

"The Loss it Sustain'd by the Immense Drain of Men":  
The Imperial Politics of Scottish Emigration to Revolutionary America, 1756-1803

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A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Virginia  
August, 2016

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## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation had its origins in a failed project. In 2008, I toured the castle in Edinburgh where I encountered the names of American sailors carved into the wooden door leading into the dungeon. These men fell into British hands during the American War for Independence and were imprisoned in the castle. I intended to develop a project around them as I prepared to return to graduate school the following year, but I found too little source material to justify a larger project. Fortunately, I encountered John Witherspoon's writings, and thus began a seven-year journey reflected in the pages below.

No project, and certainly no dissertation, is a solitary enterprise. Although I rummaged around in American and British archives and spent countless hours willing words onto the computer screen, I could not have reached the end without the help of many people at home and abroad. It is a pleasure to thank them here.

I am grateful to the numerous archivists in the United States who helped me build the foundation for this dissertation. The good folks at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh answered my numerous queries, suggested possible leads, and shuttled documents to my desk. In particular, I wish to thank Paul Carnahan at the Vermont Historical Society for helping me wade through the Papers of James Whitelaw. Thanks also to the interlibrary loan librarians at UVA's Alderman Library and the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago for fulfilling my occasionally strange requests, and for expeditiously sending books and microfilm to Charlottesville.

In the United Kingdom, I benefited greatly from the expert knowledge of many archivists. I enjoyed my time in Edinburgh at the National Records of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland. Tessa Spencer at the NRS kindly handled my requests to access private archives, and although we were unsuccessful, she provided encouragement along the way. On a quick day visit to Aberdeen, Michelle Gait and her colleagues in the Sir Duncan Rice Library at Aberdeen University had selections from the Scottish Catholic Archives waiting for me when I arrived. I am especially grateful for their hard work in scanning my documents and sending them to me in Charlottesville. Michael Gallagher and the staff at the Glasgow City Archives in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow helped me to locate port records that I would have otherwise missed. In London, the staff at the National Archives in Kew ran a well-oiled machine and maintained its reputation as a wonderful place to research and ponder the past. The same is true for the people at the British Library and Lambeth Palace.

An unexpected fellowship allowed me to visit Windsor Castle and dig through the papers of King George III. It is with great pleasure that I thank Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for initiating the Georgian Papers Project and her kind permission to quote from material in the Royal Archives and the Royal Library. I am also grateful to Oliver Urquhart Irvine, Oliver Walton, Pam Clark, Emma Stuart, Kate Heard, Carly Collier, and the staff at the Royal Archives and Royal Library for responding to my queries with great humor, sharing my excitement as I uncovered new material in George III's papers, and allowing me to view remarkable material in the Print Room. It is not everyday that one gets to casually look at some of Raphael's drawings while waiting for a map of the Battle of Bunker Hill.

I could not have visited the archives or written this dissertation without significant financial support. At UVA, Christian McMillen arranged for research funds that underwrote my

travels in North Carolina and Edinburgh. I was also honored to receive an AHSS Summer Research Fellowship, a Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Foreign Travel Research Fellowship, a Buckner W. Clay Fellowship from the Institute of the Humanities and Global Culture, and two Robert J. Huskey Travel Fellowships.

Special thanks are due to Karin Wulf at the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture for naming me the inaugural King George III Archive Project Graduate Fellow in 2015. That fellowship allowed me to visit Windsor Castle where I found material for this dissertation and for several future projects. Thanks also to Martha Howard and Beverly Smith at the OI for handling the little details that made for a very successful research trip.

I am enormously grateful to S. Max Edelson and Bill Ferster for creating a graduate assistantship that allowed me to work with them on their important new tool, MapScholar, and exposed me to the Digital Humanities. Their support and that experience helped me to win a Digital Graduate Fellowship in the Scholars' Lab in Alderman Library. Thanks to Bethany Nowviskie, Wayne Graham, Purdom Lindblad, Jeremy Boggs, Ronda Grizzle, Laura Miller, Scott Bailey, and Eric Rochester for a relaxed environment where my ideas could flourish and I could re-learn the joy of working in a team-based environment.

I did much of the writing while serving as a Doris G. Quinn Foundation Dissertation Fellow and as the Patrick Henry Fellow through the Patrick Henry National Memorial Foundation. These two organizations provided me with the time to write and, in the case of the latter, introduced me to new material that made this project better. I thank Hope Marstin, Mark Holman, Jack Schaffer, Scott Brown, and the hardworking people at Henry's last home, Red Hill, for their support and for providing historians with new opportunities to explore early America. I am very grateful to the late Ms. Quinn and the trustees of her foundation for

supporting students who have worked part-time while completing their studies. Their important work recognizes the difficult challenges that many graduate students face as they pursue their degrees.

Thank you to everyone that hired me over the past seven years. Ted Crackel and Bill Ferraro gave me the chance to work at the Papers of George Washington Project early in my graduate career. Jennifer Burns tasked me with organizing her research files on Milton Friedman and Elizabeth Varon kindly recommended me to Jane Kamensky to perform some research work. Sue Perdue of Documents Compass at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities deserves special thanks for hiring me to work on a number of projects over the years, including the *People of the Founding Era* database and the *Founding Fathers Early Access Initiative*. She, along with Will Kurtz, provided me with additional opportunities to work in the digital humanities and contribute to my understanding of how we can use technology to do better historical research. For the past few years, Brian Ullman of the International Studies Office and Emma Yin have given me the remarkable opportunity to teach early American history to visiting Chinese undergraduates. I am delighted to have made so many new Chinese friends. Finally, I thank Debbie Proffitt at the UVA School of Law for bringing me on board twice a year to proctor exams.

My mentors at the University of Virginia and abroad have been instrumental in my success. Peter S. Onuf, my advisor, consistently pushed me in ways that helped me to see what I was really trying to say. He opened doors for me, offered helpful critiques, wrote letters on my behalf, and never gave up on me when at times I did not imagine that there was light at the end of the tunnel. When Peter retired mid-way through my tenure at UVA, Max Edelson stepped in as a shadow advisor, even though he had his own students to worry about. Max helped me to

clarify my thinking about the transformation of the British Atlantic World, provided me with leadership opportunities, and informed my professional development. He also gave important advice to a young parent struggling to finish a dissertation while managing the much harder task of raising two children. Elizabeth Varon and Gary Gallagher served as crucial mentors, even if they did not always know it. Professor Varon helped me to think about what this dissertation can look like as a book. To the surprise of no one who has worked with her, she has the ability to level a difficult critique that leaves you feeling like a million bucks. The same is true for Professor Gallagher. He and Professor Varon are model teacher-scholars. That also applies to Ted Lendon. Although our research fields are thousands of years apart, Ted has supported me since I first TA'ed his Ancient Greece survey course in 2010-2011. He nominated me for teaching awards, but more importantly he gave me a confidence boost at a critical moment in the writing process and convinced me that what I had to say was important. I was fortunate to work with Sophie Rosenfeld for a semester before she departed for Yale University. She broadened my thinking about the Age of Revolutions, and helped me deal with a challenging issue in the research seminar that I taught that semester. Sadly, Andrew Cayton of Ohio State University passed away before I finished this dissertation. Drew was my undergraduate and master's thesis advisor at Miami, and he convinced UVA to take a chance on me. I would not be in Charlottesville without his faith in my abilities.

Thanks are also due to Jennifer Greeson in the Department of English for joining my dissertation committee heroically at the last moment when a complication arose, and to Robert Gibson in the Department of Medicine for challenging me to write for a broader audience. Robert Stolz helped me finalize my defense plans. In Edinburgh, Frank Cogliano offered sound advice as I began my research.

The graduate program would not function without Jenni Via. She does the heavy lifting to make sure that we know of funding opportunities, teaching assignments, other forms of employment, and reminds us to submit paperwork on time. More importantly, she is an advisor in her own right for the graduate students in our department. I thank her for expertly handling my questions, assuaging my fears, and making Nau Hall a cheerful place to learn and work.

Numerous friends have sustained me over the years. Michael Caires, Zach Hoffman, Rosemary Lee, Tamika Nunley, Will Kurtz, Jenny Foy, Emily Senefeld, and Ben Brady offered advice and laughter. The members of the Early American Seminar at the International Center for Jeffersonian Studies stimulated my thinking and shaped my work while they shared their own projects. I particularly thank Randi and David Flaherty, Jim Hrdlicka, Alexi Garrett, Shira Lurie, and Melissa Gismondi for pushing me to be a better scholar and for helping me to maintain a sense of perspective. The members of our writing group—Evan McCormick, Cody Perkins, Willa Brown, and Kristen Lashua—made my work better by being unafraid to deliver needed critiques in a sarcastic environment. I am particularly grateful to Willa for putting me up in London for a night while on a research trip, and to Kristen for joining me in commiserating over the joys of the academic job market. During my last transatlantic sojourn I stayed with Melanie Gow and her sons, Ben and Harry. They opened their home to me and made life in Windsor very pleasant for my month-long research visit.

The Man in the Yellow Shirt (Evan McCormick), Dr. Audrey (Audrey Golden), Dr. Beard Face (John Terry), Miss Cait (Caitlin Morris), Dr. Cody (Cody Perkins), and Miss Sarah (Sarah Perkins) are special friends. Over the years we've played softball in an unsuccessful quest for the intramural championship, consumed whiskey (and whisky), horsed around, and shared in one another's frustrations and triumphs. Sarah and Cody Perkins became a second family when

they moved in with us prior to their departure to South Africa for a research trip. I appreciate these friendships a great deal, even more so now that we are spread around the country.

Finally, my family has been the best source of comfort. My in-laws, Susan and David Donelson, have done more for me than most parents do for their own children. From handing down fancy ties and housing my wife and children while I went abroad to providing financial support, they have made it possible for me to complete this project. I cannot repay them, but I suspect that giving them grandchildren was a nice down payment.

My parents, Jackie and Pat Ambuske, were my first teachers. They taught me to work hard and to not be afraid to fail. Although I wanted to be an engineer like Dad when I was young, I was never good at math. Fortunately, both of them instilled in me a love of reading and learning that led me to become a historian. Mom introduced me to a gardening habit when I was a child that has provided much needed stress relief over the years. They, too, have offered us financial and moral support, helped to take care of the kids while I was gone, and never doubted that I could finish my task. My brothers, Joe and John, have had to contend with a brother who moved eight hours away, but I was always glad to get a phone call or see them on holidays. They are the world's best uncles and sources of inspiration to me. My most significant regret is that I lost all four grandparents in the last eleven years. None lived to see me finish my final degree. I hope that somewhere Jim and Joanne Patrick and Norma and Charlie Ambuske are proud of me.

Eleanor and William grew up with this project. For far too long they have tolerated vacant stares, pleas for five more minutes before heading out into the yard, occasional grumpiness, and a Daddy who went to Scotland to see the hairy coos and the Gruffalo. Their laughter and smiles have gotten me through the hardest moments of this process and reminded me that there are far more important things in life than a dusty box of documents. Now that I

have captured my white whale and lived to tell about it, E., Mr. W., and I will have a lot more time to wonder around the woods in search of discoveries, bake bread, read books, and grow vegetables in the garden. I thank them for their patience and their understanding while I completed my “big paper.”

Sarah Donelson is a far better historian and teacher than I ever will be. Her dissertation on the ways in which Henry VIII and his ministers manipulated the meanings of gender and the legal definitions of treason to destroy rival Plantagenet claimants among others to the English throne is far superior to anything that I offer in the pages below. I learned about the American sailors held in Edinburgh Castle when I accompanied her to the UK as she began her formal research. She is a wonderful woman and wife. Sarah followed me to Charlottesville, even though it compromised her own career ambitions, and finished her dissertation while parenting a nearly two-year-old child. She defended it not long before she gave birth to our second. I can't top that. Despite these events, she remained my greatest champion and editor, never letting me settle for anything less than my best, nor letting me forget the bigger picture. She has dealt with a husband whose mind often drifted back to the eighteenth century while at the dinner table, saddled her with the responsibility of minding the little ones while I took trips to the UK in four consecutive years, and had “the grumps” from time to time. Through it all she has loved and supported me at my best and at my worst. I am forever grateful for the life we have built in Charlottesville. It is to Sarah, and our kids, that I lovingly dedicate this dissertation.

*Jim Ambuske  
Charlottesville, VA  
July 29, 2016*

## **Introduction: The Tempest in a Tea Pot**

Two relics of America and Scotland's entangled revolutionary pasts lie nestled in the bucolic rolling hills of Brookneal, Virginia about an hour's drive south of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. One is Red Hill, the final home of the American statesman Patrick Henry. He died there in 1799, just over thirty-four years after he led Virginian resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765. It was one of Parliament's many imperial reforms in the years after the Seven Years War. Henry's authorship of the "Virginia Resolves," and most especially the controversial fifth statement that declared "that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and exclusive Right and Power to lay Taxes and Impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony," clarified how many American colonists thought about the constitutional relationship between Great Britain and the colonies.<sup>1</sup> Henry was a first-generation Scottish-American, the son of an early eighteenth-century emigrant from Aberdeenshire on Scotland's eastern coast, and the nephew of Hanover County's Anglican minister.<sup>2</sup>

The second remnant is set of china that rests within Henry's home. It consists of several dishes, cups, saucers, a cream boat, and a large pitcher. The set is a fine example of the blue willow form, a popular style among eighteenth-century consumers in the British Atlantic World that adorned civilian and military tables alike.<sup>3</sup> English manufactures applied a printed under-glaze of blue ink to the ceramic. The ink remained molecularly stable when subjected to high temperatures in a kiln. Artisans created designs that often depicted Chinese scenes like those

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Resolves, 29 May 1765, (Patrick Henry's Manuscript), *The Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed 1 July 2016, [[http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Virginia\\_Resolves\\_on\\_the\\_Stamp\\_Act\\_1765](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Virginia_Resolves_on_the_Stamp_Act_1765)].

<sup>2</sup> For Henry's life see Thomas S. Kidd, *Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots* (New York: Basic Books, 2011); Jon Kukla, *Patrick Henry* (New York: Simon & Schuster, forthcoming 2016); Several papers of the Reverend Patrick Henry, the uncle, are in the Lambeth Palace Library in London. See Fullman Papers: Part One General, Correspondence, Section A. Continental Colonies XII. Virginia (ii) (1724-43), ff. 229-230; Part Two Ordination Papers, Section A. Continental Colonies, XXIV. Virginia (i) (1747-1764), ff. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Lynne Sussman, "British Military Tableware, 1760-1830," *Historical Archeology* 12 (1978): 93-104.

featured on the china in Red Hill. When fired the blue ink turned a dark, vivid blue that slightly blurred. Owners displayed such sets in their homes and used them to entertain guests to remind visitors of their social status and their ability to participate in transatlantic consumer culture.<sup>4</sup>

The china set belonged to Flora MacDonald.<sup>5</sup> The precise details of how it came into the Henry family's possession long after his death is something of a mystery. How and why Flora MacDonald left Scotland for America is not. Her story embodies many of the themes contained in the pages that follow. This is a tale of how transformations in America and Scotland in second half of the eighteenth century sparked the emigration of several thousand Scots like her to the colonies and produced competing visions of empire against the backdrop of an imperial crisis that culminated in the American Revolution. It argues that this population transfer—perhaps as many as 40,000 individuals—informed the ways in which British subjects on both sides of the ocean conceptualized the empire's purpose and the implications of it for the empire's future at a moment when colonists began to question their membership in the imperial union.



Figure 1.1: Flora MacDonald's China Set, c. 1770s.

<sup>4</sup> For American consumer culture in the eighteenth century see T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Flora MacDonald China, Accession #76.2.38a, Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation at Red Hill, Brookneal, Virginia. I am grateful to Red Hill for their kind permission to publish this photograph.

Most historians of the Revolutionary period frame the events spanning from 1754 to 1783 as a contest between two fixed entities. In examining the conflict between the imperial magistrates in London who sought to reform British America through the imposition of new taxes and other administrative measures, and the aggrieved American colonists who resisted Parliament's authority, we explain the Revolutionary era as solely an argument over ideas of liberty, sovereignty, and constitutionalism. This framework implies that the British Empire consisted only of metropolitan London and the American provinces. It also suggests that only the Americans felt alienated from Great Britain at this time of imperial crisis. As Parliament passed legislation to create a more efficient empire in the wake of the Seven Years War (1756-1763), so the story goes, Americans resisted these alleged infringements on their rights through protests, rioting, and ultimately bloodshed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The London-colonial binary stands at the center of two main interpretative frameworks that have structured much of the interpretive debates about the origins and history of the American Revolution since the early twentieth century. Both revolve around Carl L. Becker's famous contention that the Revolution originated from colonists' attempt to answer "the question of home rule," and "who should rule at home." The former reflected the contested nature of Parliament's authority over the colonies, while the latter addressed tensions amongst different colonial social classes over their respective places in the economy and politics. Progressive historians of the early twentieth century such as Becker, Charles A. Beard, and J. Franklin Jameson, and their Neo-Progressive progeny in late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries such as Gary B. Nash and Woody Holton have focused their attention on the second question. They see the Revolution as a social movement generated by the imperial contest with London. Beginning in the 1950s, historians of the Whig School shifted the debate to Becker's first question by focusing on republicanism and the way intellectual thought about the structure of government and society shaped ideas on liberty, rights, and constitutionalism. Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J.G.A. Pocock advanced this republican interpretation. Historians such as Jack P. Greene and Joyce Appleby have in turn emphasized the continuities between the colonial period and the early Republic, or liberalism in early America. More recently, historians have tried splitting the difference between the Progressive and Whig camps by emphasizing the way republican thought informed class dynamics within the context of contesting British authority. For the Progressives and Neo-Progressives see Carl Lotus Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776* (Madison: Reprinted from the Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin History Series, 1909), 22; Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1913); J. Franklin Jameson, *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926); Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); and Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). For the Whigs see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill and London: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1969); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For

But if we look beyond this narrow lens we see not a static empire composed of two parties, but an empire in motion, one engulfed in crisis and war as subjects ranging from Georgia to Nova Scotia, and from England to Scotland contested the empire's purpose as well as its future. This motion was especially evident in the emigration of Scottish subjects to the American colonies. As disaffected American colonists protested in defense of their rights and liberties over the course of the 1760s and 1770s, Scots from the Highlands and the Lowlands, alienated from their native landscape in response to social and economic transformations at home, resettled in North America. The traditional framework obscures a hidden discourse on political economy and empire in which Americans, Scots, their allies, and their enemies stood at the center. Illuminating the worlds in which Flora MacDonald lived broadens our understanding of how provincial peoples far from London and Philadelphia participated in and shaped the course of the American Revolutionary era in unexpected ways.

### *The Jacobite Heroine and the Transformation of Her Atlantic World*

In 1774, Flora, her husband, Allan, and several of their children left their home on the Isle of Skye to resettle in North Carolina. Flora enjoyed some fame in Great Britain by the time that she boarded the *Baliol* for a journey to the Cape Fear River. In 1745, parts of the Scottish Highlands and Western Isles rose in rebellion against King George II and the Hanoverian line. The Jacobite rebels wanted to put Charles Edward Stuart, commonly known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie," on the British throne. A year later the Stuart Pretender's forces lay in ruins and he

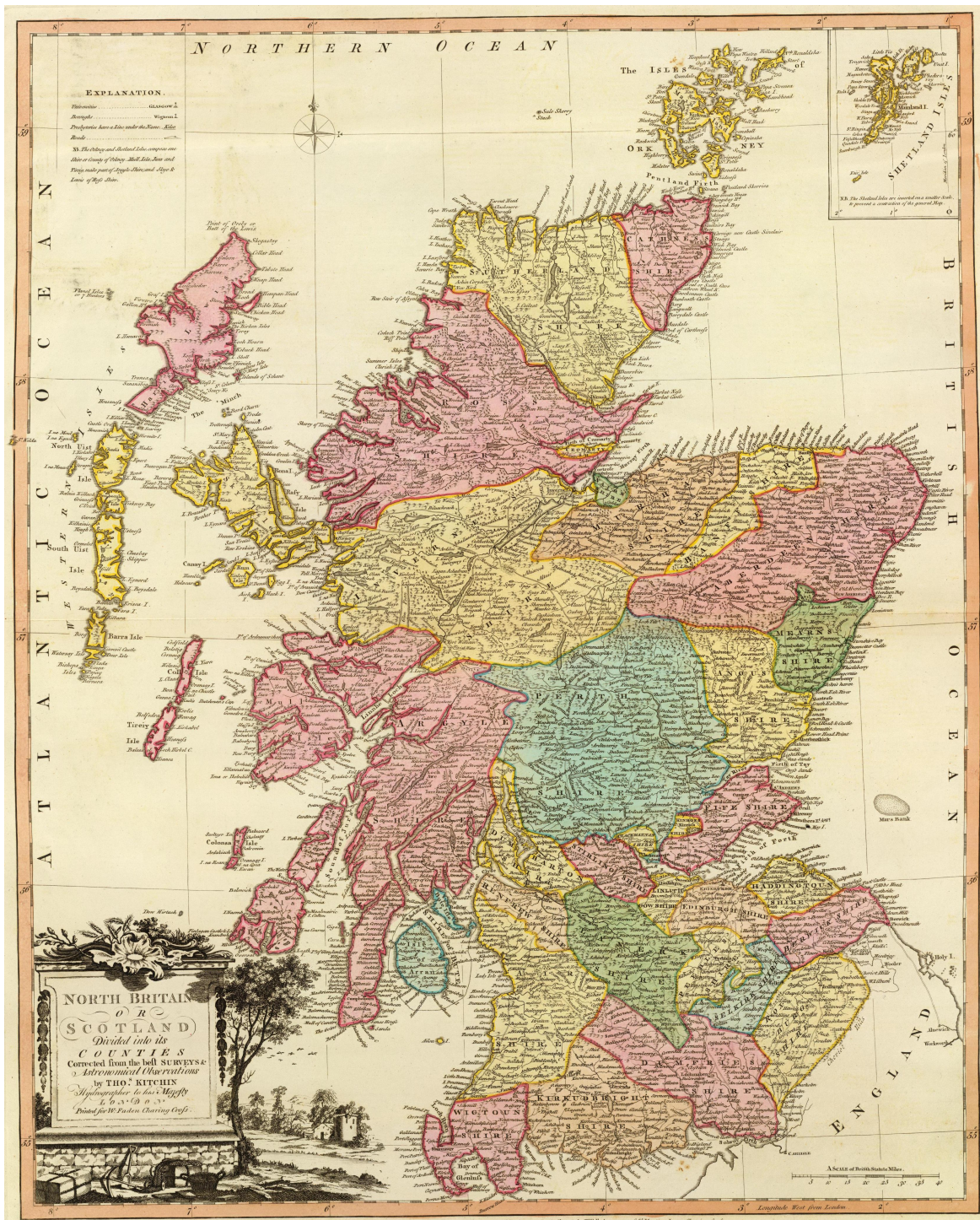
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Greene's work see his *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of the Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). For Appleby see *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984). For examples of recent historians forging a middle ground in the historiography see Benjamin L. Carp *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Ruma Chopra, *Unnatural Rebellion: Loyalists in New York City during the Revolution* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

sought refuge on the Isle of Skye. Flora agreed to hide the would-be king, who concealed himself in women's clothing and acted as her servant. The Jacobite prince slipped away to another Scottish island after several days on Skye before gaining passage to France. The British captured Flora. She was imprisoned in the Tower of London until her release in 1747.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Copy of the Declaration of Miss Mac Donald, Apple Cross Bay, 12 July 1746, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England. State Papers: Scotland, SP54/32/49e, accessed 30 June 2016, [<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jacobite-1745/flora-macdonald>]. For a general overview of her experiences see A. MacGregor & W. Jolly, *The Life of Flora MacDonald*, (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1932), 74-154. For a general overview of the rebellion see the 1745 Jacobite Uprising see Christopher Duffy, *The '45* (London: Cassell, 2003).



William Faden, *North Britain or Scotland, divided into its counties. Corrected from the best surveys & astronomical observations by Thos. Kitchen, Hydrographer to his Majesty. London, printed for W: Faden, Charing Cross. Publish'd according to Act of Parliament, Decr. 1st, 1778 by Wm. Faden, corner of St. Martins Lane, Charing Cross (London, 1778). David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, accessed 30 June 2016, [http://www.davidrumsey.com].*

By the early 1770s, Flora and her family lived on the farm of Kingsburg on Sleat, a peninsula of the Isle of Skye. They rented the land from Sir Alexander MacDonald, 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet of Sleat, and the chief of one branch of Clan Donald. Allan MacDonald had once served as a factor for the farm. A factor was an estate manager in eighteenth century Scotland. The position afforded Allan considerable status in the landed hierarchy. In the eighteenth century, the Gaelic-speaking Highlander's social world still revolved around the clan system. It was a kind of feudal structure in which a clan chief controlled access to land and allocated it to his kinsmen in exchange for their loyalty, military service, and rent. They allocated tracts to two lower orders. Tacksmen occupied the middle rung. They were minor gentry to whom the proprietor assigned a large parcel, or tack, of land. Tacksmen then subdivided the property and rented them out to common tenants.<sup>8</sup> Factors, such as Allan MacDonald, also existed in this middle space. Proprietors charged them with overseeing particular pieces of property and collecting rent from tenants and tacksmen. The common tenant provided the foundation for this pyramid. They worked the ground, drove cattle, fished the oceans, harvested kelp, performed general labor, and paid their proprietors rent in the form of cash or in kind. A similar world existed in parts of the more urban Lowlands.<sup>9</sup>

But Flora and her family were among a generation of Scots who witnessed remarkable transformations in the British Atlantic World. These changes later drove many of them to emigrate to the American colonies. In the Highlands, the old social order began to crumble. Scotland's greater engagement with the imperial state beginning in the early eighteenth century and Britain's post-Jacobite Rebellion reforms began to erode clan culture and remake clan chiefs

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<sup>8</sup> Freda Ramsay, ed., *The Day book of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield 1767: with relevant papers concerning the estate of Islay* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>9</sup> I.F. Grant, *Every-day Life on an Old Highland Farm, 1769-1782* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, Revised Edition, 1981); Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1950); Malcolm Gray, *The Highland Economy, 1750-1850* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957).

into landlords. Sir Alexander typified this new class of the Scottish Highland elite. This new chief saw his people more as rent-paying tenants that supplied his income than he did as individuals to whom he was bound through reciprocal obligations. He spent less time among them and more time in cosmopolitan London or places beyond. He devolved the management of his affairs to subordinates and raised rents to accommodate his metropolitan lifestyle. The totality of these changes alienated both tacksmen and common tenants from both their chief and their native land.<sup>10</sup> Many Highlanders believed that America could offer them a new beginning.

In the Lowlands, merchants in the more Anglicized cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow began in the mid-eighteenth century to assume a greater share of the transatlantic trade with the American colonies. Direct access to North Atlantic currents meant that ships departing from Glasgow in the Scottish west could reach the colonies far faster than could vessels leaving London or even Liverpool. Aggressive merchants established stores in the tobacco-producing Chesapeake colonies and had a significant presence in Jamaica.<sup>11</sup> In American cities such as Norfolk, Virginia or Oxford, Maryland, they unloaded linen cloth and manufactured goods produced by Scottish weavers and artisans, and filled their cargo holds with tobacco and other American commodities. The liberal use of credit facilitated these transatlantic exchanges, but a financial crisis in the early 1770s threw thousands of Lowland Scots out of work and drove up the price of provisions. Many of these Scots turned to emigration in the empire as a solution to their problems. They, like their Highland cousins, came to view America as a pathway to their

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<sup>10</sup> T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire: The Origins of the Global Diaspora* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 119-132. See also Devine, "Landlordism and Highland Emigration" in T. M. Devine, ed., *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society: Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar University of Strathclyde 1990-91* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1992), 84-103; For a longer temporal view of this transformation see Roger A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highland and Island, c. 1493-1820* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992); T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities, c.1740-1790* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1975).

future prosperity. In their collective view, and that of many of the people who encouraged their migration, the empire existed to provide a form of amelioration to domestic problems. It also presented opportunities to gain access to land and social power in ways that many Scots could not at home.

These evolutions in Scotland coincided with a war that remade the map of British North America. The British defeat of the French in the Seven Years War expanded George III's American dominions and brought some stability to the continent. With peace came the imperial reforms that triggered the colonial protests. It also created new opportunities for Scottish soldiers and civilians to acquire land in the colonies. Scots were no strangers to British America. In the century before the American Revolution, Scots had settled in every colony, with significant concentrations in New York, North Carolina, New Jersey, and Georgia.<sup>12</sup> Several differences distinguished those older migrations to those that occurred during and after the Seven Years War. The newer migrations were made possible by the needs of the imperial state during the conflict, the erection of new settlement policies after the peace, and the formation of transatlantic alliances to exploit a fragmenting Scottish social order. The existence of the older settlements mattered as well, especially in North Carolina where settlers did much to encourage Scots to come to America. Scots recognized, however, the new world the war had made. It was one that they helped to create as soldiers and officers in the British Army.

Flora and her family made the decision to emigrate to North Carolina after their financial and social position in Scotland became untenable. Sir Alexander removed Allan as factor of

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<sup>12</sup> For sources on these earlier migrations see Ian C.C. Graham, *Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc, reprint of the 1956 edition); Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); David Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607-1785* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994); Ian Adams and Meredyth Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603-1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers LTD, 1993); T.M. Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora, 1750-2010* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2011).

Kingsburgh in the late 1760s as he began to exert greater control over this property. Allan had inherited that position from his father and his dismissal from it lessened his standing in the community.<sup>13</sup> A series of brutal winter storms in the early 1770s compounded the MacDonald family's troubles. The MacDonalds lost most of their livestock and their creditors wanted payment. The MacDonalds were better off than the common tenants who labored for the main proprietor or their tacksmen, yet they were not immune to social change or financial hardship. There was nothing left on Skye, Flora told a correspondent, "but poverty and oppression."<sup>14</sup>

We do not know from which port Flora and her family took passage to America. Biographers generally believe that it was at Port Campbletown, Kintyre, which is on a peninsula in the southern Hebrides Islands.<sup>15</sup> Many emigrants boarded ships from this port on their way to North Carolina or St. John's Island (now Prince Edward Island). They joined Scots departing from other Scottish ports such as Glasgow, Greenock (near Glasgow), Fort William (near Inverlochy), Wigtown (south of Galloway), Stornoway (Isle of Lewis), and Leith (Edinburgh) for New York, Nova Scotia, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and other American colonies. Scots also went to the Chesapeake colonies and the British West Indies. Yet surviving evidence shows that Scots in this period especially favored New York, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, and St. John's Island for reasons explored in the chapters to follow.<sup>16</sup>

The MacDonald family arrived in North Carolina in 1774 and probably went by boat up the Cape Fear River and deep into the colonial backcountry. They headed for a place called Cross Creek in Cumberland County, near the modern city of Fayetteville. The adjoining settlement of Campletown lay nearby, so named for the Scottish port from whence many of the

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<sup>13</sup> John J. Toffey, *A Woman Nobly Planned: Fact and Myth in the Legacy of Flora MacDonald* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1997), 115.

<sup>14</sup> Flora MacDonald to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 12 August 1772, Delvine Papers, MS.1306, f.72, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NLS."

<sup>15</sup> MacGregor & Jolly, *The Life of Flora MacDonald*, 164; Toffey, *A Woman Nobly Planned*, 119.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5.

original settlers had departed in the late 1730s. There the family stayed with friends and relatives while Allan scouted for available plantations. Eventually, the MacDonalds purchased a farm to the west of Cross Creek along Cheek's Creek in Anson County.<sup>17</sup> Their emigration enabled them to become property owners in America, something out of reach for most of the Scots of their social class, and most especially for those below them. Emigration promoters emphasized property ownership, or at least the potential to become a landowner, as a central reason for their fellow countrymen to resettle in the colonies. A pamphlet promoting Scottish settlement in North Carolina deemed it "the best country in the world for a poor man to go to," an effusion of praise that appeared in similar forms in the letters, advertisements, and conversations of the men selling Scots on the other American colonies.<sup>18</sup> The empire was one of opportunity, they argued, when none existed in Scotland.

### *The Depopulation Dilemma*

In Great Britain, some individuals construed the meaning of Scottish emigration for Britain's American empire more darkly. In the aftermath of the Seven Years War, imperial administrators implemented a number of reforms designed to bind the colonies closer to the Mother Country. The Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763, for example, specified where colonial governors could and could not grant land and established the region west of the Appalachian Mountains as a vast reserve for Native peoples. The King's ministers wanted to control the demographic and geographic expansion of the colonies. They believed that allowing Americans to settle in the Ohio Country or the Mississippi River Valley would produce two

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<sup>17</sup> Toffey, *A Woman Nobly Planned*, 128-129.

<sup>18</sup> Scotus Americanus, *Informations concerning the Province of North Carolina, Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. By an Impartial Hand* (Glasgow, 1773), 29.

unwanted results. First, Americans who headed west would be too far from the government's influence and out of contact with the Atlantic economy. It would force them to become economically self-sufficient, and in time they could rival British manufacturers. In other words, consumers like Flora MacDonald might one day buy American-made blue willow china instead of purchasing it from an English craftsman. Weakened dependence on the British economy implied weakened dependence on Britain itself. Second, imperial officials imagined that if Americans moved west, then domestic British subjects would emigrate to take their place. That would deprive Britain of skilled laborers who in turn only strengthened American provincial economies. It also reduced the number of men available to the state in the event of a war. Eighteenth-century Europeans had a word for this kind of scenario: Depopulation.

For Britons in this period, depopulation was a very real and present threat. Larger European debates about demography and population growth or decline informed this view. Earlier in the century the French philosopher Montesquieu argued that the world's population had been in a general state of decline since Antiquity. His alarmist views ignited a wider conversation among European intellectuals in which they attempted to deduce the causes of this decline.<sup>19</sup> Previously, Europeans had believed populations to be fixed points useful for making comparison between different geographic locations. By mid-century, however, intellectuals including the Scottish philosopher David Hume envisioned population as a fluid concept that could rise or fall on account of any number of variables. Hume surmised that a lack of deadly diseases such as smallpox had contributed to the ancient world's supposedly higher numbers, while the Frenchman the Marquis de Mirabeau attributed modern depopulation to agricultural decline and an increase in the consumption of luxury goods. Others, like Robert Wallace, the

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<sup>19</sup> Andrea A. Rusnock, *Vital Accounts: Quantifying Health and Population in Eighteenth-Century England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapter 7.

moderator of the Church of Scotland, believed that it resulted from the rise of manufacturing, while Jean-Jacques Rousseau suggested it was the product of despotic governments.<sup>20</sup>

European intellectuals accepted depopulation as fact. It was only after the 1750s that scholars and politicians began to seriously challenge the Truth of Depopulation by systematically counting people. To be sure, tax levies and parishes generated demographic data, but it was not until the middle part of the eighteenth century that European states began thinking about aggregating that information to create larger data sets.<sup>21</sup> Britain's American colonies and their allegedly increasing populations stimulated British writers on both sides of the Atlantic to think more carefully about the relationship between emigration, depopulation, and the empire. They did so within the language of political economy. In the late seventeenth century, for example, the English writer Roger Coke warned that emigration robbed England of "all the Youth and Industry of this Nation." It left the mother country "weak and feeble" as laborers, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen resettled in North America.<sup>22</sup>

By the 1720s and 1730s, writers shifted course and began to argue that emigration and even some form of deliberate depopulation was beneficial for the entire empire. Joshua Gee suggested that growing colonial populations produced more wealth that flowed back into the mother country. London, in his estimation, was the particular beneficiary of an expanding colonial trade made possible by the increase of the colonies' inhabitants. Gee and his contemporary, Fayer Hall, and other British authors advanced the notion that emigration served useful purposes by offering the poor a place where they might go and improve their fortunes. These new settlers would in turn improve Britain's prospects by stimulating a robust trade between the mother country and her provincial children. Colonial consumption of British goods

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<sup>20</sup> Rusnock, *Vital Accounts*, Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Rusnock, *Vital Accounts*, Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Roger Coke, *A Discourse on Trade* (London, 1670), 10.

would spur industry and population growth in urban areas at home, while the colonists produced agricultural commodities to feed those growing numbers. Furthermore, as Gee argued, increased urbanization and production for the Atlantic imperial economy emboldened “the Landed Interest” to enhance their own incomes by raising rents and reconfiguring their properties in ways that better served that market.<sup>23</sup>

Benjamin Franklin refined these earlier sentiments to suggest in the 1750s that the population of the colonies doubled every twenty years. He lacked the numbers to support this assertion, deriving his estimate from the supposition that Americans married and reproduced at twice the rate of Europeans. Yet his larger point followed Gee’s in that a growing colonial population was beneficial to Britain.<sup>24</sup> Intrigued by Franklin’s arguments, the Welsh philosopher and actuary Richard Price attempted to quantify London’s population by applying complex insurance formulas to death records. He concluded that large cities were detrimental to population growth. Cities bred disease and poverty. He compared his analysis to various colonial records to determine that Franklin was likely correct in his assertion that an expansive territory and emphasis on agricultural production led to population increase. By implication, then, British subjects seeking a better life, and more importantly, property ownership, could avail themselves to the empire by migrating internally within it.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Joshua Gee, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Concerning the Naval-Stores Bill* (London, 1720); Gee, *The Trade and Navigation of Great-Britain* (London, 1729), iv; Fayer Hall, *The Importance of the British Plantations to this Kingdom; with the State of their Trade, and Methods for Improving it* (London, 1731). For a comprehensive overview of the ways in which British intellectuals and politicians probed the utility of the empire for Britain in the eighteenth century, see Jack P. Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Franklin wrote his essay in 1751 and published it four years later. Benjamin Franklin, *Observations concerning the increase of mankind, people of countries, &c.* (New York, 1755).

<sup>25</sup> Richard Price, “Observations on the Expectations of Lives, the Increase of Mankind, the Influence of Great Towns on Population, and Particularly the State of London with Respect to Healthfulness and Number of Inhabitants. In a Letter from Mr. Richard Price, F.R.S. to Benjamin Franklin, Esq; LL.D. and F.R.S.” in *Philosophical Transactions* 59 (January 1769): 89-125. The English agriculturalist Arthur Young disputed some of Price’s assertions in 1774. See his *Political Arithmetic. Containing Observations on the Present State of Great Britain; and the Principles of Her Policy in the Encouragement of Agriculture* (London, 1774).

Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough, understood these scenarios better than most British officials. As one of the key architects of British American imperial policy in the 1760s and 1770s, first as president of the Board of Trade and Plantations, and later as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Hillsborough expended considerable energy structuring the new American imperial landscape by encouraging settlement at the bookends of empire. He had participated in depopulation debates as a Member of Parliament in the 1750s, and called for a national census that would help determine Britain's total population, and thus inform the government of when it should and when it should not encourage emigration to North America. Convinced that new settlements in the American backcountry would only inflame tensions with Native Americans and place colonists out of contact with government, Hillsborough championed settlement in the new colonies of East and West Florida, along with Quebec, St. John's, and unsettled portions of Nova Scotia. By directing the course of settlement he believed that the British could manage population transfers more effectively, and in ways that did not harm British authority in America.<sup>26</sup>

In Scotland, concerns over depopulation changed over time. In the immediate post-Seven Years War period some expressed fears that the country's great contribution to the war effort—Scots accounted for nearly 25% of the rank and file and nearly 30% of the officers in the British Army deployed to North America in 1757—had reduced Scotland's population to dangerous levels.<sup>27</sup> These arguments lingered in the background over the next several years as Scottish proprietors expressed great displeasure at the emigration of their tenants and tacksmen to North

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<sup>26</sup> Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 29-36. See also Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961).

<sup>27</sup> For a statistical analysis of the composition of the British Army in America see "Table 5: Ethnic composition of rank and file and non-commissioned officers of British Army units in North America, summer 1757" in Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Appendix, pg. 318.

America. Their departures meant the loss of income-producing farmers and laborers. There were exceptions, as we will see, but in most cases proprietors and their estate managers struggled to counter the influence of emigration promoters and maintain personal authority on their own lands.

These local fears eventually gave way to a broader perspective on emigration that aligned with the ideological underpinnings of Britain's post-war imperial land reforms. In the eyes of men such as Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller or Lord Advocate Henry Dundas, central figures in Scotland's political and legal establishment, a direct correlation existed between Scottish emigration and the imperial crisis brewing in North America. In their view, the frequent departures of their countrywomen and men weakened American dependency on Great Britain by transferring the labor resources needed to grow provincial economies and the potential soldiers with which colonists could resist British authority. For them, Scottish emigration constituted an imperial crisis within an imperial crisis, one that threatened to undermine Britain's hold on the American colonies at a critical juncture in the empire's history. That is a major argument of this work.

### *Numbers*

Demographic shifts in the British Atlantic world drove conversations about depopulation. Flora MacDonald was one of thousands of individuals who flowed across the Atlantic willingly or in chains to the American colonies. Scholars have labored to give us some sense of the migration's scale. One estimate suggests that 600,000 free and enslaved individuals went to the

continent between 1700 and 1775.<sup>28</sup> Bernard Bailyn concluded that 125,000 people emigrated from Great Britain and Ireland in the fifteen years before the outbreak of the American War for Independence.<sup>29</sup> The total number of Irish emigrants to North America may have been 55,000. Many of these were Scots-Irish from the County Ulster in the north of Ireland, a community of Scots who emigrated across the North Channel in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to take up land on the Emerald Isle. Historian Marianne S. Wokeck has estimated that 20,000 Irishmen went to Pennsylvania alone in this period.<sup>30</sup> Scottish estimates vary widely from 16,000 to 40,000 people. We can be more precise about the number of emigrants from 1773 to 1775 because the British government ordered port officials to record all outgoing passengers. Extant evidence from official government sources shows just over 3,800 emigrants, a number that is too low because some ships did not come into port or escaped detection. Flora MacDonald's vessel is not among the ships listed in the registry.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Aaron Fogelman, "Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700 - 1775: New Estimates," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (Spring, 1992): 698.

<sup>29</sup> Bailyn gives the Irish figure as 55,000, the English as 30,000, and the Scottish as 40,000 from 1760 to 1775. See Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 26.

<sup>30</sup> "Table 4. Estimated numbers of Irish immigrants to the Delaware Valley, 1730-1774" in Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 172-173. See also Audrey Lockhart, *Some Aspects of Emigration From Ireland to the North American Colonies Between 1660 and 1775* (New York: Arno Press, 1976). For a treatment of the Ulster Scot migration prior to 1764 see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>31</sup> T.M. Devine estimated that 16,000 Scots removed to North America between 1768 and 1775. I.C.C. Graham argued that 9,500 of these individuals were from the Highlands, which would account for sixty percent of the total estimated number of emigrant Scots. Devine believes this figure for Highland departures to be too low, noting that Graham concentrated his focus on departures from Highland ports and failed to consider Highlanders emigrating from Lowland ports. Moreover, as Devine notes, contemporary sources indicate that customs oversight was weak in the Highlands and newspapers carried rumors of ships anchoring in bays and creeks to take on emigrants. J.M. Bumsted estimates 25,000 people from 1763 to 1775. In his analysis of general emigration from the British Isles from 1773 to 1776, Bernard Bailyn provided figures suggesting 3,872 individuals left Scotland in this period. This figure includes 1,099 Highlanders and Islanders, which accounted in this scheme for 28.4% of all Scottish emigration, and 12% of all British emigration. According to Bailyn, only London produced more emigrants than the Scottish Highlands. He gives the total number of emigrants from Scotland for the period between 1760 and 1775 as 40,000. Devine, "Landlordism and Highland Emigration" in Devine, ed., *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*, 87; J.M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815* (Edinburgh and Winnipeg: Edinburgh University Press and The University of Manitoba Press, 1982), 9-10; Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 26, 111. See Chapter 5 of this dissertation for a presentation and an analysis of the government records detailing emigrants.

Contemporary censuses help to put these Scottish emigration figures into greater context. A 1755 survey of Scotland found that 1,263,385 lived in that part of Britain. A second census conducted in the 1790s concluded that the population size had increased by 23% to 1,5569,987 people. Interesting observations arise when we compare the figures for some of the regions most affected by emigration between the Seven Years War and the American Revolution.

**Table 1.1: Scottish Population Change for Selected Regions, 1755-1790s<sup>32</sup>**

Region	1755	1790s	Percentage Change
Renfrewshire	26,620	77,853	193%
Mainland Argyll	43,093	47,541	10%
Mainland Invernesshire	44,497	43,854	-1%
Mainland Ross & Cromarty	41,268	48,075	16%
Sutherland	20,774	22,861	10%
Caithness	22,215	24,801	12%
Western Isles	13,623	19,139	41%
Skye and Small Isles	12,195	15,809	30%
Argyll & Bute Isles	24,881	36,943	48%

The numbers show that the populations of areas experiencing heavy emigration to North America between 1763 and 1775 actually grew in overall size from the mid-1750s to the 1790s. They suggest that over the long-term internal migration or immigration from elsewhere to those places negated any short-term population decline. Long-term population growth in the second half of the eighteenth century canceled out population loss from emigration to North America in the 1760s and 1770s. What the numbers do not easily show is the extent to which British efforts to combat population loss in the era of the American Revolution may have contributed to these demographic increases. The War of Independence presented Scottish and British authorities with unique opportunities to restrict a citizen's movement within the empire that prevented new

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<sup>32</sup> Adapted from Sir John Sinclair, ed., *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799 with a general introduction by Donald J. Withrington and additional introductory material by Ian R. Grant* (East Ardsley, England: Ep Publishing Limited, 1983), 1:xlili-xlv.

waves of emigrants from arriving on American shores. An inability to emigrate for eight years likely helped to rebuild the populations in these Scottish regions.

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The data reflects the countless hours that scholars spent combing through ship manifests, newspapers, letters, and government reports in the archives. The numbers tell us about the size of emigrant populations and national demographic shifts and that in turn has shaped the way that historians have written about Scottish emigration in this period. As one historian of the Scottish military experience in North America has correctly argued, Scottish fears of depopulation were “largely misplaced.”<sup>33</sup> Accepting that to be true informs the kind of questions one asks of the evidence and shapes the resulting argument. We lose sight of the fact that the people making the decision to emigrate, the proprietors who opposed their departures, the promoters who championed the colonies, the colonial officials who observed incoming migrants, and imperial administrators who conceived of a greater danger to the empire barely had any inkling of the total number of Scots leaving for America. They all based their actions on what they knew at the time, not what we can calculate two centuries later. The government’s official inquiries into Scottish emigration in the 1770s reflected the fact Scottish politicians and the King’s ministers well knew that they lacked this knowledge. Acquiring that information shaped the choices that British officials made as they evaluated emigration within the context of the American imperial crisis. They more often acted on the basis of what they did not know rather than the information that they had in their possession.

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<sup>33</sup> Matthew P. Dziennik, “Through an Imperial Prism: Land, Liberty, and Highland Loyalism in the War of American Independence,” *Journal of British Studies* 50 (April 2011): 332.

This dissertation reads the evidence forward to show how this crisis within a crisis emerged from a specific set of contexts and the contingent actions of individuals who sought to control or exploit it. It intervenes in a body of literature that explores America and Scotland in broad imperial terms and in migration studies more specifically. In the 1950s, John Clive and Bernard Bailyn argued that America and Scotland were two cultural provinces of England orbiting the metropolitan London core. They suggested that both Scots and Americans made impressive advancements in arts and letters during the eighteenth century, and were equally bound to the center by government-appointed officials, yet possessed a profound sense of inferior provincial identity relative to the cultural and political capital of the empire. Theological, scientific, and commercial connections linked the two provinces together, but always within a peripheral relationship to England. By the late eighteenth century, they argue, the American provinces began “moving from subordination to independence, [and] Scotland from independence to subordination.”<sup>34</sup>

Historian Ned C. Landsman complicated this concept of provinciality. He emphasized Scots’ engagement with the British state and the empire since the 1707 Act of Union that created a “Great Britain.” Crucially, while they retained a sense of Scottish identity, leading to a conception of Scotland as both a nation and a province within the British state and empire, Scots did so as British provincials “entrenched” in the commercial and administrative structures of the empire. The Scottish periphery, as historian Linda Colley has argued, began colonizing the British core in the eighteenth century as Scots took up key positions in the army and the government. Most prominent among those was John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bute, the first prime

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<sup>34</sup> John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, “England’s Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 11, (April 1954): 211. Bailyn continued this theme of provinciality in his *Voyagers to the West*. His goal in that work was to explain the provincial origins and destinations of British migration on the eve of the American Revolution.

minister from Scotland and a favorite of George III, who held that office at the end of the Seven Years War. For many Englishmen, Lord Bute, who was rumored to enjoy the favors of the King's mother, represented the physical embodiment of Scots' literal and figurative penetration of the British state.<sup>35</sup>

This dissertation locates the history of Scottish emigration in the period beginning with the Seven Years War within this imperial-provincial framework and broader debates over population and the utility of empire. Jack P. Greene has recently challenged historians to probe the ways in which British subjects evaluated the connections between empire and domestic challenges. The following work attempts to answer part of Greene's call. Rather than focusing principally on the bonds between the metropolis and the provinces, however, it offers a different view of empire by examining the relationships between the provinces themselves. By adopting this transatlantic perspective, it suggests that instead of asking why Scots emigrated in such numbers, we should explore how individuals on both sides of the Atlantic understood the causes of this emigration within the context of defining the larger purposes and benefits of the empire.<sup>36</sup>

More nuanced studies of America and Scotland in the empire probe Scottish "contributions" to the American colonies in the form of religious, intellectual, economic or cultural transfers from North Britain. American medical students such as Benjamin Rush who ingested medical knowledge at the University of Edinburgh informed the development of the American medical profession in Philadelphia, while Edinburgh-trained musicians inspired the

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<sup>35</sup> Ned C. Landsman, "The Provinces and the Empire: Scotland, the American colonies and the development of British provincial identity" in Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 258-267. Quotation on 259. For the concept of Scotland as a nation and a province see the essays in Ned C. Landsman, ed., *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2001). On the relationship between the Act of Union and the empire see Allan I. Macinnes, *Union and Empire: The Making of the United Kingdom in 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), Chapter 3.

<sup>36</sup> Greene, *Evaluating Empire*, xi, note 13.

direction of classical music in the same American city. Scots, most notably John Witherspoon, brought with them theological and religious beliefs that bolstered the state of American Presbyterianism, while American consumption of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy shaped Americans' understanding of the world. Moreover, the lucrative tobacco trade bound American planters like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington together with merchants in Glasgow who provided their customers with financial credit in exchange for their crops.<sup>37</sup>

Historians of Scotland and Scottish migrations have long probed emigration as a means to explore the social and economic changes within Scotland over the course of the eighteenth century. Their interest lies largely in determining the precise factors that encouraged Scots to seek land in North America. Since the early twentieth century much of the scholarly debate has centered on the relationship between the destruction of Scottish clans in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands, and the decision of many Gaels (Highlanders) to emigrate. The historian Margaret I. Adam believed that the fragmentation of Scottish clanship could be traced back to the failed Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The British government engaged in punitive actions to pacify the Highlands. These acts, Adam argued, encouraged clan chiefs to rethink their relationship with their clansmen. No longer bound together by tradition, kinship, and loyalty, clan chiefs began acting out of self-interest, viewing their people more as rent-paying tenants than anything else.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For these themes see the important collection of essays in Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten, eds., *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). See also William R. Brock, *Scotus Americanus: A Survey of the Sources for Links between Scotland and America in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1982); and Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study in Cultural Relations, 1750-1835* (Glasgow and London: Blackie and Son Limited, 1975). For the tobacco trade see Devine, *The Tobacco Lords*.

<sup>38</sup> Margaret I. Adam, "The Highland Emigration of 1770," *The Scottish Historical Review* 16 (July 1919): 280-293. For her analysis of the post-Revolutionary War period see Adam, "The Causes of Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," *The Scottish Historical Review* 17 (January 1920): 73-89.

Adam provided greater nuance to an earlier view that cast landlords as villainous figures that cleared tenants off their lands simply in pursuit of greater profit.<sup>39</sup> Recent scholarship has followed her in complicating our understanding of this history by placing Scottish emigration within a wider transatlantic and imperial context. Led principally by T.M. Devine, historians now date the transformation of the clan system and the Highland economy to the early eighteenth century and ascribe these changes to Scotland's greater integration into the British state and into the British Atlantic economy. While acknowledging the post-1745 reforms as fundamentally important, Devine argues that the Highland gentry's absorption of cultural and economic values from the more urban Lowlands and from London, where they increasingly took up residence, fractured the bonds of clanship. As they pursued their own economic and political self-interest, aspirations that did not necessarily correspond well with that of their clansmen, and spent greater time away from them, Scottish Highland proprietors began seeing their lands more as sites of economic production and less as property held in communal trust for the clan. They engaged in agricultural improvements and raised rents as means to maximize their lands' productivity. Scots in urban spaces like Glasgow and Edinburgh were more likely to emigrate as employees of merchant houses or when economic downturns threw them out of work.<sup>40</sup>

Other scholars have appropriated some of the evolving work on Scottish society and economy and embedded it within a variety of temporal and geographic frameworks. Historians

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<sup>39</sup> For a nineteenth-century example of this perspective see Alexander Mackenzie, *A History of the Highland Clearances* (1883). For a more recent example see James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> Devine's position is most succinctly in T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire: The Origins of the Global Diaspora* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 119-132. See also Devine, "Landlordism and Highland Emigration" in T. M. Devine, ed., *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society: Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar University of Strathclyde 1990-91* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1992), 84-103. For Devine's work on the Glasgow-Virginia tobacco trade see his *The Tobacco Lords*. For a longer temporal view of this transformation see Roger A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highland and Island, c. 1493-1820* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998). For a general overview of the Highland economy see Malcolm Gray, *The Highland Economy, 1750-1850* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957).

such as Ian C.C. Graham and David Dobson, along with historical geographers Ian Adams and Meredyth Somerville, have placed emigration and its causes within wider histories of Scots peopling North America from the early seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. They are joined by Devine, whose recent work examines “Scotland’s Global Diaspora” from 1750 to 2010. These scholars locate emigration in the era of the American Revolution as but one episode in much longer histories of Scottish migratory trends. For these scholars, emigration is a core component of Scottish national identity. It is a shared experience that unites Scots across generations and geographic space by positioning emigration as a shared experience regardless of whether or not an individual actually left home. In this view, emigration reflects a shared sense of hardship that forced Scots to make a difficult set of choices with respect to remaining in Scotland or leaving it. It also represents the exportation of Scottish culture to places such as British Canada, India, or Australia that contributes to the idea of a global clan. The presentation of emigration as a persistent theme over these centuries suggests more continuity than it does historical change, denying the extent to which various historical contexts shaped each episode, and leading to broader generalizations about America as a kind of asylum for wayward or enterprising Scots facing hardships at home.<sup>41</sup>

Geographic emphasis sharpens these choices in periodization. Social historians have produced intensive studies of Scottish settlements and community development in locations such as New Jersey, Georgia, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Jamaica and Virginia, but they do in ways that privilege earlier migrations or those that populated Canada in the years after the

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<sup>41</sup> Ian C.C. Graham, *Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc), reprint of the 1956 edition; David Dobson, *Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607-1785* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994); Ian Adams and Meredyth Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603-1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers LTD, 1993); T.M. Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland’s Global Diaspora, 1750-2010* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2011). See also Jacqueline A. Rinn, “Factors in Scottish Emigration: A Study of Scottish Participation in the Indentured and Transportation Systems of the New World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” Unpublished PhD diss., (University of Aberdeen, 1979).

American Revolution. Even when periodization and geographic focus is more compressed, such as in J.M. Bumsted's *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815*, emigration during the years of the imperial crisis acts as a prologue to later settlement of British Canada. Bumsted shifts focus from the actions of the landlords in prompting emigration to self-selecting Scots who emigrated largely of their own volition. Narrower demographic studies emphasize specific groups of Scots, most notably soldiers, who served in the Seven Years War and later as part of the British Army during the American War for Independence, but operate under the assumption that depopulation fears were without merit.<sup>42</sup>

This dissertation places Scottish emigration directly in the center of the American Revolutionary era. It recognizes that earlier migrations to North America were important, and that social change in Scotland was crucial to the disaffection among Scots that inspired their emigration, but it argues that we can better understand this phenomenon by rooting it in the broader imperial transformation of North America that birthed the American Revolution. The importance of this dissertation is that it offers a new perspective on the American Revolution and the history of eighteenth-century Scottish emigration by arguing that Scotland's emigration crisis and the American imperial constitutional crisis were two branches of the same tree. It offers a revision to historiographical framework that Clive and Bailyn offered nearly sixty years ago and one that has guided the literature since. While America and Scotland may have been moving in

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<sup>42</sup> For geographic case studies see Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Anthony W. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration, and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957); Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980); Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992). For the military perspective, see Andrew MacKillop, *"More Fruitful than the Soil": Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (London: Tuckwell Press, 2000), Chapter 6; Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

opposite directions relative to London, emigration bound America and Scotland closer together in ways that many individuals at the time believed drove a deeper wedge between the Great Britain and the colonies. Taking the belief in depopulation seriously, instead of dismissing it as a simple overreaction to emigration, complicates our understanding of American Revolutionary history by exploring how actors often on the geographic imperial margins contested the empire's purpose in this moment.

### *Choices*

The story below covers a wide geographic space and focuses on a narrow length of time. It stretches from the northern borderlands of New York to the backcountry of North Carolina; the environs of St. John's Island and Nova Scotia to Virginia and Maryland; from the rugged farms in the Highlands and Western Isles to the docks in Glasgow; and from the Scottish capital in Edinburgh and the imperial capital in London to the centers of American resistance in Boston and Philadelphia. It reaches back into the 1730s and ends in the years after the American War for Independence concluded in 1783. However, it mainly explores the period between 1756, when the British government began to recruit Highlands for service in the Seven Years War, and 1784, when the Reverend John Witherspoon traveled to Scotland as an American citizen to recruit settlers for the new United States. The lens contracts further between 1767 and 1776. It was in this short period that emigration from Scotland began to accelerate and in turn stoked fears of depopulation.

Juggling the demands of a large geographic canvas and a short timeline poses a number of challenges. The project's expansive transatlantic scope risks reducing many of the arguments to abstractions while the timeframe invites a microhistorical approach that poses the danger of

getting lost in the evidence and losing sight of the historical forest. I have sought to “balance intimacy with distance while at the same time being inquisitive to the point of invasiveness.”<sup>43</sup> I did not fully explore every place that Scots went to in colonial America or examine every single area in Scotland that lost people to emigration. Nor did I wish to repeat earlier studies that delved into Scottish-American settlement patterns in significant detail. Readers wanting more in depth investigations on colonies such as Virginia, Georgia, or Quebec will find excellent scholarly works cited in the footnotes below.

Instead, I have confined my examination to the Scottish areas that experienced the majority of emigration in this period and the colonies that most frequently received emigrant Scots. I have organized the dissertation around the core themes of competition and authority. Competition took places on a number of levels. The contest between France and Britain for control of North America brought thousands of Scots to the colonies in the 1750s and 1760s; emigrants competed with colonists for land; American proprietors competed with each other for access to newly arrived Scots; Scottish proprietors competed with emigration promoters to keep people on their lands; and finally, British and American forces competed for Scottish emigrant loyalty in the early years of the American Revolution. The desire to preserve one’s own authority or that of the British in America interlaced this competitive environment. Some emigrant Scots sought to use their authority to lure others across the ocean; others sought out American proprietors who would help them maintain their hold over their social inferiors; Scottish landlords struggled to restore authority on their lands; and both the British and American governments imagined that emigrant Scots would be useful in preserving the British Empire in

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<sup>43</sup> Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography, *The Journal of American History* 88 (June 2001): 129.

America or destroying it. Key people and their experiences drive the narrative. Invading their lives helps to illuminate the historical canvas.

Organizing the dissertation around the themes of competition and authority helps to isolate interlinked historical developments that occurred on top of one another. It is useful to think of the chapters that follow as something akin to the bellows of an accordion. A great deal of the competition described below took place between 1767 and 1776. When an accordion is closed it is nearly impossible to see the individual folds that make up the bellows. When it is extended the individual layers and their connective tissue becomes clearer. To make sense of this period and advance my argument, I separated out the layers and installed the bridges necessary to make the music. I have tried to seed the arguments of later chapters in earlier ones. In a few instances, lines of argument begun in one chapter by necessity do not reach resolution until a subsequent chapter. This is particularly the case with respect to the discussion of state-sponsored emigration to North Carolina in Chapter Two, which concludes in Chapter Five.

The emigrants described below are men, women, and children who intended to settle permanently in North America on their own accord. This includes Scots who signed indenture contracts as a means to subsidize their passage across the Atlantic. It does not include the forced migrations of people sentenced by Scottish courts to banishment in the colonies as punishment for their crimes, or kidnap victims (unless contemporaries disputed the kidnapping).<sup>44</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that I have excluded Ireland as a category of analysis except for several references that serve to contextualize events in the narrative. Ireland, like Scotland, experienced a great deal of rural unrest and emigration in the 1760s and 1770s linked

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<sup>44</sup> For convicts, see Roger A. Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718–1775*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). For kidnapping see Timothy J. Shannon, “King of the Indians: The Hard Fate and Curious Career of Peter Williamson,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 88, Third Series (January 2009): 3–44.

to elevated rents and land reforms. As the numbers cited above suggest, Irish emigration to North America likely exceeded that of Scots migrating to the colonies.<sup>45</sup> But unlike Scotland, Irish politicians rarely pressed the British government to see the loss of their citizens as fundamentally destructive to the integrity of the empire. They did have great concerns about the state of the linen trade, and Scots did as well, but Scottish politicians were fully aware of the long shadow that the Seven Years War cast over their part of the island. Scottish elites argued that the loss of laborers and potential soldiers, something that Scotland had provided a great deal of in the Seven Years War, compromised the domestic labor force and weakened Britain's hold on the colonies. The actions that they pursued to address emigration reflected that sense of history and it set them apart from their counterparts in Ireland.

#### *A Note on Names*

In the eighteenth century it was common for Scots to refer to each other by the farm or property on which they lived. This was for practical purposes, especially in the Highlands, because people often shared the same first and last name. There are, for example, several men named "Alexander Campbell" and "John MacDonald" in this dissertation. Scholars have adopted this practice to help avoid reader confusion. I have followed this convention in most cases unless it made greater sense to include the full name.

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<sup>45</sup> For a succinct account of the rural agitation in Ireland, see W. A. Maguire, "Lord Donegall and Hearts of Steel," *Irish Historical Studies* 22 (September 1979): 351-376. See also, Audrey Lockhart, *Some Aspects of Emigration from Ireland to the North American Colonies between 1660 and 1775* (New York: Arno Press, 1976).

## *Chapters*

The dissertation begins with Chapter 1, “Scottish Highlanders and the Creation of Military Emigrants in the Seven Years War, 1756-1765.” It investigates how the British government’s need for manpower to fight the French in North America led it to recruit Highlanders into the army just a decade after the last Jacobite Uprising. It demonstrates the ways in which the experience of fighting the war and the government’s imperial land reforms embodied in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 transformed these soldiers and officers into military emigrants in the New York borderlands. Chapter 2, “The Imperial Promoters: The Transatlantic Construction and Propagation of Emigration Ideology in Scotland,” probes the ways in which Americans, Scots, and British officials crafted and spread messages to entice Scots to North America. A great deal of the promotion in the years after the Seven Years War at first focused on North Carolina, where an older Scottish community used existing ties with friends and family to encourage more Scots to come to the colony, until competitors from other colonies entered the fray. These promoters often worked in concert with, or were, the subjects of Chapter 3, “The Imperial Proprietors: Patronage Networks and Power in Northern British America.” The chapter shows how Scots and Americans created partnerships to exploit landed opportunities in New York, St. John’s Island, and Nova Scotia. They often competed with each other for Scottish emigrants, while the emigrants forged relationships with American proprietors to help them navigate divisive colonial and imperial political landscapes.

Scottish proprietors and their estate managers sought to find ways to counteract emigration when their people began to depart in large numbers. In Chapter 4, “The Epidemical Phrenzy:” Scottish Proprietors and the Struggle to prevent Emigration,” we see how landlords in

the Highlands and Western Isles attempted to counter the rhetoric of the emigration promoters, employ legal strategies to protect their interests, and consider more extreme measures to contain what many elite Scots began to liken to an epidemic. The acceptance of emigration as a kind of social fact in certain Scottish political circles enabled Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller to convince the British government to authorize inquiries in Chapter 5, “‘The Studium rerum Novarum begins to operate’: Investigating Scottish Emigration and its Implications for the Future of British America.” It examines how changes in British leadership and Miller’s imperial vision led to investigations of past and present emigration that informed how officials considered emigration within the context of the growing imperial crisis in the colonies.

Chapter 6, “Scottish Emigration and the Problem of Imperial Law,” demonstrates the ways in which prominent Scots and British officials worked to find a way to suppress emigration in light of perceived threats to the British economy and authority in the American colonies. At issue was whether or not the government could restrict a free British subject’s movements within the empire. Finding an answer to that question involved overcoming constitutional objections and finding power in unexpected places. Chapter 7, “The Secret Strategy of the Final Recruitment: Emigration and War in the Early Years of the American Revolution,” details how George III and the British Prime Minister, Lord North, authorized a plan to use Scottish emigrants in the colonies to the empire’s advantage in the months before the outbreak of the American War for Independence. While some leading Scots believed that emigrants would undo the empire, one convinced his King that they could be useful in saving it. This final competition pitted Patriots versus Loyalists in a bid to win the allegiance of emigrants. It occurred against the backdrop of increasing hostility towards Scots in the colonies that even found brief expression in an early draft of the Declaration of Independence.

The conclusion traces Flora MacDonald's and John Witherspoon's journeys back to Scotland during and just after the American Revolution. It offers some reflections on how the American War for Independence forced Scottish emigrants to make hard choices to survive during the conflict and ends with a brief assessment of emigration to the new United States and British Canada in the years after the arrival of peace in 1783.

## **Chapter 1: Scottish Highlanders and the Creation of Military Emigrants in the Seven Years War, 1756-1765**

In the summer of 1765, Lord Adam Gordon ascended the Hudson River to Albany, New York. He intended to visit Sir William Johnson, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern District, at his home, Johnson Hall, along the Mohawk River. The landscape from Schenectady to Sir William's estate reminded him of Westmoreland in northern England, "or the Banks of Tay, above Perth" in Scotland. The soil of this apparent wilderness was excellent, and although it was "covered with a variety of Timber," the land "Sells very high," as speculators coveted the area for its agricultural potential.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Adam was in New York as part of a grand colonial tour between 1764 and 1765 that began in the new province of West Florida and ended in New York.<sup>2</sup> He wanted to make an investment in American land. As veteran of the European theater of the Seven Years War, Lord Adam was not eligible for a special colonial land grant reserved for British soldiers and officers who had fought in North America. The Proclamation of October 7, 1763 provided such men with land grants whose size corresponded with their military rank. Although he could not get a proclamation grant, Lord Adam wanted a piece of New York land that would complement property that he had acquired in the new province of East Florida. The purpose of his visit with Sir William was to seek his assistance to purchase some land in the colony.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Adam Gordon, "Journal of an Officer who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765," in Newton D. Mereness, ed., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 417.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Adam began his tour in West Florida before heading into East Florida and then north through many of the older colonies. He also toured the new province of Quebec. He concluded his journey with a visit to Boston in September 1765 before returning to New York in October where he boarded a ship for England.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Adam entered the army as a lieutenant in 1743 and by 1756 he had risen to the rank of captain and lieutenant-colonel of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot Guards. Gordon and his men fought along the northern French coast in September 1758 when British forces launched a failed amphibious assault near Saint-Cas. The battle ended direct British military operations against the French homeland for the duration of the war. Gordon ended as colonel of the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. When he began his tour of the colonies he had been recently reelected to his seat in

The nobleman therefore was not the only Scottish veteran interested in American land. As Lord Adam made his way to Johnson Hall, many of his fellow countrymen from the Scottish Highlands were in the city of New York petitioning the provincial government for proclamation grants. Affixing their names to individual or group petitions, Scottish veterans formalized the process of their emigration to the American colonies that had begun in the mid-1750s with their initial deployment to the continent. By applying for land north of Albany, along either side of Lakes George and Champlain, or around Batten Kill to the east of Saratoga, they participated in a form of imperial state-sponsored settlement that was a major component of the British government's post-war vision for America. Ironically, these military emigrants marked the beginning of a new wave of Scottish emigration to the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century that by the mid-1770s would come to be seen as weakening British control over North America.

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The Seven Years War and the imperial policies that followed in its wake were instrumental in drawing thousands of Scottish subjects to North America from the mid-1750s to the mid-1770s. The conflict between Britain and France created opportunities for individual Scots, provincial officials, and the British government to accomplish a number of local and imperial objectives. The scale of the war — Britain, France, and their respective allies fought in America, Europe, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa — generated a large demand for soldiers. The British army's manpower requirements for North America led officials to recruit men from the Scottish Highlands, bringing into the service many Scots who only a decade earlier had rebelled against the Hanoverian line in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-1746. Warring in America first for

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Parliament from Aberdeenshire. Stuart Handley, 'Gordon, Lord Adam (c.1726–1801)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, Oxford University Press, 2004. For the Saint-Cas campaign see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 298-302; J. Percy Groves, *The 66th Berkshire Regiment: A Brief History of its Services at Home and Abroad, From 1758 to 1881* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1887), 2-3.

the king they tried to overthrow, George II, and then his grandson, George III, did much to rehabilitate the image of the Highlander in the British mind. At the same time, service in the army and deployment to North America gave Highlanders with few prospects at home the chance for better pay and access to land in the colonies once the war was over.

Scottish soldiers who remained in colonial New York's northern borderlands would also fulfill provincial officials' longstanding goal of populating the region from Albany north to the border with French Canada. Since the early eighteenth century New York's governing officials had sought ways to people these lands in order to form a strategic buffer between the France's American Empire, their native allies, and the lower reaches of the colony. In the years before the Jacobite Rebellion some Scots had tried, and failed, to fulfill these provincial goals. Their efforts anticipated later imperial policies as the Seven Years War breathed new life into these objectives. Soldiering in the north during the war's early years exposed Scottish soldiers to a largely uncultivated landscape ripe for settlement at the war's end.

Provincial dreams converged with imperial officials' plans for post-war America. Britain's triumph over the French enlarged its American empire, presenting imperial planners with the twin challenges of controlling the colonial population's territorial expansion and finding ways of rewarding British soldiers, sailors and officers for their service in the war. Their solution was embodied in the policy discussions that culminated in the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763. Forbidding settlement beyond the Appalachian and Allegheny Mountains, the Proclamation was designed to ensure that American settlers did not stray too far out of the imperial government's reach. More important, it provided for land grants in the colonies to British soldiers and sailors who had served in the war's North American theater. Many Scottish

servicemen who had been stationed in New York's borderlands or fought in the region took advantage of those land grants and choose to put down roots in that colony.

The British government enabled Scottish emigration during and after the French and Indian War. Recruiting Scots into the army and providing them with access to colonial land after the war transformed the New York backcountry into a locus of Scottish settlement. These developments raised fundamental questions about whether or not Scotland's contribution to the war effort and subsequent role in populating New York with military emigrants was in its or the empire's best interest.

### **The Necessities of War and the Scottish Highlands**

The Seven Years War was a catalyst for bringing Scottish Highlanders more completely into the British state and empire in the years after the Jacobite Rebellion. Britain's need for men to fight the French brought thousands of Scots, particularly Highlanders, to the colonies beginning in 1756. The war between Britain and France had begun two years earlier in western Pennsylvania when a Virginia provincial regiment under the young George Washington's command skirmished with French forces over conflicting imperial land claims. Out of that brief encounter came a war that soon pitted the two rival powers and their respective allies against each other in theaters across the globe.

Recruiting Scottish men into the British army and then deploying them to North America were not forgone conclusions. Washington's encounter with the French in the Pennsylvania backcountry occurred only eight years after British forces crushed the last Jacobite uprising in Scotland. Part of the Highlands rose in rebellion in 1745 and 1746 against George II and the

Hanoverian line in hopes of placing “The Young Pretender,” Charles Edward Stuart, on the British throne. The revolt ended at the Battle of Culloden Moor in 1746 when British forces under the command of the William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland and the king’s son, defeated the Jacobite army.

The 1745 uprising marked the latest in a string of attempted Scottish rebellions dating back thirty years. The British government was determined that it would be the last. In the uprising’s wake, the government enacted a series of punitive measures designed to destroy the clan system along with Highland culture and identity.

In the government’s view, preventing future rebellions demanded breaking the bonds that attached Highlanders to their clan chiefs and reorienting the loyalty of both the common people and rebellious lairds to the British monarch. Parliament passed acts confiscating rebel and annexed them to the Crown, forbidding Highlanders from donning their traditional tartan-plaid dress, stripping chiefs of heritable judicial powers that they held over their clans, and strengthening existing legislation preventing Highlanders from carrying weapons without permission. These initiatives were designed to “civilize” a “savage” people by integrating them forcefully into the British nation, enabling the King to co-opt former rebels through means of patronage and mercy, and achieve a lasting peace between the two partners of the British union.<sup>4</sup>

Quelling future uprisings also meant executing some of the rebels while banishing other disloyal Scots to the American colonies. Around 1747, many of the tenants on Lord Lovat’s lands of Coigach “were transported to America.” They joined over six hundred Scots bound out as servants and put aboard ships for the colonies.<sup>5</sup> Others, like Dr. Hugh Mercer, went into self-

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<sup>4</sup> Christopher Duffy, *The '45* (London: Cassell, 2003), 527-548.

<sup>5</sup> Captain John Forbes to the Commissioners of the Forfeited and Annexed Estates, 28 July 1757, A.H. Millar, ed., *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estates Papers 1715; 1745* (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A.

exile. The Aberdeen native was an assistant surgeon in the Young Pretender's army. He fought at Culloden, but managed to evade British authorities after the battle. Mercer made his way south, slinking away to the port of Leith near Edinburgh where he took passage to Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup>

The outbreak of war with France in North America served several important purposes for Scots and the British government. For the government, recruiting Scots into the army became part of the ministry's strategy for realigning their interests with the British state. It also had the added effect of removing people who might still entertain notions of once again rallying to the Stuart standard. In the historian Stephen Brumwell's estimation, the French and Indian War and the concurrent "large-scale deployment of British regular troops in North America was crucial for the rehabilitation of Scotland's former Jacobites." We must be careful not to over-generalize the relationship between former rebels and the British Army during this period, but many Scots who served in America during the war had indeed fought for the Stuart cause.<sup>7</sup>

When the war began the government initially sought to deploy British regiments stationed in Ireland to the colonies and supplement them with several battalions of Swiss and German Protestants. Lieutenant-General Edward Braddock's disastrous mid-1755 defeat at Fort Duquesne in Pennsylvania and the outbreak of war in Europe forced the government to reconsider its position. In need of more manpower in the face of a widening conflict, the government encouraged Scottish recruitment in the Highlands by permitting clan chiefs to raise regiments amongst their people. In addition, they allowed Highland officers and soldiers to wear

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Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1909), 79; Geoffrey Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 50-51.

<sup>6</sup> John T. Goolrick, *The Life of General Hugh Mercer* (New York & Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1906), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Brumwell, "The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83" in Edward M. Spiers, Jeremy A. Crang and Matthew J. Strickland, eds., *A Military History of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 386. For an important examination of the Jacobite Rebellion within the imperial context see Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery*, esp. Chapter 6.

their traditional tartan dress. The government wanted to exploit Highlanders' supposed martial savagery in service of the imperial state, and in doing so bind them closer to king and country.<sup>8</sup>

The idea of using Highlanders in key roles in the British army was not new and it was based on the perception that Scotsmen possessed a martial savagery that made them ideal soldiers. In 1745, Lt. Col. George Ogilvie proposed deploying Highlanders as irregular troops. He reasoned that their growing up in the mountains produced a “hardiness, in which no Nation exceeds them in enduring Cold and Hunger,” and that their ability to “travell over very Rugged and Steep Mountains” lightly armed with broadswords and pistols made them ideal soldiers for irregular warfare. They could move with speed in ways that a column of regular soldiers could not, surprising enemies in mountain passes and bearing harsh weather stoically before unleashing hell upon opposing forces.<sup>9</sup> The challenge was harnessing what one anonymous author called “the general Savage Charracter of the People” whose “Ancient Custom” included “the Murdering of People of all Sexes and Ages.”<sup>10</sup> In his tour of the Western Islands with James Boswell in 1773, Dr. Samuel Johnson—often a harsh critic of Scottish culture—similarly reaffirmed notions of the innate martial character that supposedly animated Highland life.<sup>11</sup>

In the years after Seven Years War the Highland soldier's martial ardor was celebrated. William Pitt, who as Secretary of State for the Southern Department oversaw much of the war effort, boasted that “in the mountains of the North” he had found a “hardy and intrepid race of

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<sup>8</sup> Andrew MacKillop, *“More Fruitful than the Soil”: Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (London: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 46-47.

<sup>9</sup> Lt. Col. George Ogilvie, *A Method proposed by which a Regimt or any other Number of Scotts Highlanders may be made more usefull than any other Body of Irregular Troops is at present; and capable of Engaging with Advantage any Troops whatsoever, either Horse, Foot, or Dragoons* (1745) RCIN 1047091, Royal Library, Windsor Castle, England, United Kingdom. I am grateful to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for her kind permission to quote materials from the Royal Library and Royal Archives.

<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *Some Remarks on the Highland Clans and Methods proposed for civilizing them by.....* (1752) RCIN 1047090, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland with The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with an Introduction by Allan Massie* (New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), passim.

men” that served with “fidelity” and “fought with valour” against the French in America.<sup>12</sup> That fidelity was not evident to some government officials or to George II in 1757 when the army began to augment existing regiments with new Highland companies and battalions. Although they recognized the military necessity of recruiting Highlanders, both the Duke of Cumberland and William Barrington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Barrington, then serving as Secretary at War, did not want these new forces within Britain any longer than necessary. Understandably, they approached the remilitarization of the region with abundant caution. Ten years after the former man had led British forces to victory over the Jacobites at Culloden, both agreed that Highland units should be sent to North America expeditiously. They should not “remain in the Country, on any pretence.”<sup>13</sup> Moving Highland soldiers to America, and quickly, ensured that the government could put an ocean between it and men whose loyalties still remained suspect.

Ironically, recruitment was predicated on the government’s outdated view of Highland clan structure. Although economic interests had begun altering the nature of clanship long before the war, and notwithstanding the government’s punitive assault on Highland culture in the post-Culloden period, the government persisted in believing that traditional Highland authority remained largely intact by the 1750s. This helps to explain, as the historian Andrew MacKillop has argued, why the government permitted recruitment through clan chiefs. The government envisioned chiefs as the most expeditious means of bringing men into the army.<sup>14</sup>

Successful recruitment of new battalions and regiments lent credibility to the government’s understanding of Highland clanship. Archibald Campbell, 3rd Duke of Argyll, was

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<sup>12</sup> Speech of William Pitt, 14 January 1766, in *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to The Year 1803. From Which Last-Mentioned Epoch It Is Continued Downwards in The Work Entitled, “The Parliamentary Debates.” A.D. 1767-1771* (T.C. Hansard, 1813), 16:98.

<sup>13</sup> Lord Barrington to the Duke of Cumberland, 8 July 1757 in Stanley Paragellis, ed., *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), 381; Barrington to Cumberland, 16 August 1757, “(in the Country),” *Ibid.*, 395.

<sup>14</sup> MacKillop, “*More Fruitful than the Soil*,” 58-59.

instrumental in promoting this view. A dominant figure in mid-eighteenth century Scottish politics, Argyll pushed for the recruitment of Highlanders and assumed overall control of the general process in Scotland. Like many Scots of all classes, Argyll viewed the war and the army as a means of advancing his own political and economic interests. His effective recruiting perpetuated older notions of clan authority and enhanced his political standing in Britain; meanwhile, it solidified his own power in Scotland through patronage. Argyll and his advisors appointed many of the officers, including Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat and Archibald Montgomery, later the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton and chief of Clan Montgomery, who commanded the initial Highland battalions. Argyll's secretary, Andrew Fletcher, wrote in the spring of 1757 that the "extraordinary success with which the two Highland corps have been recruited gives great satisfaction to all concerned, some of the John Bulls cannot believe that such a large body of men could be raised in so short a space." The speed with which the latter two men raised over 2,000 recruits from their respective clans confirmed for the government that clanship bonds remained nearly intact in the Highlands.<sup>15</sup>

For aristocrats like Fraser, whose father, Simon, Lord Lovat, lost his head for his role in the 1745 uprising, raising a regiment and serving in the war was a means of demonstrating his family's loyalty and regaining confiscated property. The younger Fraser had commanded a battalion of his Jacobite kinsmen on the march toward Culloden in 1746, but the rebellion's decisive battle was over before they arrived. He was attainted for treason along with his father. The British government divorced Lord Lovat's head from his body, and kept his son confined to prison. Later pardoned, in January 1757 Fraser was commissioned as Lt. Colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Highland Battalion (later re-designated as the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot) at Argyle's behest. He

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<sup>15</sup> For Argyll's management of the recruitment process see MacKillop, *"More Fruitful than the Soil,"* 47-59. The quote from Andrew Fletcher is in *Ibid.*, 59.

raised over 1,500 men, many of them tenants living on his father's former lands. He later cited this service as evidence of his fealty when successfully he petitioned George III for the restoration of his family's lands.<sup>16</sup>

Scottish soldiers who followed Fraser and other commanders into battle enlisted out of a combination of clan loyalties, coercion, and self-interest. Fraser secured promises that the men he raised would receive access to good land upon returning home.<sup>17</sup> There was also the chance that serving in North America would open up new opportunities for them as well. A few hundred individuals and families from the Highlands had settled in New York and North Carolina before the last Jacobite uprising, demonstrating the possibilities soldiers could have when the war was over.<sup>18</sup> And Scots who preceded them in the colonies offered useful examples of success, or at least the promise of it. While in London on business, John Dalrymple reported to his cousin, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Loudon, that he wished to transfer his "family, & fifteen slaves, cattle Horses, Sheep & every thing else thats fit for a Plantation" from North Carolina where he had settled thirteen years earlier to the new colony of Nova Scotia. Once there he intended to recruit white servants for the colony.<sup>19</sup> James Murray, who settled in North Carolina in the same period as Dalrymple, promoted it as an idyllic place to prosper.<sup>20</sup> Lachlin Campbell of Argyllshire made similar claims for New York.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Stuart Reid, 'Fraser, Simon, master of Lovat (1726–1782)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Simon Fraser of Lovat to the Duke of Newcastle and to Lord Albemarle, both dated 20 March 1749, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/40 f.21, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Hereafter "TNA." "Memorial to the King by Major General Simon Fraser, for the Restoration of the Estate of Lovat to him," 9 December 1773 in A.H. Millar, ed., *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estates Papers 1715;1745*, 102-105.

<sup>17</sup> MacKillop, "More Fruitful than the Soil," 86-87.

<sup>18</sup> See below.

<sup>19</sup> John Dalrymple to Hugh Campbell, 3rd Earl of Loudon, 25 March 1749 in Allan I. Macinnes, Marjory-Ann D. Harper & Linda G. Fryer, *Scotland and the Americas, c. 1650-c. 1939: A Documentary Source Book* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society by Lothian Print Ltd, 2002), 104.

<sup>20</sup> James Murray to John Murray, 10 January 1736/7 in Nina Moore Tiffany and Susan I. Lesley, eds., *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist* (Boston, 1901), 36.

<sup>21</sup> See below as well as Chapters 2 and 3.

Scots served in North America in disproportionate numbers. While only amounting to about 12% of Britain's population between 1756 and 1783, in 1757 alone Scots accounted for over one-quarter of the rank and file, and nearly one-third of the officers deployed to the American mainland. Of the seventeen British units operating on the continent in 1757, Highlanders comprised 100% of the officers and men in the 1<sup>st</sup> Highlander Battalion and the 42<sup>nd</sup> (Black Watch) Regiment, while Scots in general formed 41% of the 1<sup>st</sup> (Royal) Regiment and 56% of the 55<sup>th</sup> (Westmoreland) Regiment. By the next year Highlanders alone accounted for 4,200 men out of the 24,000 British army troops in America.<sup>22</sup>

### **Securing the Northern Colonial Borderlands in the Eighteenth Century**

The imperial state's need for military manpower in North America bound the Scottish Highlands and northern colonial borderlands together in unexpected ways. The large-scale deployment of the British army in general, of which Highlanders were a critical part, accelerated a long standing provincial goal of peopling the colony's northern reaches for defensive purposes. New York officials long feared that a sparsely settled frontier exposed the lower reaches of the colony to the French in Canada. The most significant attempt to address this problem prior to the Seven Years War had also involved Highlanders. It was suggestive of a strategy that would later become part of Britain's military policy during and after the war. It ended in failure.

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<sup>22</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Highlander Battalion was eventually redesigned as the 77<sup>th</sup> (Montgomery's Highlanders) Regiment of Foot under the command of Lt. Colonel Archibald Montgomery. For a statistical analysis of the composition of the British Army in America see "Table 5: Ethnic composition of rank and file and non-commissioned officers of British Army units in North America, summer 1757" in Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Appendix, pg. 318. On the 2,400 Highlanders see Ibid., 266. See also Brumwell, "The Scottish Military Experience in North America, 1756-83" in Spiers, Crang, and Strickland, eds., *A Military History of Scotland*, 389-390.

In the 1730s, Governor William Crosby and his successor, Lieutenant Governor George Clarke, pursued the creation of a strategic buffer zone to shield the more settled parts of the colony from French threats and protect the colonists' access to the lucrative beaver skin trade with Native peoples. They proposed recruiting European Protestants to settle on a 100,000-acre tract that had been purchased from the Iroquois in the area running from Saratoga north to Fort Ann on the eastern side of Lake George. "When the Mohocks Country is settled," Clarke told the Duke of Newcastle, "we shall have nothing to fear from Canada."<sup>23</sup> The provincial government offered 100,000 acres gratis to the first five hundred families at 200 acres per family.<sup>24</sup> Clarke believed these initial settlers "will draw thousands after them" once word spread about the quality and quantity of the land.<sup>25</sup>

Cosby and Clarke's generosity attracted the attention of Scots in Argyllshire in western Scotland who wanted alternatives to a deteriorating situation at home. Among them was Lachlin Campbell. He held the farm of Leorin in the parish of Kildalton on the Isle of Islay. The island was the property of Laird Daniel Campbell of Shawfield. As a tacksman to Campbell of Shawfield on Islay, Lachlin Campbell occupied the middle rung of the Highlands' landed hierarchy. Tacksmen, who were often relatives of their superior, leased larger parcels of land from the proprietor and in turn subdivided it out to common tenants. Campbell of Shawfield had gained control of Islay in the 1720s by holding a financially advantageous wadset. A wadset was

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<sup>23</sup> George Clarke to the Duke of Newcastle, 26 July 1736, E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1855), 6:72. Hereafter "DCHSNY." For Clarke's concerns about the French see Clarke to Newcastle, 26 July 1736, 6:72; Clarke to the Duke of Newcastle, 15 June 1739, 6:145; Clarke to the Lords of Trade, 15 June 1739, 6:145-146; Commissioners of Indian Affairs to Clarke, 7 June 1739, 6:146, all in Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> The provincial government's proposal is listed as "Appendix No.1" in *The Case of Lieutenant Donald Campbell, and the other Children of the deceased Capt. Lachlin Campbell, of the Province of New York* (London, 1767), 11-13.

<sup>25</sup> Clarke to the Duke of Newcastle, 26 July 1736, DCHSNY, 6:72.

a type of mortgage annuity in which an individual paid a proprietor a lump sum of money for control of a particular tract of land. In return, the holder of the wadset lived rent free and received interest payments from the proprietor. Campbell of Shawfield's wadset with Sir John Campbell of Cawdor was for £6,000 and it gave him control of parts of Islay and Jura. For a further £6,000 he gained the right to control the wadsets of Cawdor's tacksman. Having done so he began reorganizing wadsets and tacks so that subtenants paid rent directly to him. He also began increasing rents. This cut out the middlemen like Lachlin Campbell whose own rent increased by 30% after Campbell of Shawfield's ascendancy. This was in addition to bad harvests and falling cattle prices complicating life for people in the Western Isles.<sup>26</sup>

Lachlin Campbell saw in the New York proposal a means of restoring part of the social hierarchy then under attack in Islay. What was more, he envisioned the 100,000-acre tract as a way of transcending the hierarchical limitations that he faced in Scotland. He wanted to become much more than a simple tacksman. In his view, assuming the responsibility of effecting the emigration of Scots from Argyllshire to a colonial tract of that size would vault him into the upper echelons of the provincial landed elite. He struck an initial deal with the provincial government that authorized him to recruit 100 families. Lt. Governor Clarke, quite sensibly, would grant the land only after the settlers had arrived. Campbell wanted to control the entire 100,000-acre tract; between 1737 and 1740, he recruited nearly 430 Scots from Islay, believing that the number of additional settlers would convince the government to pass the extensive grant into his hands. The settlers arrived eager for land, but without the funds for surveying expenses and other fees required before they could receive their individual allotments. Campbell's first

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<sup>26</sup> Freda Ramsay, ed., *The Day book of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield 1767: with relevant papers concerning the estate of Islay* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991), 2; "Rental 1733" in *Ibid.*, 10.

recruits, joined by later arrivals, languished in the city of New York, unable to take possession of the land Campbell had promised them.<sup>27</sup>

The relationship between Campbell and New York officials deteriorated. The Scot continually pressed for the entire 100,000-acre tract. Clarke and the provincial council claimed it was never their intention to allow one person to control that much land. Campbell hurt his own cause by deceiving the colonial government. In one grant application, he included the names of colonists he had not recruited, and who already lived in the colony at the time of his arrival. Making matters worse, the council further denied Campbell's petition for 30,000 acres that Clarke had promised him in 1738 as an incentive for his recruiting activities. Cadwallader Colden, then the colony's surveyor-general, later wrote that Campbell's recruits had grown impatient and developed an "Aversion" toward him, making his ability to settle even the 30,000 acres unlikely. Ironically he became an object of scorn by seeking to rebuild in New York the world from which he and his followers had fled. Dejected, Campbell purchased a small farm seventy miles north of the city. He died there a broken man in 1747, shortly after returning from Scotland where he had fought for the Crown against the Jacobite rebels.<sup>28</sup> The people he had recruited were disappointed as well. Nearly twenty years passed after Campbell's death before the provincial government granted them land.<sup>29</sup>

Campbell's mortal end did not mean the death of a broader effort to secure the northern borderlands through colonization. If Cosby and Clarke's original goal was to strengthen the colony's northern fringes in anticipation of a future conflict with the French, the outbreak of an

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<sup>27</sup> *The Case of Lieutenant Donald Campbell*, 3; "A Copy of a rough Draft in Mr Hormandens hand Writting of a Report of Comittee on Lachlan Campbell's Petition, 22 April 1741," in Cadwallader Colden, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York: Reprint of the 1919 edition by AMS Press Inc., 1973), 2:219, hereafter "LPCC"; "Memorial of Lieutenant Donald Campbell of the Province of New York to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trade & Plantations, ("a large body") May 1764," *DCHSNY* (1865), 7:630.

<sup>28</sup> "A Copy of a rough Draft in Mr Hormandens hand Writting of a Report of Comittee on Lachlan Campbell's Petition, 22 April 1741," LPCC, 2:219; Colden to William Smith, Jr., 15 January 1759, ("Aversion"), LPCC, 5:284.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 2 for this event and its importance for promotional efforts in the 1760s.

actual war in the years after Campbell's death made colonization of the northern frontier an urgent priority for British military strategists.

### *Settlement as Military Strategy*

In the midst of the Seven Years War the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America saw colonization as a stabilizing mechanism for a war-torn region. General Sir Jeffrey Amherst also wanted secure supply lines for armies traversing the northern wilderness. Soon after Fort Niagara and Quebec fell to the British in the early fall of 1759, a group of New England officers approached him “desiring to settle, by way of Township,” along a newly constructed road linking Fort No. 4 in Charlestown, New Hampshire with the installation at Crown Point, New York. Similarly, Major Philip Skene, a London-born Scot of the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment who commanded the fort at Crown Point, asked Amherst for “a patent for a tract of land between South bay, East bay, & the garrison land of Fort Edward.” Amherst supported other settlements near Forts Niagara and Stanwix, and in the region between the Mohawk River and Wood Creak as well. He encouraged the British government to grant these and other requests in the interest of provisioning the troops and jump-starting the kind of strategic settlement New York officials sought twenty years earlier.<sup>30</sup> New settlements would act as a defensive barrier against renewed French threats and consolidate British sovereignty over the region. These were also the initiatives that left some of Britain's Iroquois allies fearful of future white expansion into their homelands.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Jeffrey Amherst to William Pitt, 16 December 1759, in Gertrude Selwyn Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt when Secretary of State with Colonial Governors and Military and Naval Commissioners in America* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1906), 2:222-223.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 473-474.

On another level the New England officers' and Skene's proposals reflected the intimate and brutal fact that the years spent soldiering in the northern borderlands functioned as a real estate viewing for British and provincial servicemen. This was especially true for the Highlanders sent in arms to North America. Carrying muskets and wielding broadswords, Highlanders did the kind of hard fighting that Lt. Col. Ogilvie imagined was well suited to them. They forged their reputation in victory and defeat. For much of the period between 1756 and 1760, the Highlanders deployed to the colonies lived, fought, and died in the area from Albany north to the Plains of Abraham in Quebec.

### *Highland Soldiering in the Northern Borderlands*

In June of 1756, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment arrived in the city of New York before heading for Albany.<sup>32</sup> There, under the immediate command of Lt. Colonel Francis Grant, they spent the ensuing months in and around that town doing little but drilling for combat in the North American forests. After the French launched a failed attack on Fort William Henry at the southern end of Lake George in March of 1757, Amherst's predecessor, John Campbell, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Loudoun, set the 42<sup>nd</sup> "in Motion from Schenectady" to Fort Edward, fourteen miles south of the assaulted installation, and then marched westward toward Mohawk River in hopes of countering French advances in the area known as the German Flatts.<sup>33</sup> Later sent to Halifax in anticipation of an ultimately aborted strike against Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island beginning

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<sup>32</sup> *The New-York Mercury*, 21 June 1756. For the 42nd Regiment's experiences in the early years of the war, and especially at Ticonderoga, see Frederick B. Richards, "The Black Watch at Ticonderoga," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (New York: The New York State Historical Association, 1911), 10:367-464.

<sup>33</sup> Loudoun to Pitt, 25 April 1757, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, (1906), 1:38-39; "Copy of a Letter from Albany, dated March 30, 1757," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 14 April 1757.

in mid-1757, the 42<sup>nd</sup> returned to New York at the end of August — too late to prevent a successful second French assault on Fort William Henry.

While the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment wintered in Albany, the forces commanded by Lt. Colonel Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat, spent the season in Connecticut. The 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment had arrived in North America earlier in the summer of 1757. In the following spring they participated in a renewed campaign against Louisbourg that ended in British victory. The French fortress on Cape Breton Island succumbed to a British siege at nearly the same moment that many of Highlanders of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment were slain about the walls of Fort Ticonderoga. In early July 1758 the British mounted an assault on what the French called “Fort Carillon” at the south end of Lake Champlain. It left 500 of the 1,100 officers and men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment dead, wounded, or missing after a prolonged three-hour assault on the enemy works.<sup>34</sup> Their tenacity impressed the French commander: General the Marquis de Montcalm reported that his men were able to hold the fort even though “several [Highlanders] were killed within fifteen paces of our abbatis.”<sup>35</sup> *The New-York Gazette* offered a sobering assessment, portraying the Highlanders’ efforts as heroic, although ultimately futile. “No regiment suffer’d so much as the Highlanders,” the editors lamented. Thrice the men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment managed to reach the French lines, only to be “cut down as often as they enter’d” owing to a lack of reinforcements from the rest of the army.<sup>36</sup>

In the wake of the British defeat at Fort Ticonderoga, Fraser’s 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment was redeployed from Boston to Albany to reinforce the northern borderlands. That assignment acquainted Fraser’s men with land the men of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment had come to know well. Encamped near Fort Stanwix, then still under construction and intended to guard the waterways

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<sup>34</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 267.

<sup>35</sup> “M. De Montcalm’s Report of the Battle of Ticonderoga” in E.B. O’Callaghan, ed., *DCHSNY* (1858), 10:740.

<sup>36</sup> *The New-York Gazette: or, The Weekly Post-Boy*, 24 July 1758.

connecting Lake Ontario with the Mohawk River and ultimately the Hudson River, an officer in Fraser's regiment marveled at the landscape. "The Lands on this River far exceed any I ever saw," he wrote to a friend in Glasgow, "in particular the German Flatts, now quite depopulated" after a recent French attack.<sup>37</sup>

A soldier in Lt. Colonel Archibald Montgomery's 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment agreed with Fraser's officer. As Fraser's men took up their position in New York, the Highlanders in Montgomery's 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment were headed to the Forks of the Ohio River as part of General John Forbes's expedition against Fort Duquesne. Major James Grant of Ballindalloch, whose family's ancestral castle lay along the River Spey in Banffshire, led a failed probing attack on the French fort that resulted in his capture in September of 1758. Forbes's main force eventually took a by now abandoned fort, which the French garrison had evacuated and burnt after their Indian allies signed a treaty with the British. Two years later, while part of Montgomery's forces battled the Cherokee in the southern colonies, a soldier in one of the companies left in New York wrote home that the province was "a good Country to live in the Country people are all free holders" and those few people that did pay rent paid small amounts. "I recommend to you," he wrote to the minister of Alness, a parish north of Inverness along the Cromarty Firth, "to Come to this Country" and settle here. These observations were suggestive of the thinking behind Lachlin Campbell's failed initiative twenty years earlier. Land in New York, and by implication in the other American colonies, provided the means of upending Scotland's traditional landed hierarchy. Men with a little money could become small freeholders in their own right.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "Extract of a Letter from an Officer in Colonel Fraser's Regiment, dated at the Camp by Fort Stanwix to his Friend in Glasgow, Nov. 8, 1758," *Caledonian Mercury*, 15 February 1759.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth McLeod to James Fraser, 23 April 1760, quoted in Alexander Murdoch, *Scotland and America, c. 1600 – c. 1800* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 52. Murdoch's analysis of this document has led him to conclude that at least part of the letter may have been written by McLeod's immediate commanding officer, Captain Robertson. McLeod may have dictated the letter, with Robertson adding a few lines of his own, but concludes that the problem of authorship does not alter the letter's message or intent.

All three Highland regiments joined General James Wolfe's forces in the decisive battle of the war's North American campaign. Wolfe, who as a younger man participated in the suppression of the Jacobites in the mid-1740s, employed the "very usefull serviceable soldiers" of Fraser's 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment against French positions during the siege of Quebec in September 1759.<sup>39</sup> One English officer marveled at Highlanders' ferocity during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the final engagement of the siege. "When [they] took to their broad swords, my God! What a havock they made!," James Calcraft wrote; "They drove every thing before them, and walls could not resist their fury."<sup>40</sup> Fraser's men sustained the highest number of casualties among British units in the battle. Eighteen died for King and Country on those windswept plains, with another 148 men wounded.<sup>41</sup> Such reports burnished the martial Highlander's martial imagine, justifying Pitt's later observation that they "conquered for [the British] in every part of the world."<sup>42</sup>

By the time that Pitt uttered those words before Parliament in 1766, the men he celebrated were taking advantage of the British conquest by settling lands in North America. While the data is incomplete, recent estimates from the period between 1756 and 1763 suggest that of the approximately 3,340 Highlanders sent to North America from the Western Isles, and those as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, roughly 87% remained in the colonies after the war.<sup>43</sup> They did so using post-war imperial policies designed to address the challenges of incorporationing expansive new territory into Britain's existing American empire. Out of those

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<sup>39</sup> James Wolfe to Lord George Sackville, 12 May 1758, ("serviceable"), in A. Doughty, ed., *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham* (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 6:74.

<sup>40</sup> Letter of Captain James Calcraft, 20 September 1759, in *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 267.

<sup>42</sup> Speech of William Pitt, 14 January 1766, in *The Parliamentary History of England*, 16:98.

<sup>43</sup> Table 4.3, Selected Demobilization Rates of American Service Troops, 1756-1783 in Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 141, building off of MacKillop, "More Fruitful," Appendix 5: Recruitment and Demobilisation Rates, West-Highland Seaboard, 1756-63.

discussions emerged a set of doctrines for British America's future in which Scottish soldiers played an important role. The war had enabled significant Scottish movement to the colonies through the military; the imperial policies that followed its aftermath allowed them to remain in the New World.

### **Peopling Post-War America**

Great Britain's victory over France in the Seven Years War presented imperial officials with a number of challenges as they surveyed the North American landscape in the early 1760s. The war proved enormously expensive, and territorial acquisitions altered the map of British America. France surrendered Canada and a number of Caribbean islands while Spain ceded Florida to the British. These acquisitions left Britain in control of the entire eastern seaboard of North America as well as enhanced dominance in the West Indies. These new colonies needed to be reconstituted and peopled as British places.<sup>44</sup> An enlarged British America could be a great boon to British subjects on both sides of the Atlantic if carefully managed. Bringing more land under cultivation and increasing trade between the colonies and the mother country stood to benefit all British peoples. That required thoughtful consideration about how to manage the growth and geographic distribution of the colonial population.

Security considerations also factored into the post-war territorial equation. This was still true in the northern colonies like New York. Although defeated, the French Canadian population in Quebec remained a potentially subversive element for their new rulers despite British concessions to French religions and legal culture in place. New York shared a long northern border with the vanquished Canadian province and Lake Ontario, while Lake Erie offered an

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<sup>44</sup> Britain's national debt doubled during the war to nearly £146,000,000. See Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 562.

access point for hostile French and Native peoples into the colony's western fringes. In the west, France's defeat destroyed the balance of power between white European settlers and Native peoples. Since the seventeenth-century Algonquin-speaking Indian nations in the Great Lakes region and the Six Nations Iroquois in western New York maintained delicate alliances with their respective French and British neighbors. Indian peoples often played the two European powers off one another in extracting trade goods or in pursuit of larger strategic goals.<sup>45</sup> With the French gone British officials saw less need for treating with Indian peoples on generous terms. Iroquois leaders experienced a preview of the post-war world in 1759 when General Sir Jeffrey Amherst dismissed their concerns that his plan to establish settlements in northern New York foretold an eventual push into their territory.<sup>46</sup>

Some native leaders such as the Ottawa chief Pontiac resented British officials' newly brusque demeanor and justly feared white encroachment on Indian lands. In the spring of 1763, Pontiac led a confederacy of Native peoples against British colonists and military installations. British forces managed to quell the main Indian resistance that summer at the Battle of Bushy Run in western Pennsylvania. Swiss-born Colonel Henry Bouquet led an army that included members of the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 77<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiments in turning back the Indian attacks. Despite this victory, it took another two years to bring hostilities to a close. Pontiac's campaign against the

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<sup>45</sup> For a general overview of European-Native American relations in the Great Lakes region see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a recent critique and modification of White's thesis see Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006). For a military history of Pontiac's Rebellion, including conflicts between white settlers prior to the Seven Years' War, as well as Britain's tense relationship with its Native allies during and after the war, see David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005). For a view of the conflict from the Native perspective, particularly its religious dimensions see Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 473-474.

British encouraged officials in the imperial capital to craft a plan that ensured peace between white settlers and Native peoples in the post-war world.

Territorial acquisition, the possibility of a continued French threat, and white-Indian violence in the backcountry presented British imperial officials with a complex set of issues. There was also the question of how to reward British soldiers and sailors for their service in North America in ways that would address these challenges. British officials needed to find ways of encouraging the settlement of the new provinces of Canada and Florida, dissuade colonists in the older colonies from moving too far west and thus out of regular contact with colonial (and by extension, imperial) governments and the British Atlantic economy, and reduce hostilities between white settlers and Native American nations.

What British leaders sought was a set of policies to guide the future colonization of North America. They had begun thinking about these questions soon after the fall of New France. In 1761, a number of Protestant German families enduring hardships in the war's European theater petitioned George III for land in "any of His Majesty's [American] Dominions after the conclusion of a Peace."<sup>47</sup> Lord Bute, the Prime Minister, referred the petition to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations (Board of Trade) for their official advice. The Board recommended that the King deny the families' request. Their position reflected the ways in which the government struggled to balance Britain's imperial interests in America as it engaged in post-war planning. However proper it might be "to encourage the Increase of People in the Colonies, considered as an abstract principle of Policy," the real state of the colonies rendered such a proposal "unnecessary & inexpedient." The commissioners argued that there was hardly any room in some of the colonies for more settlers. In those that had space, imported colonists

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<sup>47</sup> Earl of Bute to the Lords of Trade, 7 October 1761, State Papers: Secretaries of State: Entry Books, SP 44/139/87, TNA.

would likely extend “Our settlements beyond what good Policy, in Reference to the Interests of This Country, & Our safety with Respect to our Indian neighbours will justify.”<sup>48</sup> They suggested that this discussion would be more appropriate after hostilities ceased and it was clearer which territories France and her allies would cede to Britain.

The Board of Trade pointedly wrote in its report to Prime Minister Bute that British subjects should be the first to reap the fruits of victory at the war’s end. In particular, the government ought to favor “our own reduced Soldiers & Seamen,” meaning demobilized or disbanded servicemen, who had fought in America. Those who won George III an expanded American empire were the most worthy objects of the King’s paternal affection. More importantly, they would be “far more proper Colonists, on British Ground, than Foreigners,” who did not speak English nor understood the “Laws & Constitution” of the British Empire.<sup>49</sup>

The Board of Trade’s 1761 report embodied British assumptions that linked effective population management with colonial stability, imperial control, and political economy. Ten years earlier, Benjamin Franklin had argued that colonial population increases necessitated the development of local manufacturing capabilities to meet growing consumer needs. In his view this was sound political economic policy, one British producers need not fear. Britain’s manufacturers, he reasoned, would not be able to meet all of a larger colonial population’s needs. Far better to let colonists produce what the British could not readily supply. Everyone stood to benefit. The colonists would make some manufactured items locally, Franklin argued, but he asked imperial officials to think about how a growing population meant more opportunities for

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<sup>48</sup> The Lords of Trade to Earl of Bute, “Report on the Settlement of German Families in English Colonies,” 5 November 1761, Secretaries of State: State Papers: Entry Books, SP, 44/139/95, TNA.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. The King gave permission for “German Protestants” to settle in South Carolina in 1764. See Earl of Halifax to Mr. Nettleton, 12 September 1764, Secretaries of State: State Papers: Entry Books, SP, 44/138/270, TNA.

British merchants peddling their wares in North America. In turn how they could load their ships with more American commodities for the voyage home.<sup>50</sup>

Franklin was pushing back against a political economic framework in place since the Navigation Acts of the mid to late seventeenth century that forced American colonists into the role as the consumers of British-manufactured goods rather than as the producers of their own wares.<sup>51</sup> In principle the Board of Trade might agree with Franklin's basic premise that an increasing colonial population led to greater British transatlantic prosperity. The French and Indian War, however, altered imperial reality. Left unregulated, newly arrived settlers would swell the populations of the older colonies, encouraging movement beyond the reach of provincial and imperial governments, only to antagonize Native peoples. Sponsoring foreign settlers would only add to the problem by inserting people unfamiliar with British political culture. Distances from eastern markets would compel these far flung settlers to develop their own manufacturing processes. When the government encouraged future settlement, the Board was arguing, it should do so in ways that encouraged dependence on Britain and integrated colonists into the imperial economy.

The question of how Britain should control colonial population growth and geographic expansion while ensuring America's continued dependency on the mother country dominated the Board of Trade's attention in the months after the Treaty of Paris formally ended the war.<sup>52</sup> George III and his ministers wanted to incorporate the newly acquired territories in North America and the West Indies into the empire, bolster British America's internal defenses against

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<sup>50</sup> Franklin wrote his essay in 1751 and published it four years later. Benjamin Franklin, *Observations concerning the increase of mankind, people of countries, &c.* (New York, 1755).

<sup>51</sup> T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 67-88.

<sup>52</sup> "The definitive Treaty of Peace and Friendship between his Britannick Majesty, the Most Christian King, and the King of Spain. Concluded at Paris the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1763. To which the King of Portugal acceded on the same day," in Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds., *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 113-126. Here after "DRCHC."

European or Native powers, and promote a trading relationship between disparate Native peoples and the various colonies. The Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, charged the Board of Trade with examining the peace treaty and developing regulations that addressed these pressing concerns.<sup>53</sup>

In their long reply the Board of Trade's members identified population growth as a central thread that united Britain's major post-war imperial challenges with the problem of continued dependency. Before the war nothing was "more certain than that many of Your Majesty's ancient Colonies appeared to be overstock'd with Inhabitants." This was partly the result of an "extremely increasing Population" attributable to natural reproduction and emigration in some of the colonies like Georgia and Nova Scotia "whose Boundaries had become too narrow for their Numbers." In other words, there were too many colonists packed into increasingly small spaces.<sup>54</sup>

The Board of Trade attributed dense colonial populations to governors who had been far too "extravagant and injudicious" in granting lands. In the late 1750s and early 1760s British subjects could acquire American land in a number of different ways. Besides outright purchase individuals could petition colonial governors for head right grants, a system in place since the early days of the Jamestown settlement; through direct appeal to the King and the Privy Council for crown-controlled lands; bounties or rewards for military service; through colonial governors whom the monarch had empowered to allocate land in particular colonies; and eventually through a lottery system.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the imperial government would adopt these latter two options

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<sup>53</sup> Earl of Egremont to the Lords of Trade, 5 May 1763, Ibid., 127-130.

<sup>54</sup> Lords of Trade to George III, 8 June 1763, enclosed in Lords of Trade to Earl of Egremont, same date, Ibid., 137.

<sup>55</sup> For the head right grants in colonial Virginia, a system adopted in other colonies, see Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975). See chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation for examples of direct appeals to the King and Privy Council for land. In April 1764, George III empowered newly installed governor of East Florida James Grant of Ballindalloch to grant land in the new province, and only if they made an application to him in person. See James Grant of Ballindalloch to

to assume more control over land allocation. The Board of Trade believed that the governors' actions had created a "Monopoly of Lands in the Hands of Land Jobbers." This cartel shaped individual decisions inimical to the empire's collective interests. The concentration of land in the hands speculators contributed to a rise in land prices and forced some colonists to reject their preference for farming in favor of going "into Manufactures." It compelled others to emigrate over the Allegheny and Appalachian mountains where they antagonized Native peoples.<sup>56</sup> The persistence of these alleged monopolies and the colonial governors who encouraged them compromised the colonists' natural dependency on Great Britain. The Board of Trade argued that undermining these monopolistic forces would lead colonists to make more favorable choices.

One possible solution to the issue of crowded colonies and imperially adverse local choices lay in routing settlers from the older colonies into the new provinces in Florida and Canada. The Board of Trade put this query to Lt. Colonel Grant of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. In July 1763 the secretary to the Board of Trade, John Pownall, wrote to Grant asking him for his thoughts on settling post-war America. Grant was a seasoned officer with a Jacobite past. He joined the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment in 1739 on the recommendation of his uncle, Simon, Lord Lovat, whose head the British had struck from his shoulders as the price of treason.<sup>57</sup> He was second in command of that regiment in North America from 1756 to 1760, fighting with fellow Highlanders at Ticonderoga in 1758 where he suffered a wound, before serving in the West

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Colonel Robinson, Deputy Quarter Master General, 2 October 1764, Reel 1: Letter Book 1, August 31, 1764 to September 8, 1766, James Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Here after "LOC." The British government instituted a lottery system to allocate township grants on St. John's Island (Prince Edward Island). See Chapter 2 for this process.

<sup>56</sup> Lords of Trade to George III, 8 June 1763, Shortt and Doughty, eds., *DRCHC*, 137.

<sup>57</sup> Simon, Lord Lovat to Ludovick Grant, 6 March 1739 in William Fraser, ed., *The Chiefs of Grant, Vol. II. Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1883), 377; Lovat to Sir James Grant of Grant, 7 April 1739, *Ibid.*, 80-381.

Indies from 1761 to 1762.<sup>58</sup> He was also a kinsman of James Grant of Ballindalloch, the major who was captured at Fort Duquesne, and who would soon be made governor of East Florida.

Pownall informed Grant that the King and his ministers were interested in the most frugal and reasonable means of settling the new American colonies. They wanted “usefull industrious Inhabitants,” for these provinces, drawing settlers either from colonies that were “overstocked” or from foreign nations.<sup>59</sup> They wanted Grant’s advice on how this might be done, reflecting a desire not only to draw on his experiences serving in North America, but also as a means of gauging his suitability for a future administrative position. He was the King’s original choice for governor of East Florida.<sup>60</sup>

Grant directed his comments to the settlement of the Floridas in a manner that had implications for Scots in British America. The challenge for the government, he argued, was finding the right kind of people to settle in the new colonies. They should not be men and women tempted by meager subsistence or want of money, a sign of “Idleness” in his eyes that would persist in the New World. What they wanted were settlers with “a View to Industry and Improvement.” For the Floridas he suggested that French Protestants fit that bill because they longed “to live under a free Government, & enjoy the Exercise of their Religion,” something difficult for them to do in Catholic France. The government should help them get started by providing them with tools, provisions, slaves, clergy, and skilled workers brought in from New

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<sup>58</sup> For a concise biography of Grant see Edith Lady Haden-Guest, “GRANT, Francis (1717-81), of Dunphail, Elgin” in *History of Parliament in Sir Lewis Namier and J. Brooke, eds., “The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754-1790,” The History of Parliament Online.; Appendix A: Roll From An Old Paper In Possession Of The 7th Duke of Atholl. Officers Of The 42nd Highlanders, New York, May 22, 1757 in Richards, “The Black Watch at Ticonderoga,” *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 10:403.*

<sup>59</sup> John Pownall to Lt. Colonel Francis Grant, 22 July 1763, Reel 4: Correspondence 1763, James Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, LOC.

<sup>60</sup> Earl of Egremont to Viscount Barrington, 3 August 1763, TNA: State Papers: Secretary of State, Entry Books, SP 44/196 f. 41. Although Colonel Grant did not accept the post, James Grant of Ballindalloch became governor of the province in 1764. Another Scot mentioned in the Earl of Egremont’s letter, Commodore George Johnstone, would be named governor of West Florida.

York and Philadelphia, along with some troops for basic defense. He figured that it would cost £16,000 the first year, and an additional £8,000 for the next four years.<sup>61</sup>

Naming French Protestants as the ideal settlers for East Florida was an explicit rejection of both existing colonists and domestic British subjects. This would preclude Scots as well. Grant's recommendation exposed conflicting attitudes about the wisdom of additional emigration in post-war Scotland. There was some sense among Scots that their people had advanced the imperial interest in America at too high a cost to their own country. During the war some Scots complained that the needs of the military had deprived "this much depopulated country" of sufficient laborers, in turn driving up labor's price.<sup>62</sup> When peace arrived "after the depopulation of so bloody a war," argued another, it made little sense to provide soldiers with land in the colonies when "industrious hands" were needed at home.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, in a debate near the end of the war over the creation of a Scottish militia, some critics speculated that "in the present depopulated state of the country" the manpower needed for a defensive force "exceeds our strength to bear."<sup>64</sup> Another did not disagree with "the view of a country so much drained of its useful inhabitants." He instead lamented that the specter of Jacobitism still hung over Scotland, making his countrymen difficult to trust with Britain's internal defense and therefore an appropriate "hoard of recruits for foreign service."<sup>65</sup> In 1764, a committee of the Convention of the Royal Burghs of Scotland complained that the government's requirement for additional

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<sup>61</sup> Lt. Colonel Francis Grant to John Pownall, 30 July 1763, Reel 4-Correspondence 1763, Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, LOC.

<sup>62</sup> "To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury," *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 July 1762.

<sup>63</sup> "Philemporus," *Caledonian Mercury*, 12 March 1763.

<sup>64</sup> "Arguments relating to a Scots Militia," *The Scots Magazine* (February 1762), 74, citing the *Edinburgh Courant*, 8 February 1762.

<sup>65</sup> The *Edinburgh Courant* published this counter argument two days later and republished by same edition of the *The Scots Magazine* as above. Ibid, 75. For an investigation of the ways in which the memory of the Jacobite Rebellion complicated Scottish efforts to revive a militia during the Seven Years War, see Robert Harris, *Politics and the Nation: Britain in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 4.

recruits for a Scottish brigade stationed in Holland would make it difficult for the country to recover “the Loss it Sustain’d by the immense drain of Men during the late war.” Scotland, they believed, could ill afford men for its own defense, let alone for foreign service.<sup>66</sup>

These debates about Scotland’s population circulated when Grant offered his recommendations to the Board of Trade. His standing as a member of the Scottish landed gentry no doubt also shaped his thinking. Offering Scots as worthy settlers in this new scheme would put him at odds with domestic proprietors who relied on tenants producing income for their estates. Whatever the government decided, Grant believed that above all the King should grant no lands “but to People who are actually to reside in the Colony.” The last thing that the government should want is a class of absentee proprietors speculating in land. The government should incentivize long-term investments, not short-term speculation. Lands should be free of quit rents, a remnant of feudal English land-tenure law that functioned as an annual tax on land granted by the crown, for ten years as a means of encouraging new settlers.<sup>67</sup> Settlers could then invest their capital and energy into the cultivation of their new lands. Later, when the lands were well developed, the Crown could share in the bounty by imposing quit rents that reflected the land’s enhanced value.

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<sup>66</sup> Provost of Edinburgh Drummond to Lord [Earl of Sandwich?], 17 April 1764, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/549, TNA.

<sup>67</sup> Lt. Colonel Francis Grant to John Pownall, 30 July 1763, Reel 4-Correspondence 1763, Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, LOC.

### *The Proclamation of 1763's Military Land Grants*

British imperial planners digested the Board of Trade's earlier thoughts, Lt. Colonel Grant's ideas, and those of other officials as they drafted a comprehensive policy. In 1763, former Georgia governor Henry Ellis circulated some "Hints relative to the Division and Government of the conquered and newly acquired Countries in America" as framework for this discussion. He proposed a scheme that would force British settlers into the new Canadian and Floridian provinces. Ellis called for a "Line for a Western Boundary to our ancient provinces" beyond which British colonists would not be allowed to settle. As populations in the older colonies grew, he expected colonists would migrate to Canada or Florida where "they would be useful to their Mother Country" in developing and cultivating the land. Allowing colonists the liberty of "planting themselves in the Heart of America" placed them "out of reach of Government, and where, from the great Difficulty of procuring European Commodities, they would be compelled to commence Manufactures to the infinite prejudice of Britain" and the empire.

From this perspective there was no political economic middle ground like the one Benjamin Franklin had proposed. Once colonists in the backcountry slipped beyond British control and gained more autonomy, so the thinking went, they were likely to become competitors with little prospect of bringing them back into the fold. The suggested "Western Boundary" would ideally prevent that from happening and using new regiments to enforce that line would keep white settlers and Natives from killing each other. The colonist's gaze should remain fixed

toward the Atlantic, and the relationship between them and Native peoples should be one of prosperous trade and not violence.<sup>68</sup>

These ideas shaped the direction of imperial policy making in the spring and summer of 1763. The Earl of Egremont initially oversaw the process as Secretary of State, but he died suddenly in August before finishing the work. The powerful former president of the Board of Trade, George Montagu-Dunk, Earl of Halifax, filled the void left by Egremont's death and spearheaded the project through to its completion. Parts of this plan would be issued in the form of a royal proclamation. Among their major decisions, the British would indeed divide Florida into two new provinces, East and West Florida, and provide these newly acquired colonies with British forms of government. Halifax and his fellow administrators incorporated language from the "Hints" in forbidding white settlement beyond an imaginary line drawn imprecisely along the ridges of the Allegheny and Appalachian Mountains. The continental interior would become a vast Indian reserve and thus, hopefully, prevent future conflicts like Pontiac's War by maintaining distance between white settlers and Native peoples.

The Royal Proclamation's restriction on western settlement was an important early moment in which American colonists expressed their unease with post-war imperial reforms.<sup>69</sup> It rankled colonists who wanted or previously held legal title to lands in the now forbidden territory. It threw a bayonet, for instance, into the plans of the Mississippi Land Company, among whose shareholders included Virginians George Washington, his brother John Augustine, Richard Henry Lee, and Francis Lightfoot Lee. Only a month before George III issued the proclamation, the company petitioned him for 2.5 million acres in the Mississippi River Valley,

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<sup>68</sup> Verner W. Crane, ed., "'Hints relative to the Division and Government of the conquered and newly acquired Countries in America,' c. 1763," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 8 (March 1922): 371. My thanks to S. Max Edelson for this reference.

<sup>69</sup> Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall in the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy 1760-1775* (Lincoln: University Nebraska Press, 1961), 107-137.

territory that was potentially now off-limits to colonial settlement under the new scheme.<sup>70</sup> The proclamation forbade colonial governors from granting lands claimed by Indians or “any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean.” It was a measure aimed at treating Indians on fairer terms and importantly preventing the expansion of the kind of “Land Jobbing” that the Board of Trade believed had characterized pre-war America. The prohibitions also left the Mississippi Land Company in limbo.<sup>71</sup> Preventing settlement despite the prohibition on land grants and the introduction of military regiments to enforce order proved difficult. Colonists continued squatting on lands reserved for the Indians.<sup>72</sup>

Nevertheless the new regulations all spoke to a broader imperial plan that included the effective management of colonial population growth and expansion. Prohibiting new grants in Indian country was one means to this end. So was authorizing special land grants for veterans of the war. In effect, the government would transform British soldiers and sailors who had served in North America during the war into military emigrants.

Fulfilling the Board of Trade’s stated 1761 desire of seeing British servicemen rewarded for their service with colonial land was attractive to the imperial government for a number of reasons. Offering disbanded or demobilized troops land grants in the colonies as one form of payment for their service created a link between the individual soldier, sailor, officer and their royal patron. George III was only twenty-five in 1763 and approaching the third anniversary of his accession to the throne. Having the young monarch provide land grants allowed him to demonstrate paternal benevolence and thus strengthen the feelings of loyalty the men felt for

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<sup>70</sup> Mississippi Land Company’s Memorial to the King, 9 September 1763, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008. Here after “PGE:DE.”

<sup>71</sup> *Royal Proclamation of 7 October 1763*, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School.

<sup>72</sup> John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), Chapter 3.

their sovereign. These grants would form part of a plan for “peopling, and settling, the New Governments, with useful and industrious Inhabitants.” Egremont specified that the military grants would apply to “such Officers and soldiers, more especially Those residing in America” who had served in the war.<sup>73</sup>

By specifying where these grants could *not* be made by prohibiting allotments in Indian country, the government could better encourage the development and cultivation of unused lands in the existing or newly acquired colonies. Whereas the Mississippi Land Company’s petition epitomized the government’s anxieties about American colonists moving too far inland and away from British influence, the military grants would ideally ensure that these settlers would populate the new, Atlantic frontiers of British America in places such as Nova Scotia, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec, and East and West Florida.

The fact that these grants were intended for military personnel meant that the British could inexpensively plant a body of trained men in America who could rally to the King’s standard in another major conflict. One of the major issues that the Board of Trade addressed in its initial report to George III was the problem of defending against future Indian or European threats. As Pontiac’s campaigns clearly indicated, the potential for large-scale Indian resistance to the new world order existed, as did the possibility of an uprising of disgruntled French Canadians.

One of the chief reasons that the government allowed the recruitment of Scottish Highlanders, suspect as their loyalties may have been, was the need for greater manpower to wage war on a continental scale. Military land grants, in a sense, would preposition forces in the

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<sup>73</sup> Earl of Egremont to the Lords of Trade, 14 July 1763, Colonial Records Class Five: Westward Expansion, Reel 3, Vol. 65, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

colonies. These men could augment existing troops deployed to enforce the western boundary.<sup>74</sup> And in the case of the Highlanders, who the Duke of Cumberland and the Secretary at War had wanted out of Britain as quickly as possible, if many of them chose to stay in North America, so much the better.

In September 1763, Halifax instructed the Board of Trade to modify the draft proclamation's language to achieve these goals. Land grants would amount to very little if they people who held them did not actually live on them and oversee the land's development. Halifax wanted to make that intention plain. He also wanted to make sure that the men who received the grants had actually served in North America in order to prevent men who had campaigned elsewhere from gaining land in the colonies at the North American veterans' expense. Land speculation by non-veterans was precisely what Halifax did not want. Through the proclamation the King would grant to "such reduced Officers only, as have served in North America during the late war, and to such private Soldiers only, as have been, or shall be disbanded in America, and are actually residing there."<sup>75</sup> Veterans were not restricted in their choice of colony. The final proclamation empowered the governors of the new colonies in Quebec, East Florida, and West Florida, "and all other our Governors of our several Provinces on the Continent of North America," to grant land to veterans who met the proper criteria.<sup>76</sup>

George III and his ministers did not want to create a class of absentee landowners or leave the lands lying fallow. They wanted these lands actively settled and cultivated. Only then could the veterans be the "useful and Industrious inhabitants" the government desired.

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<sup>74</sup> Shy, *Toward Lexington*, Chapter 2.

<sup>75</sup> Earl of Halifax to the Lords of Trade, 19 September 1763, Secretaries of State: State Papers: Entry Books, SP, 44/138/109, TNA.

<sup>76</sup> *Royal Proclamation of 7 October 1763*, The Avalon Project.

Officers and soldiers could apply for acreage according to their rank. These were as follows:

Field Officers — 5,000 Acres

Captains — 3,000 Acres

Subalterns — 2,000 Acres

Non-Commissioned Officers — 200 Acres

Privates — 50 Acres

Naval officers and sailors of equivalent rank who served aboard ships operating in American waters would receive similar terms. The lands would be free of quit rents for ten years, following Lt. Colonel Grant's recommendation, and the grantees were required to settle and cultivate the land immediately. The actual power of granting lands was devolved to the governors in each of the colonies. Individuals had to apply for the grants in person with a certificate from a commanding officer attesting to their service in the war.<sup>77</sup> The Board of Trade produced a draft of the document in early October according to Halifax's specifications. On October 7, 1763, the King issued the final proclamation in his name.

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<sup>77</sup> Earl of Halifax to the Lords of Trade, 19 September 1763, ("such reduced Officers"), TNA: Secretaries of State: Entry Books, SP 44/138/109; Beverley W. Bond, Jr., "The Quit-Rent System in the American Colonies," *The American Historical Review* 17 (Apr. 1912): 496-516; Lords of Trade to Earl of Halifax, 4 October 1763, (with proclamation draft enclosed), Colonial Records Class Five, Reel 3, Vol. 65; Entry for 5 October 1763, TNA: Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/110/101-106; Earl of Halifax to Lords of Trade, 8 October 1763, Colonial Records Class Five, Reel 3, Vol. 65. Halifax worried that the original text made it appear that only naval veterans who had served in the campaigns against Louisbourg in 1758 and Quebec in 1759 were eligible for land grants, when in reality service in either campaign qualified an individual. See Earl of Halifax to the Attorney General, 13 October 1763, Secretaries of State: State Papers: Entry Books, SP 44/138/116-117, TNA.

### *Scottish Interest in Post-War America*

Scottish investors and political officials greeted the end of the war and the Royal Proclamation enthusiastically. They wanted to exploit landed opportunities in the newly acquired provinces. This was particularly true of the Floridas, as well as the young colony of Nova Scotia.<sup>78</sup> It was even rumored in an English newspaper, wrongly it turned out, “that several hundred Highlanders” who had served in America “and like the Country” would use the proclamation grants to settle in the Floridas.<sup>79</sup>

East Florida attracted a great deal of attention among Scottish investors in general. They shared Lt. Colonel Grant’s mindset and advocated for the importation of foreign emigrants, particularly those from Mediterranean climates similar to that of East Florida. Archibald Menzies of Perthshire published a short, four-page “Proposal for Peopling His Majesty’s Southern Colonies on the Continent of North America” in 1763 in which he called for the settlement of Greeks in the colony. He reasoned that Greeks were already accustomed to laboring in the hot summer sun, making them the ideal candidates for colonization.<sup>80</sup> Dr. Andrew Turnbull pursued that course by recruiting 1,400 Mediterranean emigrants for his plantation of New Smyrna.<sup>81</sup> The prominent London merchant and slave-trader Richard Oswald pushed Governor James Grant to allocate land to the Levant Company, an English firm operating in the eastern Mediterranean, while the governor himself thought that white Bermudians and slaves seasoned in the Carolinas

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<sup>78</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 October 1763, 31 October 1763, 28 December 1763; *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (England), 8 December 1763. The proclamation first appeared in parts in the 12 October 1763 edition of the *Caledonian Mercury*, and in on the front page and part of the second in the 15 October edition. It was also published in *The Scots Magazine* (October, 1763), 576-579.

<sup>79</sup> *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (England), 8 December 1763.

<sup>80</sup> Archibald Menzies, *Proposal for Peopling His Majesty’s Southern Colonies on the Continent of North America* (1763).

<sup>81</sup> Patricia C. Griffin, “Blue Gold: Andrew Turnbull’s New Smyrna Plantation” in Jane G. Landers, ed., *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 39-68.

would make proper people to work the land.<sup>82</sup> Lord Adam Gordon and two partners acquired 20,000 acres in the new province as well.<sup>83</sup>

What Lt. Colonel Grant's ideas and the investors' proposals also had in common was a silence concerning Scottish settlement in East Florida. Grant's belief that French Protestants were the proper settlers for the Floridas perhaps reflected concerns about Scotland's recent disproportionate contribution to the imperial state. While the necessity of recruiting Scots into the army had sparked fears among metropolitan officials over the remilitarization of the Highlands in the post-rebellion years, that same process alarmed some Scots who worried about the stress that it placed on current and future domestic labor needs. This persistent tension about the Scottish place within the British Empire was bound up in the larger problem of how to people British America in a way that ensured the colonies' continued dependency.

For the individual Scottish soldier the intellectual problem of empire was of little concern. The ability to obtain American land as a reward for their service was a tangible demonstration of how the empire worked in their favor. The Scots in Grant's and other regiments had ambitions elsewhere. Despite the English newspaper's claim that Highland soldiers would use the proclamation to obtain land in the new southern colonies, many Scots who fought in the war had their sights set on the northern colonies. For it was in New York as well as Quebec that many Scottish soldiers accepted the government's invitation to transform themselves

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<sup>82</sup> James Grant of Ballindalloch to Henry Laurens, 18 November 1764; Grant of Ballindalloch to Richard Oswald, 21 November 1764; Grant of Ballindalloch to John Savage, 13 March 1765 all in Reel 1: Letter Book 1, August 31, 1764 to September 8, 1766, Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, LOC. For a good overview of the activities of the East Florida Society, a speculating company that counted many Scots among its members, see George C. Rogers, Jr., "The East Florida Society of London, 1766-1767" *The Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 54 No. 4 (April, 1976): 479-496. On grant's Military career and governorship see Paul David Nelson, *General James Grant: Scottish Soldier and Royal Governor of East Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

<sup>83</sup> Lord Adam partnered with Charles Townshend, and South Carolinian Francis Kinloch in requesting 20,000 acres. See 10 February 1766, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/111/478; 5 June 1766, *Ibid.*, f. 645-646; 18 June 1766, *Ibid.*, f. 675-676, TNA; Grant of Ballindalloch to James Watts, 14 November 1766, Reel 2: Letter books, October 3, 1766 to June 1, 1768, Grant of Ballindalloch Papers, LOC.

into military emigrants, and in pursuing their own interests and also fulfill longstanding provincial and imperial goals.

### **Scottish Military Migrants**

The Royal Proclamation of 1763's land grant provision made possible Scottish military settlement in New York or neighboring Quebec. It was equally reasonable, however, to assume that they might have gone to North Carolina or Georgia, two colonies that in the early eighteenth century experienced significant inflows of Scots, particularly from the Highlands and Western Isles.<sup>84</sup> Applying for proclamation grants in the backcountry of the latter two provinces would allow disbanded and reduced soldiers and officers to settle with colonists who shared a similar culture.

Scottish servicemen might have chosen to return home to work the land. In February 1763, some soldiers in America who were natives of Assynt, the property of the Earl of Sutherland on Scotland's northwestern coast, began exploring their post-war options back in Scotland. They wrote several letters to the Earl's factor for Assynt, Alexander Mackenzie of Ardloch, proposing, "to get tacks on this estate" when they left the army. Leasing a tack would enable them to control access to land by parceling it out to subtenants, elevating them above the common farmer, cattle drover, or kelp fishermen in the Highlands' landed hierarchy. The men began the haggling by offering to accept tacks with five percent annual rent increases until the rent reached twenty percent above its current rate, asking for leases spanning between 40 or 50

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<sup>84</sup> For general overviews of Scottish settlement in North Carolina and Georgia see, Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957) and Anthony W. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration, and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997).

years once rents reached that enhanced level.<sup>85</sup> Of course these initial negotiations took place several months before soldiers learned they could own — not lease — land in the colonies as part of the British government's strategic plan for colonial development. The Royal Proclamation expanded the options of British soldiers and officers who might have entertained thoughts of returning home. For Scots like the Assynt natives, the question became whether they wanted to return home to lease land or remain in the colonies to own it.

The question was also where to apply for grants once a serviceman had decided to accept the government's offer. That so many Scots would stake their claims in northern New York and to a lesser extent Quebec was not a foregone conclusion given the near failure of Lachlin Campbell's scheme in the former colony a generation earlier.

By contrast the formation of a Highlander community principally in Cumberland County, North Carolina in the early eighteenth century offered a compelling alternative. In the 1730s a second group of Scots from Argyllshire emigrated to the southern British American province. They created successful settlements along Cross Creek, a backcountry tributary of the Cape Fear River. In Chapter Two we will see that by the 1760s this well established community functioned as a critical transatlantic node in advocating the emigration of Western Islanders and Highlanders to the colony.

The experience of serving in the French and Indian War's northern theater was an important factor in shaping the Highlanders' post-war settlement plans. Historian Matthew P. Dziennik has recently complicated this idea by arguing that Scottish soldiers and officers who fought in the region drew on traditional Highland notions of military service to their clan chiefs in exchange for economic security. Despite the long-term decline of clanship, the bond between

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<sup>85</sup> Alexander Mackenzie of Ardoch to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 8 February 1763 in Macinnes, Harper & Fryer, *Scotland and the Americas, c. 1650- c. 1939*, 110.

those two concepts remained intact, and in this case soldiering for the British monarch thus demanded reciprocity.<sup>86</sup> Scots could claim, often with good reason as demonstrated by the broken bodies at the gates of Ticonderoga or their casualties on the Plains of Abraham, that in slaying Britain's enemies, and in charging at their foes broadswords in hand with unrestrained ferocity, they had staked their right to the ground with an effusion of blood in the King's name.

Yet any rights rooted in older traditions of military service to a clan chief would have amounted to little without the imperial government's determination to transform soldiers of war into peacetime settlers. This process did not begin until after the French defeat. In northern New York, the interests of the empire, colony, and Scottish servicemen aligned, enabled by the Proclamation of 1763's land grant provisions. It was there that Scottish soldiers and officers in large measure transformed themselves into the military emigrants. They would acquire land in an area strategically important to the provincial government and achieve landownership in ways not open to them in Scotland.

### *Gaining Land*

One month after George III issued the proclamation a copy of the document arrived in New York where Lt. Governor Cadwallader Colden ordered it published in the newspapers. Shortly thereafter he and the provincial council began receiving petitions for grants of land.<sup>87</sup> In 1764 and 1765 alone, the surveyor general's office returned approximately 52 surveys comprising nearly 30,500 acres for veterans of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, 10 surveys for almost 8,000 acres for members of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 60 surveys for 33,600 acres for soldiers in the 77<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Dziennik, *The Fatal Land*, 160.

<sup>87</sup> For the arrival of the proclamation in New York see Colden to the Lords of Trade, 7 December 1763, *DCHSNY*, 7:584; *The New-York Mercury*, 12 December 1763.

Regiment, and 26 surveys of nearly 2,700 acres for primarily non-commissioned officers of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment.<sup>88</sup> Nearly 170 veterans of the later regiment settled in Quebec as well after the regiment had been demobilized in 1763 while in that province.<sup>89</sup>

An analysis of colonial land records reveals that the New York provincial government allocated about 303 military grants totaling 136,988 acres between August 1764 and July 1775 to men in predominantly Scottish Highland regiments. This included 142 veterans of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment; 12 of the 47<sup>th</sup> Regiment; 36 members of the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment; 70 of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment; and 33 soldiers and officers in the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment. The grants averaged approximately 452 acres in size. Most were granted in Albany County or in the counties later carved out of it.<sup>90</sup>

The petitions, surveys, and grants reflected a desire among veterans for owning land in the colonies. Men of lesser rank often coordinated their actions in pursuing larger tracts on which they might collectively settle. In November 1764, for example, the surveyor returned a report for William Johnson, formerly a corporal in the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Johnson partnered with three non-Scots of the Royal American (60<sup>th</sup>) Regiment — drummer Jacob Huber, Corporal John Greter, and Sergeant John Davis — for an 800-acre tract in Albany County on the east side of the

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<sup>88</sup> My figures are based on an analysis of the *Indorsed Land Papers* from 1764 to 1765. For the purposes of this analysis, if a soldier applied as part of a group, I have only counted his individual share of the petition.

<sup>89</sup> Dziennik, “Through an Imperial Prism: Land, Liberty, and Highland Loyalism in the War of American Independence,” *Journal of British Studies* 50 (April 2011): 346.

<sup>90</sup> My analysis is based on the land records compiled by Lloyd deWitt Bockstruck in his *Bounty and Donation Land Grants in British Colonial America* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007). I collected the names, ranks, regiments, size of grant, and the county of the grant’s location. Four officers with Scottish surnames, but lacking identifiable regiments, are included in the total because they settled in Albany County, New York. The total also includes two veterans, one from the Royal American Regiment and one from the 80<sup>th</sup> Regiment who have identifiable Scottish surnames and who also settled in Albany County. To simplify my analysis I restricted my search to soldiers and officers in particular regiments, and in a few cases surname, identifiable as Scottish with a high degree of certainty. Moreover, it does not represent the total number of Scottish veterans who received proclamation grants in North America. New York’s records helpfully contain the regiments in which men served, whereas other colonial record keepers were not as attentive. A complete analysis for North America would likely require viewing the certificates of service or the actual letters patent in determining regiments and ethnicity.

Hudson River.<sup>91</sup> Donald McGilvray, John McKinvin, Donald Irvin, and Kenneth McKenzie — all privates in the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment — joined with fellow ranking soldiers John Forbes, George Southerland, and Donald McColl of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment in seeking 350 acres east of the Hudson in what is now Vermont.<sup>92</sup> Norman MacLeod and John McKinney of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment and Evan Cameron and Donald Cameron of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment received a survey for 200 acres in the same area.<sup>93</sup> Privates Angus McDonald, Miles Carmichal, and John Black of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment and John Sutherland of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment sought 200 acres on the east Kinderhook River.<sup>94</sup>

In coordinating their actions lower-ranking Scottish veterans did not act any differently than their fellow British subjects who petitioned for land during or after the war. The New York land grant records offer numerous examples of men petitioning collectively for head right grants. In March 1762, for instance, Lt. Governor Colden granted 10,000 acres on the east side of the Hudson River to a group of ten petitioners.<sup>95</sup> Two months later he signed an order granting 23,000 acres between Fort Edward and Lake George to a group of twenty-three individuals.<sup>96</sup> In May 1764, Colden granted 26,000 acres in Albany County to twenty-six men.<sup>97</sup> The grantees

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<sup>91</sup> Return of survey for Jacob Huber, John Greter, John Davis, and William Johnson, 1 November 1764, in *Calendar of N.Y. Colonial Manuscripts - Indorsed Land Papers; in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643-1803* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co, 1864), 349.

<sup>92</sup> Return of survey for Donald McGilvray, John McKinvin, Donald Irvin, Kenneth McKenzie, John Forbes, George Sotherland, and Donald McColl, 9 May 1765, *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>93</sup> Return of survey for Norman MacLeod, John McKinney, Evan Cameron, and Donald Cameron, 9 May 1765, *Ibid.*.

<sup>94</sup> Petition of Angus McDonald, Miles Carmichal, John Black, and John Sutherland, no date but filed with September 1765 petitions, *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>95</sup> Grant to Hendrick Schneyder, John Wetteck, Hendrick Lake, John Johnson, Garret Williamson, Nathaniel Ackerly, Benjamin Abbot, William Taylor, Martinus Voorhees, Daniel Hallenbeck, 24 March 1762, "*An abstract of grants of land in the province of New York*" (Landholding Document, The National Archives, Kew, 1761/3/27-1764/10/10), accessed 4 December 2015,

[[http://www.colonialamerica.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.its.virginia.edu/Documents/Details/CO\\_5\\_1134\\_Part2\\_005](http://www.colonialamerica.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.its.virginia.edu/Documents/Details/CO_5_1134_Part2_005)]

<sup>96</sup> Grant to James Bradshaw, Nathaniel Taylor, Daniel Taylor, John Warner, Abel Wright, Benjamin Silye, Kent Wright, Preserved Porter, Ebenezer Silye, Partridge Thatcher, Thomas Noble, Daniel Bostwick, Samuel Canfield, John Prindle, Isaac Hitchcock, Jonathan Hitchcock, Benjamin Wildman, Amos Northrop, Israel Camp, Samuel Brownson, John Hitchcock, Gideon Noble, and Comfort Stars, 18 May 1762, *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Grant to William Cockrost, Beamsly Glarier, Charles Le Rouse, Michael Thodey, George Brewerton, George Brewerton, Jr., Robert McGinnis, Peter Middleton, Isaac Corsa, Joshua Bloomer, Tobias Van Zandt, George Dunbar, Barach Snethen, Jonathan Ogden, Richard Rea, Verdine Elsworth, Barnaby Bryn, Peter Du Bois, Abraham

were bound to pay two shillings, six pence per hundred acres in quit-rents from the date of the grant.

The Scottish veterans' motivations and the terms upon which they sought lands distinguished them from other recipients. Colden's grants to the non-military men above amounted to 1,000 acres per head, a handsome number not available to privates or non-commissioned officers individually who applied for land under the Royal Proclamation. The Royal Proclamation imposed a land hierarchy on soldiers and officers that mirrored military ranks, which in turn reflected Britain's social order. Army officers from ensigns through colonels were often men of means, born into well-connected families, who had purchased their commissions.<sup>98</sup> An army captain possessing superior military and social rank was thus eligible to apply for 2,000 acres under the Proclamation compared to the lowly private who could command a mere fifty acres.

By coordinating their efforts the rank and file could increase the total acreage at their disposal. For the lower orders of Scottish soldiers in the Highland regiments this was a strategy not only to overcome the limitations that the Proclamation imposed on them; it also reflected the reality and changing nature of Highland society. In the eighteenth century the majority of land in the Highlands was concentrated in the hands of the aristocracy, including men like Lord Lovat (before his lands were confiscated), Norman MacLeod of MacLeod on the Isle of Skye, or the Earl of Sutherland in the northern Highlands. Common Scots, such as those who inquired about tacks in Assynt, had few pathways to property ownership in Scotland. They formed an enormous underclass whose access to land was governed by the terms of their leases or their ability to find work as laborers on Highland estates. Equally important, the communal ways in which they

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Deforest, Cornelius Duane, Joseph Bull, Tunis Corsa, Thomas Jones, David Johnson, Henry Dawson, and Alexander White, 2 May 1764, Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Anthony Bruce, *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980).

worked those lands was changing. Beginning in the 1760s, landowners began breaking down the ancient *baile*, or township. Through the end of the eighteenth century and into the next settlements once composed of a number of tenant farmers, laborers, and servants working the land as a community gave way to large single tenant farms in some parts of the Highlands while crofts, or individual small holdings, arose in other areas.<sup>99</sup> The soldiers' collective petitioning for land in New York suggested a means of resuscitating a communal form of land use in the colony that was gasping for breath in Scotland. The empire offered a means of partially restoring in the colonies a Scottish Highland world in rapid decline.

Scottish officers petitioning for land in northern New York were equally ambitious. They shared a similar desire for land ownership, an important motive for staying in the colony in the first place, for even if they could purchase some land in Scotland it would have been difficult to acquire tracts as large as the Royal Proclamation provided. Lord Adam Gordon's land holdings illustrate this point. Lord Adam, the youngest son of Alexander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Gordon, was a Lt. Colonel in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot Guards during the French and Indian War. Although his service in the war's European theater made him ineligible for a proclamation grant, his smallholdings in Scotland — 750 acres — paled in comparison to the 10,000 acre-investment that he had Sir William Johnson purchase for him in New York.<sup>100</sup> If Lord Adam had fought in North America he would have been eligible for a 5,000-acre grant, more than a five-fold increase over what he owned at home.

Like the rank and file some officers petitioned the provincial government collectively in hopes of securing larger tracts of land. Moreover, clustering by regiment indicated a desire not only to settle with fellow brother officers and men with whom they had fought, but also a wish to

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<sup>99</sup> T.M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 32-39.

<sup>100</sup> For Lord Adam Gordon's American lands see the conclusion to Chapter 3.

settle amongst kin. The Highland regiments had been raised among particular clans in which men were often related to each other. Petitioning and settling together was one means of preserving the communal bonds forged either in war or that had existed before the men had arrived in North America.

Petitions in the early days following the Royal Proclamation's arrival in New York illuminate communal settlement. In January 1764, a group of three captains, six lieutenants, and one adjutant of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment led by Captain John Small asked Colden for a grant of lands along "Otter creek, extending from the Great Falls of said creek for twelve miles upwards on both sides."<sup>101</sup> The group, minus a few members, revised their request later that summer, asking instead for lands either on Batten Kill, a tributary of the Hudson River in modern Vermont, or on the east side of Lake Champlain opposite Ticonderoga and Crown Point.<sup>102</sup> The men received their lands along Batten Kill, although Colden and the provincial council authorized most of the grants as a cluster of individual tracts.<sup>103</sup> Only the grants of Lieutenants John Grant and Archibald Campbell were conjoined for reasons that are unclear. Similarly, four non-commissioned officers of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, including Sergeant Moses Campbell, petitioned for 800 acres. As before, the provincial government issued individual patents, with Campbell receiving his 200 acres along the east side of Lake Champlain.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Memorandum of Captains Small, Forbes and Campbell, Lieutenants Archd. Campbell, Cameron, Charles Menzies, Cordon, Gregor, McCulloch and Adjutant William Gregor, 9 January 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 329.

<sup>102</sup> Memorial of Captain John Small, Lieutenants Ann Gordon, John Gregor, James Bain and Adjutant Wm. Gregor, 8 May 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 338; Petition, 9 June 1764, *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>103</sup> Petitions granted, 20 Feb 1765, Minutes of the New York Council, *Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668-1783* (Albany: New York State Library, 1903), 510. Here after "CCM."

<sup>104</sup> Petition of Mose Campbell, Alexr. McPherson and Alexr. Fraser, late serjeants; and John McPherson, late corporal, 6 Feb 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 331; Petitions granted, 8 February 1764, CCM, 411; "List of grants of land passed in the province of New York" (Landholding Document, The National Archives, Kew, 1764/10/13-1765/4/12), accessed 4 Decembe4r 2015, [http://www.colonialamerica.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.its.virginia.edu/Documents/Details/CO\_5\_1134\_Part2\_00].

On occasion officers and the rank and file united their efforts. In February 1764, Sergeant John Gibson headed a group of thirty-two other non-commissioned officers and six privates of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment and one private of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment asking for land near the former regiment's chaplain, the Reverend Harry Munro.<sup>105</sup> Likewise Allen Cameron and three other sergeants along with seven privates of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment petitioned for their share of the land.<sup>106</sup> Non-Commissioned officers were only eligible for 200 acres of land. Joining with officers of similar rank and coordinating with privates who were eligible for 50 acres allowed men on the bottom of the Proclamation's landed hierarchy to assemble large tracts of land composed of many individual grants.

That Scottish servicemen asked for their lands in areas where they had spent a great deal of time during the early years of the war is clear in contemporary maps. A 1772 map detailing the boundaries of lands on either side of Lake Champlain illustrated the transformation of a contested space between the French and the British into a solely British space by showing how the Royal Proclamation grants of Scots and other British servicemen were carved out of formerly French patents.<sup>107</sup> Claude Joseph Sauthier's 1779 map detailing land grants in the colony illustrates Scottish settlement patterns in lovely detail.<sup>108</sup> A significant number of the tracts fell in a corridor along the Hudson River between Saratoga and the north end of Lake Champlain.

Individuals like John Reid, a Perthshire native who ended the war as a Lt. Colonel in the 42<sup>nd</sup>

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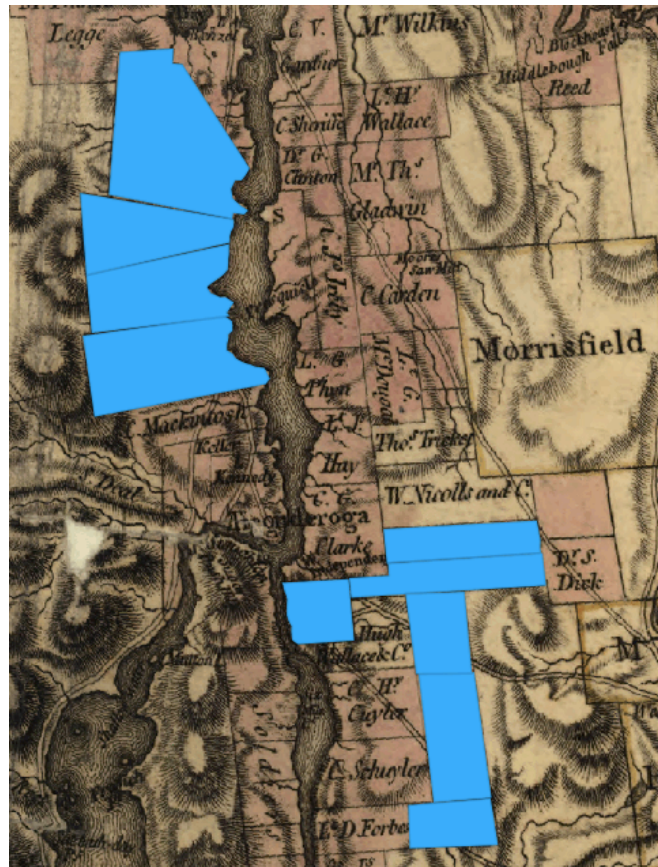
<sup>105</sup> Petition of John Gibson, serjeant, and 32 other non-commissioned officers and 6 privates of the 77th regiment and one private of the 78th, 8 Feb 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 331.

<sup>106</sup> Petition of Allen Cameron and three others, late serjeants, and seven privates in the 77th regiments, 28 Feb 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 333.

<sup>107</sup> "Map showing the boundaries of the lands on the east and west of Lake Champlain (now in New York and Vermont) and in particular a grant to Godfrey Dellius of 3 Sept 1696, with some proprietors named and tracts of land lettered" (Map, The National Archives, Kew, 1772-1772). Accessed [December 03, 2015]. [http://www.colonialamerica.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.its.virginia.edu/Documents/Details/MPG\\_1\\_597\\_1\\_001](http://www.colonialamerica.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.its.virginia.edu/Documents/Details/MPG_1_597_1_001)

<sup>108</sup> Claude Joseph Sauthier, *A Chorographical Map of the Province of New York in North America, Divided into Counties, Manors, Patents and Townships; Exhibiting likewise all the private Grants of Land made and located in that Province; Compiled from Actual Surveys deposited in the Patent Office at New York, By Order of His Excellency Major General William Tryon* (London, 1779). Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington D.C.

Regiment, received his 5,000-acre tract opposite Crown Point on the southern end of Lake Champlain.<sup>109</sup> The 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment's chaplain, Rev. Harry Munro, received his 2,000 acres adjacent to a tract of land set aside for provincial soldiers.<sup>110</sup>



Excerpt of Claude Joseph Sauthier, *A Chorographical Map of the Province of New York in North America* (London, 1779). Fort Ticonderoga is in the map's center. Lands allocated to Scottish veterans are shaded in blue.

A cluster of Highland officers received patents located closely between Ticonderoga at the head of Lake George, the site of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment's great losses in 1758, and Crown Point. In August 1764, Major Allan Campbell of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Captains Robert Grant, Nicholas Sutherland, and Alexander MacIntosh of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment, along with Captain Robert Campbell

<sup>109</sup> Richards, "The Black Watch at Ticonderoga," in *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 10: 430-433.

<sup>110</sup> Sauthier, *A Chorographical Map of the Province of New York in North America*, LOC.

of the Royal American Regiment received a combined total of 17,000 acres in the area.<sup>111</sup> Captain James Grant of the 80<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Lieutenant Allan Grant of the Royal American Regiment, and Lieutenant Donald Campbell took possession of contiguous lands on the opposite side of Ticonderoga.<sup>112</sup> These groupings were joined a cluster along Batten Kill opposite Saratoga and another major collection on the east side of the Hudson River at the south end of Lake George.<sup>113</sup> Like ancient Roman legions demobilized and settled on the frontier of the empire, these Scots began putting down roots in northern backcountry of the new British America.<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

The military grants depicted on the 1772 and 1779 maps contained the names of the men who owned them and thus who had accepted the British government's invitation to remake themselves into military emigrants. The Scottish soldiers and officers who took that bargain in northern New York through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 embodied the increasing role Scotland, and in particular the Highlands, was playing in imperial affairs. The government sent the Highland soldiers to North America in the mid-1750s to fight the French and win glory for King and Country partly out of a need for manpower. Only ten years removed from the last Jacobite uprising that challenged the legitimacy of George II and the Hanoverian line's claim to

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<sup>111</sup> Allan Campbell's grant was dated 11 July 1764, Robert Grant, Nicholas Sutherland, Alexander MacIntosh on 7 August 1764, and Robert Campbell 23 August 1764. "*An abstract of grants of land in the province of New York*" (Landholding Document, The National Archives, Kew, 1761/3/27-1764/10/10).

<sup>112</sup> Petition of Lieutenants Donald Campbell, James Rumsey, John Martin, Thomas Menzies, Alexr. Menzies, 16 Jan 1764, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 329; Petitions granted, 8 February 1764, *CCM*, 411-412; Sauthier, *A Chorographical Map of the Province of New York in North America*, LOC.

<sup>113</sup> Sauthier, *A Chorographical Map of the Province of New York in North America*.

<sup>114</sup> On Roman legions settling on the frontier see Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

the British throne, the government initiated a measured remilitarization of the Highlands, permitting recruitment through clan chiefs —some with Jacobite pasts—to raise men for war in America.

Drawing Highlanders into the empire through the military saw thousands of them deployed to North America. In the borderlands between Albany and Quebec, the men of the 42<sup>nd</sup>, 77<sup>th</sup>, 78<sup>th</sup>, and other regiments trained, fought, and died on the way to victory. They marched over ground that New York provincial officials had long wished to see peopled, envisioning settlement of the region as an important means of protecting the colony's more developed areas from French threats. An Argyllshire Scot with dreams of his own little empire had failed in that task in the decades before the French and Indian War, but that conflict brought the general idea into sharper focus as General Sir Jeffrey Amherst proposed settling the region as part of Britain's overall military strategy. It also served as a way for Scottish servicemen to evaluate the landscape as they soldiered on in the early years of the war.

The success of British arms in the northern theater of the war in the fall of 1759 and the subsequent fall of New France compelled British ministers to develop policies for post-war British America. Schemes for controlling future population growth and the spread of settlement were central to their plans for making the colonies more productive and secure. A crucial component was an initiative to reward British officers and soldiers who had served in North America with land grants in the colony of their choice. The land grant provision enabled Scots with less attractive prospects at home the ability to acquire and own land in the colonies. While they might have returned home to rent land in the Highlands or moved south to join with an older Highland colony in the backwoods of North Carolina, many of the Highlanders who fought in the northern New York applied for and received lands there.

Receiving the land was just the first step. During the war Scots had formed the tip of the British army's spear in its campaigns against the French and their Indian allies. The Royal Proclamation's land grant provisions, and Scots' willingness to accept the terms offered, transformed them into the vanguard of British settlement in northern New York. Now soldiers had to beat their broadswords into plowshares and develop the land. That was, after all, part of the government's rationale for creating the military grants in the first place. In an ideal world military emigrants would cultivate the land, making it productive for their own local worlds, and more importantly for Britain's Atlantic economy. Tying the size of the grants to military rank was intended to reinforce a social hierarchy rooted in land at a time when the imperial government was taking a greater interest in managing colonial population growth and location. Making these military tracts ranging from 50 to 5,000 acres productive required more people. To find them Scots in New York began encouraging family, friends, and prospective tenants in Scotland to join them in the colony.

They were not alone. What began as imperially state-sponsored military emigration evolved into a more general movement from the Highlands and the Lowlands in the years after the war. The availability of land in North America inspired British subjects on both sides of the Atlantic to encourage emigration from Scotland for a variety of reasons. In the two chapters that follow we will meet men and women who wanted to undermine Scottish proprietors, others who saw in Scotland a good source of indentured servants or tenant farmers, and more still who believed their own emigration was a means of restoring what they had lost in Scotland. What they all believed, like the military emigrants, was that the connections binding America and Scotland through emigration represented an empire that worked in their interests. Whether this was a positive development in the post-war British Atlantic remained to be seen.

## **Chapter 2: The Imperial Promoters: The Transatlantic Construction and Propagation of Emigration Ideology in Scotland**

In the early 1770s, the Gaelic bard Donald Matheson decided to leave Scotland for North America. A resident of the young Countess of Sutherland's lands in the Scottish north, he had borne witness to changing social and physical landscapes in his native land that he could no longer stomach. Many Scots around him felt the same. Matheson captured these sentiments of anguish and possibility in poetic song. He likened their plight to "when the Israelites were/ in Egypt in distress." Many questions remained about what they would ultimately encounter at their journey's end, yet it was far better to wander the ocean desert in search of the Promised Land than remain under their Pharaohs. "Landlords are enslaving/their people at this time," the poet sung, "evicting and forcing them/ to a land of prosperity." God deserved praise for showing His people out of the valley of the shadow of death.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to emigrate was not easy. Conflicting reports about the colonies confused the head and the heart, something that another bard, James Macrae of Kintail, expressed in his poetry. "Would you ask more of your friends/ [to come] to the place where you have settled?" he asked the nameless men "who have left us and gone across [the ocean]." He and others were "confounded/ by the reports given. Many are confused/ hoping for information by spring." Macrae complained of an indifferent clan chief who had no regard for his people "because he sees not his herd in the glens."<sup>2</sup> When he did receive news, it was not as promising as he had hoped. Still, there was enough positive information to proceed with his plans. "Better that than to remain under the landlords/ who will not tolerate tenantry." They would go "to where we shall

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Matheson, "I See a Wonder," c. 1770-1774, in Margaret MacDonell, *The Emigrant Experience: Songs of Highland Emigrants in North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 23, 25.

<sup>2</sup> John Macrae, "I Wish I Would Get News From You," c. 1770-1774, in *Ibid.* 35.

find every kind/ of the most beautiful game to be seen.” Visions of forests, rivers, and seas abounding in deer and fish softened his correspondent’s less than favorable words. In 1774, Macrae boarded a ship with his wife and four of his five children headed, like Matheson, for North Carolina.

Once aboard, Macrae exhorted his fellow emigrants to steel their hearts against any lingering misgivings. He delivered a parting blow to their former overlords: “A curse upon the landlord/ who sent us far to sea/ for the sake of paltry rent/ which was of little profit to himself.”<sup>3</sup> Sadness would soon give way to the joy of being in a new world far from the tyrant’s clutches.

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Macrae and Matheson captured in song the core messages that emigration promoters disseminated throughout in the Highlands and Western Isles in a bid to wrest Scots from the Scottish proprietor’s control. Early promoters operating in the American colonies and Scotland after the Seven Years War portrayed the clan chief-turned landlord as a self-interested villain who cared only for the money that lined his pocket. They advanced the ideas that inspired the Gaelic poets: British America was more conducive to one’s personal happiness and future prospects than an unforgiving Scottish landscape undergoing physical and social change. This was not an entirely altruistic enterprise. Some of the promoters were as driven by self-interest as the Scottish proprietors with whom they competed.

This chapter is the first of a two-part sequence exploring how imperial promoters and proprietors exploited the shifting American and Scottish landscapes. Peace opened up new spaces in the colonies, not just for the military emigrants who settled in northern New York, but in the North Carolina backcountry, coastal Nova Scotia, and St. John’s Island (Prince Edward Island). In these spaces emerged a robust trade in Scottish emigrants, and especially Highlanders,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 37.

that relied on transatlantic networks in selling Scots on the idea that emigration into the empire resolved a broader set of problems that they faced at home. Entrepreneurial Americans, Scots, and British officials advanced arguments that resonated with common Highland tenants and minor gentry alienated by the long-term emergence of a new kind of clan chief in the eighteenth century. They also struggled with ruthless winter storms that struck the Scottish north. This activity relied in part on subverting traditional Scottish social hierarchies, while in other respects it preyed on more immediate calamities ravaging the Western Isles and Highlands.

Selling Scots on America proceeded in two phases. These were not necessarily distinct periods—there is considerable overlap—and they were shaped by the successes or failures of older Scottish migrations. First, from roughly 1763 to 1771, promotion hinged largely on pre-existing transatlantic relationships. These were intimate networks composed of friends, family, and acquaintances that exchanged letters of encouragement, sought out advice, and made great use of contemporary events in Scotland to push and pull emigrants to America.

Early post-war promotional efforts centered mainly on North Carolina. Historical experience mattered a great deal in this regard. New York, of course, had just experienced the settlement of Scottish military emigrants who acquired land through the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763. They, however, had to begin building a network from the ground up. Lachlan Campbell's failure to establish an inclusive Scottish community in the 1730s and 1740s meant that there was little foundation to build a promotional movement. The same could not be said of North Carolina. In the late 1730s, the successful creation of a Scottish foothold in the provincial backcountry meant that by the early 1760s men like Alexander McAlester, one of those original settlers, were in a firm position to work with transatlantic partners in recruiting the next generation of Scottish colonists. In this initial phase, promoting North Carolina was very much a

Scottish enterprise in contrast to New York, where Scots would learn the value of forging connections with provincial elites in pursuing their goals. North Carolina's Highland Scots were aggressive in undermining the authority of the Scottish proprietor.

The successful efforts of North Carolina's Scots and their partners invited competitors in the early 1770s. Instability in Scotland prompted men like Thomas Desbrisay, William Smith, Jr., and John Witherspoon to encourage new settlers through public advertisements or personal appeals. The fragmentation of the Highland social world produced a sense of alienation among Scots that was compounded further by the misery brought on by the terrible winter of 1771/1772. Men with land or labor needs in America saw an opportunity to exploit these crises. They competed with one another, and with North Carolina's champions, in emphasizing that British America provided an alternative pathway to prosperity.

In short, the post-war years gave birth to a robust promotion of Scottish emigration to certain American colonies. The crumbling Highland social world in the post-war years, the violence of the winter weather that struck the region in the early 1770s, and the presence (or lack thereof) of well-established Scottish communities in those colonies transformed what began as a military emigration during the war into what some observers began calling a general "spirit of emigration" that seduced Scots to American shores. Only some of this conformed to the British government's objectives for managing colonial populations and assuming greater control of the land granting process. None of it assuaged lingering concerns about emigration in Scotland.

## A Tale of Two Old Argyllshire Scottish Communities in Post-War America

Captain Lachlin Campbell's failure to become a great American proprietor in the 1730s and 1740s upon the backs of several hundred emigrant Argyllshire Scots left New York without a well-organized foundation for post-war migrations. Campbell had alienated both the provincial government and those Scots he had brought to the New York, leaving a bitter legacy instead of a prosperous community. Campbell's children hoped to change that fact. As the war drew to a close, his children took up his cause in hopes of righting what they perceived as a historical wrong. By doing so they stood to gain access to a significant amount of land. The siblings—Donald, George, James, Rose, Margaret, and Lilly—believed that if they could persuade the provincial government to grant them the 100,000 acres their father had desired, they could populate them with a new group of Scottish settlers. Before they could realize their father's dream and promote their lands in Scotland, Lachlin's children needed a provincial ally championing their cause.

While alliance building in New York is the subject of considerable discussion in Chapter 3 it is necessary to introduce the problem here as a means of better explaining how North Carolinian backcountry Scots employed long-established connections in peopling what one scholar has deemed as “practically a separate Scottish Highland colony.”<sup>4</sup> The experiences of the heirs to Lachlin Campbell's failed empire in the early 1760s illustrate the fundamental challenge that Scots from that earlier migration and the new military emigrants faced in recruiting more of their countrymen to the colony. The necessity of forging connections with prominent colonists was a key distinction between the Scottish experience in New York and North Carolina. In New

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<sup>4</sup> Bradford J. Wood, *This Remote Part of the World: Regional Formation in Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina 1725-1775* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 28.

York, the absence of a Scottish community like that which thrived in its southern sister colony, and the sudden arrival of thousands of military emigrants, produced great competition for land and the people to work it. The Campbells and other Scots sought out partnerships with provincial figures as a means of furthering their agendas.

### *The Ghosts of Emigrations Past*

In their quest to resurrect their dead father's vision the Campbell children turned to New York chief justice William Smith, Jr. for help. Smith, Jr. was a natural choice for the Campbell siblings. In 1757, the jurist had published a history of the colony containing passages the condemned the provincial government's earlier treatment of the Campbell patriarch. He concluded that colonial officials had conspired against the elder Campbell in denying him land.<sup>5</sup> It was largely on this history, and Smith, Jr.'s advice, that the Campbell clan launched their renewed effort.

The Campbell brothers were all veterans of the war. Donald had served in the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment, George in the 42<sup>nd</sup>, and James in the 48<sup>th</sup>. In January 1763, they petitioned the provincial government for 100,000 acres near Wood Creek. The Hudson River's tributary flowed on its parent's eastern side from South Bay along Lake George south through land that would soon be granted out to demobilized and disbanded Scottish officers.<sup>6</sup> It was the same land their father had once coveted. It was also the kind of land grant that was drawing increased scrutiny in

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<sup>5</sup> William Smith, Jr., *The History of the Province of New-York from the First Discovery to the Year M.DCC.XXXII* (London, 1757), 179-180.

<sup>6</sup> "Petition of Donald Campbell, George Campbell, and James Campbell," 5 January 1763 in *Calendar of N.Y. Colonial Manuscripts - Indorsed Land Papers; in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643-1803* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co, 1864), 317; "Memorial of Lieutenant Donald Campbell of the Province of New York to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trade & Plantations, May 1764," in E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1865), 7:630. Hereafter "DCHSNY."

London. In the Board of Trade's view grants of this size had produced a monopoly of colonial "Land Jobbers" in the pre-war years.

Anticipating that the formal end of the war would bring about a rush on land the Campbells wanted to stake their claim early before any competitors emerged. They had good reason to worry. Their proposed tract was located within what was then Albany County. The county's population doubled after 1756 when migration from Europe and New England brought thousands of new settlers to the region.<sup>7</sup>

There was more. Not long after the Campbells lodged their petition with the provincial government, ghosts came to haunt them. Some of the Scots that Lachlin Campbell had brought to New York filed a counter petition challenging the Campbells' claim.

Alexander McNaughton represented a group who in 1738 had asked the colonial government for land independently of the senior Campbell. The failure of the original scheme had cast them into "Great distress and Poverty," and McNaughton and his co-petitioners reminded the "Government of this Province [that it] never treated the Said Captain Campbells fellow Emigrants as Dependants on him but as Principles in the Then intended Settlement." The government had, after all, approved their original request years ago, but at the time they had been unable to pay the required fees. They had largely remained in the city of New York since that time. They now feared that if provincial officials granted land to Campbell's heirs then they would be shut out of the area, perhaps reduced to tenancy under the children of their long dead antagonist.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In 1772, Albany County was sub-divided in ways that produced four new counties, including Charlotte County, containing the Campbell siblings' hoped for lands. Stefan Bielinski, "Albany County" in Eugene R. Fingerhut and Joseph S. Tiedermann, *The Other New York: The American Revolution Beyond New York City, 1763-1787* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 155.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander McNaughton, Neal Shaw, Ronald McDougall, Rich'd Campbell and one hundred others to Governor Robert Monckton, 23 February 1763 in Jennie M. Patten, *The Argyle Patent and Accompanying Documents: Excerpted from History of the Somonauk Presbyterian Church with Notes on Washington County Families*

McNaughton and his followers strengthened their hand over the Campbells by arguing that they were prepared to settle the land immediately. This meant that they had the money to pay for the required surveys and other expenses and that they could begin improving and cultivating the land. Now that the “Total reduction of Canada has removed every (sic) obstacle to a Settlement of that part of the Country,” and they had the money, they could set themselves upon the ground with dispatch. They asked for 1,000 acres for each of the 104 Scots named in the petition with the idea of settling together as one community. A committee of the provincial council weighed both petitions. It advised Lt. Governor Cadwallader Colden that a grant of 10,000 acres was sufficient for the Campbell children. It was only one-tenth of what they wanted. McNaughton and his friends did not get as much as they asked for either, but they still received a substantial grant of 47,450 acres.<sup>9</sup>

Colden’s sympathy toward the McNaughton group helped their cause. He had long believed that Lachlin Campbell had deliberately misled his recruits. He attacked Smith Jr, shortly after the publication of his history of New York for what he saw as revisionist rubbish. Colden had sat on the council and was the colony’s surveyor-general when Lachlin Campbell first arrived on the New York scene. His belief that “Campbel (sic) had conceived hopes of erecting a Lordship for himself in America” in the 1730s shaped his later impressions of the Campbell children.<sup>10</sup> The council further twisted the bayonet in the Campbells’ side by authorizing the two grants adjacent to one another.<sup>11</sup> The grant to McNaughton and his Scots—soon called the “Argyle Patent” after Argyllshire—was laid out directly north of the land allotted for their

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(Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc, 1979), 9, 10. Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup> Cadwallader Colden to William Smith, Jr., 15 January 1759, in Cadwallader Colden, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1923), 5:285. Here after “LPCC.”

<sup>11</sup> Report on the Committee of the Council, 2 May 1763, in Patten, *The Argyle Patent and Accompanying Documents*, 12-15.

rivals.<sup>12</sup> It was a poetic cartographic arrangement, one that visualized the hierarchical upending that Lachlin Campbell had wanted when he left Scotland. Instead of his children lording over the Argyllshire Scots, however, McNaughton's community and Argyle Patent stood above *them*.

### *The Pitfalls of the Royal Proclamation of 1763*

The new land management policies within the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the transformation of veterans into military emigrants compounded the Campbell family's problems.

The introduction of a new kind of imperial land grant alongside existing provincial grants

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<sup>12</sup> Both groups representing Lauchlin Campbell's legacy received smaller grants than they petitioned for because other parties wanted the same land as well. In late January 1763, twenty-four artillery veterans asked for, and received, 24,000 acres of land that overlapped part of the Wood Creek area included in the Campbell siblings' petition. Major Philip Skene entered the race later that summer. Citing General Sir Jeffrey Amherst's encouragement during the war, Skene filed a petition with 49 other men asking for land in the same region. He had planted some colonists in the area soon after Amherst had sanctioned his original scheme, but a number of them had abandoned it after Skene was deployed to the West Indies. Now Skene sought to revive and enlarge his original plan. He petitioned the Crown directly for 20,000 acres in addition to the 25,000 he had asked of the provincial council. In the end he only received the land from the King, a reflection of the Board of Trade's worry about landed monopolies. It was eventually surveyed into a patent called "Skenesborough." Both it and the Artillery lands were north of the Argyle patent.

Skene highlighted his military service and his connection to Amherst in preparing his petition. He wrote as much to Colden when he objected to Joseph Walton's petition, arguing that Walton asked for land on which Skene had already placed settlers. In his formal petition he set "forth that being encouraged by Sir Jeffrey Amherst, in the year 1760, he formed the design of making a considerable settlement on lands on both sides of Wood creek, and in prosecution of such design, he did soon after at a large expense, settle and subsist about thirty families there, but, being ordered on the expedition against Martinique and Havana, some of the settlers in his absence abandoned the settlement, &c., and praying for himself and 49 others, his associates in the army, a grant of so much as shall be found fit for cultivation of the lands lying on, and adjacent to Wood creek in the county of Albany, beginning on the north line of Kingsbury near the spot occupied by Griffith, Park and Bemis, then extending to Scone creek, &c." Philip Skene to Cadwallader Colden, 17 August 1763, in *LPCC* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1937), 9:187-188; "Petition of Major Phillip Skene," 9 September 1763, *Indorsed Papers*, 324.

In a later petition Skene and company qualified their request by specifying that they wanted 25,000 acres. They promised to settle one family on every 1,000 acres, and requested that Joseph Walton and the artillery officers forgo a claim on a small parcel where some of Skene's original settlers remained. In May 1764, Skene received 20,000 via an Order of the King in Council. A few months later he requested a warrant for a survey laying out the township of "Skenesborough." Skene wanted both grants and asked the New York government to move forward with both of them. Colden, with the provincial council's advice, suspended the 25,000-acre request in favor of Skene's 20,000-acre Crown grant. See "Report of the committee on the foregoing petition," 12 November 1763, pg. 326; "Order of the King in Council," 23 May 1764, pg. 339; "Memorial of Philip Skene," 19 December 1763, pg. 354; "Memorial of Philip Skene," 18 March 1765, pg. 358-359 all in *Indorsed Land Papers*; "Minute of Council relative to the Grant of Land to be made to Major Philip Skene," 7 August 1764, *LPCC*, (New York: New York Historical Society, 1922), 6:335-337.

dimmed their prospects. British veterans began petitioning Colden and the council for land within the vicinity of the family's request. Colden eventually issued nine patents for officers and soldiers, several Scots among them, on the immediate eastern borders of the Artillery and Skenesborough Patents.

The Campbells had one other means of acquiring the land. In May 1764, Donald Campbell arrived in London seeking an order in council grant from George III and his Privy Council. He would first have to convince the Board of Trade that New York officials had long history of deliberately mistreating his family. The King and his council would make their decision based upon the commissioners' recommendation. He argued that his father had been a loyal subject of the empire who had once sought to expand the King's dominion in New York, and had defended George II's crown against his Jacobite enemies. He charged New York officials with duping his father into believing that he would receive 100,000 acres in exchange for populating the backcountry.<sup>13</sup>

The younger Campbell appealed to part of the British government's post-war American plans. He promised that his family could settle 150 families on the requested land within three years. Many of the original Islay emigrants from the 1730s and 1740s, he boasted, wanted to settle with them as well. He even suggested that many of the "non commissioned Officers and Soldiers of the Regiments disbanded in North America" might be interested in settling with them as well. This was a strange claim given that these same veterans could get proclamation land of their own. Nevertheless, he argued that Scotland would be an excellent source of additional colonists. There were "many Families of loyal Protestants in the Islands and other parts of North Britain," he suggested, "which might be induced by reasonable proposals and a certainty of their

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<sup>13</sup> "Memorial of Lieutenant Donald Campbell of the Province of New York to the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Trade & Plantations, May 1764," *DCHSNY*, 7:629-631.

being fulfilled, to remove into the said Province.” Recruiting new Scottish subjects “would add greatly to the strength, security, and opulence” of New York. They would be “in all respects faithful and serviceable subjects to His Majesty” in making North America economically strong and secure for the British Empire.<sup>14</sup>

But the Campbell brother made his pitch to Board of Trade members that were intent on correcting what they viewed as a serious flaw in colonial land policies. Fearing that a grant of this size would give rise to land speculation, the Board of Trade rejected Donald Campbell’s plea on that grounds that the proposed grant concentrated too much land into too few hands. The commissioners also pointed out that the provincial government had already authorized the Artillery patent in the Wood Creek area and the Crown had given Philip Skene land there as well. The Board did offer Campbell 30,000 acres in an area of his choosing as a consolation prize. George III’s privy council concurred with this recommendation and ordered Colden to authorize surveys and a land grant toward that end.<sup>15</sup>

Colden was most displeased with this development. Well aware that the Campbells were allied with Smith, Jr., and quite frankly tired of dealing with the family after nearly thirty years, the Lt. Governor wrote a letter of complaint to the Board of Trade’s president, Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough. The provincial government had already offered the Campbells 10,000 acres, he wrote, far more than he thought that they deserved. Moreover, he had signed off on a 2,000-acre proclamation grant for Donald Campbell. He told Hillsborough that Smith, Jr. had colluded with Campbell in making “misrepresentations and false suggestions” to the Board. Lachlin Campbell, he contended, “deluded [emigrants] from Scotland into this Province” with the intention of ruling

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 631; Entry for 15 May 1764, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1936), 12:55. Hereafter “JCTP.”

<sup>15</sup> Entry for 15 May 1764, JCTP, 12:55; Entry for 18 May 1764, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/110/446, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Here after “TNA.” Entry for 21 May 1764, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/110 f. 456; Privy Council: Registers, Entry for 23 May 1764, PC 2/110/461

over them, and Donald, supported by his patron's written history, presented a narrative "absolutely false and a misrepresentation of the facts." It delighted him to grant land to the Scots that McNaughton represented. In his mind, they had suffered for years as a consequence of the elder Campbell's machinations. Despite Colden's charges, the Privy Council's order stood.<sup>16</sup>

Predictably, Donald Campbell and his siblings were not content with a measly 30,000 acres. He spent the next eight years asking the Board of Trade and the Privy Council to revisit their previous decision. In 1766, Campbell inexplicably tried tying his family's cause to the Royal Proclamation, which of course provided no means of relief. The Privy Council authorized an additional 5,000 acres for the family, hoping they would go away, but that was asking too much. Campbell tried the same tactic again in 1770, yoking his petition to the Royal Proclamation, only to see the Privy Council sit on his request for two years. In 1772 the provincial government authorized surveys for the land. It was not until 1774 that the Campbell family received 30,000 acres by way of royal mandamus. Their agitation apparently cost them the extra 5,000 acres. Only the outbreak of the American War for Independence stopped them from pursuing their quixotic odyssey.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Colden to the Earl of Hillsborough, 10 August 1764 in Cadwallader Colden, *The Colden Letter Books, Vol. I. 1760-1765: Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1876* (New York: Printed for the Society, 1876), 1:346. Hereafter "CLB."

<sup>17</sup> Order in Council, 12 May 1766, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/111/620, TNA. When the Board of Trade received the Privy Council's order it in turn directed that a letter should be drafted to the governor of New York asking for full details on Campbell's requests since 1764. Ten days later, however, the Board revoked that previous order and began drafting a report on Campbell's petition for the Privy Council. The final report was finished by the first week of July. Entry for 3 June 1766, *JCTP*, 12: 286-287; Entry for 13 June 1766, *Ibid*, 12:291; Entry for 3 July 1766, *Ibid*, 12:303; Entry for 4 July 1766, *Ibid*, 12:304. The substance of the Board's report is contained in the minutes of the Privy Council. "Report of the Lords of the Committee upon the Petition of Lieutenant (sic) Donald Campbell praying for a Grant of Lands, 6 September 1766," Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/16-18, TNA; Order in Council, 27 April 1770, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/114/365, TNA; Order of Reference, 23 May 1771, PC2/115/217-218; Entry for 29 May 1771, *JCTP*, 13:253; Entry for 31 May 1771, *Ibid*, 13:255; "Warrant of Survey to Donald Campbell," 27 April 1772 in *Indorsed Land Papers*, 566; "Petition of Donald Campbell and others," 29 September 1772 in *Ibid*, 580; Minutes of the New York Council, 26 January 1774, *CCM*, 571.

### *Caledonia in Carolina*

The depressing nature of Lachlin Campbell's legacy and the evolution of soldiers into settlers through the Proclamation of 1763 deprived New York of the kind of well-established Scottish community then thriving in the North Carolina backcountry. The emigrants to New York in the 1730s and 1740s had met with disappointment. Those that chose to stay after the war were just beginning the process of settling their lands. The opposite was true of those Scots who had settled along the Cape Fear River in the colonial south.

The arrival of an aged and Gaelic-speaking Highland woman beautifully illustrates the centrality of the Scottish presence in North Carolina on the eve of the American Revolution. We do not know her name, only that her ship lurched to a halt next to a dock, probably at Wilmington, sometime in the second half of the eighteenth century. The scent of pitch and pine tar would have greeted the woman on the wharf. Along with those two key exports, she might have caught sight of slaves putting aboard ship cargoes of wooden planks, indigo, rice, and other commodities. As she stood there taking in her new surroundings, she was delighted to hear the sounds of her native tongue coming from two men amidst the general bustle on the dock. Most Highland emigrants had settled up river, where she was likely headed, so it was comforting to her to hear something familiar so soon after her arrival. Trying to pick out the two Highlanders, she was shocked to find that they were not the Scots she had expected. They were slaves who had learned Gaelic from their Highland masters. Accustomed to the mild dreariness of the Scottish climate and not the intensity of the southern American heat and sun, the woman

exclaimed, “A Dhia nan gras, am fas sinn uile mar sin?” or “O God of mercy, are we all going to turn black like that?”<sup>18</sup>

Eighteenth century colonial and British observers were amazed at the population growth of this old woman’s new home. In 1767, a resident of Williamsburg, Virginia claimed that there was “scarcely any history, either ancient or modern, which affords an account of such rapid increase of inhabitants in a back frontier country, as that of *North Carolina*.” Twenty years before only twenty taxable people lived within Orange County, he explained, but he could now assure his correspondent that “there are now four thousand taxable[s]” there. This increase, and the “flourishing state” of the other counties in the backcountry, was “astonishing” to those who witnessed it.<sup>19</sup> All exaggeration aside, the Virginian’s observations only reinforced his letter’s central points: North Carolina was a growing province. Lord Adam Gordon found the colony abounding in “White Inhabitants” with “upwards of 42,000 Men fit to bear Arms, [who] live mostly in the back Country” when he passed through it. Settlers and their slaves grew some rice and indigo along with a “good deal” of wheat and other grains, while exporting significant quantities of naval stores, pitch, and tar.<sup>20</sup> The Anglican itinerant preacher Charles Woodmason grumpily mused that “propagation being unrestricted, that the Encrease of People there is, inconceivable, even to themselves.”<sup>21</sup> The colony’s population rose from approximately 35,000

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<sup>18</sup> This account is found in Charles W. Dunn, *Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), 138.

<sup>19</sup> “London, Dec. 29. A Letter from Williamsburg in Virginia, dated Oct. 18,” *The Scots Magazine* (December 1767), 659.

<sup>20</sup> Lord Adam Gordon, “Journal of an Officer who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765,” in Newton D. Mereness, ed., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 401; Wood, *This Remote Part of the World*, 99.

<sup>21</sup> Richard J. Hooker ed., *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the American Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia by the University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 80-81.

people in 1730 to roughly 180,000 individuals forty years later. By 1775, North Carolina boasted the fifth largest population among the mainland British colonies.<sup>22</sup>

Scottish emigration to North Carolina began in earnest in the 1730s when Scots like Governor Gabriel Johnston and James Murray promoted it. Murray was determined to prosper “in this remote corner of the world.”<sup>23</sup> He believed that land in the Lower Cape Fear region was far cheaper than that which could be had in Scotland, a point he emphasized as a means of encouraging others just before he sailed for the colony.<sup>24</sup> Highlanders came in large numbers beginning in September 1739 with the arrival of 350 people from Argyllshire. They were motivated by some of the same impulses—cheaper land, desire to own property, and poor Scottish weather—that had inspired Lachlin Campbell’s New York enterprise. They settled in the Cross Creek area, a backcountry tributary of the Cape Fear River. The Cross Creek settlement began its life in what was then Bladen County. In 1754, the colonial assembly carved Cumberland County of it.<sup>25</sup> A 1782 sketch of the county showed Cross Creek and its neighboring settlement Campletown at the intersection of a road and water network that allowed trade through the backcountry.<sup>26</sup> The town emerged as a major trading center in the 1760s, with roads connecting it to Wilmington in the southeast, Salem and Salisbury in the west, and Petersburg, Virginia to the north. Farms of Highlanders dotted either side of the river and the creeks that fed it.

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<sup>22</sup> Wood, *This Remote Part of the World*, 6, 24.

<sup>23</sup> James Murray to John Murray, 10 January 1736/7 in Nina Moore Tiffany and Susan I. Lesley, eds., *Letters of James Murray, Loyalist* (Boston, 1901), 36.

<sup>24</sup> James Murray to Andrew Bennet, 13 May 1735, *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> For a Description of Cross Creek and initial Scottish settlement of the region see Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 77-84.

<sup>26</sup> *Sketch of Cumberland County, [North Carolina]*. Map. North Carolina, 1782. From North Carolina State Archives, *North Carolina Maps*, accessed 26 August 2015, [<http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ncmaps/id/147>].



minority population. A smattering of Welsh, German, Scots-Irish, and other European settlers were there as well, but the majority of the Lower Cape Fear inhabitants were slaves.<sup>28</sup> Further up river in Cumberland County Scottish Highlanders formed a comfortable majority. A 1767 Society for the Propagation of the Gospel census of white male taxables found “Mostly Scotch” colonists who supported a Presbyterian minister inhabiting Cumberland.<sup>29</sup> They lived there in a community of some 900 white men and 362 “blacks & mulattoes,” raising the prospect that future Scottish settlers might one day own two kinds of property—parcels of earth and enslaved humans to work them.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Carolina Connection**

Two related families among the colony’s early Highland settlers later became instrumental in promoting North Carolina after the Seven Years War. The first, the McAlesters, was headed by Coll McAlester of Balinakill, in Kintyre, Argyllshire. Along with his wife, Janet McNeill, the McAlester patriarch settled in the colony with five of their six children, including sons Alexander and Hector. The latter returned to Scotland in 1744, three years after their parents’ death, while Alexander remained in North Carolina. Over the next two decades the resident younger McAlester achieved a great deal of prominence in the colony and in his community. He served as commissioner of the peace for Cumberland County in the late 1750s and early 1760s, represented his county in the provincial assembly in 1762, and in 1766 he was

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<sup>28</sup> Wood, *This Remote Part of the World*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> “Return of the Names of the Counties and Parishes—Estimate of 1767 the White Taxables in the Province of North Carolina—Remarks on the Ability of the Respective Parishes, and the Names of the Clergy established by Presentation from the Governor” in William Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, (Raleigh, N.C.: P. M. Hale, Printer to the State, 1886), 7:540. Here after *CRNC*.

<sup>30</sup> “A return of the Lists of Taxables in the Province of North Carolina for the year 1767,” *CRNC*, 7:539.

named colonel of the county militia.<sup>31</sup> Along the way he acquired more land, including a tract of 200 acres in 1749 along the northwest branch of the Cape Fear River.<sup>32</sup>

Neill *Du* McNeill of Ardelay on the Isle of Gigha led the second family.<sup>33</sup> McNeill was one of the leaders of the 1739 expedition to North Carolina, although he chose to settle in Brunswick where he operated a tavern. One of his daughters was Alexander McAlester's first wife, while a son married McAlester's younger sister. McNeill's wife was Grissella Campbell, a woman of means, and the aunt of two brothers, James and Alexander.<sup>34</sup> James followed his aunt and uncle to North Carolina. In 1740, Governor Johnston granted him 640 acres "of Land lying in Bladen County on the S.W. side of the N.W. Branch of Cape Fear River."<sup>35</sup> He later returned to Scotland and transferred his colonial property to his brother, Alexander Campbell of Balole on Islay, who had taken a different path to the southern province. Balole spent over a decade in the British West Indies, including significant time on Jamaica, before coming home in the 1760s. Around 1769, he traveled to North Carolina in order to inspect his lands. He quickly returned home as an enthusiastic promoter of the colony and its potential.<sup>36</sup>

The two families formed a central link between North Carolina and the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland. By the 1760s, the success of the Cross Creek settlements and the transatlantic bond between the families created opportunities for the McAlesters and Balole to exploit events in Scotland to encourage emigration. In this decade Scottish proprietors like

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<sup>31</sup> "Alexander McAllister Family" in Douglas F. Kelly with Caroline Switzer Kelly, *Carolina Scots: An Historical Genealogical Study of Over 100 Years of Emigration* (Dillion, S.C.: 1739 Publications, 1998), 150-151. The surname "McAllister" is the modern variant of the people in this story. I have chosen to retain the contemporary spelling for the purposes of historical accuracy. Alexander and his family members in this period used the surname "McAlester."

<sup>32</sup> File No. 987, Alexander McAlester, 5 April 1749. North Carolina Land Grants: Land Patent Book, 10:146, accessed 24 April 2015 [<http://www.nclandgrants.com>].

<sup>33</sup> "*Du*" or "*Dubh*" means "black" in Gaelic.

<sup>34</sup> "Neill Du McNeill Family" in Kelly and Kelly, *Carolina Scots*, 147.

<sup>35</sup> File No. 633, James Campbell, 4 June 1740. North Carolina Land Grants: Land Patent Book, 8:72, accessed 24 April 2015 [<http://www.nclandgrants.com>].

<sup>36</sup> Alexander Murdoch, ed., "A Scottish Document concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772," *The North Carolina Historical Review* Volume LXVII, No. 4 (October, 1990): 444.

Norman McLeod of McLeod, 22<sup>nd</sup> chief of Clan McLeod on the Isle of Skye, Kenneth MacKenzie, Earl of Seaforth on the Isle of Lewis, the Countess of Sutherland in the northern Highlands, and Duncan MacDonell, 14<sup>th</sup> chief of the Glengarry MacDonells, began raising rents on their lands. These proprietors, about whom much more will be said in the chapters that follow, elevated rents to bolster their incomes, pay for modernizing improvements, and enhance property values. The enhanced rents were a symptom of the clan chiefs' transformation into landlords. They alienated tenants from their superiors as well as the ground upon which they labored. The existing connections between many of those Scottish regions and North Carolina opened a path way for new emigrants as these problems emerged.

In late 1767, for example, a ship departed from the Isle of Jura in Argyllshire for North Carolina. The vessel allegedly carried “betwixt forth and fifty families.”<sup>37</sup> Some of the Scots from this mountainous island, which lays just to the north-east of Islay in the Inner Hebrides, were reportedly “persons of good circumstances” who intended to settle in the Cape Fear region as well as further south in Georgia.<sup>38</sup> Newspapers inflated both the number of individuals leaving as well as their social standing. Only fifty people arrived at the North Carolinian port of Brunswick on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and their distressed state belied the more favorable reports of their condition. Governor William Tryon had to allocate £15 out of his own pocket for their “relief and assistance.” The provincial assembly later reimbursed him with public money.<sup>39</sup>

What the Jura Scots really wanted was land. That was, after all, one of the reasons why they had ventured across the Atlantic. Tryon offered ten families and eighteen individuals (including five women) head right grants totaling 5,040 acres. The quantities per grantee ranged

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<sup>37</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 21 May 1768.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*; *The Boston Chronicle*, 8 August 1768.

<sup>39</sup> 12 January 1768, Minutes of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly, *CRNC*, 7:526; 12 January 1768, Minutes of the Lower House of the North Carolina General Assembly, in *Ibid.*, 654.

from 100 to 640 acres.<sup>40</sup> In a very short time, a group of people that most likely rented land in Scotland became North American proprietors.

### *Selling North Carolina, 1767-1771*

The McAlesters observed events unfolding in Scotland with a mixture of fascination and sense of the possibilities they represented. From Scotland, Hector reported to his brother, Alexander, that the “Rent of Lands is so much advanced all over Scotland,” and that “hundreds of families” on the Isle of Arran and in Argyllshire were “determined to leave this Country” for North Carolina.<sup>41</sup> He asked for material that he could use to convince these families that the transatlantic journey was worth the risk. People wanted assurances that their crossing would not be in vain.<sup>42</sup> His own rents were “no less than double & triple” their former rate. For people laboring under similar conditions, “Carolina is their choise.”<sup>43</sup> In 1770 a cousin informed Alexander “our Lairds or Landlords oppression will soon help to plant your Colony.” His cousin’s success in North Carolina made him “valuable to all your friend & Conections hear.” Several Scots were planning a journey to the colony and were “Desairing to be recommended to you” for assistance in finding land once they arrived.<sup>44</sup>

The McAlester brothers and their cousin Balole engaged in a loosely coordinated effort to further erode Scottish proprietors’ authority in convincing beleaguered Scots to emigrate. It is

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<sup>40</sup> Names of Persons and Familys Natives of North Britain from the Isle of Jura in Argyle Shire, Landed at Brunswick the Fourth of November 1767, allowed by His Excellency the undermentioned quantity of Vacant Land, opposite to their respective Names, clear of all Fees in the Secretary's Office, to be taken up in Cumberland or Mecklenburgh Counties at their Option, *CRNC*, 7:543-544.

<sup>41</sup> Hector McAlester to Alexander McAlester, 15 March 1769, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter “SHC.”

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Hector McAlester to Hector McNeill, 20 March 1769, Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander McAlester of Cour to Alexander McAlester, 26 July 1770, Ibid.

possible that the North Carolinian McAlester discussed some kind of joint action when Balole came to tour his colonial property, the evidence is silent here, but there was a structure to their actions nonetheless. They cast Scottish chiefs and lairds as Pharaonic tyrants intent on enslaving their tenants while holding out to prospective emigrants North Carolina as a land of milk and honey. Forsaking their native land would be difficult. In exchange for gathering the emotional courage (and financial resources) to make the journey, the McAlesters and Balole emphasized the possibility of a better life in America where they could own land. In Scotland, they argued, the proprietors' hold on land and power diminished their standing as British subjects. Only in British America could they enjoy properly the blessings of British liberty.

Each man's message reinforced that of the others. From Cumberland County, Alexander McAlester provided reassurances that what Scots had heard about the colony was true. His reply to McAlester of Cour is indicative of this role. In it, McAlester attacked the Scottish landed hierarchy. He, too, had been a keen observer of the recent increase in the number of Scots resettling in the colony. Along with the Jura passengers, at least 1,600 Scots had arrived since 1767 from the Isles of Arran, Jura, Islay, Gigha, and the Scottish mainland.<sup>45</sup> McAlester framed Scotland as a land succumbing to tyranny and "oppresion" at the hands of avaricious landlords. America, by contrast, was a land of liberty and prosperity, one where lower-class Scots would be the proprietors. He was "Glad to see so many flying from" their proprietors and looked upon "their Coming to America" with great anticipation. Their arrival would only add to the "imense Number Come to this place" in the last few years. That prospect excited him. In time, he told McAlester of Cour, "I believe this part of it will soon be a new Scotland."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> William Tryon to Earl of Hillsborough, 11 March 1771, *CRNC*, 8:526.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander McAlester to Alexander McAlester of Cour, 1770, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

Men and women in Scotland's Western Isles were excited about the colony because of the information that Hector McAlester and Campbell of Balole spread about it. This was the strategy's second component. Campbell of Balole had begun this task in 1770 after returning home from his visit.<sup>47</sup> The idea of a land of plenty and possibility resonated with Scots laboring on estates in the Western Isles and Highlands. Denizens of the former inhabited a collection of largely treeless, often mountainous islands. They slept in thatched-roof homes and warmed themselves against the North Atlantic's fury by burning peat. These tenant farmers grew oats and barley, raised black cattle, fished the coasts for herring, or harvested kelp from just off shore. The work was laborious. On some isles, like Harris, the quality of the soil and the mountainous topography prevented farmers from plowing with animals: much of the cultivation had to be done by hand.<sup>48</sup> In the early 1790s, the local minister for the Parish of Uig on the Isle of Lewis claimed that the "parish never supplies itself with sufficiency of provision."<sup>49</sup> The proprietors often had to import food from elsewhere.

On the mainland northern counties of Sutherland and Caithness the people practiced similar forms of agriculture and aquaculture. The idyllic landscape that beckons the modern

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<sup>47</sup> There is some confusion in the historical record about how many letters Balole sent encouraging emigration, and when he sent them. We do know, as indicated by evidence presented in this footnote's parent paragraph, that Balole circulated something in 1770. In 1939, when the Reverend Canon R.C. MacLeod was cataloguing the documents in the muniment room of the MacLeod of MacLeod family in Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye, he surmised that a document he labeled "A Flaming account of Carolina by a man named Campbell" was created "probably about 1770." This would correspond with the aforementioned evidence and fit with the timeframe of when Balole returned to Scotland. However, there was a letter circulated on Skye in 1772 (the subject of discussion in the paragraphs below) that contained within it a copy of a letter from Balole. The parent letter is dated; the copied part of Balole's letter is not. In his exploration of this 1772 source, Alexander Murdoch notes that a copy of the Balole part of this letter is in the Dunvegan muniments. It is possible that the "Flaming Account" pegged c. 1770 is the same as the copied Campbell of Balole letter. See "A Flaming account of Carolina by a man named Campbell, c. 1770 in The Reverend Canon R. C. MacLeod of Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan: Being Documents from the Muniment Room of the MacLeods of MacLeod at Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye* (Aberdeen: Printed for the Third Spalding Club, 1939), 2:8; Murdoch, ed., "A Scottish Document": 445.

<sup>48</sup> "Observes or Remarks upon the Lands which Compose the Barrony called Harris the Property of Norman McLeod of McLeod Esqr," 1772, Lee Papers, MS. 3431, ff. 177-83, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NLS."

<sup>49</sup> The Reverend Mr. Hugh Monro, "Parish of Uig, (County of Ross, Synod of Glenelg, Presbytery of Lewis)" in Sir John Sinclair, ed. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799 with a new introduction by Donald J. Withrington* (East Ardsley, England: EP Publishing Limited, 1983), 20:45.

backpacker to the region in the eighteenth century structured everyday life. The northwestern coastal parish of Assynt's "lofty mountains, high hills, stupenduous rocks, [and] threatening precipices" gave way to small plains and rolling hills covered with "heath and deep moss."<sup>50</sup> A 1774 survey of the parish revealed an area well suited for pasturing cattle—the locals' primary commodity—with more limited opportunities for raising crops.<sup>51</sup> A tolerable road connected Assynt with the more central and eastern parishes. Harsh weather, however, often stymied travel and communication between the regions. The people of Reay, a hilly parish on the northeastern coast that flatted as the land approached the sea, were "on the whole industrious and economical." They were a pleasant people, their minister found, yet generally poor and too much addicted to distilled spirits.<sup>52</sup>

Balole's precise words in 1770 are unknown. What we do know is that some Scots found his description of North Carolina full of exaggeration. And they were suspicious of his motives. Angus McCuaig on Islay imagined "the people will Recon [Balole] to be for his own profit" in promoting the colony.<sup>53</sup> He sought confirmation that they would not be simply ensnared in a web of Balole's self-interest. These concerns represented on the one hand a natural anxiety about a transatlantic relocation. It was expensive, dangerous, and the landscape of the intended destination unfamiliar. On the other, it required placing a great deal of trust in the person or persons pitching the idea. On Skye, some of MacLeod of MacLeod's tacksmen recognized that "there are a very great number" of subtenants on the chief's estates who "though they possess but small [pieces] of the worst of the lands, are burdened with the whole of the rents that are payed"

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<sup>50</sup> The Reverend Mr. William Mackenzie, "Parish of Assint, (County of Sutherland, Synod of Sutherland and Caithness, Presbytery of Dornoch)" in Sir John Sinclair, ed. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799*, 18:273-274.

<sup>51</sup> R.J. Adamn, ed., *John Home's Survey of Assynt* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable Ltd. 1960).

<sup>52</sup> The Reverend Mr. David Mackay, "Parish of Reay, (Counties of Caithness and Sutherland.—Presbytery of Caithness.—synod of Sutherland and Caithness)" in Sinclair, ed. *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799* 18:149, 156.

<sup>53</sup> Angus McCuaig to Alexander McAlester, 26 July 1770, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

to the clan patriarch.<sup>54</sup> In anticipating that this unbalanced arrangement might prove troublesome for their chief in the near future, it also suggested that tenants contemplating emigration would want to avoid a similar fate in British America. They did not wish to become pawns in the game of sordid men. Nor did they want to occupy the same place in North Carolinian society as they had in Scotland. Alexander McAlester therefore needed to convince McCuaig (which he did) and others that “our frind Balole” had given a faithful account of the colony.<sup>55</sup>

In numerous letters McAlester played on the twin themes of oppression and liberty to support Balole’s claims. Part of his role was in conveying a sense of urgency in stressing that Scotland could no longer provide for them. He seemed to believe genuinely that Scots living in the Western Isles and Highlands were on the precipice of disaster. To one McNabb, he argued that the “longer you and all the rest of you stays the worst it will be for you.”<sup>56</sup> He advised Angus McAlester of Loup that North Carolina was “the best poor mans country” that he knew.<sup>57</sup> He counseled another man that the poor would be wise to “tak Corrage and leave the [oppression] they now lay under.”<sup>58</sup> He told another cousin, James McAlester of Ronvachan, that recent settlers had plenty of corn, and that they and their families “seems to be well satisfied” despite any financial hardships they may have countered in reaching the colony.<sup>59</sup> The poor might meet with some initial difficulties, he informed a doubtful John Boyd, but once they are settled “it is for life.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> J. MacLeod to W. Frazer, 3 April 1769, quoted in James Hunter, *Scottish Exodus: Travels Among a Worldwide Clan* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2005), 86.

<sup>55</sup> McAlester to McCuaig, 29 November 1770; McCuaig to McAlester, 22 August 1771, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

<sup>56</sup> Alexander McAlester to ? McNabb, 29 November 1770, Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander McAlester to Angus McAlester of Loup, 29 November 1770, Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander McAlester to John Boyd, 29 November 1770, Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Alexander McAlester to James McAlester, November or December 1771, Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Alexander McAlester to John Boyd, April 1772, Ibid.

Hector McAlester had anticipated such skepticism directed at the prophets spreading the good news. In 1769, while he asked his brother for material useful in persuading Scots to leave the Western Isles, he set about enlisting the provincial government's authority in legitimizing their claims. This was the strategy's third prong. He argued that the government's support, most especially Governor Tyron's, would be crucial in assuaging prospective emigrants' fears. In other words, he wanted the government to become an active participant in selling Scots on North Carolina's virtues. He asked Tryon for a description of the colony and its productivity, along with assurances that land was leased out at rates lower than found in Scotland.<sup>61</sup> The people, as he told his brother, were convinced that rents on leased land rose in step with each other in both British places. He hoped that the governor would "incourage Numbers to join those already determined" to emigrate.<sup>62</sup> A letter in Tryon's hand and bearing his seal would lend greater weight and authority to the promoters' message. It would show that the McAlesters and Balole were not inflating the colony's promise, and provide them with cover against charges of self-interest.

Surviving evidence indicates that Governor Tryon never responded to Hector McAlester's request.<sup>63</sup> But the provincial assembly did take action in ways complementary to Hector McAlester's wishes. In 1770, the legislature passed "An Act to Encourage the further Settlement of this Province." The new law exempted "all such Persons or any Others that may

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<sup>61</sup> Hector McAlester's letter to Tryon and the governor's reply have not been found. The evidence for it and the substance of its contents comes from two letters, one written to Alexander McAlester, and the other to Hector McNeill. See Hector McAlester to Alexander McAlester, 15 March 1769; Hector McAlester to Hector McNeill, 20 March 1769, Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Hector McAlester to Alexander McAlester, 15 March 1769, Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> No mention of it appears in Tyron's published papers. Hector does not mention receiving a reply from the governor.

come from Europe” with the intention of settling in the colony from paying “any Publick County or Parish Taxes” for four years.<sup>64</sup>

The settlement act technically applied to all Europeans. Tryon warned his London superiors not to be fooled. It “was enacted on behalf of several ship loads of Scotch families which have landed in this province within three years past.” The governor acknowledged the influence of men like the McAlesters had in driving emigration. Many of these families had come from the Western Isles “but chief of them from Argyle Shire.” Most, he reported, had settled in Cumberland County. The reason given for emigrating “was that the Rents of their lands were so raised that they could not live upon them.” They had been “particularly encouraged to settle Here by their Country Men” who had long lived in the province.<sup>65</sup> The bill could not become law until the King gave his Royal assent. Tryon’s commentary was meant to help the Board of Trade, the Privy Council, and George III make that determination. If he consented to the law, the King would formally sanction the imperial state’s involvement in the emigration of his subjects out of Great Britain. Whether he would do so remained to be seen. Tryon and the provincial legislature would have to wait for his answer.

In the meantime, as Tryon’s thoughts made it clear that the combination of the higher rents in Scotland and the prodding of Scots based in North Carolina generated significant enthusiasm for the colony. The number of arrivals since 1767, which had Tryon pegged at 1,600 men, women, and children, were indicative of that trend. More were preparing to make their way there as well.

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<sup>64</sup> “An Act to Encourage the further Settlement of this Province,” 1770. The Colonial Records Project, North Carolina Office of Archives & History, accessed 25 April 2015, [<http://www.ncpublications.com/colonial/editions/Acts/settlement.htm?>]

<sup>65</sup> William Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 12 March 1771 in William S. Powell, ed., *The Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected Papers* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 2:629

Tryon's letter coincided with development of three large emigration schemes on the Isle of Skye. In April 1771, Alexander MacDonald of Kingsburgh observed one developing around him on Sleat. A man had been "Sent to London to freight Vessels for about 500 Passengers from this Place to America." The people had pooled "their Stocks into one Capital to purchase land" in the colonies.<sup>66</sup> A month later, Alexander Morrison of Skinidin, a tacksman on MacLeod of MacLeod's lands on Skye, circulated a proposal of his own among his chief's tenants. He would arrange passage for Scots who could pay their own way. For those who could not, he would underwrite their passage in exchange for signing indenture contracts for three years' service at £2 per year.<sup>67</sup>

The third plan involved a group of Skye merchants and clergy who in 1771 formally petitioned George III for 40,000 acres of North Carolina land. Encouraged by reports of the colony, the men "had in view to form a settlement to themselves and Families" there. This plan had been in development for some time, they told the King, as they had "for some time been making Dispositions for that purpose by engaging Servants and disposing their effects in this Country."<sup>68</sup> All they needed now was George III's gracious blessing to proceed, a gesture that came in the form of consenting to the massive land grant. Like North Carolina's provincial assembly, however, the Skye group would have to wait until the King's pleasure and whether or not he would involve the imperial state in promoting emigration was known. They would have to overcome the Board of Trade's aversion to grants of that nature.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Alexander McDonald to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 30 April 1771, NLS: Delvine Papers, MS.1306, ff.54-5.

<sup>67</sup> Advertisement, 10 May 1771 in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:9. For those paying their own passage Morrison asked for three guineas per person in fees.

<sup>68</sup> Petition of James MacDonald, Normand MacDonald, et al. [1771], Foreign Archives. British Records. N.C. Original Correspondence, Board of Trade 1760-1766, 1766-1768, 1768-1771, 1771-1772, (microfilm), The North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>69</sup> The Privy Council referred the petition to the Board of Trade on 14 June 1771, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/115/278, TNA.

On Arran, Hector had heard rumblings about the proposed schemes on Skye. There were “some hundred famylies goeing this year” from Skye. Some were leaving Arran as well. The landlords had “not in the least” relented in raising rents. It seemed to him that “providence had ordered for the peopling of that vast Continent” with Scots.<sup>70</sup>

If God was on the side of alienated and benighted Scots then He had an Old Testament way of showing it. What no one could know was that in the weeks after Hector McAlester invoked His divine will, bitter cold and snow would sweep through the Western Isles and Highlands. Harvests would lie in ruins, cattle would die from exposure, and people began to starve. For those thinking about emigrating, it was only further confirmation, however painful, that Scotland had failed them. For those hoping to promote their transatlantic relocation, winter’s arrival, and the desperation it produced in the people in those regions, heralded new possibilities and ways of selling the American dream.

### **The Winter of Discontent and Opportunity**

Winter came fast and hard to the Western Isles and the northern Highlands. “Such frost & snow has not been seen the in Memory of Man,” wrote the Catholic Bishop George Hay.<sup>71</sup> On the estates of the young Countess of Sutherland, who was then in her minority, her estate superintendent worried that the devastation wrought on the harvest would imperil her tenants’ lives. Captain James Sutherland argued for the importation of food “for the support of your highlanders next spring & summer.” He reckoned that he would need at least 300 Bolls of oatmeal (with one boll equalling six bushels) for the tenants in the western Parish of Assynt and

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<sup>70</sup> Hector McAlester to Alexander McAlester, 12 September 1771, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

<sup>71</sup> Bishop George Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 20 April 1772, Blair Letters 3/244/2, Scottish Catholic Archives, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “SCA.”

other places. The “situation this Year will require all our attention to prevent” the people from starving.<sup>72</sup> Snow in early 1772 severed communication and travel between the Countess’s lands in the eastern and western Highlands.<sup>73</sup> The factor for Hiltown near Dingwall in the eastern Highlands lamented the “Dismal Situation of Man & beast that engrosses the whole attention of this Country.” He claimed to have never before seen such scarcity, nor cattle in such a weakened state. There was now, he informed the Earl of Seaforth’s chief factor on the Isle of Lewis, “a general Cry from all Quarters of Emigration to America,” and only God knew where it would end. He suspected the year would bring “a fatal Blow” to many people.<sup>74</sup>

It was much the same woeful story on the Isle of Skye. Reports discord and destitution circulated among MacLeod of MacLeod’s inner circle.<sup>75</sup> A local magistrate found that the people had no seed to sow, nor any bread to eat. The cattle were dying in droves. The poor were feeding on their carcasses.<sup>76</sup> The winter’s wrath increased an already stressful situation for Flora MacDonald. Including the current spring, they had “lost almost our whole Stock of Cattle and horseis,” amounting to about 327 animals, within the past three years. She did not know how they would pay their bills.<sup>77</sup> Most of the “poor miserable Island[’s]” best people, meaning those of means, were “makeing ready to follow their freinds to america.” She anticipated that she and her husband, Allan, would be among those next to go.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 23 November 1771, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>73</sup> Sinclair, ed., *The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799*, 18:298; Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, 27 February 1772, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>74</sup> Alexander Mackenzie of Hiltown to Gillanders, 9 March 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/203/19, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “NRS.”

<sup>75</sup> John MacLeod of Talisker to MacLeod of MacLeod, 15 April 1772, in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:10.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander MacLeod of Ullinish to MacLeod of MacLeod, 21 April 1772, in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:10.

<sup>77</sup> Flora MacDonald to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 12 August 1772, Delvine Papers, MS.1306, f.72, NLS.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

The vicious winter that had left many Scottish Highlanders gnawing on the frozen flesh of their dead cattle and compromised Flora MacDonald's financial well-being created ways for a wider array of men with American lands to exploit the crisis. In the 1760s and very early 1770s, the McAlester brothers and Campbell of Balole had been using their familial connections to emphasize the ways that the empire could work in favor of common Scots. They, using words like Flora MacDonald's, emphasized that nothing but poverty and oppression awaited those Scots who chose to remain at home. Emigration into the empire, they argued, and to North Carolina in particular, offered relief from oppressive landlords and now the bitter cold. While it is difficult to link the precise numbers of those who sailed for North Carolina with the efforts of the McAlesters and Balole as this first phase of promotion gave way to the next, we do know that between November 1771 and March 1772 nearly 1,000 Scots from the isles had arrived in the colony. No doubt that some of these people had also chosen to leave because of the terrible winter. In the eyes of Tryon's successor, Josiah Martin, their arrival was a great blessing for the colony. These "hardy laborious and thrifty people" would augment North Carolina's "prosperity and strength."<sup>79</sup>

However, with winter's fury complicating an already changing Scottish social landscape, new groups of Scots, Americans, and British officials engaged in more overt acts of promotion, hoping to show how the empire could work to the advantage of their intended audience, and for their own provincial interests as well. The McAlesters and Balole faced competition from men championing other British colonies. These included the Reverend John Witherspoon, who held lands in Nova Scotia, Thomas Desbrisay, the Lieutenant Governor of St. Johns' Island (Prince Edward Island), and a familiar name, William Smith, Jr. of New York, among others. The Carolina connection that the McAlesters and Balole had built endured, and in fact expanded its

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<sup>79</sup> Josiah Martin to Earl of Hillsborough, 1 March 1772 in Saunders, ed., *CRNC*, 9:259.

reach from the Western Isles north into the Highlands, forming a crucial link between events on Skye and the northern mainland in larger measure because of the terrible blizzards and cold. Scots' willingness to emigrate, and the distress of the winter, brought new competitors into the fold.

*Campbell of Balole and The Skye Bridge to the Northern Highlands and North Carolina*

Captain James Sutherland received some disturbing intelligence in December 1771 while he was assessing the damage to the Countess of Sutherland's estates. Alexander Mackenzie of Ardlock, the factor in the Parish of Assynt, had met with tenants recently in a bid to collect rents. He discovered that "they have some thoughts to follow the example of the Isle of Skye People" to resettle in America.<sup>80</sup> By the following February, Sutherland found "that there is a migration going on in this Country in imitation of the Isle of Skye People," particularly in the parishes of Farr and Kildonan in the north-central Highlands. The principal "ringleader" was George MacKay, a tacksman of Mundale in Farr, who had found willing participants among his own subtenants and those under other tacksmen. Rumors circulated that tenants on a neighboring estate had engaged with a man named "Doctor Campbell" for passage to the colonies.<sup>81</sup>

The farmers' invocation of the "Sky People" revealed several critical things about how the McAlesters' and Balole's message had spread from the Western Isles north into the Highlands. First, it obviously demonstrated that tenants in the Countess's parishes had some knowledge of emigration schemes developing on the MacLeod and MacDonald lands on Skye. This offered a clear indication that such reports had reached the Gaelic-speaking peoples of the

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<sup>80</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 20 December 1771, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>81</sup> Same to Same, 17 February 1772, Ibid.

northern Highlands, and that they likely knew the emigrants' intended destination. Second, Captain Sutherland's own awareness of events on Skye and the realization that the people under his general care knew of them too made him cautious for the future. He realized, as we will see more fully in Chapter 4, that he and other proprietors would have to find ways to counter a growing enthusiasm if they were to keep people on their lands. Finally, in naming MacKay of Mundale as the chief agitator in Farr, Captain Sutherland's informants revealed to him (and us) how the message came north into the Countess' properties.

Captain Sutherland wanted to discover the extent of Mundale's intentions and try to convince his followers not to emigrate. He wrote the scheme's leader in early 1772 ahead of a scheduled meeting with disgruntled tenants at Kildonan where he would attempt to dissuade them from leaving.<sup>82</sup> A fresh round of heavy snow, however, had made the roads impassable. The meeting never happened.<sup>83</sup>

Meanwhile, Mundale was back on Skye by early March. He was at Skinidin, Alexander Morrison's farm. Morrison was still in the process of putting his plan of shuttling Scots to North Carolina into execution. Mundale had been inquiring about the substance of favorable reports concerning the colony, but doubts had begun creeping into his mind. He had received a letter from a "Gentleman" who argued that "we could get no Settlements [in the colony] owing to America being already the property of other trading people."<sup>84</sup> The timing of it strongly suggests that Captain Sutherland was the unnamed dissuader. Mundale had received it shortly after he and other families formalized a plan to emigrate. That correlates within the timeframe of when Captain Sutherland had learned of the activity and had written Mundale about it.

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<sup>82</sup> Sutherland mentioned that he wrote such a letter in James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 17 February 1772, *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, 27 February 1772, *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> George Mackay to Unknown, 7 March 1772 in Murdoch, ed., "A Scottish Document concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772," 447.

The question was whether or not North Carolina was still a viable destination. Yes, came the reply from an unknown correspondent, who advised Mundale that the “Gentleman” dissuader was “misinformed.” A great deal of land in the colony “is yet no Mans property but the Kings,” who would grant it out through orders in council for the usual quit rents and associated fees. Mundale should rest easy, for he had it on good authority from a “Gentleman of Illay” who had been in the colony two years earlier that a man could easily obtain a grant of lands or secure a lease on property at reasonable rates.<sup>85</sup>

Balole likely was the Islay source. Mundale’s exchange with the anonymous correspondent contained a copy of one of Balole’s letters preaching the Carolina Gospel. In the promotional letter the Islay native laid out in precise detail his vision for how emigration offered disaffected Scots a way of using the empire for their material and political advantages. It, along with a pamphlet containing similar sentiments published the following year, marked a point of transition in which promoters advocating for resettlement in particular colonies began moving beyond informal networks that had characterized the McAlester-Balole connection into public exhortations plying on the specific social and climatic conditions then plaguing Scotland.

Balole made his case for North Carolina and its imperial connection with Scotland in four ways. He emphasized the colony’s commercial and geographic advantages relative to Scotland. One could enjoy these opportunities and their rights as British subjects by emigrating. To make that case he exploited the tension between tenants and landlords within Scottish society. That also required emphasizing his personal investment in the colony. He, too, would resettle in North Carolina.

Expansive geography and commercial improvement occupied a central place in Campbell of Balole’s advocacy. Balole emphasized a landscape well suited for the production of

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<sup>85</sup> Unknown to George Mackay, n.d. [1772], *Ibid.*: 447.

marketable goods as well as a place in which settlers could, and did, prosper. One only had to look at the emergence of a growing colony hewn from the rough wilderness in the last thirty years. Much had changed since his uncle and brother arrived with the first Argyll settlers. Those earlier emigrants set themselves down “40 Miles in the midst of Woods distant from any other Settlement.” Three meager “hutts” made for the town of Wilmington. Now it was a “fine thriving pretty place” where colonists conducted “a considerable trade” with England. Settlers produced an array of commodities like tar, turpentine, beef, pork, a little indigo, along with some rice and timber. These were marked contrast to a Scottish Highland agricultural economy largely wedded to cattle, kelp, and grain production. There was “great Corn there in plenty,” a tasty detail for Scots who had lost much during the preceding winter and had been reduced to sating their hunger pangs on livestock carcasses.

North Carolina was also a big place. To islanders living on rugged land bounded by the sea, or Highlanders working patches of arable ground buttressed by great mountains, Balole spoke of vast forests through which a man might ride his horse without touching a tree. These trees could be transformed into fuel, building materials, and tradable commodities. Those who feared that good land was no longer available in the colony need not worry. “If all the people in Scotland & Ireland were to go there theyd have plenty of land in that province,” he wrote without hint of exaggeration, “for what is known of it already is much larger than Brittain & Ireland put together.” He boasted that he could buy a planation in Cumberland County for £150 of £160. For that price one could own a good house, out buildings, 80 acres of open land, and 500 acres of woodlands that would produce more for him than any farm on Islay or Skye. For a marginalized people living on the fringes of British society, this was a landscape of seemingly unlimited potential.

The prospect of property ownership mattered a great deal to a people who normally leased their land. Balole linked landholding to the greater enjoyment of their political rights as British subjects. The Highlanders who had settled up the Cape Fear River at Cross Creek each had a plantation of his own. There they lived “happy as princes, they have liberty & property,” connecting the possession of the one with the other. In Scotland the concentration of land in the hands of the properties limited access to both. Emigrating, he argued, held out to Scots the potential of owning land and participating in the political process. He might have pointed to Alexander McAlester as an example of one who had parleyed property ownership into significant political appointments.

Moreover, gaining access to the political process through property ownership in the colony was a means of overcoming their near-enslavement in Scotland. In language that echoed McAlester’s sentiments, a pamphlet attributed to Balole equated Highland proprietors with “Egyptian task-masters” who enjoyed the fruits of their tenants’ labor while denying them their rights as British subjects. The point of this pamphlet, *Informations concerning the Province of North Carolina, Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, was that only by leaving Scotland and emigrating to North America could Scots could fully embrace their status as British citizens. It would not make them any less British. Indeed, the Scots already in North Carolina “still belong to the British empire, and are happy under the benign influence of its administration,” now that Scottish proprietors no longer held them in thrall<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Scotus Americanus, *Informations concerning the Province of North Carolina, Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. By an Impartial Hand* (Glasgow, 1773), 11. Scholars dispute the authorship of this work. Ned C. Landsman has attributed the document to the Reverend William Thom, a minister in Larnarkshire, who authored a number of tracts probing the causes of emigration in the early 1770s. Landsman reasons that similarities in this pamphlet regarding the collapse of clanship with those in Thom’s other works, and that the document in question is included in a bound collection of Thom’s printed works in the National Library of Scotland, suggests that it sprang from the reverend’s pen. Alexander Murdoch concedes that a textual comparison between this pamphlet and Campbell of Balole’s letter cannot confirm his authorship, but does point out that the writer signed the document from Portaskaig in Islay, only a few miles from Balole’s farm. Critically, the author

What Balole wanted Scots to know is that they stood a better chance of prospering in a British imperial world rather a Scottish domestic one. He stressed in his letter that Scots did not “dread of their being turned out of their lands by Tyrants in North Carolina.” Each man held a firm title to his property, and in this way there were equal in standing to the Duke of Argyle or Sir Alexander MacDonald.<sup>87</sup> This was a radical suggestion. In Scotland, tenants toiled away on land they did not own, occupying in most cases the bottom rung of a landed hierarchy that limited access to property ownership and social mobility. In North Carolina, however, each man could be his own lord. The *Informations* pamphlet expanded on this point. Emigration had a kind of leveling effect for all British subjects. Scots seeking relief from tyrannical landlords would enjoy in North Carolina, and America more generally, “all those civil blessings which the noblest constitution under heaven was intended to communicate to all ranks belonging to it.”<sup>88</sup> In other words, the feudal nature of Scottish Highland society was antithetical to the British Constitution. Acquiring property in the colonies enabled Scots to reclaim their rights as British subjects. The empire provided for them in ways Scotland could not.

Balole understood that he would have his critics. McAlester had pushed back against some of them beginning in 1770. MacKay of Mudale had encountered an unfriendly evaluation of North Carolina two years later. Interested parties could take comfort in his own plan to settle there. He had a “strong Attachmt” to the Scots and his lands in Cumberland County. It was a

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mentions that he has been to North Carolina in recent years. We know that Thom never went to America. It may be that Thom assisted Balole with the publication of this pamphlet as he did with others. For an overview of this controversy see Alexander Thompson, “News From America” (Glasgow: 1774) in Barbara DeWolfe, ed., *Discoveries of America: Personal Accounts of British Emigrants to North America during the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 109-110 n48. Thompson wrote his pamphlet as a series of letters to Thom.

<sup>87</sup> Murdoch, ed., “A Scottish Document concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772,”: 449.

<sup>88</sup> Scotus Americanus, *Informations*, 11.

promise he made good. In 1775, Balole arrived in North Carolina around the same time that British forces skirmished with Massachusetts Minute Men at Lexington and Concord.<sup>89</sup>

Mundale carried Balole's words back north in hopes of assuaging lingering doubts among prospective emigrants. While it is difficult to link individual emigrants in this period with Balole's message, the Gaelic poetry noted earlier and the numerical evidence is suggestive of the effect it had on Scots. In July 1772, forty-eight families left the Sutherland estates for the Port of Greenock near Glasgow on their way to America, with "two other companies, one of 100, another of 90," following the same course.<sup>90</sup> In August, "Upwards of 200 passengers" from the same lands boarded the *Adventure* in Loch Eriboll and set sail for the colony.<sup>91</sup> Morrison of Skinidin emigrated from Skye "with 300 of his Neighbours" around the same time.<sup>92</sup> James Hogg, a resident of Caithness whose brother Robert was merchant in Wilmington, organized an expedition for Scots in Caithness and Sutherland in 1773. It ended in disaster when a storm drove the vessel ashore on the Shetland Islands.<sup>93</sup> In 1774 and 1775, Scottish customs officials recorded an additional 267 people from Argyllshire and surrounding communities leaving for the North Carolinian port.<sup>94</sup> These last figures are too low. They do not include the unknown number who sailed from Campbeltown in August 1774, when Flora MacDonald boarded the *Baliol* for North Carolina.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Alexander McAlester to Hector McAlester, Spring 1775, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

<sup>90</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (August 1772), 395.

<sup>91</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (September 1772), 515.

<sup>92</sup> Loyalist Claim of Alexander Morrison, 19 December 1783, AO 13: American Loyalist Claims, Series II - (122) Claims M.N., North Carolina, accessed, 13 February, [www.ancestry.com].

<sup>93</sup> "Report of the Examination of the Emigrants from the Counties of Caithness and Sutherland on board the Ship Bachelor of Leith bound to Wilmington in North Carolina," 15 April 1774. Treasury Records, T 47/12, TNA.

<sup>94</sup> "Port Greenock. List of Passengers on board the Ship 'Ulysses' James Chalmers Masr for Wilmington in North Carolina." 12 August to 16 August 1774 and "Port Greenock. List of Passengers from this Port from the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1774 inclusive, to the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1774 exclusive," Treasury Records, T 47/12, TNA.

<sup>95</sup> D. MacDougall, ed., *Scots and Scots Descendants in America* (New York: Caledonian Publishing Company, 1917), 1:23.

## *Competitors*

Careful observations of the instability wrought by the harsh winter of 1771-1772 and the agitation among Scots in the Western Isles and northern Highlands inspired other promoters to enter the fray. Unlike the familial connections on which the McAlesters and Balole used to spread their message about North Carolina, a new constellation of emigration advocates emerged in 1772 and 1773 targeting disaffected Scots to hawk particular pieces of colonial land. Their goal was to persuade Scots to settle in places like mainland Nova Scotia, St. Johns Island, and New York. Not only did they wish to people their respective lands with Scots, they well understood that North Carolina's champions had made significant headway in positioning that colony as emigrants' preferred destination. The robust Scottish communities in North Carolina and their personal involvement with the earlier settlement had given Balole and the McAlesters social capital to spend in doing their work. The new entrants would have to overcome both if they were to be successful.

These new emigration proponents fell into two broad categories. The first was a collection of landowners, British officials, agents, and merchants who made overtures to Scots in print or in person in hopes of gaining their business or their labor. They had a common desire to people their respective lands or colonies. The second category centered on a transatlantic coalition whose public face was the recently emigrated John Witherspoon. They advocated for resettlement in North America using arguments similar in nature as that of the McAlesters' and Balole's. Yet despite couching their efforts as an act of Christian charity, Witherspoon and his partners stood to benefit financially by bringing Scots to America.

In the 1760s, the British government complemented the land policies contained within the Royal Proclamation of 1763 with a new strategy to populate St. John's Island. The British took formal control of it from France as part of the terms of peace that ended the Seven Years War. Until 1769, St. John's, lying to the north of modern Nova Scotia and east of what is now New Brunswick, was part of the former territory. The island shaped like a well-chewed dog's bone had been highly contested by New England, British, and French forces since the 1740s. During the Seven Years War it and mainland Nova Scotia were the sites of deliberate *depopulations*. In 1755, British forces sent between 6,000 and 7,000 French-speaking Acadians from around the Bay of Fundy into exile, removing them to colonies in British America. Several thousand Acadians who managed to avoid this forced removal fled to St. John's where three years later the war and fate caught up with them. When the British military began a siege of the provincial capital of Louisbourg in the summer of 1758, the island's population stood around 4,700 people. After the island's French governor, Augustin de Boschenry de Drucour, surrendered to British forces, Major General Amherst and his subordinates initiated the removal of 3,100 French settlers from the Island. Perhaps as many as 1,500 settlers fled on their own, leaving the island's total population in mid-1759 at roughly 200 people.<sup>96</sup>

The near total depopulation of St. John's Island during the war gave British imperial planners with a nearly blank colonial landscape. The Board of Trade's approach in re-populating the island advanced the principles it had laid down in the summer of 1763 when its commissioners advised George III and his ministers on land grant reforms and the best means of

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<sup>96</sup> My account of these episodes is drawn from Earle Lockerby, "The Deportation of the Acadians from Ile St.-Jean, 1758," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 27 (1998): 45-94.

efficiently and cost-effectively integrating conquered territories into the empire. The government placed the island in the hands of great proprietors and to them assigned the task of peopling this new addition to British America. They would be their own promoters. Unlike the Proclamation's allocation of military grants based on a war veteran's rank—grants that could be as much as 5,000 acres for field officers—the government divided St. John's Island into sixty-seven townships of 20,000 acres each. It created a lottery system to allocate these tracts to new proprietors. The land owners would pay quit rents to the crown, the size of which depended on the land's quality and state of improvement, and the money would then be used to fund the island's government. The income needed to pay this land tax would come from leasing out their property to settlers.<sup>97</sup>

In 1767, the Board of Trade made final preparations for initiating the settlement of the island. The commissioners interviewed petitioners or their representatives who wanted lots, finalized the details for the lottery, and developed the regulations governing settlement. They eventually allocated sixty-six townships (reserving the sixty-seventh for the Crown) to a group of proprietors with the stipulation that lottery winners people one-third of their lands within four years under pain of forfeiting their rights to the Crown. Limiting the size of the tracts reflected concerns about monopolies and land speculation, while the short time frame was meant to encourage quick settlement. The Board of Trade also mandated that the island be settled with foreign Protestants or American colonists that had lived on the North American mainland for at least two years. The commissioners did not want the new colonies to siphon off domestic labor resources. Importantly, the Board did not provide a means to enforce these settler restrictions.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> J. M. Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 7 (1978): 76.

<sup>98</sup> "At a Meeting of His Majesty's Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, 23 July 1767," in Entry for 26 August 1767, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/438, TNA. For a visual exploration of the Board of Trade's vision for St.

It allowed proprietors, such as Scotland's Lord Advocate, James Montgomery, whose quiet scheming on the island is a critical feature of Chapter 3, to ignore the rules governing settlement.

Two years after the lottery the King appointed Irishmen Thomas Desbrisay as the island's lieutenant governor.<sup>99</sup> By then several of the original proprietors had either given up hopes of settling their lands or decided to sell them off for other reasons. Desbrisay purchased property around Charlottetown, the island's seat of government. He bought Lot 33, bordered by Charlottetown on its southern end, and by Great Rustico Bay to the north.<sup>100</sup>

Despite his royal appointment Desbrisay did not actually take up his post for another ten years. That did not stop him from trying to become an absentee proprietor. In May 1772, he circulated in Scotland a printed advertisement for his colonial lands. It noted that "His Majesty" had graciously named Desbrisay "Lieutenant Governor, Secretary, and Register of said Island." He included his official titles as a means of establishing trust with prospective emigrants. Surveyor Samuel Holland's notes from 1767 characterized the land in simple terms. He found the "Woods good and tolerable good Soil" with "Good Fishing" in the harbor.<sup>101</sup> Desbrisay used far more splendid adjectives in describing his property. His ground provided access to the markets of the capital and to the Yorke and Elliot rivers, from whence produce could be sent out into the Atlantic market. The bay was "remarkably well circumstanced for Fish Trade," fine timber was available for vessel construction, an "extremely healthful" climate offered a short winter, and soil "rich, fertile, and having little or no Brush or underwood on it," made for "easy"

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John's Island, see "Mapping St. John's Island, 1763-1781: An *Atlantic Neptune* Tour" in James P. Ambuske, Mary Draper, and S. Max Edelson, "The Atlantic Neptune Atlas: A Digital Gallery," A MapScholar Digital Atlas, <http://www.viseyes.org/mapscholar/?109> (2015).

<sup>99</sup> For a short biography of Desbrisay see F. L. Pigot, "DEBRISAY, THOMAS," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 15, 2016, [[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/desbrisay\\_thomas\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/desbrisay_thomas_5E.html)].

<sup>100</sup> "St. John's Island." 9 May 1772, State Papers, Scotland, SP 54/46/89/b, TNA; *A Plan of the Island of St. John, in the Province of Nova Scotia, in North-America*, 1765, in Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/575b-c, TNA.

<sup>101</sup> "Explanation referring to the Townships, Remarks on Lot 33," in Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/449, TNA.

cultivation. There were game aplenty and abundant natural resources, making for a very fine place indeed. Settlers who signed on for life would pay two pence per acre in rent the first year, rising to two shillings by year six, with a promise that they would never again be raised.<sup>102</sup>

Desbrisay viewed the hard Scottish winter as an opportunity to recruit Western Islanders who were then contemplating resettlement in North Carolina. He deliberately targeted the areas in the southwest that had given birth to the Argyle colony in Cumberland County. In his advertisement, the lieutenant governor promised that he would charter two 300-ton vessels that in April 1773 would call “at *Campbeltown, Argyleshire, and Lamlash* Harbour by the Island of *Arran and Kintyre, Scotland*” to take onboard new tenants.<sup>103</sup> These were all places within Balole’s and the McAlesters’ sphere of influence, and as a region where Scots had already shown a tendency to emigrate, it made sense to canvas those areas in hopes of entreating some to consider a more northerly colonial home. To promote his lands more directly, and to cover as wide an area as possible, Desbrisay named individuals in Belfast, Londonderry, Larne, and Donaghadee in what is now Northern Ireland, as well as Collin Campbell, a bailiff and merchant in Campbletown, and the Reverend Gershome Stewart on Arran, as men with whom emigrants could contract for his property.

The chief goal of Desbrisay’s advertisement and in his stationing men in both Scotland and Ireland was to insert himself into the river of emigrants feeding North Carolina’s Scottish community. Heavy shipping traffic passed back and forth between these Irish towns and the Scottish ports Desbrisay had designated in his circular. They were also deep historical ties between the two regions dating back to seventeenth century Scottish settlement in Ulster.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> “St. John’s Island.” 9 May 1772, State Papers, Scotland, SP 54/46/89/b, TNA.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>104</sup> Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Deputizing men in those places provided the lieutenant governor with additional ways of spreading his message among Scots, or interested Irishmen, who traveled between the two areas, or who might already be on their way to North America and had not yet contracted for any lands. They could also seek him out in Dublin, where he would personally treat with Scots or Irishmen. North American-bound ships would often stop and provision there before headed west across the Atlantic to ports like Philadelphia. If he could capture the attention of Scots through his intermediates in Scotland or Ireland, then in the process he might create a tributary that fertilized his St. John's lands.

### *New York Colonial State of Mind*

The lieutenant governor was hardly alone in advertising his lands or deploying agents to meet with prospective emigrants. By 1772, New Yorkers were particularly active in promoting their colony. William Smith, Jr., the province's chief justice who had championed the cause of Lachlin Campbell's heirs, sought "all FARMERS and TRADESMEN, who want good settlements for themselves and families, especially those lately arrived, or that may yet come from Scotland and Ireland." Smith, Jr. and his partners pitched their colony as the ideal middle ground between the cold of St. John's Island and the "sultry hot" of the Chesapeake colonies, and the Carolinas. It had "the most healthy climate in America." They offered land north of Albany to rent for six pence sterling per acre on a perpetual lease or to own for six shillings per acre. Interested individuals or families could find Smith, Jr. and his colleagues in their law offices on Broadway where they could view maps of the land and make a deal.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *The Pennsylvania Packet; and the General Advertiser*, 13 July 1772.

Other New York proprietors dealt with potential settlers directly or through their emissaries. Military emigrants and other landowners saw great opportunities to exploit the Western Isles and Highlands. In early 1773, Philip Skene and fellow British officers, the brothers Robert and William Edmenston, were in Dublin recruiting Scots and Irish settlers for their respective New York lands. They were ultimately unsuccessful in wooing seventeen Scottish families from Ross-shire, who later settled with Sir William Johnson along the Mohawk River.<sup>106</sup> Several months later, Daniel MacLeod, originally of Kilmuir on Sleat, and now a merchant in the port town of Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, signed a contract with the Beekman family in New York to recruit tenants for their 30,000-acre township.<sup>107</sup> He, too, would fail in his task.<sup>108</sup>

### **John Witherspoon's Empire**

The disparate motives driving the promotion of emigration to North Carolina, St. John's Island, and New York following the winter of 1771-1772 converged in a second transatlantic partnership that connected New Jersey, Glasgow, and Nova Scotia. The Reverend John Witherspoon was at its heart. In the 1760s, Witherspoon was a prominent orthodox cleric in the Church of Scotland shepherding the faithful in Paisley, an industrial town due west of Glasgow. In 1768, he was named president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton University). He had resisted earlier their invitations, but prominent Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush along with the college board of trustees succeeded in convincing Witherspoon and his wife to accept the

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<sup>106</sup> See the next chapter for this emigration movement. "The remarkable affecting Case of some poor Highlanders," in *Hibernian Journal; Or Chronicle of Liberty*, 22 February 1773; *The Massachusetts Gazette; And The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 17 May 1773; *The Connecticut Journal, And The New-Haven Post-Boy*, 21 May 1773.

<sup>107</sup> Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 592-597.

<sup>108</sup> See Chapter 5.

position.<sup>109</sup> Just before he left Paisley, Witherspoon told Rush “there are so many people here speaking of going over with us that I believe you must look out for an Island to settle a Colony.”<sup>110</sup> Fortunately, Witherspoon would not need an island. Mainland North America contained plenty of land for his speculative and settlement activities.

Historians have explained Witherspoon’s role in promoting emigration and his later support for American independence as reflecting a shift in Scottish evangelical culture over the eighteenth century. Others have described Witherspoon’s emigration activities as a simple desire to assist impoverished Scots or as a “hobby” that occupied his spare time.<sup>111</sup> The preoccupation with Witherspoon and American Independence obscures the ways in which his immersion in the very real imperial politics of Scotland and emigration commanded his understanding of the British Empire’s purpose before the revolution. Religion provided a moral framework for Witherspoon, but the empire’s political and social landscape in the 1760s and 1770s shaped his imperial vision. From his perspective the process of promoting and facilitating emigration out of Scotland could ameliorate the antagonistic and inequitable relationship between the Scottish landed elite and their tenants. These were arguments akin to those Alexander McAlester and Campbell of Balole. Holding out to common Scots the opportunity to become their own proprietors on cheap, fertile land in America could, Witherspoon imagined, force Scottish proprietors to reconsider their land management policies. Those Scots that did emigrate would

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<sup>109</sup> John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, 14 August 1767; Richard Stockton to Witherspoon, 5 November 1767, in L.H. Butterfield, ed., *John Witherspoon Comes to America: A Documentary Account Based Largely on New Materials* (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1953), 50-51, 60.

<sup>110</sup> John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, 9 February 1768, *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>111</sup> See, in particular, Ned C. Landsman, “Witherspoon and the Problem of Provincial Identity in Scottish Evangelical Culture” in Richard B. Sher and Jeffery R. Smitten, *Scotland & America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton New Jersey, 1990), 29-445; Landsman, “The Provinces and the Empire: Scotland, the American Colonies, and the Development of British Provincial Identity,” in Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), 258-287; Gideon Maier, “Anglo-Scottish Union and John Witherspoon’s American Revolution” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67 (2010): 709-746; Varnum Lansing Collins, *President Witherspoon: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), 1:148-157; J. Walter McGinty, “An Animated Son of Liberty”: *A Life of John Witherspoon* (Bury St Edmunds, England: Arena Books, 2012), 335.

improve their own personal fortunes in the colonies. Equally important, in employing their agricultural or artisanal skills in America, these emigrants would contribute to the growth of provincial economies, thereby benefitting Scotland and the empire through expanding imperial trade. More to the point, Witherspoon and his partners, like Desbrisay, could make money in the process, a goal not inconsistent with his intellectual conception of the empire. The empire had to advance their interests too if they were to assume the risk associated with emigration schemes.

Witherspoon's interest in Nova Scotia had its origins in the early post-war attempts to settle the colony. In October 1765 a group of Philadelphians received a total of 200,000 acres from the Nova Scotian government. It encompassed a settlement called Pictou. This Philadelphia Grant ran adjacent to the McNutt Grant, a 100,000-acre tract given to Irish projector Alexander McNutt. The grant's terms required the grantees to pay annual quit rents and settle or improve one-third of the land within ten years. But the Philadelphians had difficulty convincing settlers from the older colonies to remain in Pictou. Between 1767 and 1773 the grantees settled thirty-one families on their land, but none remained there for long. The land was densely wooded and lacked the convenient access to the Atlantic fishing grounds that Witherspoon and his partners would later claim. By 1772 three of the original Philadelphia grantees abandoned the project and sold their shares for £225 total to Witherspoon, Glasgow merchant John Pagan, and his nephew, William, based in New York. The new partners divided their 38,601 acres into three equal shares. The grant lay tucked into Pictou Harbor about 100 miles northeast of Halifax along Nova Scotia's northern coast. They were determined to succeed where their predecessors had failed. That task required portraying Pictou in a positive light. Witherspoon and his partners played off the social and economic conditions in Scotland in selling Pictou to Highland Scots.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> For the McNutt Grant and associated grants see "Montagu Wilmot to Alexander McNutt and Associates: Two Land Grants, 31 October 1765," Founders Online, National Archives

John Pagan placed an advertisement for the Pictou lands in Scottish newspapers four months after Lieutenant Governor Desbriay circulated a call for his lands on St. John's Island. In September 1772, Pagan called on "all FARMERS and others in Scotland," and especially "All persons in the west and north Highlands," wanting land on good terms to inquire with several agents in the Scottish north. Settlers could expect convenient access to the New England and Newfoundland fisheries as well as soil well suited for grain production and cattle rearing. An abundant wood supply would meet their heating and construction needs. Pagan positioned "the Rev. Dr JOHN WOTHERSPOON" prominently in the advertisement's first line, using Witherspoon's misspelled name and his reputation to bolster the colonial project's credibility. Pagan assured prospective emigrants that Witherspoon personally would "take particular care that the strictest justice be done, with lands disbursed impartially" to Scots accepting their offer.<sup>113</sup>

Pagan carefully designed his advertisement to leverage the recent environmental and financial hardships in Scotland's Western Isles and Highlands. He was keenly aware that he faced competition from North Carolina's proponents. Pictou, he claimed, was better suited "for a Scots settlement than most others upon the continent of North America," citing the grant's agricultural potential, and emphasized that Scotland was just over one-half the distance from

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(<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-12-02-0175> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 12, *January 1, through December 31, 1765*, ed. Leonard W. Labaree. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 345–350. In 1809, the crown escheated the Philadelphia Grant from its remaining owners, including John Pagan, for non-compliance. In a document prepared for the government, Pagan's son Robert sketched the history of the grant, including the number of settlers originally brought to that place before Witherspoon and the Pagans took possession of part of it. The document is reprinted in Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell: The People of the Hector* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980), 214-215.

<sup>113</sup> LANDS to be Settled in North America," *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 September 1772, page 4, column A; *The Scots Magazine* (September 1772), 482-483. The advertisement appeared in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* on 18 September 1772 according to *The Scots Magazine*.

Nova Scotia as it was to North Carolina. Emigrant Scots would fare better in Nova Scotia without risking a longer, potentially dangerous voyage, to the southern colony.<sup>114</sup>

Witherspoon and his Pagan allies offered to sell emigrants land rather than lease it to them. This contrasted with common Scots' experience at home, and from the terms Desbrisay offered in Charlottetown. Desbrisay wanted to lease his lands. The Pictou partners structured their prospectus to compete against these facts. They hoped to encourage rapid settlement and relied in part on the head right system. The partners would fund a survey dividing the tract into 200-acre lots. The first twenty families would receive 150 acres for every man and wife, plus an additional 50 for each child or servant, for six-pence sterling per acre. They offered like terms to the second twenty families at a price of one-shilling sterling per acre, while a third set of twenty families could have lands at one shilling six pence an acre. Witherspoon and company expected payment within two years of the settlers' arrival.<sup>115</sup>

The partners adopted Desbrisay's strategy of naming agents in key areas. Their choices reflected a crucial awareness of where Scots were most distressed by both the recent winter and by higher rents. One was in Maryburgh, just south of Dingwall in the eastern Highlands, in the Earl of Seaforth's realm, a second in Inverness, and a third at Fort Augustus near Loch Ness in the central Highlands. Two more were positioned to capture Scots contemplating North Carolina. One was in Portree on Skye, while another was at Inveraray in Argyllshire.<sup>116</sup> In these last two places especially they hoped that they, like Desbrisay, could challenge the place that North Carolina held in the people's imagination.

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<sup>114</sup> "LANDS to be Settled in North America," *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 September 1772.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* Pagan named James Campbell in Inveraray, Archibald Gray at Maryburgh, James McDonald at Portree on Skye, Donald McTavish at Fort Augustus, and Alexander Shaw at Inverness as contact points. Pagan's relationship with these men is unclear and at least one, Alexander Shaw, claimed to have no knowledge of Pagan's intention to name him as an agent and stated publicly that he had no desire to be involved in the enterprise. *Caledonian Mercury*, 7 October 1772.

What Witherspoon and the Pagans did not anticipate was criticism of their scheme. The publication of their advertisement made Witherspoon a specific and public target for critics of emigration in general, revealing that a growing unease about what one “gentleman of very considerable property in the Western Isles” feared would result in a “depopulation by these emigrations” that would prove “fatal” to northern Scotland.<sup>117</sup> One writer, “A Wellwisher to Old Scotland,” saw Witherspoon as a false prophet. The notion of Witherspoon’s “superintendency” over any settlers was “entirely groundless” given that he lived “at least one thousand miles distant” from Pictou in New Jersey. Witherspoon, he argued, lent his reputation to sell the venture with little intention of supporting settlers in “that bleak and foreign clime,” who would arrive and find the landscape “entirely in the state of nature.” It was far better for Scots to remain at home improving Scottish land than risking the hardships they would endure like “banished felons” in Nova Scotia.<sup>118</sup>

A Rutherglen, Lanarkshire-based writer “A Bystander” was kinder. His critique rejected the idea that Witherspoon “would entice his countrymen to settle in a land where they must either starve or live in misery,” given his personal and financial interest in the Pictou grant. But he attacked those, like “A Wellwisher” along with proprietors who complained about emigration, who stood by without doing “something more than they have yet done” to lessen America’s appeal. He argued that impoverishment could produce civil disorder, noting recent violence in Ireland over similar tenant discontent, and mocked the “new political theory” of “some gentlemen” who claimed Scotland suffered little through emigration.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *The Scots Magazine*, (July 1772), 515-516.

<sup>118</sup> “A Well Wisher to Old Scotland,” in *Ibid.*, 483. The writer misunderstood the terms offered, thinking that Witherspoon and Pagan intended to lease the lands, rather than sell them outright.

<sup>119</sup> “A Bystander,” *Caledonian Mercury*, 14 November 1772; On unrest in Ireland see W. A. Maguire, “Lord Donegall and Hearts of Steel,” *Irish Historical Studies* 22 (September 1979): 351-376.

But the author “Veritas” offered a more nuanced perspective. In his view common Scots were pawns caught amidst self-interested groups competing against each other. Promoters like Witherspoon seduced emigrants into settling their lands. Tacksmen competing with the landed gentry for political and economic influence chose emigration and deliberately encouraged others to follow them “in order to be revenged” of proprietors who raised their rents. Some proprietors, he concluded, silently consented to this arrangement. They believed the emigration of lazy tenants made room for more productive ones. “Veritas” called for government intervention. Scotland “must certainly suffer” from emigration as long as these groups indulged in self-interest.<sup>120</sup> The three writers collectively articulated a view of empire in which emigration and the colonies worked against Scotland’s interest, a point of view some Scots had adopted in the immediate post-war period.<sup>121</sup>

Witherspoon saw it differently. He presented himself as the anti-thesis of the Scottish landed interest. Like the McAlesters and Campbell of Balole, Witherspoon attacked the Scottish landed class. In Pictou, Scots could own their own land, not simply lease it from a proprietor. He defended his involvement in the scheme as something unexpected, claiming that he only lent his reputation to serve as a kind of insurance policy against fraud and alleviate Scotsmen’s misgivings about emigrating. He emphasized the long-term nature of the project by stressing that he was not in it for a quick profit: “The profit must be [realized in the] future and must arise wholly from the prosperity of the settlement.”<sup>122</sup> Scotland need not fear depopulation. Previous migrations from Britain had amounted to no “consequence to the population of the country,” and he saw no reason why they would do so in the future. The migration of a few hundred families

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<sup>120</sup> “Veritas,” originally in the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, and republished in *The Scots Magazine*, (December 1772), 697-700. The letter is dated 31 December 1772.

<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>122</sup> “Letter Sent to Scotland for the Scots Magazine” in John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (Edinburgh, 1805), 8:296.

might “make a great noise,” but relative to Britain’s total population it would make little difference. Even if extreme hardship drove Scots to the colonies others would “speedily” take their places if “the spirit and the constitution” were generally good.<sup>123</sup> It made little sense in his mind that some would begrudge his “poor countrymen” for seeking a more comfortable existence in the colonies, “especially as it is impossible for them to do anything for the improvement of America, that will no in the end redound to the advantage of Great Britain.”<sup>124</sup> Emigration, in other words, was good for Scotland and for the long-term prosperity of the empire. The landholders who ruled with the “iron hand of tyranny” had only themselves to blame.<sup>125</sup>

By June 1773, Witherspoon and the Pagans had contracted with enough Highlanders to warrant an initial voyage to Pictou. John Pagan contracted with John Ross, a merchant in Loch Broom in Ross-shire, to lead the group and expedite settlement. He was to survey the land and section it into lots “each Containing from two hundred Acres to one thousand Acres.” In exchange for his services, the partners granted Ross his choice of one-half the combined total acreage, about 20,000 acres, in perpetuity. They would charge quitrents at two shillings sterling per hundred acres, with Ross expected to settle a net 250 people on his share within one year. In return, Pagan and company agreed to outfit a ship with one year’s worth of provisions and support the colonists until they could do so themselves.<sup>126</sup>

In July, Pagan’s ship, the *Hector* cleared the port of Greenock with 72 families of 190 Scots aboard along with assorted trade goods.<sup>127</sup> Upon arrival they found the land not as

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 301.

<sup>126</sup> Copy Contract between John Pagan and John Ross, 3 June 1773, recorded 6 November 1776, Register of Deeds McKenzie Office, RD4/220/106-108, NRS.

<sup>127</sup> Entry for 5 June 1773, Customs Accounts: Collector's Quarterly Accounts: Greenock: Oct 1772 - Jul 1773, E504/15/22, NRS.

advertised. It was densely wooded and not as near the fishing grounds as they had been led to believe. Some families remained, more left for other parts of Nova Scotia or other colonies. A 1770 census of Pictou Township shows two Scots among 120 settlers; most were “Americans.”<sup>128</sup> In 1775 the number of Scottish settlers rose to 31 people, nearly half of the township’s 77 inhabitants.<sup>129</sup> William Pagan settled an additional twenty-five families over the next twenty years, although they did not purchase the land and most moved on after a short time. In 1793, John Pagan’s son sold 7,306 acres to an additional sixty-six families. In that year Witherspoon conducted a land swap with Pagan valued at £211.2.2. In the end Witherspoon and his partners failed to settle enough people on the grant. In 1809 the Crown escheated the Philadelphia Grant for non-compliance.<sup>130</sup>

## Conclusion

By the time that the *Hector* unloaded Witherspoon’s emigrants in Nova Scotia a robust competition existed between Scots, Americans, British officials, and colonies for new settlers. The success of North Carolina’s Argyle Colony in the 1730s and the transatlantic connections that the McAlesters and Balole maintained gave them a head start thirty years later. When Scots in the southern Western Isles and in Argyllshire once again faced higher rents and unresponsive

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<sup>128</sup> A Return of the State of the Township of Donegall or Pictou, 1 January 1770, Nova Scotia Archives: Census Returns, Assessment and Poll Tax Records 1767-1838, RG 1, Vol. 443, No. 29, accessed 11 November 2015, [<https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1394>].

<sup>129</sup> A Return of the State of the Township of Pictou, 1 January 1775, Nova Scotia: Census Returns, Assessment and Poll Tax Records 1767-1838, RG 1, Vol. 443, No. 28, accessed 11 November 2015, [<https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1391>]. The number of inhabitants apparently increased over the next eight years, with loyalists fleeing the rebelling American colonies adding to Pictou’s numbers in addition to settlers that the Pagans sponsored. A 1783 report shows 70 men capable of bearing arms. A Rol of the Inhabitants of Pictou or Finmouth Capable to bear Arms, 12 February 1783, Nova Scotia: Census Returns, Assessment and Poll Tax Records 1767-1838, RG 1, Vol. 443, No. 36, accessed 25 January 2016, [<https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1772>].

<sup>130</sup> MacKay, *Scotland Farewell*, 214-215.

proprietors, the Carolina Connection was well positioned to offer them an alternative by subverting traditional Highland authority. The hopeful message that Balole helped to spread north to Skye and into the northern Highlands found greater resonance in 1771 and 1772 when blizzards and deadly cold hammered the region. Prosperity and liberty awaited them in North Carolina, not tyranny and oppression. That willingness to emigrate, coupled with winter's misery, opened the door for a collection of promoters with property in other colonies to challenge the flow of Scots to the southern province. Witherspoon adopted the idealism of the McAlesters and Balole with the self-interest of the others to present an imperial vision of emigration's utility in which the passage of Scots to North America benefitted the interest of Scotland, the empire, and himself.

What the activities of the promoters suggested was that patronage networks were crucial to one's success in getting land or gaining tenants for one's estate. The Scottish military emigrants in New York had martial camaraderie in their new home and family ties abroad, but not the well-established community one found in North Carolina. Land politics in New York were perilous. The imperial reforms granting land to military veterans only intensified competition for land in the colony. Scots formed alliances with patrons in hopes of achieving success. It quickly became clear to Scottish and American proprietors in New York and in St. John's Island, the site of another imperial experiment, that they could use these patronage networks to their own advantages.

### **Chapter 3: The Imperial Proprietors: Patronage Networks and Power in Northern British America**

In 1773, a Glaswegian printer published an expanded version of William Smith, Jr.'s advertisement for his New York lands as a pamphlet. It now contained an endorsement from the Reverend William Marshall of Philadelphia. Marshall had arrived in Pennsylvania in 1763 on a missionary charge from the Anti-Burgher Associate Synod of Scotland, a faction of the Church of Scotland uncomfortable with the religious oaths required of civil officers. Ten years later the Presbyterian divine was head of a congregation on Philadelphia's Spruce Street.<sup>1</sup> His contribution to the pamphlet was a recommendation for Scots to seek out a military emigrant. Lieutenant Colonel John Reid, "our countryman has in the province of New-York, a large tract of land to settle." The war veteran had nearly 36,000 acres on the east side of Crown Point along Otter Creek, which feeds into Lake Champlain. Settlers could have access to "soil very rich, fit for grain or pasture" free for the first seven years and thereafter pay their landlord an annual fixed rate. Scots should hurry, Marshall implied, for "the country is making a rapid progress in settling," and the best lands and the most agreeable proprietors might soon be in short supply.<sup>2</sup>

Some of Reid's property lay in smoldering ruins as Marshall's words circulated in Scotland. In the summer of 1773, a group of militia men calling themselves the "Green Mountain Boys" fell upon the homes and the fields of his current tenants, settlers whom Reid hoped would underwrite his ambitions of becoming a great provincial lord. Reid's lands were within territory

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<sup>1</sup> "To Benjamin Franklin from William Marshall, 30 October 1772," Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-19-02-0235> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 19, *January 1 through December 31, 1772*, ed. William B. Willcox. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1975, pp. 354–357, n8.

<sup>2</sup> William Smith, Jr., *Information to Emigrants, Being the Copy of a Letter from a Gentleman in North America: Containing A full and particular Account of the Terms on which Settlers may procure Lands in North-America, particularly in the Provinces of New-York and Pensilvania. As Also, The Encouragement Labourers, Mechanics, and Tradesmen of every Kind may find by going there to Settle. To which is added, Observations on the causes of Emigration* (Glasgow, 1773), 11.

long disputed by New York and New Hampshire. In time, the modern state of Vermont would emerge from this contested terrain. In the 1770s, however, a controversy over land grants and legal titles to them in this region produced a violent insurgency. The Green Mountain Boys torched the dwellings of Reid's Scottish tenants as well as those of other colonists whom they believed had no right of habitation. The houses destroyed, and the settlers' crops equally ruined, the militia threatened to flay the flesh from the colonists' bones should they unwisely remain on the land.<sup>3</sup>

Reid had seen his fair share of conflict. The Perthshire native had fought for the Crown against the Jacobite rebels in the 1740s. He later served in Martinique and Havana during the Seven Years War as a member of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, and was Henry Bouquet's second in command during the army's struggle against Pontiac's confederacy.<sup>4</sup> Like many Scottish military emigrants and those Scots that followed in their wake he viewed land in the American colonies as the engine of his future economic and social prosperity. He did not expect that part of those lands would one day be reduced to ashes.

Becoming an American proprietor was a more difficult and complicated task than Reid and others like him had imagined.

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The promoters who championed emigration in the post-Seven Years War era fed the ambitions of men who were or aspired to become American proprietors. Proprietors in the colonies and in Britain envisioned ways of utilizing imperial emigration for their own designs. Reverend Marshall's support for Lt. Colonel Reid illustrated an important component of this process: Patronage networks were essential in recruiting, or at least trying to recruit, Scots for

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<sup>3</sup> This episode and its broader context are discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick B. Richards, "The Black Watch at Ticonderoga," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (New York: The New York State Historical Association, 1911), 10:430-433.

one's lands. These proprietary bonds linked Americans, Scots, and British officials attempting to take advantage of the instability in Scotland's Western Isles and Highlands and the Lowlands. On occasion—as in the case of John Witherspoon—the roles of promoter and proprietor overlapped. They all participated in a fierce competition between proprietors within and across colonies in a bid for the loyalty and affection of wayward Scots.

The kind of American proprietors men became depended upon a mix of variables. Local circumstances in Scotland and in the colonies, the imperial strategies for promoting colonial development, and the politics of emigration shaped the formation of transatlantic alliances as well as the competition amongst proprietors. Success, although not guaranteed, often depended upon an astute reading of both the imperial and domestic landscapes. In some instances American proprietors continued the subversion of traditional Scottish hierarchies while in others success depended upon reinforcing them.

This chapter begins in New York in the early 1760s. The failure of Argyllshire Scots to build a community as their counterparts had in North Carolina, and the Royal Proclamation of 1763's land grant provision, compelled Scots to forge relationships with powerful provincial figures such as Sir William Johnson in the pursuit of tenants, land, and patronage. The Irish-born Sir William, however, was this game's best player. He recognized quickly that in assisting in the creation of a Scottish America in northern New York, one that resembled an older Highland social order, he could further his own interests as a proprietor.

Lord Advocate James Montgomery's scheming on St. John's Island offered a different lesson. In the late 1760s and early 1770s, George III's chief legal officer in Scotland put into motion a carefully orchestrated plan to people his lands. Montgomery maneuvered to expand his control of territory in St. John's Island. He wanted to populate those lands with Highlanders in

contravention to both the wishes of his social class and the imperial regulations governing the island's settlement. As he did so, and in a bid to gain more tenants, Montgomery became entangled with a group of Scottish Catholics suffering under a zealous Protestant convert laird. St. John's Island was to be a source of income for Montgomery, the site of his broader vision for Scotland's economic importance in the empire, and an unexpected religious refugee for Scots of the Church of Rome.

Finally, by the early 1770s enthusiasm for emigration began spreading south from the Highlands into the Scottish Lowlands. Following the example of their fellow Scots on the Isle of Skye, farmers and tradesmen in and around Glasgow began forming corporate associations to settle entire communities in the colonies. For John Witherspoon this was a second chance to put his theory of emigration and empire into practice. While settlement was underway on his Pictou lands in Nova Scotia, and still stung by the public criticism of that enterprise, Witherspoon adopted a new strategy to treat with representatives from the Scotch American Company of Farmers. He had property in what is now Vermont and knew he had competition from other proprietors. He therefore had to find ways of ensuring that they ultimately chose him.

Sir William, Lord Advocate Montgomery, and the Reverend Witherspoon serve as viewports into the larger world of the competition between proprietors for Scottish emigrants. The imperial state lingered above them all. State-sponsored resettlement in the form of military migrants created new opportunities for Scots and Americans alike in New York, while the prohibition of it elsewhere, along with social stigma surrounding its encouragement, forced other proprietors to think carefully about how to achieve their objectives.

## Sir William Johnson and his World

Lachlin Campbell's failure to erect a grand estate in New York beginning in the 1730s and the competition for the land in which his children were embroiled in the 1760s illustrated the perils that hopeful proprietors faced in their quest to control land and people at the war's end. For the more recently arrived military emigrants and those that followed them, one lesson of the Campbell siblings' travails was that one needed competent patrons to steer them around dangerous imperial and provincial shoals. New imperial policies embodied in the Proclamation of 1763 changed the calculus in an already competitive New York backcountry. For many Scots in this period, Sir William Johnson was that patron.

### *Sir William's Ascent*

Land management, speculation, and investment dominated Sir William's life from an early age. Born in Ireland to Catholic parents around 1715, Johnson moved to New York about the same time that Lachlin Campbell brought his second wave of recruits from Islay. He came in 1738 under the patronage of an uncle, Peter Warren, an officer, later promoted to admiral, in the Royal Navy. Warren owned several thousand acres of land west of Schenectady on the south side of the Mohawk River. He charged his nephew with the oversight of the indentured servants and slaves transforming the wilderness into a profitable enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

Warren's sponsorship and money gave Sir William the means of assembling his own estates in the provincial backcountry. His 1739 purchase of an 815-acre tract north of the river

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<sup>5</sup> James Thomas Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet: A Biography of Sir William Johnson* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 13-16.

formed the foundation of the 170,000 acres he owned at the time of his demise thirty-five years later. He quickly established a store in the area, trading English goods with his Iroquois neighbors, and supplying newly arrived settlers in the region, along with the military garrison at Fort Oswego. By the 1740s, Sir William's rising influence with the Six Nations Iroquois, and in particular the Mohawk, and the important role he played in the backcountry's economy translated into colonial militia appointments and later a seat on the provincial council. That relationship with the Iroquois elevated Sir William's importance in the British government's eyes after the outbreak of the Seven Years War. In 1756, the ministry named him Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern District. He spent most of the war rallying the Iroquois to the British standard.

Sir William's influence with the Iroquois, provincial, and imperial governments paid handsome dividends. After he took Molly Brant, an intelligent Mohawk woman who was a skilled diplomat in her own right, as his common law wife, the Mohawk granted him a roughly 80,000-acre tract about forty miles west of Johnson Hall. It was a controversial grant; other men claimed they had already secured the right to purchase the land from the Mohawks, but with Lt. Governor Cadawallader Colden's help, Sir William succeeded in winning first the Board of Trade's and then the King's approval. George III confirmed the grant in 1769, which Sir William named "Kingsland" after his royal benefactor.<sup>6</sup> His creation of the Kingsborough Patent was even more impressive. The 50,000-acre tract lay four miles north of the Mohawk River, encompassing Johnstown, the village Johnson founded in 1762, and Johnson Hall. New York law

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<sup>6</sup> Order in Council, 3 May 1769, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/114/9, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Here after "TNA." Milton W. Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson: Colonial America, 1715-1763* (Port Washington, NY, 1976), 299-301. For the important roles Molly Brant and her brother, Joseph Brant, played in the northern borderlands see Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 93-96; Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 38-41, 65-66, 131.

only permitted provincial grants of 2,000 acres per individual, perhaps a problem for some men, but not for the crafty ones. Sir William worked around the limitations by using surrogate grantees. He had these men apply for and hold the several parcels that became Kingsborough in a kind of trust. He later bought them out. By the 1760s, Sir William had settled a number of German Protestants and British settlers on the land. In time, it would become home to many Scottish Highlanders.<sup>7</sup>

Scots in New York after the war turned to Sir William on the basis of his knowledge of land politics and reputation as a proprietor. He was the center of gravity in the New York backcountry, pulling Scots and other settlers into his orbit. Former soldiers, private investors, desperate emigrants, and shrewd negotiators sought him out in hopes of advancing their own interests. Sir William wanted to do the same. He conducted his business skillfully with an eye toward establishing mutually beneficial relationships that resulted in tenants for his massive land holdings or deepened his connections with important figures in America and Great Britain.

### *The Military Emigrants and their Patron*

The challenge for many Scottish military emigrants in establishing themselves in New York was to forge crucial relationships with provincial men immersed in the colony's contentious land politics. The imperial state had enabled their emigration partly in hopes that they would enhance colonial productivity through land development, yet there were many competitors on the field for land, power, and influence. The legacy Scottish emigrants from the 1730s, fellow military emigrants who had campaigned over the northern part of the colony, men like Philip

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<sup>7</sup> For the history of the Kingsborough Patent see the introduction to the patent's rent roll. Duncan Fraser, "Sir John Johnson's Rent Roll of the Kingsborough Patent," *Ontario History* 52 (1960): 176-178. The German Protestants on the Kingsborough Rent Roll are listed largely on pg.184.

Skene who had begun a settlement scheme during the Seven Years War, and the powerful families who controlled the provincial council or owned the great manors dominating the landscape around the lower Hudson River all vied with one another in this space.

Lieutenant James McDonald came to understand all too well how influential families limited access to land in the colony. His conflict with New York proprietors and the provincial council illuminated one of the ways that Scots hoped to employ Sir William in the service of their ambitions. McDonald was a veteran of the 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment and a close associate of George Croghan, one of Sir William's deputy Indian agents overseeing the Illinois Country. He had survived Pontiac's siege of Fort Detroit in 1763 and fought at the Battle of Bushy Run a few months later.<sup>8</sup> McDonald aspired to more land than which he could claim under the terms of the Proclamation of 1763. He petitioned the Board of Trade in 1764 for an Order in Council grant for 10,000 acres. On its recommendation the King and his Privy Council approved his request. McDonald asked the provincial government to survey the tract in Ulster County on both sides of the Shawangunk Kill at the base of the Shawangunk Ridge. This was west of a patent called the Minisink Angle.<sup>9</sup>

McDonald's proposal thrust him directly into the path of one of New York's leading politicians and landholders. Oliver De Lancey, the powerful New York merchant and member of the provincial council, took exception to McDonald's petition. De Lancey was invested in the Minisink Angle, a patent with disputed boundaries. When in 1765 a survey showed McDonald's

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<sup>8</sup> For McDonald's account of the siege of Fort Detroit see "Extract of a Letter from Lieut McDonald to George Croghan Esquire giving an Account of all Transactions at Detroit from 6th of May to 12th July 1763" in., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1951), 10:736-745. Hereafter "PSWJ." On McDonald's application for a place in the Indian department McDonald to Sir William, 15 January 1765, *PSWJ* (1925), 4:635; Sir William to George Croghan, 17 January 1765, *PSWJ* (1953), 11:536-537.

<sup>9</sup> Entry for 10 July 1764, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1936), 12:91; 11 July 1764, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/110/505, TNA; 17 July 1764, PC2/110/528, *Ibid.*; 20 July 1764, PC2/110/551, *Ibid.*; "Memorial of James McDonald," 15 April 1765, *Calendar of N.Y. Colonial Manuscripts - Indorsed Land Papers; in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643-1803* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co, 1864), 359.

prospective lands infringing, at least in their minds, on the Minisink Angle, De Lancey and several other investors filed a complaint with the provincial government.<sup>10</sup> A frustrated McDonald, who earlier in the year had applied for an appointment in the Indian Department, complained to Sir William of the “very unreasonable Objections” that De Lancey and his partners had brought against his petition.<sup>11</sup>

The case came before Colden on whose authority the grant would be executed. McDonald intimated that Sir William’s support could be enough to sway Colden’s decision in his favor. The lieutenant governor faced two interrelated problems in rendering a verdict. First, De Lancey and other members of the provincial council that had invested in the Minisink Angle tried tying Colden’s hands in a bid to ensure a favorable outcome. The provincial council refused to offer a formal opinion on the grant, in other words their consent, which was technically required. This led to the second problem. Even though George III had already authorized the grant, Colden was unsure if he could formerly issue it without the provincial council’s approval. The existing patent’s disputed boundaries complicated the legal question because it was unclear where it ended and where lands vested in the British crown began.

Colden turned to the colony’s attorney general, John Tabor Kempe, for a legal opinion on the dispute. Kempe assured him that the King’s Order in Council provided him with sufficient legal authority to issue McDonald his patent.<sup>12</sup> Satisfied that the lands were crown property,

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<sup>10</sup> “Return of survey for James McDonald, late Lieutenant in the 60th regiment,” 29 June 1765, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 370; “Protest of Mr. De Lancey, in behalf of himself and the rest of the proprietors of Minisink patent,” 8 July 1765, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 371; “Caveat entered by Oliver De Lancey and John Morin Scott,” 8 July 1765, *Ibid.*, 371; 22 July 1765, Minutes of the New York Council, *Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668-1783* (Albany: New York State Library, 1903), 513. Hereafter “CCM.”

<sup>11</sup> James McDonald to Sir William, 24 July 1765, *PSWJ*, 11:868.

<sup>12</sup> Colden to John Tabor Kempe, 25 July 1765, in *The Colden Letter Books, Vol. II 1765-1775. Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1877* (New York: Printed for the Society, 1878), 2:24. Hereafter “CLB.” Kempe to Colden, 27 July 1765, in Cadwallader Colden, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1923), 7:48. Hereafter “LPCC.” Colden to Kempe, 29 July 1765, *CLB*, 2:25; Kempe to Colden, 30 July 1765, in Colden, *LPCC*, 7:49; Colden to Goldsbrow Banyar, 1 August 1765, in *CLB*, 2:25-26.

Colden issued a patent to the war veteran. His fast action prevented Sir William's intervention, but McDonald believed that it might become necessary in the future given that "Severals of the Grandees of this Metropolis" and the "petulant Tongues of the Lawyers" persisted in their complaints over the patent.<sup>13</sup> He wanted Sir William's support in the event that he would have to plead his case directly before the Board of Trade.

What McDonald's reliance on Sir William in his contest with De Lancey and the provincial council illustrated was the fact that he expected the Indian diplomat's weight would be useful in furthering his agenda. The advantage Sir William would have gained in helping McDonald is not altogether evident beyond the ability to call in a future favor. Colden's swift actions in deciding the matter curtailed his involvement.

However, Sir William's relationship with Lieutenant Hugh Fraser of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment and with other emigrants both military and civilian illuminate more clearly how Sir William and Scotsmen viewed each other as essential partners in exploiting shifting imperial landscapes. Lt. Fraser in particular shared Sir William's craving for land and the power it gave him over the lives of others. He adopted a number of tactics in pursuing his fortune and Sir William factored in nearly all of them. In 1763, Fraser returned home soon after his regiment had disbanded.<sup>14</sup> He was already aware of Sir William's prominent place in New York's land market. From Scotland Fraser arranged for letters of introduction to him.<sup>15</sup> In 1764, he returned to New York with his new wife, Elizabeth McTavish, the daughter of a fellow officer, and promptly wrote to Sir William declaring his intention to place himself under his "protection."<sup>16</sup> Sir William had some

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<sup>13</sup> McDonald to Sir William, 27 August 1765, *PSWJ*, 11:913, 914.

<sup>14</sup> "Hugh Fraser [2] (1730-1814)" in Ian Macpherson McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains: The Highland Regiments in the French & Indian War, 1756-1767* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2006), 2:102.

<sup>15</sup> For Fraser's letters of introduction see William Hunter to Sir William, 11 September 1763, *PSWJ*, 4:203; Andrew Watson to Sir William, 22 September 1763, *PSWJ*, 4:207. These letters were casualties of the 1911 fire that consumed many of Sir William's papers, but fortunately they had been calendared before the inferno.

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Fraser to Sir William, 7 September 1764, *PSWJ*, 4:526.

German settlers on his Kingsborough lands, although much of it lay uncultivated. Fraser promised that he could provide more people.

Fraser brought his new wife and a number of “industrious People” from Scotland to the banks of the Mohawk River.<sup>17</sup> The terms Sir William offered his new tenants is uncertain, but those he gave to other settlers suggests that the Scots did not have to pay rent for the first five years while they set about cultivating and improving their individual 100-acre lots. After the grace period they were probably liable for an annual rent of between £6.1 and £6.3.<sup>18</sup>

Sir William intended his generous terms as a deterrent against other suitors and also as an incentive for future Scottish emigrants to make their way to his property. This was important because Fraser said that he could entice more Scots to North America. That promise of more people came with a price. In exchange, he wanted Sir William’s help in influencing the provincial government for more land. Fraser saw settlement at Kingsborough as a temporary home from where he could begin building his own estate in New York.

In the summer of 1765, Fraser petitioned the provincial government for the 2,000 acres of proclamation land to which his former rank entitled him.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as did James McDonald, he wanted more. He asked Sir William to press Colden, which he did, on “his case, & the Expence he has been at” in bringing Scots to the colony. Fraser wanted a head right grant, Sir William wrote, and presumed that his efforts “entitle him to apply for a grant of 100 Acres of Land for each of his People, & something more for himself.” If the government obliged him, he would “use his endeavours to bring more of his Countrymen” to New York.<sup>20</sup> The prospect of new settlers cultivating unused land, along with Sir William’s support, got Fraser part of the way

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<sup>17</sup> Sir William to Colden, 15 August 1765, *LPCC*, 7:50.

<sup>18</sup> The precise terms that Johnson offered Fraser’s Scots and how many there were is unclear, but his terms offered to other individuals suggests a grace period of at least five years with an annual rent of between £6.1 and £6.3 thereafter. See Fraser, “Sir John Johnson’s Rent Roll of the Kingsborough Patent”: 185-188.

<sup>19</sup> “Petition of Hugh Fraser,” 15 June 1765, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 369.

<sup>20</sup> Sir William to Colden, 15 August 1765, *LPCC*, 7:50.

toward his goal. The colony's surveyor-general instructed his deputies to find a piece of land that met Fraser's specifications. There is no evidence, however, that in the end Fraser received any additional land grants.<sup>21</sup>

Not content with waiting for the provincial government's decision regarding his proposed emigration scheme, Fraser tried playing another card in a bid for more land. His father-in-law, Lieutenant James McTavish of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment, was eligible for a proclamation grant as well. The lapsed Jacobite was nearly sixty years old in 1757 when he joined the army. He was ill for much of the war. When his daughter and son-in-law returned to New York, McTavish sent his son, Simon, with them.<sup>22</sup> McTavish's right to a land grant doubled the number of acres that Fraser might conceivably control.

But McTavish was in Britain where he was recuperating from his illness. Veterans needed certificates attesting to their service in the North American theater and then had to apply for their land in person. Fraser tried maneuvering around this critical detail by asking Sir William to submit his father-in-law's petition on his behalf directly to General Thomas Gage, the commander-in-chief of British forces in North America. Policies governing the implementation of the Proclamation grants unsurprisingly frustrated Fraser's strategy. Gage authorized a certificate for McTavish, and made sure that Sir William understood that he did so as a personal

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<sup>21</sup> Colden to Sir William, 31 August 1765, *PSWJ* (1957), 12:922.

<sup>22</sup> McTavish's petition was destroyed in the 1911, but it survives partially in calendared form. The petition may have been lost, or Sir William forgot to forward it, because Sir William sent it to General Gage in January 1766 and it was not recorded as received until that April. See John McTavish to the Lieutenant Governor and Council of New York, 28 July 1765, *PSWJ*, 4:802; Sir William to Gage, 30 January 1766, *PSWJ* (1927), 5:19; "Petition of John McTavish," 4 April 1766, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 395. McTavish was born "John 'Dubh' Fraser, but lost the right to his surname for his support of Bonnie Prince Charlie. He fell ill after participating in the campaign against Louisbourg in 1758. See "John 'Dubh' Fraser aka John McTavish, of Gathbeg (c.1701-1775)" McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, 2:95.

favor. He warned that previous petitions had been rejected unless a veteran made “Personal Application ” to the colonial government for a land grant.<sup>23</sup>

Thwarted in laying claim to McTavish’s lands Fraser in turn peddled out his brother-in-law’s labor as a way of ingratiating himself with provincial officials. In late 1766, Sir William asked Goldsbrow Banyar, the provincial deputy secretary and a prominent landowner, if he wanted the sixteen-year old Simon as an aide. The young McTavish could “write a tollerable good running hand.”<sup>24</sup> How Baynar responded is lost, although by the 1770s McTavish was working in the fur trade, a business that he would eventually dominate from Montreal in the years after the American Revolution. He petitioned for his father’s share of the Proclamation land in 1771 without success.<sup>25</sup>

Fraser did succeed in becoming a modest landholder despite his failure to realize his larger dreams. The provincial council approved his Proclamation grant in 1767, and he chose to keep the lease on his Kingsborough lot as well. He even purchased some property in the area between Hoosick, New York and Bennington in the disputed New Hampshire Grants. He resettled there with a number of Scots in 1769. He attracted more in 1773 when new waves of his countrymen arrived in the colony.<sup>26</sup>

The partnership that Fraser and Sir William built in the 1760s led the former to moderate success. The guileful Sir William, naturally, got the better of the deal. He acquired tenants through Fraser, but more importantly, he become known as someone to whom Scots could turn and trust once they had emigrated to the colony. This was critical in the early 1770s when the

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<sup>23</sup> Sir William to Gage, 30 January 1766, *PSWJ*, 5:19; Gage to Sir William, 10 February 1766, *PSWJ*, 12:16.

<sup>24</sup> Sir William to Goldsbrow Banyar, 28 November 1766, *PSWJ*, 12:224.

<sup>25</sup> Fernand Ouellet, “McTAVISH, SIMON,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003, [[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mctavish\\_simon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mctavish_simon_5E.html)], accessed December 1, 2014]; “Petition of Simon McTavish, in behalf of his father John McTavish, lieutenant in the 78th regiment,” 2 February 1771, *Indorsed Land Papers*, 517; 19 January 1767, *CCM*, 525.

<sup>26</sup> Fraser, “Sir John Johnson’s Rent Roll”: 180-181; Hugh Fraser [2] (1730-1814)” in McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains*, 2:102.

combination of higher rents, winter storms, and fierce competition between promoters pushed and pulled new waves of civilian Scots to North America. The likes of Philip Skene, the brothers Robert and William Edmenston, John Witherspoon or Thomas Desbrisay, relied on printed advertisements or treated with Scots in Ireland and Scotland. By contrast, Sir William's reputation, the connections he forged with Scots in New York, and his willingness to play the role of a benevolent lord for Scots under the thrall of allegedly oppressive men at home did the advertising for him.

*Sir William, Clan Chief of Kingsborough*

Promotional efforts of which William Smith, Jr. was a part advised newly arrived Scots on what to do once they had landed in the city of New York. In Smith, Jr.'s case, a 1772 broadside offered emigrants explicit instructions. Any "FARMERS and TRADESMEN" from Scotland or Ireland interested in good lands should first consult with Smith, Jr. and his partners about available property. They were then to proceed north up the Hudson River to Albany. The town functioned as the gateway to the northern borderlands. There the emigrants would find "Mr. *Edward Willet*, Schoolmaster," who would lodge them and show them the prospective lands. If they saw what they liked, the emigrants would then head south down the river and make a deal with their new proprietors, and thus begin in their new lives in America.<sup>27</sup>

Sir William needed to insert himself into this emigrant artery in much the same way as Desbrisay wished to redirect prospective North Carolina settlers to St. John's Island. Promoters and proprietors offered an array of opportunities for potentially bright futures, but the very nature

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<sup>27</sup> "To All FARMERS AND TRADESMEN, Who want good Settlements for themselves and Families, especially those lately arrived, or that may yet come, from Scotlaud or Ireland" (Philadelphia: John Dunlap, 1772).

of that competition meant that they had to earn the trust of a people already wary of landlord machinations. John Witherspoon, the McAlesters, and Campbell of Balole approached the issue of trust by attacking modern Scottish proprietors. Sir William adopted a different tactic altogether. He portrayed himself as a clan chief from an earlier era in Scottish history. That performance entailed providing good land at reasonable rates, living in proximity to his people, and offering them protection on property situated at a safe distance on the provincial margins of the imperial periphery. It also meant finding people who were receptive to those older ideas. Providing a sense of stability in a rapidly changing colonial environment was key. Despite a later claim that “disputes with the mother-country” concerning Parliament’s authority over the colonies had not generated any controversy in the backcountry, northern New York was not immune to colonial protests over Parliament’s various imperial reforms.<sup>28</sup> Albany residents decried the Royal Proclamation’s restrictions on westward expansion, and they protested the Stamp Act of 1765 and subsequent Townshend Duties of 1767 as unconstitutional infringements on their rights as British subjects.<sup>29</sup>

Inter-colonial disputes were a source of tension as well. Sir William’s lands were far removed from the contested boundary between New York and New Hampshire, an area that is now modern Vermont. In the 1740s, New Hampshire governor Benning Wentworth began authorizing a series of grants west of the Connecticut River on lands also claimed by New York. The competing claims made life difficult for property owners as they held land titles situated in a contested legal jurisdiction. Royal officials adjudicated the conflict in 1764, deciding in New York’s favor, and the provincial government invalidated Wentworth’s grants and ordered

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<sup>28</sup> *The Scots Magazine*, (February 1775), 106.

<sup>29</sup> Stefan Bielinski, “Albany County” in Eugene R. Fingerhut and Joseph S. Tiedermann, *The Other New York: The American Revolution Beyond New York City, 1763-1787* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 156-157.

proprietors to retitle their lands under New York law. In some instances owners were told to re-buy lands they had already purchased.<sup>30</sup> The imperial government's intervention did little to ease the tension for those settlers within that contested space, as some Scottish emigrants would soon discover.

Sir William's success in winning new tenants for his Kingsborough and other properties also depended on benefiting from, and besting, military emigrants. Hugh Fraser had brought Scots to the banks of the Mohawk River in the 1760s, but as the decade came to a close and Fraser moved on to his own lands, the Reverend Harry Munro emerged as a new conduit for recently arrived Scots fleeing the Western Isles and Highlands. He would be Sir William's point man in Albany, just as Edward Willet filled that role for Smith, Jr. During the war Munro had been chaplain of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regiment. When it was over the Presbyterian had a theological change of heart and went to England where he took Holy Orders in the Anglican faith. He came back to New York in 1765 with a missionary charge in hand from the Society for Propagating the Gospel. Three years later he was named rector of St. Peter's Church in Albany, and shortly after Sir William asked him to preach among the Mohawks.<sup>31</sup>

Munro began to repay Sir William for his patronage by deliberately routing newly arrived Scots his way. He well understood that Sir William had plenty of land, an incentive to offer advantageous rates, and, unlike many modern clan chiefs, personally oversaw the development of his lands and the welfare of his tenants. He also knew that Sir William already had a good relationship with his existing Scottish tenants. It was for these reasons that around 1770 Munro began sending Scots to Johnson Hall. It began simply enough with one Daniel Urquhart, who,

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<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive documentary record of the dispute see *The Documentary History of the State of New-York* (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, Public Printer, 1851), 4:529-1034. Hereafter "*DHSNY*."

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:410n; "Henry Munro (1730-1801)" in McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountain*, 2:79, 160; *The New-Hampshire Gazette, and Historical Chronicle*, 6 July 1765. On Munro ministering to the Mohawks see Munro to Sir William, 12 April 1769, *DHSNY*, 4:409-410; Johnson to Munro, 8 June 1770, *PSWJ*, 7:720; Munro to Rev. Dr. Daniel Burton, 25 September 1770, *PSWJ*, 7:962n-963n.

Munro told Sir William, “wod fain Settle with his Country-men [already] on Your Estate.”<sup>32</sup> In 1773, an even more significant, although tragic, opportunity presented itself.

### *The People of the Britannia*

A dreadful tale began to take shape in the fall of 1772 when seventeen Gaelic-speaking families from Ross-shire on Scotland’s western coast departed from Lochaber for New York. They, along with other Scots, had suffered from the bitter cold and winds that brought snow and death to the Highlands and Western Isles. They, too, were dealing with a proprietor whose interests were no longer aligned with those of his tenants. According to a sympathetic report in Dublin’s *Hibernian Journal*, the families had been forced to abandon their lands when some “Land Jobbing” entrepreneurs convinced their former proprietors to enclose their lands and raise Black cattle in a quest for greater income. In their desperation the families accepted an offer from “a Kind of Pettifogger in Trade,” in other words a nefarious merchant, for transportation to America. They were put aboard a damaged vessel that limped into the Port of Dublin where two shipmasters determined that the ship could not make the transatlantic voyage. Stranded in Ireland, the emigrant Scots were forced to rely on charitable donations after they had exhausted the last of their funds. Fever and small pox took the lives of one man and four children. Yet, salvation, the paper emphasized in a bid for more contributions, was at hand. Some “Military Gentlemen, now in this City, who have extensive Grants of Land near Albany,” made “these poor

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<sup>32</sup> Munro to Sir William, undated, but included in the letters for late 1770, *PSWJ*, 7:1026.

Highlanders advantageous Officers, and Encouragement to settle upon their Lands.” These officers were Philip Skene and the Edmenston brothers.<sup>33</sup>

Colonial newspapers initially suggested that Skene had succeeded or at least had the lead in wooing the Scottish families to Skenesborough.<sup>34</sup> They had arrived in New York aboard a new ship, the *Britannia*, in May 1773 as tired and nearly broken people. Their journey had been funded largely by contributions. Drained of money, they possessed little bargaining power beyond their ability to improve someone else’s lands. Those skills were greatly attractive to men like Skene, as they were to other proprietors. When they arrived in Albany a few days later they had in hand offers from Skene, the Edmenston brothers, and Lt. Colonel John Reid.

Harry Munro had other ideas. Eager to assist Sir William, and perhaps suspicious of whatever terms other suiters had offered, when the Scots appeared in town he convinced them to seek out Sir William along the Mohawk River. “[Y]ou have Land enough,” Munro told him, “& these poor people may in time prove useful and good Tenants.” And there was more to be had if all went well. Munro had heard rumblings “that the lower Class of people are generally discontented, & the Spirit of Emigration prevails greatly” in Scotland. He had reason to believe that “some hundreds of families will soon follow” once these new settlers sent home word of Sir William’s benevolence.<sup>35</sup> Such a lovely prospect and his past experiences with Lt. Hugh Fraser convinced Sir William to open negotiations with these lowly Scots. In the process he and Munro got the better of his competitors, and most especially Lt. Colonel Reid.

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<sup>33</sup> “The remarkable affecting Case of some poor Highlanders, with their Wives and Children, to the Number of Sixty-Nine Persons in All,” dated 2 February 1773 in *Hibernian Journal; Or Chronicle of Liberty*, 22 February 1773. Emphasis in the original. The article was reprinted in *The New-York Gazette; and the Weekly Mercury*, 31 May 1773.

<sup>34</sup> *The Massachusetts Gazette; And The Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser*, 17 May 1773; *The Connecticut Journal, And The New-Haven Post-Boy*, 21 May 1773.

<sup>35</sup> Munro to Sir William, 21 May 1773. Boston Public Library. American Revolutionary War Manuscripts Collection. Digitized by the Associates of the Boston Public Library with support from the Yale Class of 1955, accessed 9 December 2014, [<https://archive.org/details/lettertosirwilli00munr>].

Much went right for Reid in the early 1760s as the Seven Years War came to a successful conclusion. He married a Scottish-American woman, Susanna Alexander, in 1762, and as a consequence became a member of one of the most politically prominent families in the colony. Her late father, James, had supported the Stuart Pretender in the 1715 Jacobite Uprising before fleeing to New York where he would eventually become the colony's surveyor-general. Her brother, William, was a member of New Jersey's provincial council, a claimant to the earldom of Stirling, and had married into the prominent Livingston family. Susanna brought considerable property along Otter Creek near Crown Point to her marriage with Reid. He added onto it, eventually constructing a 36,000-acre tract in the disputed New Hampshire Grants, territory contested by New York and New Hampshire in what is now Vermont. This was all in addition to his 5,000-acre proclamation grant.<sup>36</sup>

Whatever terms Skene and the Edmenston brothers had offered the Scottish families from the *Britannia* proved unacceptable because soon the contest for their labor was between Sir William and Lt. Colonel Reid. Like Sir William's property, the veteran's lands were useless he had men, women, and children tilling fields or raising animals. The impoverished Highlanders were in some ways a natural and logical fit for his American estate. While in Scotland these families were on the lowest rung of a landed hierarchy in which they produced income for a proprietor that ruled over them from a distance. In New York, Lt. Colonel Reid evidently believed that he could replicate that experience by settling the poor Scots on his lands along Otter Creek while he resided in Albany. In fact, he thought that he had succeeded in wooing

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<sup>36</sup> Richards, "The Black Watch at Ticonderoga" in *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 10: 430-433; *The New-York Gazette*, 3 January 1763. William Alexander lived and styled himself as "Lord Stirling," claiming the title of the Scottish earldom. His father, James, emigrated to the colony following his participation of the failed 1715 Jacobite Rebellion. William later became a general under George Washington during the American Revolution. See "Alexander, William" in Allen Johnson, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 1:175-176. For land papers relating to Reid see *Indorsed Land Papers*, 387, 518, 519, 526, 530, 536, 552, and 589.

them. One can imagine his shock, then, when the poor Scots signed up with Sir William after Munro's intervention.

Reid seethed with anger as he accused Sir William of deliberately sabotaging his agreement with the Scottish families. Sir William feigned innocence.<sup>37</sup> The emigrants had visited him "of their own free choice, & without any endeavor of mine," a half-truth that left out Munro's role in the affair. They had appeared before him with many proposals in hand and claimed that they had not reached a deal with anyone at that point. Sir William assured his rival, most disingenuously, that as a gentleman he would never knowingly interfere in another's negotiations. Besides, he had given them lands on Kingsborough on terms seemingly disadvantageous to himself. The state of that property "would not permit me to Make any [offers] but [for] those [parcels] which they readily accepted of, for I can now let mine (on much better terms) faster than is consistent with good policy." Sir William made them an offer they could not refuse; something he tried obscuring by suggesting that in taking them on he had assumed great risk to his own interest. He told Lt. Colonel Reid condescendingly that he had allocated the families "pieces of Clearings for this Year, on which they planted & also bought Cows," but presumed "they, or the greatest part will return to you" in the end.<sup>38</sup> It would have surprised no one if Sir William wrote those words with a slight smirk on his face.

What Sir William had left unspoken in his letter was that he had given the Scottish families land on terms similar to those that he had provided Hugh Fraser and his followers. They would pay nothing for five years, and then a modest annual rent thereafter. Readily available and cleared land, leased on deferred rent from a nearby proprietor with prior history of successful dealings with emigrant Scots did much in encouraging their decision to settle on Kingsborough.

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<sup>37</sup> Sir William to John Reid, 6 June 1773, *PSWJ* (1933), 8:816. Reid's original complaint has not survived, but Sir William's reply contains the substance of Reid's accusations.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

A crop in the ground attached them to the land even further. The emigrants were reportedly “much pleased with their situation.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Sir William’s offer proved so attractive that some Scots whom Munro believed would settle on his lands later backed out and moved west up the Mohawk River.<sup>40</sup> Munro had done his job a little too well.

### *The Military Emigrants and Their Enemies*

Settling with Sir William along the Mohawk River offered Scots an additional layer of security from colonial insurgents ravaging the countryside. His lands were at a distance from the contested New Hampshire Grants. That simmering landscape erupted into open violence about the same time as the *Britannia* Scots made their way to Johnson Hall. Sir William could offer them protection. Lt. Colonel Reid could not make the same claim for some of the Scots who arrived shortly thereafter. His Otter Creek lands, and Scottish tenants that he did persuade to settle on his property, were in the very cauldron of the dispute. The imperial government’s ruling in favor of New York in the controversy angered settlers such as Ethan Allen and his brother Ira. The brothers controlled the Green Mountain Boys, a militia group that operated out of the town of Bennington, some thirty miles east of Albany. Together the Allens and their men resisted the

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<sup>39</sup> Word of the Highlanders’ agreement with Johnson appeared in *The Pennsylvania Packet*,; and *the General Advertiser*, (“much pleased”) 14 June 1773; *The Providence Gazette*; and *Country Journal*, 19 June 1773; Supplement to the *Boston Evening-Post*, 21 June 1773; and *The Massachusetts Spy Or, Thomas’s Boston Journal*, 24 June 1773. No surviving list identifies all of the Scots from the *Britannia* who settled on the Kingsborough Patent. Indeed, only one individual, Duncan Murchason, is named in the sources. “Simons, Blacks, and Murray to George and William Ludlow, Dublin, 24 March 1773,” *The New-York Gazette*,; and *the Weekly Mercury*, 31 May 1773.

<sup>40</sup> Murchason’s name appeared on the Kingsborough Rent Roll, as did three of the four men (Murdoch McPherson, Alexander Cameron, and Finlay Grant), who apparently made promises to Harry Munro. Murchason’s rent was to commence in September 1778. See Fraser, “Sir John Johnson’s Rent Roll”: 185; Statement of Joseph Chew, 3 May 1774, *PSWJ*, 12: 1086-1087.

New York government's attempted imposition of its sovereignty, using violence and intimidation against proprietors and settlers in the area.

In the summer of 1773, Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys terrorized Lt. Colonel Reid's tenants. John Cameron and his family were among the Scots who agreed to settle on Reid's lands. He along with some other Scots toured Reid's vacant property in June. It was empty because his former tenants had left the area "in Consequence of Threats and ill usage from some of the People claiming [the land] under New Hampshire" law.<sup>41</sup> Cameron, Reid, and the others found some New Englanders squatting in the vacant homes. The squatters agreed to leave provided that Reid purchased the hay, wheat, and garden produce they had grown, a request to which he begrudgingly agreed in the interest of getting them off his lands. Cameron, his family, and fellow Scots James Henderson and Angus McBean took up residence on Reid's property. The New Englanders retreated into the countryside, and plotted their next move.

The squatters were not gone for long. On the afternoon of August 11<sup>th</sup>, Ethan Allen and "more Than one Hundred Men" began a two-day raid on Reid's property and his tenants. One faction of mounted men confronted Henderson and three others with "Guns, words and Pistols." They force-marched them "like Criminals" to another house where Allen waited. He wanted his prisoners to watch what came next. It was a warning to others who might follow them. Allen first commanded his men to feed their horses in the grain fields, destroying part of the harvest, and then he ordered Henderson's house burnt to the ground. A defiant Henderson shouted that he

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<sup>41</sup> Affidavit of John Cameron, 25 September 1773, *DHSNY*, 4:847. Cameron noted in his affidavit "about the latter End of June last he and some other Families from Scotland arrived at New York." This is nearly 1.5 months after the *Britannia* emigrants arrived. In a deposition given the following year, and included in Ethan Allen's treatise on the New Hampshire-New York controversy, James Henderson gives their arrival as on or about 19 June 1773. Ethan Allen, *A Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New-York, Relative to their Obtaining the Jurisdiction of that Large District of Land, to the Westward from Connecticut River* (1774), 152.

would rebuild his home and remain on the land. Allen was unmoved. He “Threatned to Bind some of us To a Tree and Sking us Allive” should Henderson make good on his promise.<sup>42</sup>

When the Green Mountain Boys returned the next morning they destroyed Reid’s newly constructed gristmill. After dismantling the building they “broke the Mill stones in pieces, which they threw down a precipice into the River.” Angus McBean protested, but Allen “Damn’d his soul.” The mob then turned their sights on John Cameron’s home, dragging his wife and children from the building, before setting it alight. Henderson reckoned that the mob burnt six houses in total, losses compounded by the destruction of the mill and produce. Cameron lingered in the area for three more weeks. He hoped for support from Reid and the government. Having received none, he headed for the city of New York. Reid’s loss was once again Sir William’s gain. Cameron eventually took up a lot on Kingsborough.<sup>43</sup>

### *The MacDonells of Glengarry and the Restoration of the Old Order*

Sir William offered Scots protection that extended beyond geographic distance from violence. This included reinforcing the social standing of men whose diminished power in

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<sup>42</sup> James Henderson to Lachlan Mackintosh, 12 August 1773, (“one Hundred Men”; “Skin us Allive”), *DHSNY*, 4:842. Mackintosh was the Justice of the Peace at Crown Point. Affidavit of James Henderson, 28 September 1773, (“Guns, words and Pistols”; “like Criminals”), *DHSNY*, 4:851.

<sup>43</sup> Affidavit of John Cameron, 25 September 1773, (“precipice”), *DHSNY*, 4:848; Affidavit of Angus McBean, 28 September 1773, (“Damn’d his soul”), *DHSNY*, 4:854; Affidavit of James Henderson, 28 September 1773, *DHSNY*, 4:853; Fraser, “Sir John Johnson’s Rent Roll of the Kingsborough Patent,” 185; Richards, “The Black Watch at Ticonderoga” in *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, 10: 432. The New York government asked General Frederick Haldimand for a contingent of troops to contain Ethan Allen and his allies, but Haldimand, fearing a deployment would enflame colonial tensions, rejected the request. See Haldimand to William Tryon, 1 September 1773, *DHSNY*, 4:844-845. Allen and his men soon struck another Scottish settler’s property. John Munro, who served in the 48th Regiment of Foot during the Seven Years War, had amassed 11,000 acres near Bennington and took residence there in 1765. Munro had established himself as a merchant in Albany and on his Bennington lands built mills, a nailery, and facilities for making pot and pearl ash. He was also a Justice of the Peace for Albany County. In August 1773 “a Rioutous Mob” destroyed Munro’s ashery and threatened to burn all of his property. See Munro to William Tryon, 22 August 1773, *DHSNY*, 4:843; J. K. Johnson, “MUNRO, JOHN,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003, accessed 17 December 2014, [[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/munro\\_john\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/munro_john_4E.html)].

Scotland threatened to undermine their control over lower-class Scots. Such was the case of the tacksmen from Clan MacDonell, a Roman Catholic people who inhabited the area around Loch Garry on Scotland's western coast. In the late summer of 1773, some of them headed an expedition to New York aboard the *Pearl*.<sup>44</sup> The MacDonells were a sub branch of Clan Donald, sharing a common religious and familial heritage with the MacDonalds of Clanranald and the MacDonalds of Glenaladale. Many men from this expanded clan had thrown their support behind Charles Edward Stuart during 1745 Jacobite Uprising, including "Spanish" John MacDonell of Scotus, so named for his service in the Spanish Army in the 1740s. He, like his cousins, Allan of Collachie, Alexander of Aberchalder, and John of Leek — all brothers — held tacks under Duncan MacDonell, 14<sup>th</sup> clan chief of the Glengarry MacDonells.<sup>45</sup> Their own local world changed along with the rest of the Highlands as clan chiefs consolidated their hold over their lands, and in the process squeezed out the tacksmen who occupied the middle position of the landed hierarchy.

For much of the eighteenth-century weak chiefs headed the MacDonells of Glengarry. In the absence of an authoritative lord the clan's gentry, men like the brothers Allan, Alexander, and

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<sup>44</sup> The precise number of Scots on board is unclear. *The Scots Magazine* reported that in late August 1773, 400 Highlanders stood ready to sail from Fort William. This notice was later reprinted in *The New-York Journal; Or, The General Advertiser*. An extract of a letter printed in the *Caledonian Mercury* indicated that 250 Scots sailed from Fort George and that 308 MacDonells of "Glengary and neighbouring districts" sailed from Fort William. A subsequent letter printed in the *Derby Mercury* put the total number sailing from Fort William at 425 people. *The Scots Magazine* (September 1773), 499; "Extract of a letter from Fort William, in Scotland, dated August 20," *The New-York Journal; or The General Advertiser*, 28 October 1773; "Part of a letter from a Gentleman in Strathspey, dated Sept. 19 to the Publisher," *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 September 1773; "Letter from Fort William, September 4, 1773," *Derby Mercury*, 1 October 1773.

<sup>45</sup> For Spanish John's background see his autobiographical essay, "A narrative of the early life of Colonel John McDonell of Scottos, written by himself, after he came to Canada, at the urgent request of one of his particular friends. — Interspersed with numerous anecdotes and historical details of the times," *The Canadian Magazine and Literary Repository* 4 (1825): 305-322, 385-399. For a good overview of the MacDonells involved in this migration, and in particular the four leaders, see W. L. Scott, "The MacDonells of Leek, Collachie and Aberchalder," *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report* 2 (1934-1935): 22-32. For the role that the MacDonells of Glengarry played in the 1745 rebellion and the later role Alexander of Aberchalder's son, John, played in the American Revolution and post-war Canada see Brigadier-General E.A. Cruikshank, "A Memoir of Lieutenant-Colonel John MacDonell, of Glengarry House, The First Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada," *Papers and Records - Ontario Historical Society* 22 (1925): 20-59.

John along with their cousin Spanish John, possessed great influence within the clan and controlled generous tacks and wadsetts. Duncan MacDonell did not follow his predecessors' path. As the historian Marianne McLean has shown, the young man determined to be a strong chief. When Duncan came to power in 1768 he began to reassert the chief's place atop the clan hierarchy. He repaid inherited debts and made improvements on his lands with an eye toward transforming his estates into a more financially productive enterprise. In the beginning, Duncan carefully avoided antagonizing the clan gentry by involving them in the decision to sell some estate lands. Soon, however, he turned his attention to the remaining properties. In his view these lands generated too little profit relative to their value, and the clan gentry enjoyed too much of what wealth the land did produce. Eliminating his debt and realizing the land's full potential could bring about his financial independence and lessen the gentry's relative influence over the clan.<sup>46</sup>

In 1772, the young chief of Clan MacDonell made his move. He raised rents, redeemed the wadsetts, and offered the gentry and his tenants new leases and mortgages on terms far more advantageous to himself, and in doing so alienated some of the clan's older gentlemen. As the historian McLean has argued, they "were faced not merely with the loss of favourable leases but with a new landlord-tenant relationship that ignored their traditional status in the community."<sup>47</sup> As he had intended, Duncan's actions forced a set of difficult decisions upon men like the MacDonell brothers and their cousin. If they remained on the estate they then faced untenable financial arrangements and humiliation in the community. Emigration to America, however, offered them a promising alternative. If they could acquire land in the colonies they could in turn

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<sup>46</sup> Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 66.

<sup>47</sup> McLean, *The People of Glengarry*, 86.

recreate the older social world they favored, and the economic benefits they derived from holding sway over tenants.

The brothers three and their cousin opted for America. Using the influence they still possessed over their families as well as tenants beholden to them, they recruited over three hundred emigrants. The men reportedly “obtained a grant of lands in Albany,” hinting that the MacDonells spoke with a recruiter in Scotland, or were in correspondence with someone in New York.<sup>48</sup> There is no evidence that they in fact had a contract prior to their departure. They may have entertained proposals while in Scotland, and were no doubt aware of the migration out of Lochaber that preceded them by only a few months, and weighed their options among the many promotional pieces advocating emigration then circulating through Britain at that time. Most likely they met with land peddlers in October 1773 after their ship put into port at New York and followed the kind of path to Albany that Smith, Jr. and his partners had laid out in their broadside.

The MacDonells and their followers attracted the interest of the provincial papers when they arrived in North America because the manner of their appearance contrasted sharply with those Scots who had arrived only a few months earlier. They appeared “to be genteel People, of considerable Property.” Unfortunately, they too faced tragedy on the voyage. A lethal stowaway, said to be small pox, hid aboard the *Pearl*. Twenty-five emigrant children met their deaths at the hands of the remorseless passenger before they could lay eyes on America. These deaths and others reduced their numbers to about 280 souls. Those “respectable passengers” that remained, however, “were full of health, and ready money to purchase each man his freehold.” Such a

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<sup>48</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (September 1773), 499. There is little evidence for a prior arrangement. One historian speculated that Hugh Fraser might have introduced them to Sir William Johnson since Archibald MacDonell, John of Leek’s son, had married a Fraser prior to their emigration. Another surmised that Archibald was somehow instrumental in introducing his father and uncles to Sir William. See Scott, “The MacDonells of Leek, Collachie and Aberchalder,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report* 2 (1934-1935): 30; Fraser, “Sir John Johnson’s Rent Roll of the Kingsborough Patent”: 181.

description signaled to land owners and speculators that a new batch of buyers or prospective tenants had arrived in the colony ready to make a deal. These Scots “were justly esteemed a great acquisition to this province,” and by extension the proprietor who could settle them on his lands.<sup>49</sup>

We do not know who introduced the MacDonells to Sir William, only that the emigrant group appointed Allan of Collachie to meet with him in late October or early November at Johnson Hall. Sir William once again offered generous terms. He quoted the Scots a figure of £6 per 100 acres in annual rent (though in writing he named his price as £6.3), with the first rent due in 1780. He placed great emphasis on his Kingsborough lands and property he controlled in the Mayfield patent, which ran along the former’s northern border. He also discussed property along Schoharie Creek, a tributary of the Mohawk River to the south of its parent, and ground along the Susquehanna River near where its waters meet with the Unadilla River in southern New York. All interested the MacDonells.<sup>50</sup>

Competition for the MacDonells’ people produced a great sense of anxiety in the group’s leadership. In Collachie’s view competing interests, while somewhat welcome, threatened the emigrant clan’s social cohesion, and compromised their hold over the people. They wanted a deal that afforded them part of the traditional authority they had once exerted at home. When he and a

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<sup>49</sup> *The New-York Journal; or, The General Advertiser*, (“genteel People”), 21 October 1773. Notice of their arrival and the deaths also appeared in *Dunlap’s Pennsylvania Packet or, the General Advertiser*, 25 October 1773; *Der Wöchentliche Pennsylvanische Staatsbote* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 26 October 1773; and *The Essex Gazette*, 2 November 1773. Other papers more precisely defined the majority of the survivors as members of the McDonell clan. See *The Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 25 October 1773; *The Connecticut Journal, and the New-Haven Post-Boy*, 29 October 1773; *The Boston Evening-Post*, 1 November 1773; *The Essex Gazette*, 2 November 1773, page 55, column b; and *The Providence Gazette; and Country Journal*, 6 November 1773. For the comments about the emigrants’ respectability and their value to the colony see, “New-York, October 25,” *The Connecticut Journal, and the New-Have Post-Boy*, 29 October 1773; “New-York, October 25,” *The Boston Evening-Post*, 1 November 1773. The party lost an additional person to illness after arriving in New York. *The New-York Journal; or, The General Advertiser*, 28 October 1773.

<sup>50</sup> Sir William’s written offer and the specific details contained within has not survived, but they are recounted in an enclosure Allen MacDonell of Collachie sent to Sir William as part of their negotiations. See MacDonell of Collachie to Sir William, 14 November 1773, *PSWJ*, 12:1041-1042. The cover letter, of the same date, is in *Ibid.*, 8:915-916.

small party of men were with Sir William, some unnamed proprietors or their representatives convinced four of the Scots left behind to view lands along the Susquehanna River. The four men “returned & reported to the people the most flattering encouragement,” leaving the group “in a fluctuating Situation.” The peoples’ realization that they could choose from among a variety of options excited them, while it terrified their leaders. The gentry had envisioned emigration as a way of maintaining authority over their people, not losing it.<sup>51</sup>

Retaining that hold required a demonstration of the MacDonell leaders’ ability to provide for their clansmen. Although they believed that Sir William’s readily available lands and his lease terms represented a means of restoring some semblance of the social world they knew in Scotland before Duncan MacDonell became clan chief, they needed additional incentives that impressed the common people. The Kingsborough and Mayfield lands were far from eastern markets, and its general lack of mills—“Articles of the greatest Importance to New Beginners”—placed the prospective settlers at a disadvantage. The majority of the people “will adhere to us” if Sir William offered them all his protection. That took the form of a year’s support for each family, which they promised to repay, along with a horse and cow (or the cash equivalent) in exchange for some form of collateral.<sup>52</sup>

Collachie candidly admitted a “double motive” in asking for the beasts of burden. It was as much a practical request as it was a means of highlighting their ability to extract concessions from a landlord. Perception mattered when other proprietors had “designs laid of Inveigling [the people] from us.” In Scotland, Duncan MacDonell’s emergence as a stronger clan chief left the gentry and the commoners with little negotiating space. In New York, however, these humble Scots discovered that they could select from a variety of suitors if they so desired. The

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<sup>51</sup> MacDonell of Collachie to Sir William, 14 November 1773, *PSWJ*, 12:1041-1042.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

appearance of strength at the negotiating table allowed the MacDonell gentry to claim they had secured protections for their emigrants. Failing in that duty risked the loss of control.<sup>53</sup>

The MacDonell leaders asked Sir William to see the broader picture. If he played the role of a benevolent proprietor, provided the emigrants with support, and in addition assigned them lands with “room” nearby, it would encourage “such of our friends & Countrymen as will incline to follow our fate” to join them.<sup>54</sup> These were words similar to the lines Harry Munro fed Sir William when the Scots from the *Britannia* had arrived in Albany, and the cleric had not been wrong. The MacDonells, after all, were before Sir William asking for land. Help us appear strong, they entreated him, and in return they would help him.

The Highlander gentry’s sense of desperation played into Sir William’s hands. This he no doubt knew. He had little to lose in the short-term by refusing the MacDonell leadership’s terms. If the group splintered he could negotiate with individual Highlanders directly or with smaller factions. The existing Highlander presence on his Kingsborough lands would attract some of them, and distance from the hostilities in the east would likely persuade more to avoid settlements in the New Hampshire Grants. It was simply more opportune to play the part of the fictive clan chief. Binding the MacDonell gentry to him through a reconstructed version of the Scottish landed hierarchy gave him access to more tenants than he might have won on his own.

Both sides understood that it could only be a partial historical reconstruction. Admitting the need for incentives revealed the MacDonell gentry’s weakened position after their arrival in the colony. Sir William exploited this weakness for his own advantage. Bolstering the standing of the Highland leaders within their local emigrant community served their interests, but it was to him that both gentry and commoner would be indebted.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 1041.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 1042.

By the summer of 1774, Sir William could report that nearly 40 Highlander families had settled with him on Kingsborough and other lands. They took up tracts ranging from 100 to 200 acres each. In a letter to Spanish John, who purchased some of Sir William's lands near Cobles Kill, a branch of Schoharie Creek, the aging British diplomat wrote that the families were doing well. They were "a very heavy burthen" on him, intimating that he was spending more than he would like on provisions and improvements. They were as "much as I can bear," but if they proved "industrious" and succeeded in make the "rude woods" cultivable he would be quite pleased.<sup>55</sup>

Not all of the MacDonell Highlanders remained with Sir William. Another Allan MacDonell led a smaller group to Quebec. There they contracted with Lt. Gabriel Christie of the Royal American Regiment, a fellow Scot who acquired significant property in the new British province after the Seven Years War. MacDonell secured assistance from General Frederick Haldimand in moving his party across Lakes George and Champlain, with Haldimand delighted that Christie had "prevailed on those poor Scotch Adventurers to go to settle on some of your Lands in Canada."<sup>56</sup> Sir William later heard that the emigrants were "squabbling with Coll. Christie, & He with them," and was unsure "How it will end, or where they will Sitt down." He thought that they were wasting their "time & Substance" in Quebec. He hoped, certainly, that they would return to New York to strike a deal with him.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Fraser, "Sir John Johnson's Rent Roll of the Kingsborough Patent," 187-188; Sir William to John [Mac]Donell, 28 June 1774, *PSWJ*, 12:1111. Spanish John settled on 500 acres of land with three other families.

<sup>56</sup> Frederick Haldimand to Allan MacDonell, 28 March 1774; Haldimand to Captain Delaplace or the Officer Commanding at Ticonderoga, 28 March 1774; Haldimand to Gabriel Christie, 19 April 1774, all in Sir Frederick Haldimand: Unpublished Papers and Correspondence, 1758-1784, microfilm (London: World Microfilm Publications, 1977) reel 13, section 21693, #365, 367, and 377. For Christie's holdings see Françoise Noël, *The Christie Seigneuries: Estate Management and Settlement in the Upper Richelieu River, 1760-1854* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).

<sup>57</sup> Sir William to John [Mac]Donell, 28 June 1774, *PSWJ*, 12:1111.

## **James Montgomery's Subterfuge**

Sir William's amalgamation of his own Scottish colony was made possible in part by the imperial state's creation of military emigrants as well as the promoters who sold Scots on New York's virtues. He established alliances with the former group who then sent Scots his way, enhancing his reputation as someone who would deal fairly with those people, an arrangement that paid off mightily when discord in Scotland and within the colonies rendered life untenable for many of them. He had assumed the role of a fictive clan chief, a strategy that succeeded in winning for him two shiploads of Scottish emigrants

In similar ways, the British government's plan for St. John's Island provided unexpected opportunities for men to become imperial proprietors on the backs of Scottish emigrants. This was, after all, what Thomas Desbrisay was trying to achieve in 1772 when he openly advertised his lands in the new province. Indeed, when in 1767 the Board of Trade announced its plan to allocate townships on the island through a lottery, it elicited great interest among Scots who had served in either the political or military establishment in North America as well as prominent Scottish authorities at home who wanted access to land abroad. They all hoped to win a slice of the island.

Politically well-connected individuals appeared on the list. Most of them occupied positions of power within the domestic and imperial establishment. Those men who had served in the colonies included Colonel Simon Fraser together with several officers of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Captain David Shaw of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, and Quebec's governor, Major General John Murray. In Scotland, Perthshire merchant and Member of Parliament Adam Drummond (also a veteran of the war's American theater), physician Doctor John Pringle, and Lord

Advocate James Montgomery, the King's chief legal officer in Scotland, all put in their names for a slice of the island.<sup>58</sup> They were joined by other British imperial officials such as Board secretary John Pownall, Chauncy Townsend, a London contractor with extensive business dealings in Nova Scotia, and William Mathew Burt, a former member of St. Kitts's provincial council, and then a Member of Parliament, among many others.<sup>59</sup>

The government's plan for St. John's had much in common with the logic behind the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Settlement should be efficient, orderly, and ultimately for the empire's benefit. The comparison in intent ends there, for unlike the regulations governing the military grants, there was no requirement that property owners on St. John's had to reside on the island. Nor were the settlers to come from Britain. Like earlier discussions centered on finding the settlers who advanced Britain's imperial interest while preserving the domestic population, the Board of Trade mandated that "the Settlers to be Introduced be Protestants from such parts of Europe, as are not within his Majestys Dominions."<sup>60</sup> The Board of Trade was content with state-sponsored emigration with respect to military veterans, but that was couched within a framework of rewarding combat service. In some respects the provision mirrored the recommendation that Lt. Colonel Francis Grant had given in suggesting that French Protestants were appropriate settlers for East Florida. Using foreigners for the new colonies would not compromise Britain's domestic labor resources.

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<sup>58</sup> "List of Petitions annexed to the foregoing Order of Reference" in Entry for 23 May 1767, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/302-303, TNA.

<sup>59</sup> John Brooke, "TOWNSEND, James (1737-87), of Bruce Castle, Tottenham, Mdx.," in History of Parliament in Sir Lewis Namier and J. Brooke, eds., *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754-1790*, The History of Parliament Online, accessed January 11, 2016, [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/townsend-james-1737-87>]; for John Brooke, "BURT, William Mathew (d.1781), of Maiden Erleigh, nr. Reading, Berks.," in *Ibid.*, accessed January 11, 2016, [<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/burt-william-mathew-1781>].

<sup>60</sup> "At a Meeting of His Majesty's Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, 23 July 1767," Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/438, TNA.

The government's lottery system and the constraints it placed on the kind of people who could settle on St. John's complicated the larger ambitions of Scotland's Lord Advocate. James Montgomery was the King's man in Scotland. The position afforded him enormous patronage powers, although he chose to use his influence more subtly than others who held that office.<sup>61</sup> He was also a Member of Parliament, and was involved with the Board of Trustees for Manufacturers and Fisheries in Scotland. The organization's mission was to spur economic development in that part of Great Britain, especially in the Highlands, by encouraging linen production. Flax seed needed for the process often came from North America. Montgomery dreamed of flax farms on St. John's that could meet Scottish demand. He therefore needed enough land and a sufficient labor force for this to become a reality. That was easier said than done when government announced the results of the lottery and the regulations structuring settlement.

The lottery produced some big winners. Colonel Fraser and his fellow officers, for example, drew favorable townships, four in all, for a total of 80,000 acres.<sup>62</sup> They were all located along the island's southeastern coast around St. Peter's Bay, giving future settlers easy access to the sea for fishing and for the exploitation of what the earth would produce.<sup>63</sup> The surveyor, Samuel Holland, generally praised the quality of these particular lands in his report of the island. All four townships had good soil and promising fisheries, with Lot 39 having "the advantage of the whole Island being well situated for fishing and Agriculture, and abounds also

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<sup>61</sup> J. M. Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803," *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 7 (1978): 78.

<sup>62</sup> "At a Meeting of His Majesty's Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, 23 July 1767," Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/442, TNA; "Explanation referring to the Townships," in *Ibid.*, f. 450.

<sup>63</sup> *A Plan of the Island of St. John, in the Province of Nova Scotia, in North-America*, 1765, in *Ibid.*, 575b-c.

with Fish and plenty of Game,” and a harbor that could accommodate ships of 200 tons.<sup>64</sup> Some land had already been cleared by the former French inhabitants of these lots. Seven hundred acres had been cleared on Lot 38, which also contained fourteen houses and barns. Likewise, on the much-praised Lot 39 sat thirty-four houses and barns plus a water mill, with 1,600 acres of forested land cleared. Lot 42 featured the ruins of a village and 100 cleared acres. Together these townships had a great deal of promise for their new proprietors.<sup>65</sup>

Fortune did not favor Lord Advocate Montgomery. He drew Lot 7 on Cape Wolfe, a township on the northwest part of the island that bulged out into the Northumberland Strait toward the Nova Scotian mainland. “The Township is bad,” Holland wrote, “having indifferent Lands and woods and no Fishery, and the sea Coast Steep and Rocky.”<sup>66</sup> Montgomery lamented that among his friends who had also received land “it is likely the worst of the 4 has been drawn in my name.”<sup>67</sup> He had been left holding a loathsome lot.

But Montgomery was not content with fate’s decision. Prior to the drawing he had arranged to secure other townships through these same friends, much in the same way that Sir William went about building his Kingsborough tract.<sup>68</sup> They applied for lots in their own names with the idea of later transferring control of the property to him. Dr. Pringle, who drew Lot 51, was a party to this plan.<sup>69</sup> After the lottery, Montgomery sought to trade one grant for another, and “if a little money could be usefull in bring abt an exchange,” he would offer it, and had thoughts of acquiring townships later through outright purchase. One of his concerns was whether or not a proprietor could have more than one lot to his name, and if so whether it was

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<sup>64</sup> Remarks on Lot 39 in *Ibid.*, f. 451.

<sup>65</sup> Remarks on Lots 38, 39, and 42 in *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Remarks on Lot 7 in *Ibid.*, f. 445.

<sup>67</sup> James Montgomery to John Spottiswoode, 3 August 1767, Microfilms (General Series) RH4/56, The National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “NRS.”

<sup>68</sup> This argument is advanced most convincingly by Bumsted, “Sir James Montgomery”: 79.

<sup>69</sup> “At a Meeting of His Majesty’s Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, 23 July 1767,” in Entry for 26 August 1767, Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/442, TNA.

wise to do so. Montgomery, fearing accusations of corruption, concluded that for the moment it was best to leave Pringle's lot in his own name, "because so many coming into mine might create Suspicion which is to be avoided."<sup>70</sup> In another letter, Montgomery begged an anonymous correspondent that his involvement with Pringle and, more mysteriously, "the other Manoeuvre" be kept "a secret from all."<sup>71</sup> His strategies worked. By 1770, Montgomery held 100,000 acres, or five townships, on the island. He added some small islands off the coast of his lands to his collection a few years later.<sup>72</sup>

The main reason that Montgomery wanted to keep his involvement on St. John's Island as quiet as possible had to do with the people he intended to settle there. He wanted Highlanders to work the earth and grow the flax seed that could then be exported back to Scotland. Yet, as Lord Advocate he straddled both the Scottish political and British imperial worlds. Montgomery's place as a member of the Scottish elite and a prominent domestic land owner in his own right made him aware of the growing discomfort among the gentry about emigration, first through the military during the war, and then subsequently in the 1760s to colonies like New York and North Carolina.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, as he well knew, the government had mandated that proprietors settle their lands with foreign Protestants. He was also well aware of Britain's emigration laws and the ways in which they were designed to protect the domestic labor force. One year before the lottery, he had prosecuted successfully men charged with promoting the

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<sup>70</sup> Montgomery to Spottiswoode, 3 August 1767, Microfilms (General Series), RH4/56, NRS.

<sup>71</sup> James Montgomery to unknown, 1767, quoted in Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery": 79n7.

<sup>72</sup> Board of Trade: Minutes, 29 May 1772, Records of the Colonial Office, CO 391/79/106-107, TNA; Board of Trade: Minutes, 3 June 1773, Records of the Colonial Office, CO 391/80/112-113, TNA; Board of Trade: Minutes, 14 June 1773, Records of the Colonial Office, CO 391/80/121, TNA; Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery": 79.

<sup>73</sup> Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery": 81.

emigration of Scottish laborers to foreign nations, a crime under British law.<sup>74</sup> He could not, therefore, be seen as acting against Scottish or imperial interests.

Executing his plan of settling Highlanders on the island required Montgomery to operate in the shadows. He did so in two ways. In the first instance, Montgomery subcontracted out the work of recruiting new settlers, transporting them to the island, and overseeing other business matters in a bid to remain hidden from view. Those duties fell in part to David Lawson of Callendar and Ludovic Grant. In 1770, Lawson, a Perthshire flax farmer, signed up fifty men to four-year indenture contracts. They came from Perthshire in east-central Scotland as well, which encompassed part of the southern Highlands. The men would receive land on 1,000-year leases at the end of their terms, a measure designed to ensure a steady stream of income and the continued cultivation of his lands. To Montgomery, these men were his “White Negroes.”<sup>75</sup> They were, in ways similar to African slaves, a class of people who in his eyes only had value in their ability to perform labor. He controlled their lives through the terms of the indentures, with the difference being that if they survived they would regain their freedom, and have the option of remaining bound to their master through a rental agreement.

What Montgomery soon came to discover was that this was still an expensive proposition. While he, through his man Lawson, managed to settle those fifty indentured servants on part of his lands in the summer of 1770, the venture cost him more than he had originally

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<sup>74</sup> Brief overviews of the cases that Montgomery prosecuted appear in *The Scots Magazine*, (February 1766), 110, 501. Montgomery explained the particulars of these cases in a letter to William Burke, undersecretary of state for the Southern Department. Montgomery to Burke, 16 August 1766, State Papers: Scotland SP54/45/152, TNA. The act under which Montgomery prosecuted the men was “An Act for the effectual punishing of Persons convicted of seducing Artificers in the Manufactures of *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, out of the Dominions of the Crown of *Great Britain*; and to prevent the Exportation of Utensils made use of in the Woollen and Silk Manufactures from *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, into foreign Parts; and for the more easy and speedy Determination of Appeals, allowed in certain Cases, but an Act made in the last Session of Parliament, relating to Persons employed in the several Manufactures therein mentioned.” 23 George II. C.13. [1750] in John Raithby, ed., *The Statutes at Large, of England and of Great-Britain: From Magna Carta to the Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, 1811), 10:528. The act revised statute from the reign of George I.

<sup>75</sup> Bumsted, “Sir James Montgomery”: 81.

imagined.<sup>76</sup> Supply problems compounded the first settlers' difficulties as they struggled to clear land. So poorly had most of the proprietors misjudged the needs of their charges, an early historian noted, "settlers were landed in a state of entire destitution, and sometimes almost perished with hunger." There were even horrific rumors that colonists "had eaten human flesh" for want of food.<sup>77</sup> A few more settlers arrived on Montgomery's lands in the ensuing years, but by the opening of the American War for Independence only about one-sixth remained on his property.<sup>78</sup>

### *Catholic Persecution in South Uist*

The expenses associated with his ventures and a crisis in Scottish Catholicism presented Montgomery with a second and unexpected means of planting Scots on his lands. In this case he, like Sir William, positioned himself as a benevolent patron and proprietor who could offer relief to a benighted people. Catholics were a very small part of the Scottish population. In 1764, they were about 2.6 percent of the Scottish population. This amounted to about 33,000 worshipers, including 23,000 in the Highlands. On the Isle of South Uist, one of the southern islands in the Outer Hebrides, Catholics numbered about 2,500 people in this period.<sup>79</sup>

In 1770, a religious tempest brewed on South Uist. Colin MacDonald directly controlled half of the island as the Laird of Boisdale, a village on southwest coast. He held another portion of it in tack from Ranald of Clanranald. He was also a convert to Presbyterianism, one who

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.: 81-86.

<sup>77</sup> George Patterson, *Memoir of the Rev. James MacGregor, D. D., missionary of the General Associate Synod of Scotland to Pictou, Nova Scotia; with notices of the colonization of the lower provinces of British America, and of the social and religious condition of the early settler* (Philadelphia: J.M. Wilson, 1859), 209.

<sup>78</sup> Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery": 84-86.

<sup>79</sup> Kathleen Toomey, "Emigration from the Scottish Catholic bounds 1770-1810 and the role of the clergy" (PhD diss., 1991), 17.

embraced his newfound Protestant faith with the fervor of a zealot. To the great alarm of Catholic Bishops in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Boisdale embarked on a quest to turn his tenants away from the Church of Roman and toward the Church of Scotland. What was more, it appeared to Bishop George Hay that the “persecution raised in Uist” was spreading. On the small Isle of Muck in the Inner Hebrides, the Protestant wife of the island’s laird “caused [Father] Kennedy upon his landing be brought Prisoner to her house.” The incarceration lasted two days and ended with a warning to not to make another attempt to officiate on the island.<sup>80</sup>

Bishop Hay had spent a year in a London prison for participating in the Jacobite Rebellion. He was born to Protestant parents, but he began taking instruction in Catholic teachings during his imprisonment. He later became a priest. In 1766 the now Bishop Hay was named coadjutor, an administrative position in the diocese, to Bishop John Grant, the Lowland Vicar Apostolic.<sup>81</sup> He worried about the Uist people’s spiritual and temporal welfare and that Boisdale’s behavior would inspire the persecution of Catholics elsewhere, as it had seemed to do on the Isle of Muck. The people had thus far stood firm in their faith. It was uncertain how much that devotion might cost them.<sup>82</sup>

The question was how the Scottish Catholic community should respond. John MacDonald, Laird of Glenaladale along Loch Shiel near Scotland’s west coast, quickly arrived at the conclusion that emigration into the empire was the best way to preserve the South Uist people’s religious freedom. As one biographer has suggested, Glenaladale was not of the same mindset that had led Duncan MacDonell of Glengarry and other proprietors to pursue financial

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<sup>80</sup> Bishop George Hay to Peter Grant, 13 & 16 August 1770, Blair Letters 3/219/9, Scottish Catholic Archives, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “SCA.”

<sup>81</sup> Oswald Hunter-Blair, “George Hay.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 7. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910, accessed 23 Feb. 2016, [<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07157b.htm>]

<sup>82</sup> Bishop Hay to Peter Grant, 13 & 16 August 1770, SCA BL 3/219/9; Bishop Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 11 November 1770, BL 3/220/6, SCA.

and land management strategies that benefitted their interests.<sup>83</sup> He possessed a larger understanding of empire, one in which the availability of land in North America provided an immediate solution to the South Uist problem. It was a sentiment that he shared with Bishop John MacDonald of the Highland district.

Bishops Hay and Grant were not so sure. Hay initially believed that emigration should be a measure of last resort and was concerned about the financial costs to mount an expedition.<sup>84</sup> Grant was the more skeptical of the two men. He believed that the tenants should use the threat of emigration as a bargaining strategy in hopes of effecting a change in Boisdale's hardened heart. He suggested that Glenaladale should not be so quick to act as he doubted that many of the tenants could be easily convinced to leave the land of their parents, despite their persecution. In his mind, Glenaladale should at least try to seek relief from political authorities in Edinburgh, and if necessary travel to London "to procure the interest of some power Friend at [George III's] court" who could help them put a stop to "the malice of our enemys."<sup>85</sup> Yet when it became clear that Boisdale would not retreat from his position, the bishops (Grant most reluctantly) came around to Glenaladale's way of thinking.<sup>86</sup> They took some measure of comfort in observing that Scots on the Isle of Skye and in Argyllshire were appealing to emigration as a means of relief "from the Rapacity & oppression of their Masters at home."<sup>87</sup> It offered an example, and a justification, for the Uist people to take similar steps.

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<sup>83</sup> F. L. Pigot, "MacDONALD OF GLENALADALE, JOHN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 23, 2016, [[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macdonald\\_of\\_glenaladale\\_john\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macdonald_of_glenaladale_john_5E.html)].

<sup>84</sup> Bishop Hay to Peter Grant, 13 & 16 August 1770, BL 3/219/9, SCA.

<sup>85</sup> Bishop James Grant to Bishop George Hay (Edinburgh), 30 October 1770, BL 3/215/10, SCA.

<sup>86</sup> Bishop Grant to Bishop Hay, 20 November 1770, BL/3/215/13, SCA.

<sup>87</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop Geddes, 11 November 1771, BL 3/220/6, SCA.

*The Lord Advocate and the Catholic Refuge on St. John's Island*

Now all the Catholic Scots had to do was find a new home in North America. As it turned out, Glenaladale did not have to look far for a solution to that problem. Lord Advocate Montgomery was more than happy to help. By 1770, Montgomery had acquired Lot 36 on St. John's Island, property once owned by the merchants George Spence and John Mill.<sup>88</sup> It was a considerably better tract of land than the one he had first drawn in the 1767 lottery. The township included Tracadie Bay, then known as Bedford Bay, which opens into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. In his surveying notes, Samuel Holland described it as "Tolerable good Ground and Timber" in the lot's southern end, but "indifferent" in a northern end that had been "almost entirely destroyed by fire." Eight houses and a ruined mill stood on 250 cleared acres at the time of the auction.<sup>89</sup>

Montgomery saw in the plight of Scottish Catholics a way of making his investment in Lot 36 viable. Glenaladale had, in a way, followed Bishop Grant's advice in seeking out a powerful friend within the British political. In the fall of 1770, he traveled to Edinburgh to consult with Montgomery about his property on St. John's Island. Bishops Hay and Grant disagreed sharply about Montgomery's motives. Hay was more sympathetic. He was given to understand that the Lord Advocate's tracts had "most excellent Soil & [a] fine Climate." It did strike him as strange that "a man so much of the Government is most willing to give them all Encouragement," given the settlement regulations and Montgomery's prominence within the Scottish political establishment, but Hay found assurance in the Protestant Montgomery's indifference to their Catholicism and even his suggestion that a Catholic enclave on the island

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<sup>88</sup> "At a Meeting of His Majesty's Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, 23 July 1767," in Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/442, TNA.

<sup>89</sup> "Explanation referring to the Townships," in Privy Council: Registers, PC2/112/451, TNA.

would be of comfort to the French Catholics who remained there after the expulsion.<sup>90</sup> Here again Montgomery was willing to overlook the rules and give encouragement to domestic Catholics, not foreign Protestants.

In Aberdeen, Bishop Grant remained wary. He had heard that the air on the island was “very unwholesome” and that a “thick fogg hovers” over it. He also feared the possibility that Montgomery would walk back the agreement, or try to alter it, after the emigrants had landed.<sup>91</sup> That information contradicted everything Hay had heard from settlers who had already gone there, and he did not believe that Montgomery, whom Hay knew, harbored malicious intentions toward their flock.<sup>92</sup>

The conversation between Montgomery and Glenaladale evolved from an arrangement to lease the land to one of outright sale of the property.<sup>93</sup> By December, Glenaladale had concluded an agreement to buy the lot from Montgomery for £600.<sup>94</sup> He mortgaged his Scottish lands to make the purchase. The sale was advantageous to both parties. The Catholics gained control of land on which they could build a religious refuge for those fleeing Boisdale’s wrath. It also offered space for other Catholics who, like their Protestant brethren, complained of rising rents and inattentive clan chiefs. Montgomery received money that he could then rout into other projects while still fulfilling his original goal of settling Highlanders on his lands. The property was no longer his, but selling to Glenaladale achieved the same objectives. It permitted him to distance himself from the process of encouraging emigration. To be sure, Bishop Hay had noted

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<sup>90</sup> 17 November 1770 Bishop Hay (Edr) to Bishop Grant, 17 November 1770, BL 3/220/8, SCA.

<sup>91</sup> Bishop Grant to Bishop Hay, 20 November 1770, BL 3/215/13, SCA.

<sup>92</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop Grant, 4 December 1770, BL 3/220/11, SCA.

<sup>93</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop Grant, 17 November 1770, BL 3/220/8, SCA. As Hay noted in this letter, buying the property outright was not the original objective. His “agreement with the Advocate being upon quite a different footing,” than a purchase, something that Hay did not encourage because Glenaladale had proposed mortgaging his Scottish lands to achieve it. Soon, however, Glenaladale followed this very path.

<sup>94</sup> Bishop Hay to John Geddes 20 December 1770, BL 3/220/14, SCA; William Fong, *Sir William C. MacDonald: A Biography* (Montreal and Quebec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 11.

the tension between Montgomery's place within the British government and his willingness to help his people resettle in the colonies. Transferring the property's title to Glenaladale, however, had an effect similar to Montgomery's use of subordinates in recruiting and managing his colonial lands. It put a great deal of legal and social space between the proprietor who promoted Scottish relocation and those who actually undertook it.

Paying for the costs of outfitting the expedition and transporting to St. John's the Scots who wanted to go remained problematic for nearly two years.<sup>95</sup> Most families on South Uist could not afford their own passage. The money that Glenaladale had raised from mortgaging his estate could only go so far. Part of those funds went to procuring a ship for their use, which his brother and thirty others sailed to St. John's in March 1771 to prepare for the future settlement.<sup>96</sup> He had also purchased Lot 35 around the same time. Charitable contributions were not as forthcoming as Bishop Hay had hoped, although by early 1772 they had raised some money toward the intended purpose.<sup>97</sup>

In the meantime, Boisdale's malevolence toward the Catholics on his lands continued. Winter's arrival in late 1771 made it much worse. Two people deputized by the community to treat with Glenaladale accused their proprietor of monopolizing resources and driving them further into debt. He did not bother the people on the lands that he held in tack from Clanranald, but those on his property—about thirty-six families—he delighted in greeting them as “You Devil” when they passed him on the roads. These were acts of oppression not unlike that “practiced in most of the Western Isles, where British liberty was scarce ever heard of,” an attitude that John Witherspoon, Alexander Campbell of Balole, and Alexander McAlester

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<sup>95</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop Geddes, 11 November 1771, BL 3/220/6, SCA.

<sup>96</sup> Bishop Hay to Peter Grant 25 March 1771, BL/3/231/7, SCA.

<sup>97</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 20 April 1772, BL 3/244/2, SCA.

certainly shared.<sup>98</sup> Like them, Glenaladale, his supporters, and the South Uist people had come to believe that the only means of overcoming Scottish tyranny was in using the British Empire itself as the solution.

In January 1772, Glenaladale set out for South Uist with Bishop John MacDonald to take stock of Boisdale's people and exhort them to emigrate.<sup>99</sup> The two men found the people even poorer than they had been led to believe, leading Bishop MacDonald to conclude that the church would have to underwrite Glenaladale's venture upon promise of repayment.<sup>100</sup> To their great surprise, however, a number of the thirty-six families had signed one-year leases with Boisdale. About twenty-six rejoiced at their arrival, and yet within a few days about ten of these families expressed reservations about St. John's. From what Bishop MacDonald and Glenaladale learned, Boisdale had convinced the wives and daughters in many of the families that they would all "be sold or used as slaves" in the colonies by their alleged saviors.<sup>101</sup> They had forbidden their husbands and fathers from signing on to the scheme. They found it too difficult to uproot themselves from the land to which they were firmly attached, even with the problems under which they physical and spiritually labored. Fortunately, two months later, some lost hope that Boisdale would change his ways and they agreed to the emigration plan.<sup>102</sup>

Glenaladale chartered a ship in Greenock with the church's backing. The *Alexander* stopped first off of Arisaig, a village in Lochabar on the west coast, where it collected 110

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<sup>98</sup> Bishop John MacDonald to Bishop Hay, 29 October 1771, BL 3/233/16, SCA.. Hay extracted a portion of Bishop MacDonald's letter in his to Peter Grant, 25 Nov 1771, BL 3/232/16, SCA. Glenaladale mentioned the meeting in John MacDonald of Glenaladale to Bishop Hay, 8 November 1771, BL 3/233/19, SCA.

<sup>99</sup> Charles Cruikshanks to Bishop Hay, 13 February 1772, BL 3/237/3, SCA.

<sup>100</sup> Bishop John MacDonald to Bishop Hay, 14 February 1772, BL 3/247/1, SCA; Charles Cruikshanks to Bishop Hay, 28 February 1772, BL 3/237/7, SCA; Charles Cruikshanks to Bishop Hay, 26 March 1772, BL 3/237/15, SCA. Bishop Hay expressed some reservations that the people were pleaded poverty to a greater degree in order to have their passaged funded by money that church had set aside to help the poor, but he admitted that he did not have sufficient information on that point. See Bishop Hay to Charles Cruikshanks, 30 March 1772, BL 3/243/19, SCA.

<sup>101</sup> Bishop John MacDonald to Bishop Hay, 14 February 1772, BL 3/247/1, SCA; Charles Cruikshanks to Bishop Hay, 28 February 1772, BL 3/237/7, SCA.

<sup>102</sup> Bishop John MacDonald to Bishop Hay, 26 February 1772, BL 3/247/3, SCA; Charles Cruikshanks to Bishop Hay, 26 March 1772, BL 3/237/15, SCA.

passengers from Glenaladale's lands. It then proceeded on to South Uist where 100 people came aboard.<sup>103</sup> The total cost, including freight and provisions, amounted to about £1,500. Most of the emigrants from the Scottish mainland paid their own way; the church provided for the South Uist people. To their delight, and "thanks to God," Bishop Hay and his fellow clergymen managed to raise enough money "from our good friends in England" to cover all of the costs.<sup>104</sup>

The emigrants disembarked on St. John's Island in May 1772 to settle on lands that had once belonged to Lord Advocate Montgomery.<sup>105</sup> Like their fellow Protestants Scots further south in North Carolina, the Catholic MacDonells who bargained with Sir William Johnson in New York, and the Highlanders who accepted John Witherspoon's invitation to resettle in Pictou, Nova Scotia, Glenaladale and the people in his charge believed that emigrating into the empire offered them relief from perilous circumstances in Scotland. For all of them, and for the proprietors with whom they contracted, this was the way that the empire should and did work in their favor. Some, however, had to be more careful than others as they went about their business. Montgomery's actions demonstrated that his personal interests overrode any larger concerns that the Scottish elite or officials in London may have had about peopling North America with domestic British subjects. They shaped the choices he made as a proprietor.

### **John Witherspoon's Salesmanship**

John Witherspoon invited the kind of criticism that James Montgomery strove carefully to avoid. The 1772 advertisement for his lands in Pictou earned him public scorn. As part of his

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> This included freight charges of £3.12.6 per person above seven years of age, totaling more than £600, a one year's supply of food at an estimated £500, and clothing and farming equipment at around £400. Bishop Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 20 April 1772, BL 3/244/2, SCA.

<sup>105</sup> Bishop Hay to Bishop Grant, 8 July 1772, BL 3/244/12, SCA.

rebuttal, Witherspoon distilled them into a simple syllogism: “Migrations from Britain to America, are not only hurtful, but tend to the ruin of that kingdom; therefore J.W. by inviting people to leave Scotland and settle in America, is an enemy to his country.”<sup>106</sup> While he actually believed that his support of emigration made him a friend to his country and his empire, (not to mention his own financial interests), the attacks had caught him off guard. To gain settlers for a second substantial piece of land that he owned with others in the disputed New Hampshire Grants, Witherspoon altered his strategy and employed methods characteristic of both Sir William and Scotland’s Lord Advocate.

Witherspoon’s involvement with a township called Ryegate had its origins in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. In some respects it mirrored his gaining control of part of the Pictou grant. In 1763, New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth granted a charter for Ryegate to a group of speculators. The property ran adjacent to the Connecticut River some three hundred miles north of Manhattan. Four years later the original grantees sold the just over 23,000-acre tract to John Church. The Charlestown, N.H. land agent in turn sold an interest in the southern half of it to Witherspoon and his Pagan partners after the former’s emigration to New Jersey.<sup>107</sup> Ryegate, today about one hour’s drive east of Montpelier, Vermont along Interstate 89, was not among the lands contested by the Green Mountain Boys. Lt. Colonel John Reid had that unfortunate distinction.

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<sup>106</sup> “Letter Sent to Scotland for the Scots Magazine” in John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (Edinburgh, 1805), 8:294.

<sup>107</sup> Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 612.

## *The Lowlanders are Coming*

By the early 1770s, Scottish Lowlanders began to follow the example of their Highlander cousins for slightly different reasons. The Scottish economy stagnated following years of significant growth. Liberal use of credit in funding agricultural, manufacturing, and internal improvements, coupled with the bad harvest during that hard winter, drove up the price of goods. In the summer of 1772, a bank collapse in England triggered a credit crisis that spread to Scotland. It mortally wounded the Douglas, Heron & Company Bank in Ayr along Scotland's western coast. Unemployment rose among weavers and laborers in the linen trade in the wake of the bank's failure, leading to rioting in cities like Dundee, Perth, and Glasgow.<sup>108</sup>

Lowlanders were certainly no strangers to North America. In the early eighteenth century merchants had set up shop in the Lower Cape Fear River Valley in North Carolina. Lowlanders operating storehouses in coastal Virginia and Maryland for Glasgow corporations had firm control of the transatlantic tobacco trade.<sup>109</sup> With the onset of the credit crisis and the rise in both unemployment and the cost of provisions, Lowlanders began mobilizing their resources for relocation in North America. Following the example of Scots on the Isle of Skye, farmers and tradesmen in and around Glasgow began forming corporations to effect their emigration. In 1772, while Witherspoon's partners in the Pictou enterprise began the work of finding settlers for their Nova Scotian land, Scots in Inchinnan, Renfrewshire met to organize the Scotch American

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<sup>108</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, "The British Credit Crisis of 1772 and The American Colonies," *The Journal of Economic History* 20 (June, 1960): 161-186; Henry Hamilton, "The Failure of the Ayr Bank, 1772," *The Economic History Review* 8 (1956): 405-417; *An Inquiry into the late mercantile distresses, in Scotland and England* (London, 1772), 81-83; Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller to Earl of Suffolk, 25 January 1773, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/46/50, TNA; Same to Same, 25 October 1773, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/46/88, TNA.

<sup>109</sup> T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords: A Student of Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and Their Trading Activities, c. 1740-90* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd, 1975); Albert Tillson, *Accommodating Revolutions: Virginia's Northern Neck in an Era of Transformations, 1760-1810* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 153-174.

Company of Farmers. The small village was west of Glasgow, and just to the north of Witherspoon's former Paisley home. In 1774, a similar company, known either as the "Arnpyrick Society for Emigrants" or the "United Company of Farmers for the shires of Perth and Stirling," formed in Arnprior, Shropshire.<sup>110</sup>

In 1773, the Scotch American Company of Farmers dispatched two agents to the colonies in search of land. Surveyor James Whitelaw and farmer David Allan represented 139 company subscribers. The company's directors instructed them to "explore the Country, make choice of a proper place for a settlement, and purchase as much land as their Capital will amount to" on behalf of the Company's subscribers. They headed to Philadelphia to meet with Alexander Semple whose brother, William, operated a merchant house in the city. He served as the agents' point of contact.<sup>111</sup>

The company probably enjoyed the patronage of Witherspoon's former colleague the Reverend William Thom of Govan.<sup>112</sup> Thom had written a number of pamphlets blaming Highlander emigration on the evolution of clanship.<sup>113</sup> He had also counseled Glaswegian farmer Alexander Thompson on his emigration to Philadelphia, where Thompson met and consulted with Witherspoon.<sup>114</sup> It was therefore more than a little too convenient when Whitelaw and Allan "accidentally met with Doctor Witherspoon" in Philadelphia almost immediately after they stepped off the ship. In Whitelaw's telling the two company men all but bumped into the college

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<sup>110</sup> Journal of Alexander Harvey, 9 May 1774 – 22 November 1775, MS B H262J, Vermont Historical Society, Barre, Vermont. Hereafter "VHS." Harvey succeeded in purchasing land near the Scotch American Company of Farmers in Vermont, but the outbreak of the American War for Independence disrupted their plans.

<sup>111</sup> Journal of James Whitelaw, 1773-1793, MS B W58J, VHS.

<sup>112</sup> Alexander Thompson, the Lowlander who in 1771 had settled in Pennsylvania, acknowledged Thom's mention of the Scotch American company in his pamphlet, "News From America." Alexander Thompson, "News From America" (Glasgow: 1774) in Barbara DeWolfe, ed., *Discoveries of America: Personal Accounts of British Emigrants to North America during the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 109.

<sup>113</sup> *A Candid Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late and Intended Migrations From Scotland* (Glasgow, n.d.); *Seasonable Advice to the Landholders and Farmers in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1770); and *The President Conduct of the Chieftains and Proprietors of Lands in the Highlands of Scotland* (London, 1773).

<sup>114</sup> Thompson, "News from America," in DeWolfe, ed., *Discoveries of America*, 117.

president.<sup>115</sup> They carried letters for Witherspoon and probably intended to call on him in a matter of days, but Whitelaw did not expect to meet him so soon after their arrival. For his part, the college president wasted little time in the seemingly chance encounter. He asked them to call on him later in the evening and made sure to mention that he and “some other Gentlemen had a township of Land” they were “willing to dispose of” should the company agents be interested.<sup>116</sup>

### *Witherspoon's Gambit*

Whitelaw's journal and letters to the company reveal Witherspoon's carefully orchestrated and ultimately successful salesmanship. When the company's agents called on Witherspoon, he “promised to do everything in his power” to assist them in their mission. After briefly describing Ryegate, and telling the men he was ready to part with it “in Case we though it would sute our purpose,” he urged a judicious evaluation of all potential opportunities. He wanted to sell Ryegate to them, yet he adopted a measured approach in promoting the lands. He wanted to win their confidence without seeming overbearing.<sup>117</sup>

The agents spent some additional time in Philadelphia before meeting with Witherspoon again in Princeton, New Jersey. Some of Witherspoon's partners were there as well. Robert and John Hyndman had just returned from Ryegate and they offered the company's agents “particular intelligence” about the township. Nevertheless, Witherspoon did not offer them terms. The company had directed Whitelaw and Allan to scout in New York first. Witherspoon

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<sup>115</sup> “Journal of the Proceedings of the Managers of the Scotch American Company of Farmers,” MS 974.31sj, VHS; James Whitelaw to Company Managers, Undated, but written between 24 May 1773 when Whitelaw and Allan arrived and 27 May 1773 when they went to visit Witherspoon in New Jersey. Papers of James Whitelaw, Unorganized Material, VHS.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Whitelaw to Company Managers, Undated, (“promised to do”), Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, DOC 326 Folder 4, VHS; Journal of James Whitelaw, (“in Case we”), Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, MS B W58J, VHS.

wanted them to see land there and at Ryegate before he stated his price. He wanted to have the option to counter any offers that they might receive in New York. Equally important, the Hyndmans' report gave the agents a frame of reference for thinking about lands suitable for company settlement. Just as he did with the Pictou scheme, Witherspoon cultivated the image of a benevolent friend rather than a speculative proprietor.<sup>118</sup>

Allan and Whitelaw met with land dealers in the city of New York before heading up the Hudson River to Albany. In June 1773, they, like so many other Scots in this moment, met with Sir William Johnson at Johnson Hall.<sup>119</sup> Sir William had just finished seducing the *Britannia* Scots away from Lt. Colonel Reid when Whitelaw and Allan came calling. He offered the agents land at one dollar New York currency per acre (about £1.16 sterling) for property "12 or 14 miles from the Mohake river and over a high hill and some swamps."<sup>120</sup> They thought that the land was too far from the river. They then turned east to meet with John Church in Charlestown, N.H., who guided the men up the Connecticut River, stopping briefly to treat with the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock in Hanover, before arriving at Ryegate.<sup>121</sup> Whitelaw found a landscape marked by good soil featuring maple, hemlock, and basswood trees along with "an excellent Meadow." It seemed idyllic, although Whitelaw worried that Ryegate's distance from commercial markets and the lack of good roads or navigable rivers to access those markets might counterbalance the landscape's agricultural potential. He observed, however, that settlers in the area sold produce to

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<sup>118</sup> Journal of James Whitelaw, Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, MS B W58J, VHS.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. Wheelock told the men he had lands available for supporting about 30 families, and that he preferred "Scotch people before any other as he though much of their religion and manner of Church government," but expected his lands would not remain on the market for long.

newcomers at elevated prices, and suspected that his Scots could peddle their wares in the same manner.<sup>122</sup>

The agents returned to Princeton in the middle of July. It was at this mid-point in their journey that Witherspoon offered them terms. He would sell Ryegate to them, save for a 2,000-acre reserve, for two shillings sterling per acre. The Scotch American Company stood to receive about 10,000 acres at a rate significantly below that which Sir William had offered them. Yet even here Witherspoon did not push for an answer. He carefully suggested that the men “be at all pains” in evaluating the proposal, and if they found better property to take it, “as he is very fond of our scheme should succeed.”<sup>123</sup> Witherspoon did not want to push his property on them. He wanted to win their trust to make a deal later.

The men were to head south on the next leg of their expedition. Witherspoon had often journeyed through Pennsylvania and Virginia on church business, leaving him with a good sense of those colonial land markets. By all means inspect lands further south, he suggested, in a sense daring them to find cheaper lands or at the least a competitor whose bid he could counter. He was as eager to sell the land, as they were to buy property.

The agents’ journey south took them through lower Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and upper North Carolina. Whitelaw deemed Pennsylvania land west and south of Philadelphia the finest he had seen in America, but lamented that the best parts had been settled. That which remained was too expensive for the company. Alexander Thomson, who emigrated from near Glasgow in 1771 with his large family, hosted the men in mid-August 1773 on his farm near Shippensburg. Thomson was aware of the company’s activities through William Thom and he

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid. In a letter to his father, Whitelaw restated his reservations about the Ryegate, but not the possibility of settlers selling produce to new emigrants as a means of supporting themselves. Whitelaw to William Whitelaw, 13 July 1773, Papers of James Whitelaw, DOC 326 Folder 4, VHS.

<sup>123</sup> Witherspoon also offered three-quarters of his tract, minus a 1,500 reserve, for 3 shillings 3 pence New York currency per acre, or half the property for three shillings New York money per acre. Journal of James Whitelaw, Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, MS B W58J, VHS.

urged Whitelaw and Allan to seek land along the Ohio River. The King had recently granted the Grand Ohio Company, the successor to the Ohio Company, a large tract of land along the southern bank of the river that stretched to the Scioto River. In a promotional pamphlet begun during Whitelaw and Allan's visit Thomson reported, "crouds passing this way almost every week" on their way to Ohio. He implored prospective Scottish emigrants to do the same.<sup>124</sup>

But Thomson also urged his readers to trust Witherspoon's judgment and likely conveyed similar sentiments during Whitelaw and Allan's ten-day visit. This only reinforced Witherspoon's position relative to their other suitors, especially after the men rejected settlement along the Ohio. The land was too distant from established markets for their tastes. This explains why they never toured George Washington's holdings in that region, even though they gave him the impression that they would during a brief stay at Mount Vernon.<sup>125</sup> In North Carolina, they encountered Renfrew emigrant William Park, who directed them to a Mr. Montfort in Halifax, the owner of considerable acreage in the colony. Montfort's holdings proved too costly. The land was of good quality and near navigable rivers, but it was much too expensive and the environment below Halifax too sickly for the agents' taste. Finding nothing suitable in North Carolina, Whitelaw and Allan returned north to accept Witherspoon's offer.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> 14 August 1772, TNA: Privy Council: Registers. PC 2/116/413; Samuel Wharton to George Mercer, 20 August 1772, Box 2, Folder 11, Ohio Company Papers, 1736-1813, DAR. 1925.02, Darlington Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Pittsburgh; "News from America" in DeWolfe, ed., *Discoveries*, 118.

<sup>125</sup> "News From America" in DeWolfe, ed., *Discoveries*, 112. Thomson's pamphlet is dated 16 August 1773. Journal of James Whitelaw, MS B W58J, VHS; George Washington, 23 August 1773, Diary Entry, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, ed. Theodore J. Crackel (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008). Whitelaw and Allan apparently told Washington of their interest in lands along the Ohio, though they had already ruled them out. Washington noted on the day the men left Mount Vernon that the agents "prosecuted their journey towards Carolina in pursuit of this scheme purposing also to view the Lands on Ohio, & to see Min there before they returnd with their Report to Scotland." George Washington, 24 August 1773, Diary Entry in *Ibid.* See the editor's note attached to this last entry for a discussion of GW's desire to lease his Ohio lands, and see below for GW's dealings with Witherspoon on these lands.

<sup>126</sup> Journal of James Whitelaw, Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, MS B W58J, VHS.

In October 1773, the Scotch American Company of Farmers purchased the southern half of Ryegate from Witherspoon and his partners for £666.13.4 sterling.<sup>127</sup> Whitelaw and Allan set out for their new settlement almost immediately, surveyed the land, and started improvement projects in anticipation of the first settlers arriving in the spring.<sup>128</sup> Whitelaw's father reported that Thomson's pamphlet "Mightily lifted up" some people, but skepticism about emigration remained as "others [are] laughing at it."<sup>129</sup> Still, as the company managers noted by July 1774, the agents' reports of progress made at Ryegate and the landscape's potential "raised an uncommon itching for America, in General, but more so in the Compy concerned."<sup>130</sup> Inspired by the Scotch American Company's success, the Arnpyrick Society for Emigrants sent an agent to the colonies that resulted in the purchase of 7,000 acres in Barnet township, just to the north of Ryegate. These promising beginnings would soon meet challenges neither company had expected when an imperial civil war divided Great Britain and her colonies.

## Conclusion

The growing Scottish presence on lands owned or controlled by Sir William Johnson, Lord Advocate James Montgomery, and the Reverend John Witherspoon was a great testament to

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<sup>127</sup> "Minute of Agreement between David Allan & James Whytlaw as Commissioners for the Scots American Company and John Witherspoon of Princeton in New Jersey," 2 October 1773, Papers of James Whitelaw, Doc 326 Folder 4, VHS. The company was to pay in four installments. The boundary dispute between New York and New Hampshire over the New Hampshire Grants delayed the Scots Company from receiving formal title to the property. A November 1773 agreement served as a placeholder until the Company could acquire a proper title. "The Agreement between John Church Esqr.....John Witherspoon...John Pagan...and William Pagan...on the one part and David Allan & James Whitelaw Commissioners for the scotch american Company of Farmers," 19 November 1773; William Pagan to David Allan and James Whitelaw, 23 February 1774, all in DOC 326 Folder 4, VHS.

<sup>128</sup> Journal of James Whitelaw, Papers of James Whitelaw Papers, MS B W58J, VHS. James Whitelaw and David Allan to the Company, 11 February 1774, Papers of James Whitelaw, DOC 326 Folder 4 Letters, VHS.

<sup>129</sup> William Whitelaw to James Whitelaw, 25 March 1774, Papers of James Whitelaw, DOC 326 Folder 4 Letters, VHS.

<sup>130</sup> William Houston to James Whitelaw and David Allan, 13 July 1774, Papers of James Whitelaw, DOC 326 Folder 4 Letters, VHS. Houston referenced Whitelaw and Allan's report of 11 February 1774 in Ibid.

the ways in which they and their partners outmaneuvered the competition and in some instances circumvented the imperial-state's mandates. Sir William's skillful use first of military emigrants, themselves a product of the imperial state, and then of Scots fleeing social change and disaster at home enabled him to populate his lands. In doing so, he took up the mantle of the kind of Scottish clan chief fading into history, one who dealt fairly with his tenants, reinforced the social standing of the minor gentry, and offered them protection in a world at times plagued by violence.

Lord Advocate Montgomery's place among the landed and political elite raised a host of problems for his proprietary designs. By employing a network of friends and employees to work on his behalf, and in seeing a chance to make the persecution of Scottish Catholics work in his favor, Montgomery partially succeeded in doing what the British government and the Scottish gentry did not want: relocating domestic Highlanders (some of them Catholics to boot) to the new American colony. In a similar vein, the Reverend Witherspoon, criticized his involvement in the Nova Scotia project, shifted to a more hands on and crafty approach in establishing a Scottish community in Ryegate.

All three men understood that their individual pursuits of self-interests came at costs to Scottish and imperial interests. It was something that Sir William came to understand well. In 1767, he began to reflect on its impact on Great Britain. It had been two years since Lord Adam Gordon had visited him at Johnson Hall, a meeting that later produced instructions from the Scottish nobleman for Sir William to buy for he and his partner, John Murray, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Atholl, a tract of 10,000 acres in northern New York. On this property they intended to settle emigrants

from Scotland, Ireland, or Germany.<sup>131</sup> Atholl was an elected Scottish Representative Peer in the House of Lords and a trustee for the young Countess of Sutherland.

Sir William happily obliged them. He was eager to strengthen his relationship with the noblemen as his own Scottish tenants were with him. Lord Adam and Atholl sent two farmers to inspect the lands. He hoped that the farmers' report would "occasion a Settlement being made there of reputable Substantial people," but in a telling moment he stated his belief that it "will be much for the advantage of this Country tho' I must own it makes little in favor of the Mother Country."<sup>132</sup> In theory the addition of new settlers in the colonies would generate more commodities for the transatlantic market, and in turn these settlers would consume British-made goods. This was Witherspoon's claim. The challenge, as Sir William suggested, was that abstract theories did not map nicely onto the world in which people actually lived.

The difference between theory and reality became clear a year later when Lord Adam and Atholl suspended their plans for a settlement. Under the pretense of his recent marriage commanding much of his attention, along with a less than favorable report from the farmers, Lord Adam nevertheless pointed to developments within the empire and Scotland as the real reasons to stand down for the moment. After protests and rioting broke out in the colonies over the Townshend Duties in 1767, Lord Adam told Sir William "the Confusions in America, & the Expences of fitting out our Colonists, have *scared* both the Duke of Atholl & me."<sup>133</sup> Sir William had anticipated the noblemen's shifting stance and implored them through another correspondent that recent events had not dissuaded others from settling nearby lands.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Lord Adam Gordon to Sir William, 10 January 1767, *PSWJ*, 12:249.

<sup>132</sup> Sir William to Gavin Cochran, 14 November 1767, *PSWJ*, 5:787.

<sup>133</sup> Lord Adam to Sir William, 25 August 1768, *PSWJ* (1928), 6:337. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>134</sup> Thomas Bateman to Sir William, 14 April 1768, *PSWJ*, 6:190-192; Sir William to Bateman, 24 August 1768, *Ibid.*, 6:330.

Yet in 1771, the same processes that had brought Sir William and Scottish emigrants together on the margins of Britain's American empire fed a growing fear among the Scottish gentry. Lord Adam wanted him to understand that emigration "begins to alarm the landed Interest here — that so many of their young, and usefull hands should migrate to America." Recruiting settlers for his American lands now would imperil his standing among his peers.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, his father's tenants soon threatened emigration.<sup>136</sup> Unfortunately, there was no clear solution for "preventing [emigration]; for any attempt to that purpose (like persecution in Religion) would only incite greater curiosity, & render men more obstinate to go."<sup>137</sup> He and Atholl could not push ahead with their plans. They would have to wait until conditions within the empire and in Scotland proved more favorable. Much of that would depend on what the Scottish proprietors could or were willing to do to stop the bleeding.

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<sup>135</sup> Lord Adam to Sir William, 21 July 1771, *PSWJ*, 12:195.

<sup>136</sup> William Todd to James Ross, 23 March 1772, Papers of the Gordon Family, Dukes of Gordon, Lordship of Badenoch - Letters of William Todd, factor, GD 44/27/11/17x, NRS.

<sup>137</sup> Lord Adam to Sir William, 21 July 1771, *PSWJ*, 12:195.

#### **Chapter 4: “The Epidemical Phrenzy:” Scottish Proprietors and the Struggle to prevent Emigration, 1770-1774**

Colin MacDonald of Boisdale felt confident. In late 1771, John MacDonald of Glenaladale expressed surprise at Boisdale’s “Indifference for the people’s leaving him.” “All other Superiours in his Neighbourhood,” he wrote, “tremble for the Consequences of the Emigrations.” Boisdale expected that he could easily replace the tenants that he lost to America. He had invited sixty families from the Isle of Skye to settle on his lands, “but he was laughed at.”<sup>1</sup> Despite this rebuff Boisdale did not see the error of his ways until after Glenaladale had shipped 100 of his people to St. John’s Island. He never truly thought that they would leave, or that Glenaladale and the Scottish Catholic Church would find the money to fund the expedition. Now that more families had engaged to go the following spring, and he was “attacked on all hands by the neighbouring Proprietors who are in terror for themselves,” he began to soften his attitude toward his people.<sup>2</sup> Bishop George Hay, who had reluctantly embraced the emigration scheme as a measure of last resort, now hoped that Boisdale’s new stance would render future emigration unnecessary. By September 1772, Bosidale was no longer “in any disposition of renewing the Storm,” but Glenaladale warned Bishop Hay that they should remain vigilant.<sup>3</sup>

One year later the authors James Boswell and Dr. Samuel Johnson witnessed a cultural manifestation of Scottish proprietors’ greatest fears on the Isle of Skye. In October 1773, they visited one of Sir Alexander MacDonald’s factors on the island during their famous tour of the Western Isles. One evening the two men joined other guests in a dance that the “the emigration from Sky has occasioned:” “They call it *America*. Each of the couples, after common

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<sup>1</sup> John MacDonald of Glenaladale to Bishop George Hay, 8 November 177, Scottish Catholic Archives: Blair Letters 3/233/19, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “SCA.”

<sup>2</sup> Bishop George Hay to Bishop James Grant, 8 July 1772, BL 3/244/12, SCA.

<sup>3</sup> John MacDonald of Glenaladale to Bishop George Hay, 22 September 1772, BL 3/247/11, SCA.

*involutions* and *evolutions*, successively whirls round in a circle, till all are in motion; and the dance seems intended to shew how emigration catches, till a whole neighbourhood is set afloat.”<sup>4</sup>

The guests danced to bagpipe music and beat the ground with their feet in a joyful engagement that masked a more sobering reality. Proprietors on Skye and other Scottish lands had recently lost tenants and tacksmen to America. Johnson and Boswell encountered a similar scene a few evenings earlier when they dined with Malcolm MacLeod, laird of Raasay on Skye. Two women entertained the dinner party with Gaelic songs following the meal. One, Johnson was told, was a love song. The other was a farewell. One of the “Islanders that was going, in this epidemical fury of emigration, to see his fortune in *America*” had composed it.<sup>5</sup>

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Boisdale’s new perspective on his people and Boswell and Johnson’s observations on the Isle of Skye illuminated the fundamental problem that Scottish Highland proprietors confronted in the late 1760s and early 1770s: The “spirit of emigration” had become an alarming social fact. That phrase and similar terms like the “creaze” or “frenzy” for emigration appeared frequently in newspapers and correspondence. Johnson’s use of the term “epidemical” to describe what he and Boswell witnessed on Skye was not an accident. Proprietors, their subordinates, and other observers in the Western Islands and Highlands likened the enthusiasm for resettling in America to an infection that suddenly took hold of people and spirited away souls to the afterlife. In May 1772, one of the Duke of Gordon’s factors wrote that Thomas Desbrisay’s advertisement “has

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<sup>4</sup> Boswell’s entry for 2 October 1773 in Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland with The Journal of a Tour to the Herbrides with an Introduction by Allan Massie* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 344.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

putt all their Heads agog in the west Highlands for going to St. John's" Island.<sup>6</sup> In this view, emigration was a disease, or a kind of delirium; by infecting the people it threatened to subvert Highland society. Fear of it fed into post-war concerns over depopulation as Scotland recovered from its manpower contributions to the British Army in the French and Indian War.

Many proprietors struggled to counter America's appeal. The promoters first transmitted their messages from North America to the isles of the Southern Hebrides and north to the Isle of Skye. They then quickly spread the good news onto the Countess of Sutherland's lands in the northern Highlands, the Earl of Seaforth's estates on the Isle of Lewis, and deep into Scotland's northern interior. Proprietors shared a sense that the political economy of empire worked against them. Instead of Scotland importing raw American commodities like tobacco and flax seed, America mined Scotland's labor resources and the sustainers of the proprietors' wealth and authority. It was a role reversal that compromised the standing of the Scottish landed gentry.

Contemporaries believed that the proprietors' frequent absences from their lands and their delegation of authority to middle managers contributed to the alienation of tenants and tacksmen. In the Countess of Sutherland's case this could not be helped, but in general the proprietors' transfer of their authority to their estate managers altered the social compact between the patriarch and the people. It placed the underlings in a difficult position. They had to project the proprietor's authority even when they did not truly possess it. Protecting their superior's interests often put them at odds with the people they oversaw and at times with their chiefs. This tension opened breeches within local communities into which disgruntled tacksmen, tenants, or American promoters could insert themselves as they touted the possibilities of landownership in the colonies.

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<sup>6</sup> William Todd to John Ross, Papers of the Gordon Family, Dukes of Gordon, Lordship of Badenoch - Letters of William Todd, factor, GD44/27/11/39, The National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NRS."



Detail of William Faden, *North Britain or Scotland, divided into its counties. Corrected from the best surveys & astronomical observations by Thos. Kitchin, Hydrographer to his Majesty. London, printed for W: Faden, Charing Cross. Publish'd according to Act of Parliament, Decr. 1st, 1778 by Wm. Faden, corner of St. Martins Lane* (London, 1778). David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, accessed 30 June 2016, [<http://www.davidrumsey.com>]. The Isle of Lewis is in the upper left corner and shaded pink. The Isle of Skye is located left of center and shaded yellow. The Countess of Sutherland's estates spanned much of the northern Highlands.

The proprietors' absences also meant that the task of combatting emigration fell to their subordinates. Managers strove to prevent the loss of people, protect the proprietor's interests, force departing emigrants to pay their lawful debts, and ensure civil order and stability. In 1771, contemporaries identified the Isle of Skye as the center of the epidemic. Estate managers for Norman MacLeod of MacLeod's lands struggled to retain his tenants on that island, and Sir Alexander MacDonald's conduct after his ascension to the head of his clan branch convinced Flora MacDonald, her family, and many others to resettle in North America. The administrators of

the Countess of Sutherland's vast estates in the Highlands, and the Earl of Seaforth's lands on the Isle of Lewis and the mainland, feared what Skye portended for them. Emigration spread to their lands beginning in 1772 and they pursued a number of measures to limit the damage. In all three areas local circumstances shaped estate managers' responses. Interpersonal relationships mattered a great deal as internal conflicts drove people apart and shaped the choices that they made to support or resist emigration. These local battles all added up and they contributed to a larger view of a Scotland bleeding people into America.

### **Rumblings on Skye**

In the spring of 1771, the Reverend Robert Forbes took stock of the recent emigrations from the Western Isles to North America. Forbes was the Bishop of Ross and Caithness in the Scottish Episcopal Church. He had supported Charles Edward Stuart in the 1740s, for which the British government imprisoned him for a time first in Stirling Castle and later in Edinburgh Castle.<sup>7</sup> He was given to understand that 800 Scots from Argyllshire and another 500 from the Isle of Islay had emigrated the previous year. Bishop Forbes since learned that "two thousand emigrants are preparing for their departure from the Isle of Skye to some part of our foreign settlements." He speculated that they might be headed for St. John's Island, and we know that some were en route for North Carolina. His information indicated these emigrants were from the estate of Sir Alexander MacDonald, the owner of Sleat on Skye, "who may chance to be a proprietor of land without tenants." If emigration spread beyond Skye it "may terminate in

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<sup>7</sup> William Donaldson, 'Forbes, Robert (*bap.* 1708, *d.* 1775)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2004).

depopulating Old Caledon!” without some swift countermeasures. “All, *all* this is owing to the exorbitant rents for land” that proprietors authorized in support of their livelihoods.<sup>8</sup>

Forbes’s remarks captured both the excitement and alarm that emigration from Skye engendered. Higher rents were one issue at hand; so too was the notion that what was happening on Skye was far more dangerous to Scotland than migration’s from elsewhere. John Mackenzie of Strickathrow, the Earl of Seaforth’s trusted estate manager, offered similar thoughts. In October 1771 he wrote to George Gillanders, Seaforth’s factor on the Isle of Lewis, commenting on the “great noise” he had heard about Skye, and wondered if Gillanders had heard it too. He hoped that this “infection” would not take root on Lewis and anticipated that the threat of its spread “will certainly oblige the highland lairds to deal more candidly with” their tenants.<sup>9</sup>

Strickathrow’s and Forbes’s observations highlighted one of the central fears about emigration on Skye. It represented the collapse of the social links binding tenants and tacksmen to their proprietors. In this case two powerful clan chiefs, Sir Alexander MacDonald, 9<sup>th</sup> Baronet of Sleat, head of one branch of Clan Donald, and Norman MacLeod of Clan MacLeod, who owned much of Skye, stood to lose their tenants. But, as Forbes in particular noted, if emigration crossed the waters to spread beyond Skye to the mainland and adjacent islands it could have a similar effect on other lands with just as serious consequences.

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<sup>8</sup> Bishop Robert Forbes to Bishop Robert Gordon, 9 May 1771, in Henry Paton, ed., *The Lyon in Mourning or a Collection of Speeches Letters Journals Etc. Relative to the Affairs of Prince Charles Edward Stuart By the REv. Robert Forbes, A.M. Bishop of Ross and Caithness 1746-1775* (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1896), 3:259. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>9</sup> John Mackenzie of Strickathrow to George Gillanders, [?] October 1771, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/9, NRS.

## *The Lords of Dunvegan and Sleat*

Even though forty years of age separated MacLeod of MacLeod from the younger Sir Alexander the two men typified the transformation of Scottish clan chiefs into landlords. The former man's life traced this evolution. In the late 1740s, the portraitist Allan Ramsay depicted the 22<sup>nd</sup> chief of Clan MacLeod as a stately, authoritative figure, reflecting both his position as a Member of Parliament from Inverness-shire and as the head of his clan. Ramsay's representation of MacLeod is significant for the ways in which it conveyed the tension between Scottish Highland culture and British society. In the full-length portrait, MacLeod appears awash in red tartan, armed with a dress sword, and against the backdrop of a mountainous landscape recalling Skye. MacLeod had rallied many members of his clan against the Jacobite threat, a rebellion that eventually led Parliament to ban Highlanders from bearing arms or wearing their traditional tartan dress. That MacLeod appeared with both signaled the privileges of loyalty to the British king as well as his desire to appear as a traditional Scottish clan chief. The landscape in the painting's background reinforced this latter point. It connected MacLeod with the land on which his people lived.<sup>10</sup>

Ramsay's portrait displayed an idealized version of a clan chief at odds with reality. In 1740, MacLeod was involved in a kidnapping plot to sell 100 of his tenants and their children into servitude in the colonies. At the time it was thought that Sir Alexander's father had also been

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<sup>10</sup> Allan Ramsay, "Norman MacLeod of MacLeod," 1747, oil (private collection). For MacLeod's life see Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'MacLeod, Norman, of Dunvegan (1705–1772)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2004).

involved, a charge that his wife vehemently denied that charge.<sup>11</sup> A storm forced the ship to call at an Irish port, sparing the poor Scots.

In truth, MacLeod rarely spent time at the family's ancestral home of Dunvegan Castle on Skye following his election to Parliament in 1741. He had squandered £60,000 during his youth. While living in London he had indulged in an expensive metropolitan lifestyle that included a ruinous drinking and gambling habit that drove him into further debt. He removed to Edinburgh after his retirement from Parliament in 1754, and eventually settled in St. Andrews on Scotland's eastern coast in his final years. He died in 1772 with his estate £50,000 in debt.<sup>12</sup>

MacLeod's grandson and successor, General Norman MacLeod, later attributed his grandfather's personal failings and the distressed nature of his estates to the evolution of clanship and the Scottish gentry's greater integration into metropolitan society. "He was the first of our family," he wrote around 1785, "who was led, by the changes of manners, to leave the patriarchal Government of his Clan, and to mix in the pursuits and ambition of the world."<sup>13</sup> Had his grandfather resisted self-interest earlier in his life, and adhered to his duties as the clan's father, history might have remembered him differently. Instead, the striking figure in Ramsay's portrait did not speak Gaelic and spent much of his time in London and the Scottish Lowlands. His Gaelic-speaking people knew him as *An Droch Dhuine*, "the Bad Man."<sup>14</sup>

By contrast Sir Alexander had only recently assumed his role as clan head. In 1766, his brother died in Rome, which left Sir Alexander in possession of Sleat on Skye and the Isle of

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<sup>11</sup> A. MacDonald and A. Macdonald, *The Clan Donald* (Inverness: The Northern Counties Publishing Company, Ltd., 1904), 86-88; Lady Margaret MacDonald to Lord Justice Clerk Andrew Fletcher, Lord Milton, 1 January 1740, in H.R. Duff, ed., *Culloden Papers: Comprising an Extensive and Interesting Correspondence from the Year 1625 to 1748* (London, 1815), 154-155.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the MacLeods with Genealogies of the Principal Families of the Name* (Inverness: Scottish Highland Office, 1889), 146.

<sup>13</sup> General Norman MacLeod, "Memoirs of His Own Life," c. 1785, excerpted in Mackenzie, *History of the MacLeods Genealogies of the Principal Families of the Name* (Inverness: Scottish Highland Office, 1889), 150.

<sup>14</sup> Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'MacLeod, Norman, of Dunvegan (1705–1772), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*.

North Uist. Later biographers described him as a man who “looked upon himself simply as a landlord, and in no sense as the chief of a clan, unless indeed that position was to be held as merely honorary and conveying a certain dignity to the holder of it.” He was educated first at Eton and then at St. Andrews and served in the Coldstream Guards before taking possession of his property. His tastes were said to be more English than Highland and he was less interested in the welfare of his people than had been his brother or his father. Sir Alexander began raising rents in the late 1760s. In some instances he evicted poorer tenants.<sup>15</sup> Alexander MacDonald of Kingsburgh recognized that a sea change had occurred with Sir Alexander’s accession. If the “late worthy Sir Alex Macdonald and his amiable Son Sir James” were not dead there would have been no need for Scots on Sleat to leave.<sup>16</sup> He believed that the dead MacDonalds would have dealt with the people fairly.

### *The Failures of the Father*

In 1769, Norman MacLeod of MacLeod began raising rents on his lands to compensate for his expenses and debts. He owned nearly 400,000 acres on the isles of Skye, Harris, St. Kilda, and in Glenelg on the mainland. Although rental income actually rose from £2,595 in 1754 to £4,316 in 1769, that increase masked his deteriorating financial situation. He began elevating rents on his land on Skye, the Isle of Harris, and the mainland to pass on the costs of his frivolous ways to his people.<sup>17</sup> Tenants in Glenelg, for example, protested a £220 rent

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<sup>15</sup> MacDonald and Macdonald, *The Clan Donald*, 3:95-101. Quotation on pg. 99.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander MacDonald of Kingsburgh to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 30 April 1771, Delvine Papers, MS. 1306, ff 54-5, NLS.

<sup>17</sup> “Estate Rental” in The Reverend Canon R. C. MacLeod of Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan: Being Documents from the Muniment Room of the MacLeods of MacLeod at Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye* (Aberdeen: Printed for the Third Spalding Club, 1939), 2:64.

increase and implored their master to sell his Edinburgh home and live amongst them instead.<sup>18</sup>

The minister of the parish complained that his stipend had gone unpaid. The local presbytery threatened legal action if the parson remained uncompensated.<sup>19</sup>

In raising their rents MacLeod of MacLeod and Sir Alexander acted no differently than many other proprietors in this period. Financial necessity drove landholders like MacLeod to act in this manner, as did a rise in land values associated with the broader eighteenth-century improvement movement struggling to bring the Highlands into modernity. Enclosing farms, constructing roads, erecting out buildings, and encouraging new agricultural practices was expensive. Between 1769 and 1775, John Campbell, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll, increased rents for tacksmen on his lands on the Isle of Mull and the Morvern peninsula. Duncan Campbell's rents for the farms of Aross, Killnalen, and Crannich more than doubled, from just over £18 in 1769 to a little over £39 by 1775. John Stewart fared slightly better. His burden for the farm of Achadashenaig increased from £16.17.4 to £41.16.10 1/2.<sup>20</sup> In 1769, the Commissioners for the Annexed and Forfeited Estates, the government body charged with managing the confiscated lands of former Jacobites, raised rents on the executed Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat's properties.<sup>21</sup> One tenant's rent in Glenmoriston on the Isle of Raasay quadrupled over the course of twenty years.<sup>22</sup>

On the Isle of Skye some of MacLeod of MacLeod's advisors and family members recognized that their chief's financial situation and his continued residence in St. Andrews had compromised his authority as the clan's head. Simon Fraser of Lovat, a cousin of MacLeod's and

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<sup>18</sup> Three Glenelg Tenants to Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, 18 January 1769, *Ibid.*, 2:8.

<sup>19</sup> Document 12, Bundle 26A, July 1769, *Ibid.*, 2:8; Document 19, Bundle 26A, 23 January 1770, *Ibid.*, 2:8.

<sup>20</sup> Instructions His Grace The Duke of Argyll to John Campbell of Airds and Chamberlain of Mull, Morvern & Lesmore October 1775 in Eric R. Cregeen, ed., *Argyll Estate Instructions: Mull, Morvern, Tiree, 1771-1805* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society by T. and A. Constable LTD, 1964), 102.

<sup>21</sup> A.H. Millar, ed., *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estates Papers 1715; 1745* (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1909), 120.

<sup>22</sup> David Turnock, *The Making of the Scottish Rural Landscape* (Hants, England: Scholar Press, 1995), 241.

the commander of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment in North America during the Seven Years War, chided him for his conduct as clan patriarch. His spending habits and reliance on “parasites” for advisors imperiled his standing as a clan chief. Fraser warned that MacLeod would lose the respect of his people further if he proceeded with a proposal to sell Glenelg to shore up his finances.<sup>23</sup> MacLeod’s daughter soon learned that £4,000 in rental income would only just meet the family’s needs.<sup>24</sup> The aging and increasingly ill chieftain’s affairs equally dismayed General MacLeod.<sup>25</sup> The grandson stood to inherit his grandfather’s estates and his title.

Sir Alexander’s behavior toward his tenants deeply concerned members of the MacLeod family. In late 1770 or early 1771, Sir Alexander wrote a “taunting letter” to one of his factors “against such [people] as was going to Ammerica.” This letter and another one like it “gave such a general offence that now they are so much bent on going to Ammerica that if Sir Alexander was to give them lands as formerly they swear they won’t stay under such a T[yrann]t.” Now that emigration had become a very serious matter MacLeod’s son urged his father to “treat fair with your people [as] possible” or his lands would suffer a similar fate.<sup>26</sup> Alexander Morrison of Skinidin had a similar message for his patriarch, one that revealed how alienated the people of Skye were from their chief. “I grew out of this ground and have as strong an attachment to my native soil as any man,” he wrote, but he and his neighbors could not afford their rents. If MacLeod did not personally meet with his people and relax the rents then his lands would be

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<sup>23</sup> Simon Fraser of Lovat to Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, 12 April 1769, Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:45.

<sup>24</sup> Fraser of Balnain to Emilia MacCleod, 3 February 1770, *Ibid.*, 2:35.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander MacLeod to Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, 18 February 1771 in Allan I. Macinnes, Marjory-Ann D. Harper & Linda G. Fryer, *Scotland and the Americas, c. 1650-c. 1939: A Documentary Source Book* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society by Lothian Print Ltd, 2002), 170.

“stripped” of its tenants.<sup>27</sup> Two months later Morrison of Skinidin initiated his scheme to resettle people in North Carolina.<sup>28</sup>

MacLeod’s son may have believed that his father had inspired Sir Alexander’s actions. In 1772, the clan chief tried to sell the Isle of Harris in order to raise capital.<sup>29</sup> General MacLeod was against the measure and argued that even an offer of £20,000 was not worth breaking up the family lands and the instability it might bring for the tenants there. He instead suggested that the clan chief place his estates in the hands of well-chosen trustees that could deal with the family’s financial crisis more effectively.<sup>30</sup> MacLeod consented to the trusteeship, but proceeded with the attempted sale of Harris. The island along with nearby smaller ones consisted of nearly 277,000 acres and commanded £724 in annual rent minus allowances for the minister and schoolmaster.<sup>31</sup>

In a commentary on the proposed sale an anonymous author blamed MacLeod of MacLeod’s 1769 decision to raise rents for paving the way for “The Duke of Gordon, Sir Alexander Macdonald, and other Proprietors” to do the same. While MacLeod of MacLeod’s imperiled finances forced his hand, the author argued that other proprietors did so “vainly imagining that as the Tenants were naturally indolent & Seemed to live in a kind of Affluence” they could bear the rent increases. Tenants might have accepted the increases if they had been implemented over the course of several years, and if their clan chiefs met with them directly, but the sudden rise in rents and the continued absence of their chiefs roused the people from their “Servile State.” MacLeod and the other proprietors broke the social contract between a chief and his people. The rent increases were done out of self, not communal, interest. In language that recalled Alexander Campbell of Balole’s or Alexander McAlester’s promotional words, the

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander Morrison of Skinidin to Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, 18 March 1771, quoted in James Hunter, *Scottish Exodus: Travels Among a Worldwide Clan* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream Publishing, 2005), 84.

<sup>28</sup> Advertisement, 10 May 1771 in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:9.

<sup>29</sup> “To be SOLD, The Islands and Barony of Harries,” *Caledonian Mercury*, 1 February 1772.

<sup>30</sup> General Norman MacLeod to MacLeod, 25 January 1772 in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:24.

<sup>31</sup> “To be SOLD, The Islands and Barony of Harries,” *Caledonian Mercury*, 01 February 1772.

author found it unsurprising that a “Spirit of Emigration” had taken root that “in a few years will carry the Inhabitants of the Highlands of Islands of Scotland to North America.” This was the author’s critical point. Individualism in America embodied a rejection of the landed hierarchy that bound the clan together through the chief. The imperial framework offered alienated Scots the ability to breathe “a Spirit of Liberty” and the possibility “of every individual becoming a Proprietor” in the colonies.<sup>32</sup>

MacLeod of MacLeod’s family and subordinates recognized the deleterious effects of his poor decisions and the promoters’ attractive offers on his standing among his people. Whereas Sir Alexander MacDonald seemed to care little if his people left—even when 500 people proposed to go to North Carolina—MacLeod’s inner circle realized that preserving tenants meant undercutting those promoters and the tacksmen who encouraged these schemes. They wanted to limit the spread of the contagion from Sir Alexander’s lands to their property and in the process restore some semblance of the MacLeod authority on the island.

The MacLeods had to convince people to choose hierarchy and tenancy instead of emigration. Since his 1770 return to Scotland, Balole had advocated for emigration to the colony. His “Flaming account of Carolina” circulating on the Isle of Skye and excited the people.<sup>33</sup> He, along with the McAlesters, promised a world in which Scots could be landowners. Skinidin offered to arrange passage for Scots seeking that kind of life. The winter of 1771-1772 strengthened the promoters’ hand.<sup>34</sup> The ruined harvest, dead and dying cattle, and an absent chief strengthened the promoters’ message.

### *The Grandson’s Promise*

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<sup>32</sup> “Observes or Remarks upon the Lands and Islands which Compose the Barrony called Harris the Property of Norman McLeod of McLeod Esqr,” Lee Papers, MS.3431, ff.177-183, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “NLS.”

<sup>33</sup> “A Flaming account of Carolina by a man named Campbell, c. 1770 in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:8.

<sup>34</sup> See Chapter 2.

By March 1772, MacLeod of MacLeod had to acknowledge that enthusiasm for North America was reaching alarming proportions. Too ill to make the journey from St. Andrews to Skye (he died four months later), he deputized his grandson, General MacLeod, to treat with the people.<sup>35</sup> Tension had emerged within the clan chief's inner circle. Colonel John MacLeod of Talisker, a tacksman and one of the trustees appointed to oversee the MacLeod estates, blamed his chief "for the family misfortunes." Talisker contended that the chief's friends had given him terrible advice.<sup>36</sup> James Boswell and Samuel Johnson heard a similar claim when they visited the island the following year.<sup>37</sup> Talisker and sheriff-substitute Alexander MacLeod of Ullinish both told their chief that his people were in dire straits.<sup>38</sup>

It became General MacLeod's responsibility to persuade his fellow clansmen not to board ships for the colonies. In anticipation of MacLeod of MacLeod's demise and in an effort to bolster the standing of his grandson among the people the estate trustees began a campaign to win back the common peoples' trust. They circulated a letter among the tenants challenging the promoters' claims and imploring them not to emigrate until the younger Norman MacLeod could speak with them. The dying MacLeod had abdicated his responsibilities as chief, but the next generation pledged not to make the same mistakes. General MacLeod was a chief-in-waiting who understood his grandfather's errors and rejected the kind of policies that Sir Alexander MacDonald pursued on his lands.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> MacLeod of MacLeod to General Norman MacLeod, 30 March 1772 in Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:24. MacLeod died on July 21st. *The Scots Magazine* (July 1772), 399.

<sup>36</sup> Colonel John MacLeod of Talisker to Simon Fraser of Balnain, 2 April 1772, Macleod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:10; Talisker to MacLeod of MacLeod, 15 April 1772, *Ibid.*, 2:10.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson and Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands*, 289.

<sup>38</sup> John MacLeod of Talisker to MacLeod, 15 April 1772, MacLeod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:10.; Alexander MacLeod of Ullinish to MacLeod, 21 April 1772, *Ibid.*, 2:10.

<sup>39</sup> Circular Letter, 13 April 1772, *Ibid.*, 2:9.

Shortly after MacLeod of MacLeod's death, his grandson traveled to Skye. General MacLeod arrived as the new chief. His presence was supposed to symbolize the restoration of the family's authority in the face of agitators like Skinidin and Balole. Talisker assisted him in pleading with the people. General MacLeod understood that a delicate task lay before him. The tenants generated income that sustained the MacLeod family and helped satisfy the family's creditors. He needed to display the paternal benevolence that the people expected and restore the tattered clanship bonds his grandfather's cosmopolitan lifestyle had compromised. These were now his people. He wanted to win their trust, loyalty, and affection.

The new clan chief acknowledged that the people had endured hardships. True, they had heard many wonderful tales of places like North Carolina. He understood that "their ideas of America were inflamed by the strongest representations [of the promoters], and the example of their neighbouring clans [on Sleat]." America, however, was not the answer. He "combated their passion for America by a real account of the dangers and hardships they might encounter there." General MacLeod appealed to the shared histories of their families in asking them to stay. He promised to live among them as a clan chief. He and Talisker then agreed to give "considerable abatements in the rents" as a further incentive for them not to emigrate.<sup>40</sup>

Talisker soon reported that their efforts had met with some success. General MacLeod's intention to reside on Skye did lift the spirits of some among the poor and middling classes, but he admitted that he was only "partially successful" because emigration continued.<sup>41</sup> Tacksmen like Skinidin, whose social power and economic interests would weaken in the face of a more

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<sup>40</sup> General Norman MacLeod, "Memoirs of His Own Life," c. 1785, excerpted in Mackenzie, *History of the MacLeods*, 152.

<sup>41</sup> General Norman MacLeod to Thomas Pennant, n.d., MacLeod, *The Book of Dunvegan*, 2:11. In the 1780s, he claimed that only a "few emigrated." General Norman MacLeod, "Memoirs of His Own Life," c. 1785, excerpted in Mackenzie, *History of the MacLeods*, 152.

attentive chieftain, remained relatively unfazed and proceeded with their plans.<sup>42</sup> In 1773, Skinidin succeeded in conveying 300 people to North Carolina.<sup>43</sup> The colony's allure and the distress under which the people had labored compelled them to reject General MacLeod's entreaties. Boswell and Johnson took note of that fact when they visited the Western Isles. Johnson found islanders who could not live at home as they desired listened "to the tale of fortunate islands, and happy regions" where they could be their own proprietors.<sup>44</sup>

Sir Alexander MacDonald's lands fared far worse because he made no effort to convince the people to stay. It was one of the reasons that Boswell found the dance that he and Johnson engaged in so curious. Boswell believed that if proprietors did nothing to stop emigration it would have far greater consequences than Sir Alexander and other like-minded proprietors had imagined. Boswell was told that in the previous year when a ship had sailed from Skye's main port of Portree for America "the people on shore were almost distracted when they saw their relations go off; they lay down on the ground, tumbled, and tore the grass with their teeth.—This year [1773] there was not a tear shed. The people on shore seemed to think that they would soon follow. This indifference is a mortal sign for the country."<sup>45</sup>

For his part General Macleod had done what he thought was necessary to restore a sense of reciprocity between the chief and his people. He was successful in convincing at least some of his people not to emigrate. What he had not done was contain the affliction to Skye. MacLeod and his family focused on the preservation of the people on their own lands and safeguarding their local interests.

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<sup>42</sup> MacLeod of Talisker to General Norman MacLeod, 22 February 1773, *Ibid.*, 2:12.

<sup>43</sup> Loyalist Claim of Alexander Morrison, 19 December 1783, AO 13: American Loyalist Claims, Series II - (122) Claims M.N., North Carolina, accessed 13 February 2015, [www.ancestry.com].

<sup>44</sup> Johnson and Boswell, *A Journey to the Western Islands*, 78.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

The infection spread north into the Highlands. In the previous chapter we encountered George MacKay of Mundale, the tacksman on the Countess of Sutherland's lands, who took the spirit of emigration home with him after visiting Skinidin on Skye. There the contagion found a familiar social landscape and a fresh set of hosts. Yet unique circumstances on the Sutherland estates began to transform the broader conversation about emigration in ways that Skye or even the Catholic persecutions on South Uist had failed to do. A peculiar division of power in Sutherland gave important members of the Scottish political establishment in Edinburgh key insight into a rapidly evolving phenomenon as they struggled to maintain authority and power in the Scottish north.

### **The Infection of Sutherland**

The Countess of Sutherland's father had an excellent excuse for his absence from the family lands. He was dead. William, Earl of Sutherland, died in June 1766 at the age of 31, only ten days after his wife succumbed to a "putrid fever" that killed them both. One of the sixteen Scottish Peers to sit in the House of Lords, the Earl of Sutherland had served as the lieutenant-colonel-commandant of a Highlander battalion in the Seven Years War. Death took the family's only son a year earlier. The Earl's estate passed to his daughter Elizabeth, then just over a year old.<sup>46</sup>

Shortly before his daughter's birth the Earl created a trusteeship for his children to oversee his estates. The slate of nominated trustees, or Tutors, contained the names of some of

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<sup>46</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (June 1766), 336. The Earl's death elicited a number of poetical tributes in *The Scots Magazine*. See "Love and Grief. A ballad," and "Elegy on the much lamented death of the late Earl and Countess of Sutherland," (July 1766), 374, 375: "On the death of the Earl and Countess of Sutherland," (August 1766), 436: "Thoughts occasioned by the funeral of the Earl and Countess of Sutherland, at the Abbey of Holyroodhouse (October 1766), 543.

the most important members of the Scottish elite. These included John Murray, the Duke of Atholl (and Lord Adam Gordon's partner in the proposed Mohawk River Valley settlement); Charles Bruce, Earl of Elgin; James Wemyss, Member of Parliament from Fifeshire; Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, a judge and historian; Thomas Miller, the Lord Advocate at the time; Sir Adam Fergusson, a politically ambitious young lawyer and significant landowner in his own right; Alexander Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, a prominent judge and father of author James Boswell; and finally John Mackenzie of Delvine, an Edinburgh lawyer who later corresponded with the MacDonalds of Kingsburgh.<sup>47</sup>

The Tutors held the Countess's authority in trust and wielded power on her behalf until she came of age. Together, these men possessed the power to grant tacks, set leases, and initiate any improvements to the estate as they saw fit. They had no intention of managing the Sutherland estates on site; they ruled from Edinburgh.<sup>48</sup> The Tutors understood, however, that the Earl's death and their charge's young age created a leadership vacuum. MacLeod of MacLeod, absent as he might have been, was at least alive. For the Sutherland people their clan head was dead and his heir a toddler. The Tutors wanted a trusted individual on the ground to oversee the Countess's interests and her people. They feared that when "left under no other Management than that of an ordinary Factor" the people were "very apt to be mutinous & grow turbulent." They needed an individual who would preserve order and stability on the estate, a de facto proprietor who functioned as a chief.<sup>49</sup> The Tutors needed a man who could control the tacksmen

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<sup>47</sup> Nomination of Tutors and Curators by William Earl of Sutherland to his Children, 15 January 1765, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS. Despite Thomas Miller's nomination, it does not appear that he ever attended a meeting of the Tutors. He did, however, assist in protecting the countess's legal claim to her estates. For this challenge and Miller's involvement see the collection of nineteen letters spanning 1766 to 1771 in Sir William Fraser, ed., *The Sutherland Book: Volume II – Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1892), 2:303-314.

<sup>48</sup> Nomination of Tutors and Curators by William Earl of Sutherland to his Children, 15 January 1765, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>49</sup> Minute Book Entry for 11 December 1766, *Ibid.*

and command the people's respect, one who could confidently project a proprietor's authority on their and the Countess's behalf.

### *The Superintendent*

The Tutors turned to army officer and Sutherland kinsman, Captain James Sutherland of the 38<sup>th</sup> Regiment, to fill the superintendent's role. Captain Sutherland had attended to the Earl during his final illness. His attachment to the family and the Tutors' offer of a £200 annual salary persuaded him to leave the army. He assisted the Tutors in successfully fending off a legal challenge to the Countess's inheritance from a rival claimant, but he spent most of his time managing her estate's daily affairs. He took up residence at Dunrobin, the seat of Clan Sutherland, on the northeast coast of the Highlands. From there, he oversaw an estate that "lies in nine different Parishes, of severals of which [the Countess] has the sole Property, & of others very large shares." Her domain encompassed large portions of the eastern Highlands and stretched to the west coast to include the parish of Assynt.<sup>50</sup>

Sutherland assumed oversight of estates in need of improvement. A 1771 assessment valued all of the Countess's properties at £12,333.<sup>51</sup> In 1766, the factor for the main Sutherland estate estimated that it produced an annual gross income of £2,292 in kind and £1,723 sterling, "beside the Fishings which are judge[d] to be about £250."<sup>52</sup> Sutherland noted a host of problems in this and other locations. The walls "of the House of Dunrobin in many parts received Water in

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Captain Sutherland assumed his new position in 1767. See Minute Book Entry for 7 August 1767, *Ibid.* He is identified as a member of the 38<sup>th</sup> Regiment in Sutherland to Sir Robert Gordon, 2 September 1766, Fraser, ed., *The Sutherland Book*, 2:303.

<sup>51</sup> Loretta R. Timperley, *A Directory of Landownership in Scotland, c 1770* (Edinburgh: The Scottish Record Society, 1976), 338.

<sup>52</sup> Minute Book Entry for 11 December 1766, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

the Winter time.” The levees were in a “ruinous condition.” The minster of Kildonan’s home was near collapse, and the parson feared an untimely meeting with God buried amidst the rubble. The inhabitants of Dornock were reluctant to attend public services, believing the church would collapse around them. Sutherland and the Tutors authorized these repairs, while contemplating the introduction of sheep husbandry, in an effort to enhance the value of Countess’s holdings.<sup>53</sup>

More troublesome problems emerged in the parish of Assynt that resembled those on Skye. In the summer of 1769, the factor for the parish reported difficulties collecting rents. Alexander Mackenzie of Ardlock, who also held a tack in the parish, told the Tutors that his charge had “become more burdensome” since the Earl of Sutherland’s death and the “different Augmentations of Rent” since his appointment.<sup>54</sup> As on Skye, rent increases and the absence of the actual proprietor compromised the inhabitants’ attachment to the land and the Sutherland family. By late 1771, Captain Sutherland found such a “litigious spirit” on the Countess’s lands that he asked the Tutors for an appointment as Baron-Baillie, a judicial position akin to a magistrate, over all of her properties. The Tutors denied this request by arguing that it conflicted with Captain Sutherland’s role as estate overseer.<sup>55</sup>

The Assynt people commanded much of Captain Sutherland’s attention. In November 1771, several thieves stole wood from their neighbors in Caithness, most likely to keep themselves warm as blizzards and bitter cold descended upon the Highlands. Sutherland had sent such offenders into the army as punishment before, and he thought of doing so again, but he was keenly aware of the hardship cause by the poor harvest and the hard winter. It was at this time that he requested that the Tutors provide 300 Bolls of meal to keep the tenants in Assynt and the

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<sup>53</sup> Minute Book Entry for 18 March 1768, Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Minute Book Entry for 20 July 1769, Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Minute Book Entry for 11 July 1771, Ibid.

other parishes from starving.<sup>56</sup> Supplying provisions was a logical reaction to a desperate situation. Besides keeping people alive it demonstrated the Tutors's intent to protect the Countess's interests by sustaining the fragile connection between them and her people.

The Tutors and Captain Sutherland were particularly interested in Assynt because they believed that its lands were undervalued. They authorized a survey of the parish to better understand the levels of rent the land there might support. They had already contracted with surveyor John Kirk in mid-1771 to map out the farms in the parishes of Golspie and Loth, the former of which contained Dunrobin. Captain Sutherland requested that Kirk then move on to Assynt where the tacks expired in 1775. He wanted the Tutors to "have the several farms laid before them" before they assigned new tacks and leases.<sup>57</sup> It surprised him that Assynt rents were lower than those on the Countess's other lands. The rentals for each farm had remained flat since at least 1759<sup>58</sup> He thought the tenants could afford it, noting that they sold their cattle for good prices recently and could have sold even more if they had accepted slightly lower prices for their animals.<sup>59</sup>

### *The Assynt Stratagem*

Despite evident hardship on the Countess' lands Captain Sutherland suspected that the Assynt tenants harbored ulterior motives. In December 1771, Mackenzie of Ardlock had managed to collect only £15 sterling of rent during a meeting with the tenants. Captain Sutherland was greatly disappointed. It would not have surprised him if "£15.0.0 str had been

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<sup>56</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 23 November 1771, Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Same to Same, 15 October 1771; Minute Book Entry for 11 July 1771; Minute Book Entry for 17 December 1771, Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Table 1: Rental of Assynt: 1759, 1766, and 1775 in Adam, M.A., ed., *John Home's Survey of Assynt*, 62-63.

<sup>59</sup> Captain James Sutherland to [Alexander Mackenzie of Ardlock], 19 December 1771, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

drank” at the meeting. He suggested that Ardlock call another meeting to ask delinquent tenants their reasons for delaying payment. Sutherland made it clear that tenants in arrears should not expect the Tutors to supply them with relief provisions.<sup>60</sup> To the Tutors’ secretary, Sutherland revealed the full extent of his concerns. “There is nothing that I am more certain of then that the Assant People have a Scheme to plead poverty,” he wrote, “in hopes as their Tacks are near run out, to diminish the present rent, or at lease to prevent an Augmentation.”<sup>61</sup> Sutherland believed that it was a negotiating tactic. In his view the people were not as distressed as they claimed to be.

In Chapter 2 we saw that the Countess’s tenants understood the imperial opportunities open to them. In their conversations with Mackenzie of Ardlock the Assynt tenants invoked the emigration schemes on the Isle of Skye. They believed that by threatening to emigrate they could force Captain Sutherland and the Tutors to negotiate for more favorable terms. Sutherland certainly viewed it that way. If the Tutors gave into their demands it would encourage other tenants to use a similar approach. Yet Sutherland was not entirely confident that it was an empty threat.<sup>62</sup>

In February 1772, Sutherland learned that George Mackay of Mundale had promoted emigration in the central parishes of Farr and Kildonan.<sup>63</sup> He assured the Tutors that Mundale and his accomplice “Doctor Campbell are so insignificant of themselves that this project of theirs must fall to the ground.” If any tenants did leave it would surely be those who had shown a “dislike to honest industry” and therefore no great loss to the Countess’s lands.<sup>64</sup> He claimed to

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 20 December 1771, Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 17 February 1772, Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

be confident that he could replace lazy Scots with better people. His actions and that of the Tutors suggested otherwise.

Sutherland found himself in a position not unlike that of General MacLeod's when the new chief of Clan MacLeod confronted his people. He was not the proprietor, just her representative, but under the circumstances he was the closest thing to it. He, like MacLeod, had to restore wayward tenants to their proper obedience and counter the influence of men like Mackay of Mundale. In planning for a meeting with potential emigrants in Kildonan, one that heavy snow prevented, Sutherland imagined that the tenants' "great argument in suport of migration will be the Want of Victual and the opression they meet with from their Masters the Tacksmen." If he gave comfort to the former he expected to draw the ire of the latter. What Sutherland had discovered was that some of the tacksmen such as Robert Gordon had encouraged the poor to leave so that they could find better tenants. The men he had expected to help him "distroy this project" actually thought that emigration was a good idea. If the empire could provide their poor tenants with some place to go, it could help make room for more profitable subtenants.<sup>65</sup> This put Sutherland in a difficult position. Even he had suggested that the Countess might benefit from losing ineffective tenants. The difference, however, is that he and the Tutors believed that they, not the tacksmen, should make that determination.

Sutherland's duty was to the young Countess and the preservation of her estates. However suspect the tenants' motives might have been, he needed to "relive the opresst," render the colonies less attractive, and fend off the tacksmen if he hoped to fulfill his charge. The aborted meeting at Kildonan was part of that strategy. The "Scheme will Vanish by a little attention" if he and the Tutors demonstrated appropriate concern for the tenants' welfare.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Captain James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, W.S., 27 February 1772, Ibid.

Providing food and supplies would show the Sutherland family's willingness and ability to protect them. Sutherland had some food imported from as far away as Peterhead, Aberdeenshire to meet the tenants' needs.<sup>67</sup> Another component of his plan involved undercutting MacKay of Mundale's scheming. Mundale's visit with Alexander Morrison of Skinidin coincided with Sutherland's attempts to persuade him that North Carolina was an impossible dream. He was less successful in this regard. Balole's words offered reassurance that there was land aplenty in the colony.

In March 1772, Sutherland declared that emigration was "a flame that I have in great measured stifl'd." But the Assynt people remained a problem. Although Mackenzie of Ardloch had managed to collect a little more than £92 in rent, the estate was still a touch over £46 in arrears. The tacksmen claimed they were waiting for money from cattle sales to arrive from Edinburgh. The common tenants thought they might be able to pay in the fall. Sutherland acknowledged that they had all shared in the winter's hardships, but he could not shake the feeling that they were hiding something. The tacksmen and their subtenants continued to complain that their rents were too high, and yet he considered them "the most Opulent" of all of the Countess's tenants because they held the best farms. He continued to suspect that it was a larger ruse to negotiate for lower rates. He knew "the Game that they will play, that they will [threaten to] go to America, this Idea of going to that Country is at present a sort of Madness among the Common People."<sup>68</sup> He did not believe it would happen. The tenants had no leader; the tacksmen surely would not go. The greater danger was in the tacksmen declaring their intent to emigrate and in turn rekindling interest in emigrating among the common people.

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<sup>67</sup> Minute book Entry for 23 June 1772, Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, 2 March 1772, Ibid.

But Captain Sutherland's confidence was misplaced. In May 1772, twenty-one families of 120 people, many of them children under the age of six, left the Countess' estates. They boarded a ship on the east coast and sailed to Dysart Harbor in Fife.<sup>69</sup> They disembarked there to cross over to Leith and then on into Edinburgh. From there they traveled west to Glasgow. They had "bravely bid adieu to slavery and beggary at home," according to one observer, and left "illiberal petty tryants" for a better life in the colonies.<sup>70</sup> The families made "a melancholy appearance."<sup>71</sup> In Fife two clergymen provided them with food and ale and sought help for the pregnant women. Other donations came in to help the ill.<sup>72</sup>

The emigrants' arrival in Edinburgh shocked Bishop George Hay. It had only been a few weeks since the departure of the persecuted Catholics from South Uist. He knew that the "most severe Winter here" had destroyed harvests and cattle in the Highlands, reducing people "to beggary." This knowledge did not prepare him for what he witnessed when the emigrants passed through town. These families were "a most dismal sight." He saw children of varying ages among the families, some of them "in the small pox," and many of the "women big with Child." They had resolved to go to America. Hay was not sure how they could afford passage when they "had not a penny in their pocket." They continued to rely on charitable contributions.<sup>73</sup> When they arrived in Glasgow some of the families who did have money booked passage for Philadelphia. The rest paid with their labor by indenting themselves to merchants.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 11 July 1772; "Philo Scotroum , Extract of a Letter from Fife, 30 May 1772," *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 June 1772. The *Scots Magazine* reported forty-eight families arrived in Edinburgh from Sutherland in June. This was either a mistake in which the editors combined the twenty-one families with subsequent groups moving through, or a deliberate inflation to draw greater attention to emigration. *The Scots Magazine* (August 1772), 395.

<sup>70</sup> "Philo Scotroum , Extract of a Letter from Fife, 30 May 1772," *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 June 1772.

<sup>71</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle*, 6 June 1772.

<sup>72</sup> "Philo Scotroum , Extract of a Letter from Fife, 30 May 1772," *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 June 1772.

<sup>73</sup> Bishop George Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 12 June 1772, BL 3/244/8, SCA.

<sup>74</sup> *Newcastle Courant*, 11 July 1772.

Tenants continued to leave the Sutherland estates. In July, while the first group prepared to leave Glasgow, another 100 emigrants, including thirty children, arrived in Dundee on their way to the Lowland port. Another ninety people, only three English speakers among them, passed through the village of Kincardine O'Neil in the northeast Highlands also headed for Glasgow.<sup>75</sup> One month later the *Adventure* sailed from Loch Eriboll in the Countess's lands with its 200 passengers for North Carolina.<sup>76</sup>

These collective departures rattled Captain Sutherland and the Tutors and forced them to alter their strategy. They would not reduce rents. Instead, they decided to "indulge [the tenants] in a little more time to recover their misfortunes & pay their Rents." They were convinced that the lands could support the rents in normal circumstances. The Tutors later authorized Captain Sutherland to purchase food and other supplies to help the people through the upcoming winter.<sup>77</sup> It was a prescient, but insufficient decision. In spring of 1773, the Tutors authorized even more relief.<sup>78</sup> They also agreed to allow Robert Gordon to give up his tack. He had "much opresst" his subtenants, many of whom who had emigrated the previous year, and their replacements now threatened to do the same. The Tutors decided to lease the lands directly to the tenants, thus eliminating a troublesome middleman and establishing their direct authority over the people.<sup>79</sup>

Assynt remained a serious problem. The estate was now £405.11.9 1/2 in arrears.<sup>80</sup> In some ways Captain Sutherland and the people on those farms were at an impasse. Sutherland still believed that the tenants misled him about the dire nature of their circumstances, yet given the recent emigrations he could not afford to provoke them. Most of the people in arrears did not

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.; *The Scots Magazine* (August 1772), 395.

<sup>76</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 September 1772.

<sup>77</sup> Minute Book Entry for 17 November 1772, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>78</sup> Minute Book Entry for 17 November 1772; Minute Book Entry for 11 March 1773, Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Minute Book Entry for 11 March 1773, Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Arrears due on the Estate of Assint of Rent 1772 Drawn out 17 May 1773, enclosed in James Sutherland to Alexander Mackenzie, 27 May 1773, Ibid.

deserve any favors, “but as matters are situated at present & so many attempts to debauch the minds of the People to imigrate have been made of late” he thought it best not to try to collect the money for the moment. A heavy hand could lead to more departures. One tacksman had offered to buy tenants’ cattle, money they could then use to emigrate. Sutherland did not want to push the people over the edge.<sup>81</sup>

In response to the persistent Skye infestation in Assynt, the Tutors and Sutherland added a new component to their suppression strategy. They asked the Reverend William Mackenzie, Assynt’s parish minster, to preach against emigration. They hoped to disrupt the promoters’ messages by involving the peoples’ spiritual guide and a trusted figure in the community. Mackenzie could sympathize with his flock’s troubles. He had lost his own crops and sixty head of cattle. He used “every method, which either my Prudence or Invention could Suggest” to dissuade the Assynt people from leaving and counter the influence of Alexander Mackenzie of Ardloch in promoting the “Frenzy of Emigration.” Ardloch, who had earlier expressed his dissatisfaction to the Tutors concerning his wages, had begun “to promote that Spirit” in the community. Mackenzie considered him an oppressive tacksman. The parson reported that only one man, a non-native of the parish, had emigrated from Assynt under his watch.<sup>82</sup> He apparently had accomplished in the parish what Captain Sutherland could not.

### *The List*

It is difficult to corroborate Reverend Mackenzie’s claim. The evidence that could do so survives in partial form. What it does tell us is far more important. In early 1774, Captain

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<sup>81</sup> Captain James Sutherland to [Alexander Mackenzie, W.S.], 27 May 1773, Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Reverend William Mackenzie to John Mackenzie of Delvine, 25 October 1773, Delvine Papers, MS.1374, ff.105-6, NLS.

Sutherland sent the Tutors a list of all Sutherland tenants whom he believed had emigrated in the previous three years. The list originated out of the Tutors' fear that emigration had damaged their reputations. In Edinburgh, Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes informed his colleagues "that it was publicly reported that the avarice of Landlords was the Cause of the Emigrations from Sutherland." He argued that people might accuse the Tutors of deliberately driving up rents to clear people off of the land.<sup>83</sup> This was Bishop George Hay's belief as he watched benighted Sutherland emigrants lumber through the streets of Edinburgh on their way to Glasgow.<sup>84</sup>

Despite all of Captain Sutherland's reports neither the superintendent nor the Tutors had a firm grasp on the situation. They had no precise idea of how many people had emigrated. Like Lord Adam Gordon (and his partner, the Tutor the Duke of Atholl) or Lord Advocate James Montgomery, the Tutors did not want to be seen as acting against the interests of their class or blamed for emigration.

Lord Hailes wanted concrete numbers to evaluate the damage done to the Countess's interest and their standing in the landed community. He asked that Captain Sutherland compile a list of all persons who had left from 1771 on, including the terms of their leases and if they were in arrears at the time of their departures. The other Tutors concurred. What they would do with that list was a different question. Alexander Boswell argued that their hands were tied. The Tutors could set leases with tacksmen and tenants directly, but they had no direct control over tenants who subleased from others. In other words, they could not easily stop people from leaving. Boswell wanted Captain Sutherland and his subordinates to work in concert with government officials to ascertain "the causes & the extent of the alarming Emigrations of the

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<sup>83</sup> Minute Book Entry for 30 November 1773, Sutherland Papers, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>84</sup> Bishop George Hay to Bishop John Geddes, 12 June 1772, BL 3/244/8, SCA.

inhabitants of Sutherland.”<sup>85</sup> Compiling a list of emigrants was a means to enlist the state’s help in curbing emigration. The list would provide the Tutors with hard data with which they could make a case for government assistance. They would have to show that what was happening on Sutherland was part of a much broader problem.

Captain Sutherland assembled the emigrant data and transmitted it to the Tutors. They in turn passed it on to Thomas Miller, one of the Countess’s original trustees, and now Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland. Miller’s investigation into emigration and its consequences is the subject of the following chapter. The Sutherland data was incorporated into Miller’s report. Through Captain Sutherland and men like Reverend Mackenzie the Tutors had tried to counter the messages of hope that promoters carried into the Scottish north. In the process, they struggled to strengthen ties with their tenants by ridding the Countess’s lands of troublesome tacksmen. They had met some success in Assynt, but the Countess’s more central lands had lost many tenants. Captain Sutherland’s census determined that in 1772 and 1773 “No less than Seven hundred & thirty five persons Men Women & Children” had gone to the colonies.<sup>86</sup> The number gave the Tutors a sense of the losses they might continue to sustain if depopulation continued unchecked.

The Countess’s Tutors were not alone in looking to the British government to stem the tide of emigration, though they had no idea what form government intervention might take. On the Isle of Lewis, where the spirit of emigration had also spread, the Earl of Seaforth’s estate administrators had a clearer idea of what they wanted from London. Lewis bore more than a few resemblances to the Isle of Skye. The example of both Skye’s proprietors and its emigrants inspired the men and women on Lewis, and not in constructive ways. The factor for the Lewis

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<sup>85</sup> Minute Book Entry for 30 November 1773, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Miller to Earl of Suffolk, 25 April 1774, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/45/164a, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Hereafter “TNA.”

feared that civil authority was on the verge of collapse. He no longer believed in his ability to quell the agitation on his own. He called for direct government intervention to shore up what little remained of his authority.

### **The Struggle on the Isle of Lewis**

The Isle of Lewis belonged to the Earl of Seaforth. Kenneth Mackenzie assumed the title of Viscount Fortrose and Baron Ardelve when his father died in 1761. Ten years later the king created the chief of Clan Mackenzie as the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Seaforth. The old earldom had been dormant since 1716. The government had stripped Seaforth's grandfather of his titles and estates for his participation in the 1715 Jacobite Rising. His grandson was forced to purchase these lands back from the government later in the century. The new Lord Seaforth was at the time Member of Parliament from Caithness and held lands on both the Outer Hebrides and the mainland.<sup>87</sup> Like Norman MacLeod of MacLeod and Sir Alexander MacDonald. Seaforth lived a cosmopolitan lifestyle that compounded his financial problems. He was only twenty-seven years old when he became earl and had little interest in living on Lewis or his mainland properties, preferring to spend his time in Paris or London. In the summer of 1771, Seaforth was in the French capital with his mistress, Harriet Powell, making preparations for their nuptials.<sup>88</sup> He was still there when his agent, John Mackenzie of Strickathrow, heard the rumblings about emigration on the Isle of Skye.

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<sup>88</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 16 August 1771, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/5, NRS.

### *Seaforth's Administrators*

The responsibility of managing the young Seaforth's estates in his absence fell to two men. Mackenzie of Strickathrow, Seaforth's commissioner or general estates manager, was often in London or Edinburgh overseeing his master's financial affairs and frequently returned north to meet with Seaforth's other subordinates. His deceased brother had been Seaforth's factor on Lewis before George Gillanders succeeded him in 1761. Gillanders, an Aberdeenshire native, assumed joint oversight of the mainland properties in 1765 and delegated some of his responsibilities on Lewis to his son Alexander. The elder Gillanders divided his time between Lewis and Brahan Castle in Dingwall, just to the south of Inverness.

Strickathrow and Gillanders assigned tacks, set leases, oversaw rent collection, and initiated improvement projects in support of their young chief's livelihood. These duties generated conflicts with the people under their charge. They were also handicapped by the earl's residence in the south. John Mackenzie of Delvine argued that emigration was "a punishment for the imprudences, shall I say the sins, of chieftains who from avarice... plunge at large in the fashionable luxuries and vices of the age, [and] must needs squeeze their tenants without discretion."<sup>89</sup> Their chief's behavior put Strickathrow and Gillanders in a difficult position. They preferred to take a stronger approach than others when the specter of emigration cast its shadow on Lewis and Seaforth's other properties. They first resorted to strategies similar to their counterparts elsewhere: food imports, a reconsideration of the rents, and direct appeal. The failure of these counter measures compelled Gillanders, the man most directly in the middle of the crisis, to turn to the law to restore order and collect Seaforth's income.

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<sup>89</sup> John Mackenzie of Delvine to General Norman MacLeod, 11 August 1773, quoted in Hunter, *Scottish Exodus*, 86.

## *The Infection*

In 1771 the Earl of Seaforth's finances were in poor condition. Strickathrow wanted current rents and outstanding debts collected in a timely manner, instructing Gillanders to "bring all the cash you can scape together with You" when they next met.<sup>90</sup> In the summer he waited with baited breath for news about the cattle drovers and their fate at the market. Seaforth had £2,000 of liabilities coming due in the autumn and needed the drovers to sell their animals for decent prices in order to "make ready payments of the Rents."<sup>91</sup> The total Lewis rent paid in crops for the year amounted to only £2,204.<sup>92</sup> Seaforth still had "great demands for cash both in Scotland and England" that October when he arrived back in London. It was at this time that Strickathrow queried Gillanders about emigration from Skye.<sup>93</sup>

Seaforth knew about events on Skye. For a brief time he entertained the idea of exploiting MacLeod of MacLeod's financial problems. When the chief of Clan MacLeod listed the Isle of Harris for sale in 1772, Seaforth imagined expanding his control over the whole of the Long Island (as Lewis and Harris were together called) by purchasing Harris. Besides ascertaining the "Solvencie of the Tenants" and "how far it is improvable by introducing Manufactures & Agriculture amongst them," Seaforth directed Gillanders to discover whether the Harris people "are as much infected with the Spirit of Emigration as the Sky gentrie seem to be."<sup>94</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow likened emigration to a disease that corrupted the bodies of weak-minded Scots.

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<sup>90</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 30 April 1771, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield GD427/214/4, NRS.

<sup>91</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 16 August 177, Ibid., GD427/214/5, NRS.

<sup>92</sup> Rental of the Lewis Crop, 1771, Ibid., GD427/9/1, NRS.

<sup>93</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, [?] October 1771, Ibid., GD427/214/9, NRS.

<sup>94</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 2 February 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/12, NRS. See also Same to Same, 14 February 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/14, NRS.

Seaforth's men were concerned about emigration. By early February 1772 "a great gall of Snow" covered the countryside.<sup>95</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, the factor for Hiltown near Dingwall, reported a dreadful situation for both people and their animals. Tenants "from all Quarters" were considering emigration to America.<sup>96</sup> Strickathrow and Gillanders realized that they faced a serious problem. Seaforth had been informed about the "threaten'd emigration" from his lands, but he left his lieutenants to deal with it.<sup>97</sup> The Isle of Skye loomed large in their minds. Strickathrow's characterization of emigration as an infection was no accident. If the disease took root, Seaforth soon would become a proprietor without tenants.

Gillanders and Strickathrow resorted to familiar tactics. By providing the people with the "necessaries of life and employ[ing] them as much as may be in the Manufactures," they sought to inoculate their tenants.<sup>98</sup> But miscommunication complicated their plans. Despite repeated claims of starvation, neither Strickathrow nor their grain supplier could get Gillanders to tell them how much he needed to distribute to the tenants. They did not want to overstock Lewis with provisions. Any new expenditure put additional pressure on Seaforth's finances. Eventually the supplier shipped 700 bolls of meal, the equivalent of 4,200 bushels, for the tenants' use. Another 400 bolls were authorized in anticipation of an equally difficult fall.<sup>99</sup> "There is So much want in Sky and to the Southward," Strickathrow observed, that he expected supply shortages and price increases. Paying for everything compounded an already stressful time. He entreated Gillanders, who was heading to Brahan Castle in late spring, to collect as much cash

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<sup>95</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 2 February 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/12, NRS.

<sup>96</sup> Alexander Mackenzie of Hiltown to Gillanders, 9 March 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/203/19, NRS.

<sup>97</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/17, NRS.

<sup>98</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 10 April 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/17, NRS.

<sup>99</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 6 May 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/19, NRS.

from the tacksmen and tenants around Dingwall as he could to subsidize the flax spinning on the Lewis. In the interim, he had to meet a £150 obligation for the meal.<sup>100</sup>

Providing the people with food to eat and flax to spin was a means to an end.

Strickathrow reckoned that Seaforth would recover the investment within a year's time. A short-term outlay in the interest of long-term growth would address the people's immediate needs and demonstrate that Seaforth cared for his people, strengthening the bond between the tenants and their young proprietor. Strickathrow hoped that they had not acted too late. A disgruntled tacksmen had stepped into leadership void and told the people enchanting tales of a better world across the ocean. And he promised to take them there.

### *The Squire*

Seaforth's administrators referred to the man who vexed them as the "Squire." He was Daniel MacLeod, a tacksmen and merchant in Stornoway, whom contemporaries also referred to as "Donald MacLeod."<sup>101</sup> In the early 1760s he left the village of Kilmarie on Strath, Isle of Skye for Lewis.<sup>102</sup> He contracted with Strickathrow to rent at least one lot in Stornoway at 15 shillings annually. The lease mandated that MacLeod build upon the land. Strickathrow also made it known that MacLeod "will be as welcome as any person to a Tack on a possession" when

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<sup>100</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 20 May 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/20, NLS.

<sup>101</sup> The exact nature of MacLeod's role in promoting emigration has been muddled because of confusion in the sources. In addition to Daniel there is also a Donald MacLeod assigned the moniker "the Squire." At times they both appear in the same source referencing the same individual. They are indeed the same person. MacLeod's name in Gaelic, *Domhnall*, is pronounced "Donnell" and can be rendered in English as either "Donald" or "Daniel."

<sup>102</sup> Bailyn identified Daniel MacLeod as a former resident of Kilmuir on the Isle of Arran, however, John Mackenzie of Strickathrow addressed a letter to him at "Kilmorie Strath Sky" in 1762 as part of their negotiations over a plot of land in Stornoway. See Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 594.

Seaforth's administrators next allocated them.<sup>103</sup> MacLeod later acquired a tack in the nearby settlement of Balallan.<sup>104</sup> If MacLeod had any legal training it is not evident in the sources, but Strickathrow addressed his letter to "Daniel MacLeod, Esquire." The term "Squire" did not signify respect for the man, but rather disdain.

Whatever relationship MacLeod may have enjoyed with Strickathrow and Gillanders in the early 1760s had soured by the end of the decade. In 1769, Gillanders secured a precept, or a warrant, from the local deputy sheriff to confiscate MacLeod's assets in a process called poiding. It was a legal tool used when tenants or tacksmen fell into arrears. MacLeod owed Seaforth £27 in back rent for his lands in Balallan and £2 for his Stornoway lot.<sup>105</sup> Although he paid most of the balance, a 1771 list of arrears showed a £2 outstanding balance.<sup>106</sup>

It was not unusual for Gillanders to employ the law in his management of Seaforth's affairs. In 1770, Gillanders issued a precept to warn out thirty leaseholders and their families from Seaforth's lands.<sup>107</sup> MacLeod knew how to use the law too. In early 1772, the lawyer Colin Mackenzie of Dingwall was "plagued with letters from Squire McLeod employing me in Lawsuits" against some of his subtenants in Balallan. MacLeod accused them of stealing forty-three lambs in the previous year and causing £20 in unspecified damages. He wanted them legally removed from his tack. Mackenzie refused. He was confident that Seaforth, Strickathrow, and Gillanders "would take a concern for the Tenants" and support them against MacLeod's

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<sup>103</sup> John Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Daniel MacLeod of Kilmarie, 16 June 1762, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD 427/266/3, NRS.

<sup>104</sup> Precept against Donald MacLeod of Balallan by George Gillanders, 14 December 1769, Ibid., GD 427/248/1, NRS.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Copy, List of Arrears Lewis rent Crop 1771 & meal, Ibid., GD427/9/6, NRS.

<sup>107</sup> Precept of Warning, 19 December 1770, Ibid., GD 427/253/1, NRS.

accusations. Their interest was in retaining tenants, not expediting their removal unless it was deemed absolutely necessary.<sup>108</sup>

MacLeod did not take Mackenzie's refusal lightly. He sent out a letter among "his friends in the Country" that put Seaforth's men on guard. Strickathrow ordered Gillanders "to take all the prudent measures You can to render their attempts ineffectual."<sup>109</sup> Later correspondence and events make it clear that they feared MacLeod's influence over Scots on the Lewis suffering from the recent winter. He "held forth to them [on] the fertility & Cheapness of the lands in America," promising to escort them personally to the colonies where he would see that they were well settled.<sup>110</sup> Local ship owner Donald MacNeil and one John Morrison joined MacLeod in the scheme. They planned to procure vessels to freight passengers across the Atlantic. Like prospective emigrants elsewhere those tenants who could afford their own passage could pay outright while poorer Scots would sign indenture contracts to subsidize their journey. In Strickathrow's view men who promoted emigration were "rascals" who corrupted the minds of weakened people.<sup>111</sup>

Supplying the people with provisions and encouraging them to labor were critical to their strategy to undermine MacLeod's appeal. For a brief time Strickathrow and Gillanders thought they had brought some stability to the island. Then a real disease struck Lewis. What was first

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<sup>108</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 10 February 1772, Ibid., GD427/203/7, NRS.

<sup>109</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 14 March 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/15, NRS.

<sup>110</sup> Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Commissioners of Customs, 14 February 1774, CE86/2/2 - Stornoway Outport and District Records, 1773-1778 Board to Collector, NRS. My thanks to Mary Draper for imaging this document.

<sup>111</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 10 April 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/17, NRS.

thought to be the plague was a “putrid fever” carried into Stornoway in the summer of 1772 aboard a ship from the Netherlands.<sup>112</sup>

The illness appeared on the island at the critical time of year for Seaforth’s estate managers. They met with tenants and tacksmen then to negotiate new leases. Seaforth, who had yet to come north, empowered Gillanders to treat with tenants “as far as prudence will direct” provided rents were at least equal to their current rates.<sup>113</sup> He was to take care that he did not place any undue hardships on the destitute and was encouraged to legally “warn out and remove Such people as are unfit and blamable in their conduct” as he judged necessary for Seaforth’s benefit.<sup>114</sup> Gillanders could raise rents on farms that could bear it, although he was not to offer terms below present rates.

In the fall of 1772, however, fewer tenants paid their rents. The arrears for the crop year 1771 stood at just over £33, a figure that included expected payments in cash and oatmeal.<sup>115</sup> That number increased by 1,163% to over £417 the following year.<sup>116</sup> Gillanders threatened several delinquents with poinding, but many of the tenants were simply fed up, leading them to resist Seaforth’s authority and entertain MacLeod’s offers.<sup>117</sup> Provisions in Stornoway were too expensive (which Gillanders blamed on price gouging customs officials), their proprietor had failed to return home and fulfill his duty as a benevolent patriarch, and the putrid fever worsened matters.<sup>118</sup> Nor did flax spinning offer relief from their plight. The laboring strategy had largely

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<sup>112</sup> Robert Finlay to John Ingram, 30 October 1772, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/53b, TNA; James Montgomery to Earl of Suffolk, 8 November 1772, *Ibid.*, SP 54/46/55a, TNA; Thomas Miller to Earl of Suffolk, 14 November 1772, *Ibid.*, SP 54/46/58, TNA.

<sup>113</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 27 October 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/24, NRS.

<sup>114</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, n.d [c. October 1772], *Ibid.*, GD427/214/18, NRS. Internal evidence indicates that this document was written either shortly before or after the 27 October 1772 letter. It mentions both the putrid fever and Gillanders’ powers to treat with tenants.

<sup>115</sup> Copy, List of Arrear Lewis rents Crop 1771, *Ibid.*, GD427/9/6, NRS.

<sup>116</sup> Copy List of Arrear given up wt Account of Crop 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/9/5, NRS.

<sup>117</sup> Precept for Poinding & Arrestment, 4 September 1772, *Ibid.* GD427/258/1, NRS.

<sup>118</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 27 October 1772, *Ibid.*, GD427/214/24, NRS.

failed. The tenants were “So much in their own light as to decline aplying to the manufactures” that Strickathrow feared that the “creaze” for emigration would not subside unless they convinced the people to labor and accept new leases.<sup>119</sup> He implored the Reverend John Downie to “Preach up for Peace and Industry” in hopes of “quieting the People” just as Sutherland’s Tutors asked Reverend William Mackenzie to beat back enthusiasm for North Carolina in Assynt.<sup>120</sup>

### *Violence*

MacLeod and other “infamous fellows” had gained considerable influence among segments of the island’s population.<sup>121</sup> Gillanders’s attempt to restore Seaforth’s authority did further damage. This was especially true in Bragar on the northwest coast of Lewis where a number of tenants had failed to pay their rents as well as an excise tax on whisky. In November 1772, Gillanders sent Donald Ross to talk with them. Ross learned that MacLeod had gained the confidence of many of the residents, and had positioned himself as the Bragar people’s protector in opposition to Seaforth’s administrators. Several of the Bragar tenants signaled their intention to emigrate. Some promised to labor in the spring, others refused outright. They could not pay current rents because they had sold all of their crops to cover the previous year’s debts. The tenants tried to negotiate a deal, offering to disavow MacLeod and “willingly stay at home” if Gillanders agreed not to pursue legal action against them.<sup>122</sup> Ross learned that MacLeod was in league with some Americans who would pay the arrears. This was no random act of charity:

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 17 November 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/27, NRS.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Donald Ross to Gillanders, 2 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/204/15, NRS.

emigration promoters sought to transform these debts to Seaforth into indenture contracts with American shipmasters. MacLeod boasted that “its in his power to stop the next Labouring” if Gillanders tried to force payment.<sup>123</sup> This was a direct challenge to Gillanders.

Ross’s confrontation with the tenants was indicative of Strickathrow and Gillanders’s realization that some tenant loss was inevitable. Their priority shifted slightly to recovering any unpaid taxes and debts as well as getting rid of men like MacLeod.<sup>124</sup> Ross had orders to collect the still heads from tenants who refused paying the whisky excise tax. The still head allowed the vapors rising out of the grain mash to condense into the liquid spirit. Ross targeted the still heads of “Every person in this district that propose going to America.” He would hold them hostage until the tenants paid the necessary tax. In a hurry to accomplish other tasks that day, Ross left at least one of the still heads with his mother for temporary safekeeping. Much to her son’s astonishment Ross’s mother promptly gave them back to “these Emigrants.” At a home in nearby Borge the still master begged, and Ross agreed, to allow him to finish distilling before taking his still head. The still master promised to deliver it up within an hour. It was a trap.<sup>125</sup>

When Ross returned at the appointed hour a party of men and women seized hold of him. Knocking him to the ground, they struck his legs and feet leaving him unable to stand, while the still master shouted that Gillanders was nothing but an oppressor. Ross had to be carried to his father’s house.<sup>126</sup> The Borge assailants were unafraid of Gillanders, letting it be known they would not stand in awe of him “while they Live.” Too sore to walk days later Ross blamed two brothers, Donald and William MacLean, who like MacLeod excited the people with stories of America. The two men were already on Gillanders’ mind. They were among the tenants he had

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 17 November 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/27, NRS.

<sup>125</sup> Ross to Gillanders, 5 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/204/18, NRS.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

formally charged with delinquency.<sup>127</sup> It was some consolation to Ross that a few of his attackers expressed remorse over their actions. Still, he had evidence that they were funding their future emigration plans by selling the whisky they had already managed to distill.<sup>128</sup>

The tenants' assault on Ross was an extreme manifestation of their desperation and the mistrust that existed between them and Seaforth's managers. Tenants elsewhere were also conspiring to emigrate. Gillanders no doubt knew that tenants of a Seaforth cousin had made similar plans. Five tenants on farms in Dingwall entered "into the association" with the intention of "Transporting ourselves to America." They apologized for "Deserting our farms" only after authorities put them into Dingwall prison. Upon coerced reflection they gave up thoughts of "Baneshing ourselves to America or the Planatations."<sup>129</sup> On Lewis, John Morrison, tacksman of Begrigary, wrote that his subtenants paid him neither "obedience nor dues," with some of them resolving to go to America. Strickathrow relayed that tenants in Kintail were threatening to give up their leases unless they received a better rate.<sup>130</sup>

### *Defeat*

Protecting Seaforth's interests now meant recovering debts and cutting out the cancer that encouraged his tenants to emigrate. That included getting rid of MacLeod and his fellow instigators. In December 1772, Strickathrow ordered Colin Mackenzie to warn out, or legally

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<sup>127</sup> Precept for Poining & Arrestment, 4 September 1772, Ibid., GD427/258/1, NRS.

<sup>128</sup> Ross to Gillanders, 7 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/204/19.

<sup>129</sup> Tenants Petition on Account of Intending to Emigrate, 8 October 1772, Mackenzie Papers. Vol. IV ADD MS 39190 ff. 190, The British Library, London, England, United Kingdom.

<sup>130</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, [10?] January 1773, The Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/215/1, NRS.

remove, MacLeod and his accomplices Donald MacNeil and John Morrison from their lands. He justified this move on the basis of their promoting emigration.<sup>131</sup>

Death stalled that strategy. The county sheriff had recently died, putting a halt to all judicial actions until the appointment of a successor. Colin Mackenzie advised Gillanders to obtain a warrant of poinding and arrestment against tenants in arrears. Many sold their cattle in anticipation of emigrating. It would allow him to seize whatever profits these “intended Emigrants” made from their cattle sales while they waited for a new sheriff to assume office.<sup>132</sup>

Gillanders tried to play down the extent of his problems when Skye once again loomed large. It comforted Farquhar MacRae that Gillanders thought “so little of the Number of Emigrants from your place.” Some of the tenants around him in Inverness threatened to leave, but he believed that most would not go through with it. At least he hoped so. MacRae recognized that powerful messages still emanated from the southern Western Isles. “The Sky people make a great noise,” he wrote, “& many Join in the common cry to encrease the dread of Emigration.”<sup>133</sup> Colin Mackenzie relayed equally mixed news. A new sheriff had been appointed, yet they could not proceed with removing MacLeod and his associates until the sheriff had appointed his deputies.<sup>134</sup>

Unable to remove MacLeod from Seaforth’s lands Gillanders instead sought to frustrate his designs. By March 1773 the schemers, whose numbers had grown to include a MacLeod cousin, John McAulay, had gathered a number of emigrant families in Stornoway. They had contracted two vessels to carry out the journey, including the ship owned by Donald MacNeil. Gillanders once again turned to the law for help. He secured a warrant permitting him to

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 20 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/204/22, NRS.

<sup>133</sup> Farquhar MacRae to Gillanders, 17 February 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/8, NRS.

<sup>134</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 8 February 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/7, NRS.

confiscate the property of many of the emigrants waiting in the port village. They had sold their possessions on consignment. Gillanders, however, possessed the receipts that McAulay needed to properly disburse the funds. The receipts became a bargaining chip to compel payment of late rents. McAulay asked for the list of people contained in the warrant, promising not to take away anyone who had not paid their rents, but protested Gillanders's obstinacy in wanting the debts paid before he would release the receipts. The emigrants could not even buy provisions in Stornoway. Surely these "poor people" should "not be allowed to Starve" from want of their own money.<sup>135</sup>

Gillanders refused McAulay's terms. Handing over the receipts risked the ships sailing away without the tenants satisfying their debts. Permitting them to go would show the rest of Seaforth's people that his lordship's administrators — and by extension Seaforth himself — had no authority. McAulay issued a counter proposal. He would "pay this day for any person that is to go to America along with me, in any legal demand you have upon them for Seaforths Rents," reiterating that the people were starving in the town. Left unspoken was that fact that the tenants would now be in *his* debt. He accused Gillanders of deliberately distressing "the poor Emigrants" and illegally holding the receipts. God, McAulay reminded his adversary, had seen fit to place them in a land of liberty, and if Gillanders held fast he would commence legal action against him in Edinburgh.<sup>136</sup>

Meanwhile, numerous reports suggested that more tenants and tacksmen were coming to Stornoway to surrender their tacks or leases. They added to a tense environment.<sup>137</sup> Elsewhere a

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<sup>135</sup> John McAulay to Gillanders, 4 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/15, NRS.

<sup>136</sup> John McAulay to Gillanders, 5 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/16, NRS.

<sup>137</sup> Donald Ross to Gillanders, 20 March 1772, Ibid., GD427/205/20, NRS; James Tastard to Gillanders, 25 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/20, NRS; Angus Morrison to Gillanders, 3 April 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/26, NRS; Donald McAulay to Gillanders, 7 May 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/36, NRS.

new round of encouraging letters from Skye “disturbed many heads” on neighboring lands.<sup>138</sup>

Gillanders did succeed in convincing some tenants on Lewis to renew their leases, a victory that won Seaforth’s approbation, but he still wanted to secure the debts of those emigrating.<sup>139</sup>

A cousin of both MacLeod and McAulay lamented the conduct of his kin. The Reverend John McAulay found the former man “had never head nor heart to do [but] for himself nor another” while the latter was a mere “puppie” who in beating “up for recruits to America” betrayed the memory of his father.<sup>140</sup> Many of the emigrants shared this estimation of their leaders. Reverend McAulay heard that MacLeod had embezzled £170 of their available pooled capital. As one correspondent put it, MacLeod’s “heedless Dissipation has plungd his own Affairs, Character & friends into absolute Ruine.”<sup>141</sup> The customs collectors at Stornoway took a more measured view. Making no mention of fraud, they wrote only that MacLeod had “Disappointed” the emigrants “when it came to the push,” sending them scrambling to make alternative arrangements.<sup>142</sup>

MacLeod’s actions compromised his standing among the emigrants, some of whom contracted with Glaswegian merchant Alexander Morrison for transportation. His two vessels would join the ship that Donald MacNeil had already supplied. Gillanders made a last ditch effort to collect back payments. He informed Morrison that emigrants intending to board his vessel were late on their rents. The ship-owner willfully pleaded ignorance. If the passengers and servants under his care were in Seaforth’s debt “its more than I know,” and several of them complained about Gillanders’s refusal to turn over their money. He had, he wrote, not engaged with any of them under false pretenses, especially the people who signed indenture contracts and

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<sup>138</sup> Farquhar MacRae to Gillanders, 19 April 1773, Ibid., GD427205/31, NRS.

<sup>139</sup> Earl of Seaforth to Gillanders, 30 April 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/34, NRS.

<sup>140</sup> The Reverend John McAulay to Gillanders, 20 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/25, NRS.

<sup>141</sup> Norman MacLeod to Gillanders, 7 May 1773, Ibid., GD427/205/37, NRS.

<sup>142</sup> Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Commissioners of Customs, 14 February 1774, CE86/2/2 - Stornoway Outport and District Records, 1773-1778 Board to Collector, CE86/2/2, NRS.

swore to him that they were beholden to no one else. Nor did he have any power over those who had paid their own fares. Morrison boasted that he could recruit twice the number of people to go if he so desired. And he was anxious to get underway. If Gillanders wanted to put “the Law in Execution,” he should do so now, otherwise he and his emigrants would shove off.<sup>143</sup>

Set sail the emigrants did. The precise number of people that departed is unknown. Colin Mackenzie understood that 400 left the island in the early spring through the late summer. Only 50 paid their own way. The rest signed indenture contracts to subsidize their passage. Stornoway customs officials informed their superiors in Edinburgh that the poor signed indentures for three to five years depending on their ages.<sup>144</sup> In Thomas Miller’s report, parish ministers concluded that 478 men, women, and children had left. That figured included 134 children from the Parish of Barvas.<sup>145</sup> These latter figures technically covered 1772 through 1773. The fact that the number corresponds closely with Colin Mackenzie’s information strongly indicates that the bulk of this migration occurred in the first half of 1773.

When the Stornoway customs officials asked the tenants why they were leaving they cited a number of reasons. The “Severity of the Seasons for two or three years past,” along with the death of their cattle, the high cost of provisions, and an inability to “pay their Rents, which they likewise complained was higher for some Years past” had reduced them to “mere Beggary.” The “oppressive measures practiced by the factor here,” a reference to Gillanders, was the last

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<sup>143</sup> Alexander Morrison to Gillanders, 31 May 1773, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/206/11, NRS.

<sup>144</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 28 June 1773, *Ibid.*, GDGD427/206/7, NRS; Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Commissioners of Customs, 14 February 1774, Stornoway Outport and District Records, CE86/2/2, NRS.

<sup>145</sup> “A List of Persons who have Emigrated from the Shire of Ross To America during the Years 1772 and 1773,” State Papers, Scotland, SP54/45/164e, TNA. The report is enclosed in Archibald Campbell to Thomas Miller, 3 March 1774, SP54/45/164b, itself an enclosure in Thomas Miller to Earl of Suffolk, 25 April 1774, SP54/45/164a.

reason given.<sup>146</sup> His aggressive pursuit of unpaid debts and his sequestration of the emigrants' money did much to drive them from Seaforth's lands.<sup>147</sup>

### *The Redcoats Are Not Coming*

Throughout the crisis Gillanders never believed that the law alone could protect Seaforth's interests or secure his authority. Seaforth dined with noblemen and scholars in London while his people fled.<sup>148</sup> Gillanders wanted the power of the state behind him in quelling unrest on Lewis.

The idea of securing an army company to bolster civilian authority first appeared in early May 1772.<sup>149</sup> Gillanders raised the issue again in the fall, implicitly acknowledging that his efforts to maintain order through the law were insufficient. The tenants had little, if any, regard for his station. Some of the people spoke ill of Gillanders in petitions to Seaforth while Colin Mackenzie reported that individuals on Skye lambasted his reputation.<sup>150</sup> Redcoats, he believed, would help him put a stop to such problems. Strickathrow reluctantly agreed to forward his request for a company of twenty men to Seaforth.<sup>151</sup> He had hoped that the Reverend Downie's influence would make troops unnecessary.

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<sup>146</sup> Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Commissioners of Customs, 14 February 1774, Stornoway Outport and District Records, CE86/2/2, NRS.

<sup>147</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow wrote in a number of letters that he had engaged their suppliers for additional 600 bolls of oatmeal, procured in Ireland at 16 shillings/boll, which was a better price than they could secure in Scotland. Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 13 March 1773, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/215/4 and a second of the same date, GD427/215/3, NRS; Same to Same, 30 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/5, NRS; Same to Same, 15 April 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/6, NRS; Same to Same, 15 May 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/8, NRS.

<sup>148</sup> *Daily Advertiser* (London), 26 April 1773.

<sup>149</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 6 May 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/214/19, NRS.

<sup>150</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 27 October 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/24, NRS; Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 20 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/204/22, NRS.

<sup>151</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 27 October 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/24, NRS.

In London, Seaforth found Gillanders's request troubling. Confident in his ability to persuade the Secretary at War, William Barrington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Barrington, to authorize an army company Seaforth nevertheless questioned the idea's wisdom. Instead of quieting minds, Strickathrow told Gillanders, it "might inflame the People," creating divisions deeper than what might have been otherwise.<sup>152</sup> No similar calls came from the Isle of Skye or from the Countess of Sutherland's lands. Strickathrow, however, had come to agree with Gillanders. In the early months of 1773 he twice repeated the request to his master. Seaforth continually rebuffed them. Gillanders had to do the best he could until Seaforth's scheduled arrival later that summer.<sup>153</sup>

The prospect of Seaforth's visit was welcome. It was equally encouraging that he had asked for a complete financial overview of the island's financial state.<sup>154</sup> At least they now had his attention. Strickathrow shared John Mackenzie of Delvine's sentiments about the costs that proprietors should bear for their own conduct. In a rare moment of candor he complained that Seaforth "must blame himself" given that they had warned him of their struggles on Lewis.<sup>155</sup> Seaforth "will suffer something by it, & deservedly."<sup>156</sup> After much prodding the earl set out from Edinburgh with Strickathrow to begin a grand tour of his lands.<sup>157</sup>

Seaforth found his people on Lewis in an agitated state. Nineteen Stornoway inhabitants demanded improvements in the village before they would accept a "new lease of our Acres." The petitioners wanted Seaforth to act like a clan chief and guarantee them certain protections. They

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<sup>152</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 10 December 1772, Ibid., GD427/214/28, NRS.

<sup>153</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, [10?] January 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/1, NRS; Same to Same, 6 February 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/2, NRS.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 13 March 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/4, NRS.

<sup>156</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 19 June 1773, Ibid., GD427/215/9, NRS.

<sup>157</sup> *Public Advertiser* (London), 29 July 1773. Seaforth arrived in Edinburgh on July 24th before continuing his journey north. Mackenzie of Strickathrow noted in several letters to Gillanders of his inability to convince Seaforth to make the journey from London or his uncertainty of when the Earl would set out. See Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 15 April 1773, GD427/215/6; 29 April 1773, GD427/215/7; 15 May 1773, GD427/215/8, all in Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, NRS.

demanding the construction of a public market and a well in the center of town; that the market be open on a fixed day each week; and they called for Seaforth to shield them from tacksmen who, they said, confiscated and “sold all the Cattle belonging to the People of this Place” when the animals encroached on their lands.<sup>158</sup> Fulfilling their needs was the price of their loyalty.

Seaforth did not understand the need for reciprocity. He was “a good deal surprized” that the petitioners demanded an answer before they agreed to their leases. He saw no connection between the two, and was shocked that they would try to extract concessions from him before coming to terms. In his view, the petitioners should sign their leases first, and then he would address their concerns. Nevertheless, he agreed to the creation of a public market on the condition that the inhabitants paved the gravel on the site and dug the well at their own expense. They could hold the market each week when it best suited them. As for the cattle issue, he suggested that they confiscate the animals that encroached on their lands.<sup>159</sup>

No sooner had Seaforth arrived on the island than he prepared to return to London for the winter. Not taking any chances, Gillanders asked for specific instructions for how to act in “case the Creeze of Emigration Continue[s].”<sup>160</sup> Seaforth simply told him to carry on as usual. There was one silver lining. He would try to procure a party of soldiers “to Support the Authority of the Civil Power” on the island, but only if absolutely necessary.<sup>161</sup>

The people harvested a better crop and sold their cattle at higher prices in the fall of 1773. Yet, an incredulous Strickathrow could not believe it when the Lewis people once again balked at paying their rents and asked “for an indulgence.”<sup>162</sup> He again pressed Gillanders to exert all his

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<sup>158</sup> Petition of the inhabitants of Stornoway, 2 September 1773, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/165/1, NRS.

<sup>159</sup> Seaforth’s Answer to the Petition of the Inhabitants of Stornoway, 3 September 1773, Ibid., GDGD427/166/1, NRS.

<sup>160</sup> Gillanders to Seaforth, 13 October 1773, Ibid., GD427/168/1, NRS.

<sup>161</sup> Seaforth to Gillanders, 14 October 1773, Ibid., GD427/169/1, NRS.

<sup>162</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, Ibid., GD427/215/12, NRS.

powers to lawfully collect the debts. Strickathrow needed cash to satisfy some of Seaforth's creditors.<sup>163</sup>

By asking for indulgence the tenants signaled their continued willingness to exploit the distressed state of Seaforth's land, affairs, and the recent tenant departures to negotiate for better terms. When fresh snow fell across the Highlands in early 1774, Colin Mackenzie feared that "the poor Highlanders will be reduced to the miserable State" they had been two years earlier.<sup>164</sup> In March shipmaster Thomas Jann arrived in Stornoway with native islander Collin MacLeod seeking out poor Scots to indent for his Philadelphia merchant employers. For Seaforth's allies the *Friendship's* appearance heralded nothing that resembled the name inscribed on the ship's stern. It was as if "Satan is let loose" among the people, wrote Norman Morrison, minister of the Parish of Uig. "They are all like drunken and Demented Creatures," falling prey to the insinuations of the Devil and his minions.<sup>165</sup>

Colin Mackenzie thought that civil authority was on the brink of collapse. He had not even bothered sending a warrant for the apprehension of some tenants in North Galson, arguing that Gillanders could not enforce it if he tried. For him that was a turning point. He too believed that Gillanders needed a military party and why "Seaforth should be so blind to his own Interest" in not sending one befuddled the lawyer. The recruiters "Intoxicate and Delude the poor Ignorant people" and without the military there would be no means of rousing them from their stupor.<sup>166</sup> Only state power could save them now.

The alleged evil that Jann and his men visited upon the island went far beyond simply indenting Seaforth's people. It was much worse. These "Atrocious Villans" were stealing

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<sup>163</sup> Mackenzie of Strickathrow to Gillanders, 6 January 1774, Ibid., GD427/215/14, NRS.

<sup>164</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 17 January 1774, Ibid., GD427/207/6, NRS.

<sup>165</sup> Norman Morrison to Gillanders, 22 March 1774, Ibid., GD427/207/9, NRS.

<sup>166</sup> Colin Mackenzie to Gillanders, 11 April 1774, Ibid., GD427/207/11, NRS.

children. Collin MacLeod and his fellow recruiters took underage “Boyees off the Beech and Shore” without the consent of their parents or masters, locked them up on board the *Friendship*, and prevented anguished parents or aggrieved masters from seeing them.<sup>167</sup> Gillanders filed a legal protest against Jann and charged him with conspiring to mislead an “ignorant” people whom he would “sell and make Merchandise” in Philadelphia. The American had illegally indentured children and enlisted residents indebted to Seaforth, all “to the manifest loss of the Countrey in general, & of the Proprietor and lawful Creditors in particular.”<sup>168</sup> The loss of these people hurt Seaforth and the nation. Jann never disputed these facts. He and Gillanders understood that there was little that could be done to stop him.

The reports of Jann’s practices finally convinced Seaforth to ask the British government for military assistance. He did so begrudgingly. If tenants wanted to go they would and “a Soldier tho dressed in Red can no more prevent a Man going aboard Ship” than any other person. He restated his belief that troops would only agitate the people more and risked sending additional emigrants into the waiting arms of the American shipmaster. He imagined recruiters laughing at Gillanders if he showed up on the beach with a company Redcoats behind him.<sup>169</sup> Still, because they were so insistent, Seaforth petitioned George III for a contingent of men. In his memorial he claimed that if not checked the “illegal Practices” would soon leave the island “desolated,” and would encourage similar practices on the mainland.<sup>170</sup>

The King and his ministers were equally skeptical of Seaforth’s request. Secretary of State for the Northern Department Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk doubted the propriety of sending a contingent of troops because “any forcible Opposition to the Spirit of Emigration

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<sup>167</sup> Gillanders to John Davidson of Stewartfield, 22 April 1774, State Papers, Scotland SP54/45/167b, TNA.

<sup>168</sup> Precept of George Gillanders against Thomas Jan, Master of the *Friendship*, 20 April 1772, Papers of the Gillanders Family of Highfield, GD427/264/1, NRS.

<sup>169</sup> Seaforth to Mackenzie of Strickathrow 30 April 1774, Ibid., GD427/207/15, NRS.

<sup>170</sup> Memorial for the Earl of Seaforth, sole Proprietor of the Island of Lewis in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, c. May 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/167d, TNA.

might prove more likely to increase than diminish it.”<sup>171</sup> Suffolk asked Thomas Miller for his opinion.<sup>172</sup> Miller concluded that the government could not authorize the plan because “there is no Judge or Magistrate Known in the Law” on the island to take command of the detachment.<sup>173</sup>

The government said no. It vindicated Seaforth’s long-standing objections and demonstrated the government’s own belief that a military presence would do more harm than good. An already distressed people might perceive an army company as a tool of oppression, more especially so in a region with a Jacobite past. Gillanders could not have his soldiers.

## **Conclusion**

In December 1774 the Presbytery on the Isle of Lewis authorized a public day of thanksgiving. The islanders had brought in a good harvest and their cattle sold for higher prices. The combination of the two had “to All appearance cured the people of the Epidemical Phrenzy, which had seized them for migrating to America.” God deserved praise for restoring order and industry on the island.<sup>174</sup> The Presbytery made no mention of George Gillanders, John Mackenzie of Strickathrow, or the Earl of Seaforth playing a similar role.

Trusted advisors and estate managers struggled to fill their proprietors’ leadership role as tenants and tacksmen pursued emigration to America. Gillanders, Captain Sutherland, General Norman MacLeod and a host of other men in the Western Islands and Highlands shared a set of common experiences in protecting the interest of their superiors, confronting idealized visions of America, and maintaining order on their respective lands. The idea of resettling in Britain’s

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<sup>171</sup> Suffolk to Seaforth, 2 June 1774, Ibid. SP 54/45/167e, TNA.

<sup>172</sup> Suffolk to Thomas Miller, 2 June 1774, Ibid., SP54/45/167a, TNA.

<sup>173</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 4 July 1774, Ibid., SP54/45/168, TNA.

<sup>174</sup> Entry for 2 December 1774, Records of the Church of Scotland: Presbytery of Lewis – Minutes of the Presbytery of Lewis, CH2/473/1, NRS.

American colonies had spread like an infection from the Isle of Skye to other parts of Scotland. Men harboring a variety of motives propagated the virus among receptive tenants who expected their proprietors to fulfill certain obligations, only to suffer disappointment. Estate managers were well aware that their local travails were part of a much larger “Phrezny” that had gripped northern and western Scotland.

The British government had begun to take notice of the matter as well. Gillanders may not have gotten a contingent of soldiers to assist him on Lewis, but it was not ignorant about events in Scotland. For George III’s ministers in London and Edinburgh the task was to determine whether emigration was as serious as some claimed, what risks it posed to domestic labor supplies, and to what extent it interfered with the government’s vision for future colonial development. Captain Sutherland’s report was part of that initiative. Getting those answers required British officials to find out everything they could about the emigrants. They also wanted to know one more thing: if Scotland’s depopulation would make the unfolding imperial crisis in North America worse.

**Chapter 5:**  
**“The Studium rerum Novarum begins to operate”: Investigating Scottish Emigration  
and its Implications for the Future of British America.**

In November 1773, the meddlesome Daniel MacLeod of Kilmarie sailed from New York to the Isle of Lewis.<sup>1</sup> The Squire did not let his earlier failures dissuade him from trying to settle Scots in North America. This time he came at the behest of the prominent Beekman Family. In 1769, the family secured a 30,000-acre township along the northwest side of Lake Champlain. Their property included Grand Isle. The patent required them to settle the lands with one family per one thousand acres and clear three acres for every fifty within three years of the grant.

The Beekmans contracted with MacLeod of Kilmaire to recruit Scottish families for their township. The contract promised to transform MacLeod into an American tacksman. In exchange for settling Scottish families the Beekmans granted him the power to sublease the lands to his recruits. He would pay the quit rent of two shillings and six pence per 100 acres for the first five years. The compact obliged him to pay the Beekmans six pence per acre for the next seven years. After that he would pay the quit rent plus one shilling per acre for the rest of his life.

But the Beekmans offered MacLeod more than he might have ever imagined. The designation “tacksman” did not adequately describe his new role. If he succeeded he would become a proprietor in all but name. The Beekman family gave him free reign to offer emigrants whatever terms he pleased, and they promised him a £600 loan to get him started.<sup>2</sup> He carried with him a document that extolled the patent’s agricultural potential and promised the Beekmans that he would have his fellow countrymen in place by September of the following year.<sup>3</sup>

MacLeod’s journey portended his project’s fate. He stopped first in Belfast where he

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<sup>1</sup> *The New-York Journal; or, The General Advertiser*, 11 November 1773.

<sup>2</sup> Philip L. White, *Beekmantown, New York: Forest Frontier to Farm Community* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), 11-15. The loan was for seven years at 7% annual interest.

<sup>3</sup> *The New-York Journal; or, The General Advertiser*, 27 January 1774.

charted the 400-ton *Charming Sally* and bought provisions for 400 hundred emigrants. Storms in early April 1774 forced the ship into port at the Isle of Raasay off the east coast of the Isle of Skye. It delayed Macleod's arrival in Stornoway until the end of the month. What he found on Lewis disheartened him. He could find hardly any emigrants to join him. The infamous Thomas Jann had just recently sailed with his Highlander cargo for Philadelphia aboard the *Friendship*. Shortly thereafter Belfast merchant and former Stornoway resident John Wyllie recruited "upwards of 400" people between Lewis and the mainland.<sup>4</sup> They had beaten MacLeod to the mark.

MacLeod spent a month canvassing the Isle of Lewis for emigrants. The best that he could do was recruit twenty-four people.<sup>5</sup> He returned to New York without his promised hoard, borrowed a little over £8 from one Beekman brother, and soon sought refuge in the city's poorhouse. His failure ruined him.<sup>6</sup>

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In the early 1770s, Scottish emigration presented the British government with an unexpected problem as it faced the twin challenges of implementing its post-war North American strategy and quelling the unrest those imperial reforms provoked in the colonies. We know about MacLeod of Kilmarie's failure and John Wyllie's success because in late 1773 the government had instructed Scottish port officials to begin tracking all outgoing emigrants. British officials ordered an emigrant census after Scottish political figures and landed gentry

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<sup>4</sup> Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Customs Commissioners, 14 November 1774, CE 86/2/2, The National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NRS."

<sup>5</sup> Stornoway Customs Collectors to Scottish Customs Commissioners, 31 May 1774, CE 86/2/2, NRS.

<sup>6</sup> White, *Beekmantown*, 13.

warned Whitehall that the “epidemical phrenzy” plaguing the Highlands threatened to depopulate the Scottish north and have a similar effect in the Lowlands.

The feared depopulation of Scotland had not caught government officials unawares. While Scottish proprietors and their subordinates battled America’s champions for influence over common tenants, and colonial landowners tussled with each other for access to Scottish settlers, political authorities in London and Edinburgh began to investigate the ramifications of emigration for the empire’s future. Scottish landowners remained overwhelmingly concerned with emigration’s effects on their own local worlds, but several of the King’s ministers saw it from a grander perspective. The emigrant census was one component of a larger British endeavor to assess unregulated Scottish emigration’s domestic and imperial consequences. The Board of Trade’s vision for North America and continued unrest in the colonies over Parliament’s persistent efforts to tax Americans shaped their work. As emigration seemingly spread from Western Isles such as Skye to the northern Highlands and into Lowlands, British officials interrogated its causes and considered whether or not it weakened British authority in the colonies.

The imperial government’s interest in emigration was not a foregone conclusion. Too be sure, George III’s ministers in London sought to ensure that various emigration schemes received no state support, but they initially viewed emigration as a localized matter. Key Scottish officials strove to make a Scottish provincial issue into a British imperial problem. That involved portraying emigration as a threat to the nation’s domestic labor force and as a subversive element that further undermined British rule in America.

This chapter begins in London in the early 1770s when departures from the Isle of Skye to North Carolina compelled British officials to determine the limits of state-sponsored

emigration. As introduced in Chapter 2, the North Carolina provincial assembly enacted legislation to provide tax incentives for European emigrants. Governor William Tryon admitted that the legislature had developed the law following the arrival of several hundred Scottish settlers from the Western Isles. The bill arrived in London for George III's royal ascent at nearly the same moment that a group of Skye men sent to the King a petition asking for 40,000 acres of North Carolina land. They intended to settle numerous families and servants in the colony. Consenting to both requests meant directly involving the imperial state in the removal of domestic subjects to provincial outposts.

The King's ministers faced a similar quandary when they learned that Thomas Desbrisay, the absentee lieutenant-governor of St. John's Island, had been soliciting settlers for his lands in the new colony. His advertisement gave the appearance that Desbrisay did so with the imperial government's blessing.

British officials learned of Desbrisay's actions because Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller brought it to Whitehall's attention. Miller, more than any other Scottish politician, encouraged London officials to see emigration as a matter of British imperial concern. His fears prompted British officials to engage in separate, yet interrelated initiatives to determine the extent of Scotland's population loss and its broader meaning for the empire. For Miller, the departure of his countrymen portended dangers far beyond the harm done to Scottish proprietors or local labor needs; it compromised American dependency on Great Britain.

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## **The End of Lord Hillsborough's Empire**

The emigration crisis on Norman MacLeod of MacLeod's and Sir Alexander MacDonald's lands on the Isle of Skye raised questions for British colonial administrators charged with implementing the imperial government's post-war settlement strategies. The government could not restrain the activities of free British subjects in emigrating to the colonies or purchasing land there. It was illegal for individuals to encourage the emigration of domestic subjects to foreign nations, but the law did not prevent the removal of British citizens from one part of the King's dominion to another. The issue was one of what action the government could take and why it might want to act in the first place. These questions landed on the desk of Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough, the King's chief minister for the colonies, and a seasoned imperial official. In 1763, George III installed Hillsborough as president of the Board of Trade, a powerful role in which he oversaw the empire's economic activity and its colonial land policies. Five years later the King elevated Hillsborough to Secretary of State for the Colonies. The more prominent position gave him general oversight of the American provinces. He also retained the presidency of the Board of Trade. The two positions gave him considerable authority to manage the political economy of British America.

Hillsborough wholly supported the Royal Proclamation of 1763's restrictions on western settlement and its emphasis on populating the newly acquired colonies over the old. He, like Henry Ellis and the Earl of Halifax, wanted imperial expansion carefully managed in the interest of binding the colonies old and new more closely to Great Britain. He agreed with the notion that the government should encourage foreign Protestants to settle North America instead of British subjects, believing as Ellis did that the availability of new lands could drain Britain of productive

laborers. Hillsborough also supported the controversial tax policies like the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Duties of 1767. Both had generated considerable unrest in the colonies as Americans contested Parliament's constitutional authority to levy such taxes on them.

Hillsborough saw them as critical to the government's mission to bring order and efficiency to the empire. Yet, he and his ideas on American expansion became increasingly unpopular within Prime Minister Frederick, Lord North's cabinet. He soon found himself marginalized in the imperial capital.

### *The Politics of Westward Expansion*

Hillsborough's conservative approach to colonial expansion won him enemies within the British government and among colonists who favored the erection of new provinces in the American interior. He was not opposed to limited expansion—he supported the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix in which the Six Nations Iroquois sold to the British parts of modern Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania—but remained wary of consenting to schemes that placed colonists out of the imperial government's influence, encouraged British emigration, and led to colonial economic self-sufficiency. In 1767, Hillsborough's predecessor as secretary of state, William Petty, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Shelburne, suggested the establishment of colonies deeper in the colonial backcountry near the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Hillsborough and the Board of Trade urged the King to reject the idea.<sup>7</sup> They further argued that creating new colonies in the American center would draw in settlers from the northern and southern provinces and trigger the depopulation of the older colonies that in turn made room for new British emigrants to replace

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<sup>7</sup> Entry for 6 October 1767, *Journals of the Board of Trade and Plantations*, Volume 12, British History Online, accessed 15 January 2015, [<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/jrnl-trade-plantations/vol12>].

them.<sup>8</sup> That advice put him at odds with most of the King's ministers, who favored more liberal expansionist policies, and Members of Parliament like Thomas Walpole, leader of the Grand Ohio Company. The corporation counted Benjamin Franklin among its most prominent investors. In 1770, the company petitioned George III for a 2.5 million acre-crown grant along the Ohio River, and the Privy Council referred the request to the Board of Trade. Hillsborough delayed a report on the petition for two years, drawing the ire of Walpole, Franklin, and even the King.<sup>9</sup>

In the meantime, in May 1771, Hillsborough received North Carolina Governor William Tryon's letter recounting the provincial assembly's "An Act to Encourage the further Settlement of this Province."<sup>10</sup> As we have seen the bill offered tax breaks to Europeans who emigrated to the colony, although Tryon noted that the legislature had created it to support recently arrived Scots from the Western Isles. If the King gave his royal ascent the province would use it as a means to encourage further settlement in North Carolina. Nearly a month later the King and his Privy Council referred to Hillsborough and the Board of Trade the petition from the Isle of Skye merchants asking for 40,000 acres of North Carolina land.<sup>11</sup> Alienated former tenants and

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<sup>8</sup> The Lords of Trade's 1768 report is quoted in their 15 April 1772 report on the petition of the Grand Ohio Company. "Report of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, on the Petition of the Honorable Thomas Walpole and his Associates, for a Grant of Lands on the River Ohio, in North America," in John Bigelow, ed., *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1904), 5:413-422.

<sup>9</sup> For an extended discussion of the political machinations surrounding the Grand Ohio Company's petition and Hillsborough's stalling see Clarence Walworth Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics: A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1917), 2:119-148.

<sup>10</sup> Tryon's letter arrived on 15 May 1771. William Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, 12 March 1771 in William S. Powell, ed., *The Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected Papers* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 2:629.

<sup>11</sup> Petition of James MacDonald, Normand MacDonald, et al. [1771], Foreign Archives. British Records. N.C. Original Correspondence, Board of Trade 1760-1766, 1766-1768, 1768-1771, 1771-1772, (microfilm), The North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina; The Privy Council referred the petition to the Board of Trade on 14 June 1771. Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/115/278, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Hereafter "TNA."

tackmen of Sir Alexander MacDonald proposed to settle an entire community of 500 people in the province and had raised sufficient capital to relocate there in short order.

Eight years earlier Hillsborough had faced a similar decision when the heirs of failed New York proprietor Lachlin Campbell petitioned the King for 100,000 acres of land. Donald Campbell, Lachlin's son, argued to the Board of Trade that provincial officials had wrongly denied their father what they had promised him. In building his case for why the King should grant the land, Donald proposed to actively recruit new waves of Scots for the property and reasoned that his plan conformed to the provincial government's goals of securing the northern borderlands and contributed to the colony's (and by extension the empire's) economic strength. Hillsborough and the Board of Trade were loath to recommend an Order in Council grant that would create an instant land monopoly, yet they could not rule out the possibility that the provincial government had somehow wronged Lachlin Campbell. They compromised in offering the Campbell children 30,000 acres, not insubstantial grant, but one that fell far short of what the Campbells believed that they deserved.

But by 1771, the disturbances on the Isle of Skye, recent emigration more generally from the Western Isles and Great Britain, instability in the colonies, and greater support for colonial expansion in London reinforced Hillsborough's own sense of the danger in loosening imperial settlement policy. The Board of Trade evaluated the Skye merchants' petition with the view that the emigration of domestic subjects to North America was inimical to the empire's interests. In recommending that the King reject the memorial, the Board of Trade argued forcefully that George III should "on no account" grant the requested land. James MacDonald, Normand MacDonald, and the other petitioners in effect asked the government to sponsor depopulation. Migration from the British Isles to North America "cannot fail to lessen the strength and

security” of Great Britain. It harmed “the landed Interest and Manufacturers of these Kingdoms,” depriving the great landholders of their tenants, and provided the colonies with laborers and artisans that competed with domestic producers.<sup>12</sup>

Hillsborough and the Board of Trade wanted to deepen American dependence on Great Britain. Colonial unrest over Parliament’s taxation efforts had produced a wider debate about the nature of the imperial constitution. From the Board’s perspective rendering government assistance to emigrants now in the form of Order in Council grants enabled the transfer of productive British subjects to the colonies. It would supply the provinces with human capital that bolstered their economies and weakened the transatlantic bonds that bound George III’s dominions together. In advancing this argument the Board intimated that lending state support to the MacDonald scheme reduced the number of available men that the government could recruit in the event of a future war in Europe, or perhaps, in America. It also implicitly rejected the claims of promoters such as John Witherspoon, Alexander MacAlester, or Alexander Campbell of Balole, who pitched emigration as good for the individual Scot as well the empire. The colonies were supposed to work for the Mother Country, not against it.

The Board of Trade’s strategy for peopling St. John’s Island also guided its advice to the King. If George III wanted to grant American land “to persons of substance and ability in this Kingdom,” he should mandate that grantees settle their property with “foreign Protestants.” Those ideas—that proprietors had the financial ability to settle non-British subjects—underwrote the township lottery system through which the government had hoped to populate the island. The Board believed that these basic principles should be formally adopted for the colonial mainland. “The great extent to which this [general] emigration hath of late years prevailed,” Hillsborough

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<sup>12</sup> Report by the Board of Trade of Great Britain concerning a petition from James McDonald and Normand McDonald for land grants in North Carolina, 21 June 1771, William Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, (Raleigh, N.C.: P. M. Hale, Printer to the State, 1886), 8:622. Hereafter “CRNC.”

and his fellow commissioners suggested, “ renders it an object well deserving the serious attention of government.”<sup>13</sup> It was therefore unwise for the King to approve the Skye merchants’ petition lest it exacerbated an emerging threat worthy of government scrutiny.

Hillsborough and his colleagues applied the same philosophy to the North Carolina assembly’s emigration act. The legislation’s intent and its wording raised several imperial problems. It applied the tax exemptions to all Europeans, not just to Protestants, which raised the possibility that Catholics might also settle in the province. The act’s preamble noted, “several Persons have within six Months last past come immediately from Europe in Vessells to settle in this Province.”<sup>14</sup> Governor Tryon had clarified the meaning of this passage for his superiors in Whitehall. It referred to the arrival of recent Scottish emigrants. The Board of Trade’s legal counsel, Richard Jackson, questioned why the tax provision had not been extended to “all persons,” meaning the inhabitants of the other colonies, and not just Europe. Jackson argued, “such exclusive encouragement may have a Tendency to increase the Migration from your Majesty’s European Dominions.” In February 1772, the Board reminded the King that in its evaluation of the Skye merchants’ petition it had “particularly insisted upon” the threat that emigration “to your Majesty’s American Colonies” presented to the British landed interests and manufacturers. George III accepted this advice. He rejected the petition and allowed the provincial legislation to expire.<sup>15</sup>

Assessing the two North Carolina initiatives helped the Board of Trade to refine its response to the Grand Ohio Company’s petition. Two months after it urged the King to veto the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> An Act to Encourage the further Settlement of this Province, 1770. The Colonial Records Project, North Carolina Office of Archives & History, accessed 25 June 2014, [<http://www.ncpublications.com/colonial/editions/Acts/settlement.htm?>]

<sup>15</sup> Memo from the Board of Trade of Great Britain regarding acts of North Carolina, 26 February 1772, *CRNC*: 9:251-252.

provincial legislation, the Board presented him with a lengthy argument against the Ohio scheme. In addition to quoting extensively from its 1768 commentary on Lord Shelburne's suggestion for interior settlements, Hillsborough and the Board reiterated the Proclamation of 1763's central tenets: "settlements should lie *within the reach of the trade and commerce of this kingdom*, upon which the strength and riches of it depend, and also of the exercise of that authority and jurisdiction which was conceived to be necessary for the preservation of the colonies in a due subordination to, and dependence upon, the mother country."<sup>16</sup> The Ohio grant would have precisely the opposite effect. Governor James Wright of Georgia concurred. The Board included part of a letter from Wright in which he argued that large backcountry grants "must draw and carry out a great number of people from Great Britain." They would "soon become a kind of separate and independent people" disconnected from imperial authority and engaged in the manufacture of their own goods.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the Board argued that parts of the proposed grant lay with Virginia's land claims and in Indian territory.

This time Hillsborough failed to persuade George III and the Privy Council. The Grand Ohio Company's representatives pushed back against the Board of Trade's report. In an interview with the King's councilors they successfully argued for the scheme's imperial merits, satisfying the royal advisors that the grant did not lie beyond the empire's political and economic reach nor conflict with any other land claims. The King made the grant. The result was not as surprising as it might seem. Some of the company's shareholders, including the Earls of Gower and Rochford, sat on the Privy Council and had an interest in seeing the grant made. Defeated and with few allies left in the government, Hillsborough resigned his commissions as president

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<sup>16</sup> Report of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, on the Petition of the Honorable Thomas Walpole and his Associates, for a Grant of Lands on the River Ohio, in North America," in Bigelow, ed., *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, 5:412.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 427.

of the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for the Colonies. Emigration's most vocal opponent and champion of measured colonial expansion left the administration.

*Thomas Desbrisay's Folly*

Lord Hillsborough's departure from office cleared the path for British officials who favored western settlements and were less concerned with emigration to wield power in the administration. The King replaced him with William Legge, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Dartmouth. Like Hillsborough, Dartmouth had served as president of the Board of Trade, but he did not share Hillsborough's resolute adherence to Britain's post-war land policies. The latter man's resignation also weakened the power of his office. The position of Secretary of State for the Colonies was relatively new. It had been carved out of the Secretary of State for the Southern Department's responsibilities in 1768. Hillsborough's had served as the position's inaugural holder.<sup>18</sup> Other members of the cabinet, including the Earl of Suffolk, then Secretary of State for the Northern Department, considered it an unnecessary position, and sought to exert greater control over American affairs.<sup>19</sup>

Despite Dartmouth's earlier Board of Trade service, the new secretary of state's administrative experience and knowledge of colonial issues paled in comparison to that of his predecessor's. Aware of his own limitations, Dartmouth relied heavily on John Pownall, the

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<sup>18</sup> The Secretary of State for the Southern Department oversaw affairs in England, Wales, and Ireland, as well as foreign relations with Catholic and Islamic nations in Europe. Before 1768, the secretary was also responsible for oversight of the American colonies.

<sup>19</sup> The Secretary of State for the Northern Department shared oversight of England, Wales, and Ireland with the Southern secretary, as well as diplomatic relations with Protestant states in Northern Europe. The secretary also exercised de facto oversight of Scotland, whose secretaryship had been abolished in 1746 following the Jacobite Rebellion. The Lord Advocate's office technically possessed the power vacated by the defunct secretaryship, but as we will see Scottish officials worked closely with the Northern Department in this period. For tension in the cabinet over the colonial secretaryship, see Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics*, 2:146-148.

Board of Trade's secretary. Pownall had begun his service with the Board in 1741 as a clerk. Over the next thirty years he acquired considerable power and influence within the administration. More importantly, he gained the confidence of each of his superiors, the Earls of Halifax, Hillsborough, and Dartmouth. When Dartmouth ascended to the colonial secretaryship in the summer of 1772, he trusted Pownall's wisdom and judgement sufficiently to allow his subordinate to act in his stead.<sup>20</sup>

Pownall shared Hillsborough's belief that colonial expansion should not come at the expense of Great Britain's landed and mercantile interests. He did not approve of state involvement, or even the appearance of it, in sponsoring British emigration to North America beyond narrowly defined policy objectives. He was therefore displeased when he received an extract of a letter from Scotland's Lord Justice Clerk, Thomas Miller. It included a copy of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Desbrisay's printed advertisement for his St. John's Island lands.

In October 1773, Miller attended a meeting in Ayr, a town on Scotland's western coast. Shortly thereafter he recounted its proceedings to the Earl of Suffolk, who as Secretary of State for the Northern Department had de facto oversight of Scottish affairs. Several prominent Scots attended the meeting. These included John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, the former commander-in-chief of British forces in North America, who chaired the meeting, and Sir Adam Fergusson, one of the Countess of Sutherland's Tutors. The meeting concluded with an alarming report from Sir Adam who "took notice of the dangerous situation this Country was in, from the various Arts used to impose upon our People, and entice them to America." As one of the Countess's Tutors, Sir Adam knew first hand how emigration had infected his young charge's lands. He displayed Desbrisay's advertisement before the meeting's attendees as evidence of these artful seductions.

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<sup>20</sup> Franklin B. Wickwire, "John Pownall and British Colonial Policy," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 20, No. 4 (October, 1963): 543-554.

Miller noted that Ayrshire had not yet suffered population loss, but that “in the neighbouring Countys of Argyll, & Northward, as well as in Ireland, the Migration has been considerable.” He pointed out Desbrisay’s decision to prominently tout his official position and titles in the advertisement.<sup>21</sup>

Pownall already knew about Desbrisay’s machinations and had kept it quiet. In the months before he had privately expressed in “strong terms” the “Impropriety of those Encouragements” to the lieutenant governor. Pownall had thought that his arguments had won Desbrisay over. They did not. Now it was a matter of “Public Complaint,” brought to the government’s attention by Scottish proprietors “whose Estates have suffered extremely” from emigration. Pownell angrily chided Desbrisay for incorporating the offices he held “under The King’s Royal Commission” into the advertisement, which gave Desbrisay’s private initiatives the appearance of public policy. He warned the lieutenant governor that George III had a copy of both the document and Thomas Miller’s letter, and ordered him to cease his activities immediately lest he face the King’s displeasure.<sup>22</sup>

Desbrisay was in Dublin recruiting tenants for his lands when Pownall’s rebuke reached him. He restricted his reply to his activities in Ireland and made no mention of his work in Scotland or the fact that it had been Scottish proprietors who alerted Whitehall of his conduct. Desbrisay claimed that Hillsborough and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Francis Seymour-Conway, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Hertford, had consented to his activities so long as he received permission from local proprietors to take their tenants. He could not comprehend why “I should

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Miller to Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk, 27 October 1773, State Papers, Scotland, SP 54/46/89a, TNA.

<sup>22</sup> John Pownall to Thomas Desbrisay, 9 November 1773, Colonial Office, Correspondence - Secretary of State, Correspondence with St. John’s Island, CO 226/5/69-71, TNA.

be the only person debarr'd from sending people to America." Nevertheless he agreed, begrudgingly, to remove his advertisement from Irish papers. He said nothing about Scotland.<sup>23</sup>

What Desbrisay did not understand is that unlike Scotland's Lord Advocate, James Montgomery, he had not promoted emigration from the shadows. He may have had Montgomery in mind with his opaque reference to other promoters. Montgomery carefully maneuvered through his agents or worked with persecuted Catholic Highlanders to settle his lands on St. John's Island. He well knew that he was acting in contravention to the Board of Trade's plan for the island and the interests of the Scottish gentry. The office that Montgomery inhabited made his scheming all the more perilous. It would not do well for the King's chief legal officer in Scotland to openly recruit domestic Scottish subjects for the new colony, especially when Hillsborough was in power. By contrast, as Pownall had argued, Desbrisay flouted his titles. It gave the contradictory appearance of a state-sanctioned scheme. He remained intent, however, on peopling his lands with British subjects. Desbrisay simply shifted strategies. He swindled some Englishmen to whom he sold or rented some of his lands at high prices. The wily lieutenant governor had not told his new tenants that he had already mortgaged those same lands to another person.<sup>24</sup>

### **Thomas Miller's Depopulation Fears**

Hillsborough's downfall and the weakened status of his former position made it possible for Thomas Miller to emerge as the principal advocate for a government investigation into emigration. His transmission of Desbrisay's advertisement to Whitehall helped to trigger a probe.

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Desbrisay to John Pownall, 22 November 1773, Ibid., f. 147-149, TNA.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Patterson to Earl of Dartmouth, 20 August 1774, Colonial Office, Correspondence - Secretary of State, Correspondence with St. John's Island, CO 226/6/59, TNA.

Calls for or the suggestion of an official inquiry had circulated in Scotland since the late 1760s when Scots began departing for North America in earnest. They mirrored Hillsborough's position that the loss of domestic subjects strengthened the colonies relative to Britain. These commentaries moved beyond the proprietors' local worlds to reflect a number of issues that orbited a central theme: Scottish emigration had the potential to increase the tension between Parliament and the colonies over the former's post-war imperial reforms. Within this context concerned Britons initially saw emigration through a political economic lens. They saw population transfer as destabilizing the empire at a moment of transatlantic debate over the imperial constitution. It deprived Scotland and by extension Great Britain of laborers, potential soldiers, and subjects with questionable loyalties.

*"The Balance of Power"*

Public and private commentary hinted at emigration's potential imperial consequences. In 1770, Bishop James Grant's skepticism of the plan to resettle the Catholic Scots from South Uist on St. John's Island contained many of these sentiments. He doubted that the government would take comfort in "a set of Highlanders looked upon as disaffected and Jacobites" emigrating to America at a moment when there was "little agreement" between the mother country and the colonies.<sup>25</sup> In his view, their ties to a Jacobite past already placed their allegiance to George III's crown under suspicion. The alienation that they suffered at the hands of their proprietor broke the bonds between them and their native land. Emigration removed them from the government's watchful eye and raised the possibility that they would adopt American

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<sup>25</sup> Bishop James Grant to Bishop George Hay, 30 October 1770, BL/3/215/10, Scottish Catholic Archives, The Sir Duncan Rice Library, Aberdeen University, Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "SCA."

attitudes toward British authority. In 1772, an alleged Western Isles proprietor warned that in the preceding four years emigrants had carried at least £10,000 of specie out of Scotland. Worse, still, their labor would “soon render our colonies independent” of Great Britain.<sup>26</sup> In the same year one author, writing in the wake of John Witherspoon’s proposed settlement of Pictou, Nova Scotia suggested that the government should offer potential emigrants cheap leases on the Annexed and Forfeited Lands to keep them at home.<sup>27</sup>

By the end of 1772 some commentators began to open up the discussion with greater precision. A gentler critic of Witherspoon’s echoed prevailing eighteenth-century ideas on demography when he argued, “the strength of a country consists in the number of its inhabitants.”<sup>28</sup> The author of an anonymously published London pamphlet structured one of the most important critiques of emigration around that idea by situating *An Inquiry into the late Mercantile Distresses, in Scotland and England* and emigration within the larger political economy of empire. He argued that the liberal use of credit to finance transatlantic commerce during the Seven Years War had hurt Scottish manufactures once peace lessened demand for their products. The credit crisis in 1772 and the collapse of the Douglas, Heron & Company Bank in Ayr only exacerbated this problem. The use of cheap credit as a currency had contributed to an increase in the cost of provisions and rents in Scotland, but the credit crisis drove down the price of manufactured and agricultural goods at a time when rents remained elevated.<sup>29</sup> If “the whole of this island is to be considered as a commercial country, and can only flourish while trade is prosperous,” then it behooved all to fear “for the general welfare of his

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<sup>26</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (September 1772), 516.

<sup>27</sup> “Veritas,” originally in the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, and republished in *The Scots Magazine*, (December 1772), 697-700. The letter is dated 31 December 1772.

<sup>28</sup> A Bystander,” *Caledonian Mercury*, 14 November 1772.

<sup>29</sup> Anonymous, *An Inquiry into the late mercantile distresses, in Scotland and England* (London, 1772), 35-39.

country” when “the industrious Manufacturer and the frugal Trader” met with difficulty.<sup>30</sup> He suggested that this was already the case in Scotland, and that England had begun to show similar symptoms.

The author’s fundamental point was that Scotland was the proverbial canary in a coalmine. In Scotland, rent racking by Highland and Western Isles proprietors, the transformation of the clan chiefs into absentee lords, the recent unforgiving winters, and the credit crisis all contributed to emigration. He did not expect those Scots preparing to resettle in America to change their minds, nor did he hold out much hope that proprietors would relax their rents in time to “cure the disease.”<sup>31</sup> The combination of these factors produced two unwanted results. First, some Scots emigrated as “a Colony complete—men to till the Ground, and others to make their Implements and Cloathing.”<sup>32</sup> They would be self-sufficient and have no need for British manufactures. Second, the author linked population with Britain’s national and imperial security. “Every man that removes out of it,” he argued, “tends to weaken its strength as a European State.”<sup>33</sup> Recalling William Pitt’s praise of Highland soldiers for their service during the Seven Years War, the author envisioned a disturbing future: if emigration continued the government may not be able to recruit enough of the “intrepid race of men, from the mountains of the North” for the next conflict.<sup>34</sup> And lest anyone believe “that the depopulation will be confined to the Highlands,” he suspected that it would spread into the Lowlands.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps it would also take hold in England.<sup>36</sup> Great Britain should not expect to remain a commercial and military power if it tolerated depopulation.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

Other essayists addressed the connection between emigration and Britain's ability to project military power and maintain its authority over the colonies. In lambasting Highland clan chiefs for destroying the traditional clan social order, one author contended that they had unwittingly contributed to the erosion of the British constitution and the empire. Highlanders had proven to be "trusty troops" in the last war; their emigration now can "only deprive the nation of those who could be extremely serviceable" in the next one. In America, they might prove "dangerous to the mother-country," more especially so in light of recent turbulence in the colonies. Augmenting the provinces with Highlanders' martial strength and the labor of their families upset the "balance of power" Britain enjoyed "to be respected and obeyed by her colonies."<sup>37</sup> Anticipating Adam Smith's chapter "Of Colonies" in *The Wealth of Nations*, the author believed the colonies' rapid demographic and economic growth might one day necessitate the transfer of the British Empire's seat to America. Yet, in the current climate emigration did more harm than good to the imperial union. The writer "Philander" put it more bluntly. The forced emigration of criminals and other undesirable people was one thing, but the voluntary departures of perfectly capable subjects indicated social and economic instability at home. Consequently, it "drains the kingdom of its inhabitants, raises the price of labour, destroys agriculture, and retards the improvement of trade," all to America's benefit. He hoped that the "disturbances" in the colonies would check emigration or at the least provide a solution to it.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "A Highlander," *The Present Conduct of the Chieftains and Proprietors of Lands In the Highlands of Scotland, Towards their Clans and People, considered impartially* (1773), 6.

<sup>38</sup> "Philander," "An Essay on Emigration - Section III," *The Edinburgh Magazine and Review*, (December 1774), 743.

## *Disorder*

For Thomas Miller discussions about emigration's potential domestic and imperial consequences were less a theoretic exercise than a practical reality unfolding before his eyes. Miller had once represented Dumfries in Parliament and preceded James Montgomery as Scotland's Lord Advocate. In 1766, George III named him Lord Justice Clerk. One nineteenth-century biographer argued that the government "had a high opinion of [Miller's] good sense and knowledge of Scottish affairs."<sup>39</sup> David Hume, a nephew of the eponymous philosopher, eulogized Miller in 1789 as a man who possessed a "sincere concern in the grandeur and prosperity of the British empire." Not one for public debate in Parliament, Miller had spoken out against the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, an act that Hume pointed to as evidence of his friend's commitment to the empire.<sup>40</sup>

In the months before Miller encountered Desbrisay's advertisement, rioting occurred in towns such as Newburgh, Dundee, Perth, and Glasgow. The credit crisis and ensuing bank collapse drove up unemployment among weavers and laborers in the Scottish linen trade. In late December 1772 and early January 1773, armed mobs in Newburgh, Dundee, and Perth seized control of the granaries, sold off the grain, and plundered private homes. The rioters dispersed when a coalition of local gentry and the county sheriff, supported by troops deployed from Edinburgh, arrested some of the suspects and reestablished civil authority. In a report to the Earl of Suffolk, Miller believed "that the frequency & danger of these mobs" rendered it necessary to make examples of the guilty parties. In a trial before the Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh, a jury

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<sup>39</sup> Born in 1717, Thomas Miller, Lord Barskimming, joined the Faculty of Advocates in 1742, was named Solicitor-General for Scotland in 1759, and appointed Lord Advocate a year later. He became a Member of Parliament in 1761. See George William Thomson Omond, *The Lords Advocates of Scotland From the Close of the Fifteenth Century to the Passing of the Reform Bill* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1883), 2:68-71.

<sup>40</sup> Royal Society of Edinburgh. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*. (Edinburgh, 1790), 2:67.

convicted some of the rioters. The court sentenced some to banishment for life in the colonies and found a few defendants not guilty. Other suspects remained at large.<sup>41</sup> That same month a mob of sailors in Port Glasgow and Greenock protested flat wages and forced local magistrates to call out two companies of the 15th Regiment to assist them in disbursing the mob. A jury convicted five out of the six indicted ringleaders. The court sentenced two men to temporary banishment in the colonies and confined the other three men to prison.<sup>42</sup>

In the summer of 1773, a cabal of Paisley men and women led Miller to see the labor agitation in a graver light. Prosecutors indicted twelve people for inciting weavers to protest their depressed wages.<sup>43</sup> The leaders called for higher wages and vowed not to work until they and their fellow artisans received them. They paid men not to work, and they used violence and intimidation to enforce group solidarity. The rioters posted guards on Paisley's roads to intercept raw materials on their way to factories and forced local lawyers to draw up a new contract to which manufacturers would have to agree before the weavers returned to work. Mobs threw stones at and spit in the faces of weavers who reached separate agreements with employers.<sup>44</sup> The leaders also wrote threatening letters to men who did not fall in line. They advised one David Boyle and his companions not to accept any work. If Boyle continued in his trade they promised to murder him without a second thought "because we recon ourselves free of your blood and substance and you will suffer when you lest expect it."<sup>45</sup> A mob of men, women, and

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<sup>41</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 January 1773, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/46/60, TNA. The rioting broke out in December 1772. *The Scots Magazine*, (December 1772), 692; *The Scots Magazine* (1773), 14-20; 329-331.

<sup>42</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (June 1773), 334.

<sup>43</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 October 1773, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/88, TNA

<sup>44</sup> Indictment of William Gibson, John Clark, William Sulaler, William Jameison, Thomas Hasdane, William Lennox, William Baine, James Provan, William Brisbane, Agnes Urie wife of William Primrose, Robert Brown, and James Turner, 9 September 1773, High Court of Justiciary Processes, JC26/197, NRS. James Turner's name is missing in a shorter version of the indictment dated 2 October 1773. Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Letter sent to David Boyle, 23 June 1773, enclosed as evidence in William Fulton's declaration, 6 July 1773, High Court of Justiciary Processes, JC26/198, NRS. Boyle's endorsement reads "The Above Letter was reced by me from Paisley Post this 23d July 1772," inadvertently writing the wrong month and year. William Fulton, a Paisley

children assaulted weaver Hugh Niven near a bridge. They threw peat at him and called him a “Rascal.” Journeyman printer John Turner “happened to be a little in liquor” in that moment and joined the excitement. He shoved Niven, stripped him of his cap, and promptly threw it into the river.<sup>46</sup> The rioting disrupted manufacturing in Paisley and the surrounding communities for several weeks.

In the Circuit Court of Glasgow, Lord Justice Clerk Miller presided over the trial of the Paisley instigators. Lord Advocate Montgomery prosecuted them for entering into a combination to advance their wages through criminal means. When it began in October 1773 it had only been a few months since the Scots American Company of Farmers, based in the nearby village of Inchinnan, had dispatched James Whitelaw and David Allan to scout for land in North America on behalf of its 139 subscribers. Miller recognized that the company’s recent emergence as well as that of other emigration schemes in the Glasgow region altered the trial’s dynamic. Like some of their Highland counterparts, the weavers deployed emigration rhetoric to their advantage. “As some thousands of usefull weavers were engaged in this Combination, and threatened to goe off in a body to America,” Miller noted, “the trial became very delicate.” He did not want the rioting to resume nor did he wish the masses to make good on their threat. He appointed a jury “of the most intelligent & disinterested Gentlemen” to hear the evidence, and they convicted seven out of the twelve defendants.<sup>47</sup>

In the trial’s sentencing phase Miller used his authority to diffuse the tension within the community and head off any emigration. He wanted to make examples of the convicted in a different way than that of the rioters found guilty in Perth, Dundee, and Newburgh. Speaking to

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manufacturer, evidently was Boyle’s employer. He attested to Boyle receiving the letter when he gave an official statement on 6 July 1773 and referred to it again during the trial on 11 October 1773. Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Statement of John Turner in the Presence of Mr. John Snodgrass sheriff substitute of the shire of Renfrew, 7 August 1773, High Court of Justiciary Processes, JC26/198, NRS.

<sup>47</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 October 1773, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/88, TNA.

the convicted Paisleymen, he expressed “tenderness for their [employment] situation,” while stressing the criminality of their actions. They need not fear banishment to North America or long prison sentences; Miller and the state would show them leniency. He sentenced three individuals to one-month prison terms and the remaining four people to spend eight days each in jail.<sup>48</sup> By showing them his and the state’s benevolence, Miller hoped to restore order and diminish “all thoughts of goeing over to America” for some time. Like some of the estate managers and factors in the Highlands and Western Isles, he imagined that his skillful use of the law might reduce enthusiasm for the colonies, but he warned Suffolk that he was not entirely confident. “I pray to God, for the sake of this Countrey,” he wrote, “that such Ideas of Migration to America may not became epidemical amongst the most useful of our people.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Suffolk’s Charge, Miller’s Mission*

Miller’s report on the trial in Glasgow and his recounting of the county meeting in Ayr prompted certain elements of the British government to take greater interest in emigration. His letters reached the Earl of Suffolk within two days of each other. Desbrisay’s advertisement, Miller argued, was but one of “so many snares” thrown out to lure “our most usefull hands to America.”<sup>50</sup> George III was pleased with Miller’s efforts thus far “to prevent the fatal Consequences” of emigration.<sup>51</sup> Suffolk’s use of the term “fatal” was no mere rhetorical device. In a world in which individuals imagined that a nation’s population size equated to its economic

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<sup>48</sup> *The Scots Magazine* (October 1773), 555-556.

<sup>49</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 October 1773, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/88, TNA.

<sup>50</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 27 October 1773, TNA: State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/89a, TNA.

<sup>51</sup> Suffolk to Miller, 5 November 1773, TNA: State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/91, TNA.

and military strength, an “epidemic” like emigration could ravage the body politic just as small pox attacked its human hosts.

The question for Suffolk and other government ministers was how extensively this disease had infected Scotland and how many people it had already carried off to America. Answering it meant acquiring the hard data to make those calculations. The evidence could then be used to determine whether or not the government should intervene. Those questions produced two different inquiries. The first, led by Miller, examined past emigration while the second, under the oversight of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, focused on continuing emigration. The two investigations overlapped for a brief time. I have analyzed each in turn.

In November 1773, Suffolk ordered Miller to gather evidence of past emigration. Desbrisay’s use of his official titles in his advertisement had disturbed Suffolk, as it had John Pownall. He wanted to know if the document had influenced Scots’ decision to emigrate and how many had actually done so.<sup>52</sup> That would take time. Miller first had to decide on “the most proper steps” to acquire the information. At present the most reliable figures available came from newspapers. He wanted more authoritative sources. More importantly, Miller took Suffolk’s command as a starting point. He expanded the scope of his inquiry to examine all Scottish emigration within the previous two years.<sup>53</sup> The meeting at Ayr and the trial in Glasgow convinced him that assessing emigration’s domestic and imperial consequences necessitated a wider investigation. Only then might he and other British officials determine the extent of any possible damage to Scotland’s provincial interests and Britain’s imperial concerns.

A recent precedent for conducting a Scottish census informed Miller’s specialized population count. In 1755, the Reverend Alexander Webster took a formal census of Scotland at

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 12 November 1773, TNA: State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/92, TNA.

the government's behest. Webster was a prominent figure in the Church of Scotland. In the late 1740s, he co-founded the "Fund for the Widows and Orphans of the Ministers of the Church of Scotland," and in 1753 the church elected him Moderator of its General Assembly. These roles gave Webster a great deal of influence among parish ministers, and through them he obtained demographic information in two ways.<sup>54</sup> In the first instance, Webster ordered parish ministers operating the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge's charity schools in the Highlands and Western Isles to make lists of parishioners within their respective parishes and note whether individuals were Protestant or Catholic. If a minister did not comply with the order then the SSPCK would withdraw its school from his parish. In the second method, Webster sent requests to parish ministers where SSPCK did not operate. Through these means Webster calculated that Scotland contained 1,265,380 people. He figured that one-fifth of each shire's or parish's population consisted of "Fighting Men" able to perform military service.<sup>55</sup>

Miller borrowed part of Webster's methodology to determine the number of Scots who had emigrated to America. It was far easier to count people who lived in Scotland than those who had left it. He had no guarantee that anyone with whom he might inquire had kept any records that could assist his investigation. Miller included redundancies in his plan to capture as accurate a portrait as possible. In the Scottish capital, Miller first met with the Commissioners of the Board of Customs and directed them to order officials stationed at ports "from which I understood these Emigrants had sailed" to send to them specific details on emigration.<sup>56</sup> The commissioners sent a circular letter to twelve ports on the mainland, the Western Isles, and the

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<sup>54</sup> For a brief biography of Webster see James Gray Kyd's introduction in James Gray Kyd, ed. *Scottish Population Statistics including Webster's Analysis of Population 1755* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1975), ix-xv.

<sup>55</sup> Reverend Alexander Webster, "Introduction," in *Ibid.*, 7-9.

<sup>56</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 April 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164a, TNA.

distant Orkney Isles.<sup>57</sup> They commanded their subordinates to determine the number of men, women, and children who had departed their respective precincts “within these two Years past, and the Inducements held out to them, & the means used, & by whom, to engage them to leave their Native Country.”<sup>58</sup> Some of the emigrant ships “had sailed from different Bays & Creeks of an extensive Coast,” and never put into a Scottish port where customs officials might have observed them. To correct this blindspot, Miller directed county sheriffs in places that reportedly suffered population loss to obtain information from parish ministers.<sup>59</sup>

Port officials reported difficulties in assembling the information. As the customs collectors in Campbeltown, Argyllshire put it, since “no attention was given to this matter when the people left the Country,” they had not bothered to keep any data.<sup>60</sup> Officials in Greenock relayed similar trouble in acquiring useful intelligence.<sup>61</sup> The best that they could offer was information on two ships that had recently sailed for Jamaica with thirty passengers aboard.<sup>62</sup> The majority of these individuals departed “with a View to mend their fortains (sic)” on the island.<sup>63</sup>

The Campbeltown officials produced better results that raised as many questions as it did provide some answers. That port and the places under its jurisdiction had been the points of departure for many of the Western Islanders who had emigrated to North Carolina. The officers

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<sup>57</sup> Entry for 24 November 1773, Scottish Board of Customs. Minute Book, 5 Aug 1771 to 10 Nov 1774, CE1/13, NRS.

<sup>58</sup> Circular Letter, Commissioners of the Board of Customs to Scottish Port Officials, 24 November 1773, Stornoway Outport and District Records, 1773-1778, CE86/2/2, NRS.

<sup>59</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 April 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164a, TNA.

<sup>60</sup> Port of Campbeltoun - Account of the Number of Persons who have Emigrated from the District of this Port according to the best Intelligence that could be procured by the Collector and Comptroller in the Course of the following years Vizt, 23 February 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164d, TNA. The report is included as an enclosure in Miller to Suffolk, 25 April 1774, SP 54/45/164a, TNA.

<sup>61</sup> Greenock Customs Collectors to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 13 December 1773, Greenock and Port Glasgow Outport and District Records, Letter Book, 1772-1774, Glasgow City Archives, The Mitchel Library, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom, CE60/1/7/197. Hereafter “GCA.”

<sup>62</sup> Port officials collected the names of the passengers on the *Mary* on 29 November 1773 and those on the *Ross* at about the same time. Ibid., CE60/1/7/198, GCA.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., CE60/1/7/197, GCA.

reported that they had not cleared out an American-bound vessel from that port since July 1771, but they were aware of emigrant ships that “took these people on Board in different Lochs within the District of the port.” This later informed Thomas Miller’s suspicion that some shipmasters had simply anchored in lochs or rivers, picked up emigrants, and sailed away without some kind of contact with a customs official. Campbeltown administrators also knew that emigration was “much more Considerable” in the years prior to 1772-1773, and consequently directed their subordinates to inform them of activity dating back to 1769.

What Campbeltown officials received from the different stations (if they got anything at all as several locations did not report back) left them unable to provide as much detail as Miller wished. It was “Impossible” in most cases to determine the divisions between men, women, and children. They also could not say with certainty to what American port some of the ships had sailed. In some instances the ship’s name was not known, nor could officials confirm how many ships took on passengers at various locations.

**Table 5.1: Combined Report for Port Campbeltown, 1769-1773**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Departure Port</b>	<b>Ship</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Destination</b>
1769	Campbeltown	Helen	84		60	144	N.C.
1769	Portaskaig, Islay					129	
1770	Campbeltown	<i>Edinburgh</i>	120			120	N.C
1770	Campbeltown	<i>Anabella</i>	70			70	St. John's Island
1770	Campbeltown	<i>Neptune</i>				360	North Carolina
1770	Loch Tarbert, Argyll	<i>Nancy</i>				302	
1771	Campbeltown	<i>Edinburgh</i>	100			100	St. John's Island
				<b>Total</b>	<b>1769-1771</b>	<b>1,537</b>	
				<b>Total</b>	<b>1772-1773</b>	<b>187</b>	
			<b>Combined</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1769-1773</b>	<b>1,724<sup>64</sup></b>	

The Campbeltown data illustrates several important points. Scots were attracted to the colonies of North Carolina and St. John's Island. The numbers lent support to the figures that Governor William Tryon cited in his correspondence with the Earl of Hillsborough and provided evidence of recruitment for St. John's Island despite a prohibition on the settlement of domestic subjects. The data suggested the important role Alexander Campbell of Balole and Alexander McAlester of Cumberland County, N.C. had played in extorting Scots to relocate to North America, and revealed similar efforts on the part St. John's Island proprietors. The Campbeltown officials spoke to the promoters' influence, particularly those men who championed North

<sup>64</sup> Port of Campbeltown - Account of the Number of Persons who have Emigrated from the District of this Port according to the best Intelligence that could be procured by the Collector and Comptroller in the Course of the following years Vizt , 23 February 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164d, TNA.

Carolina, finding that Scots who had “gone from this Country to American Years ago” wrote “Enticing letters to their Friends at home” espousing the colony’s virtues.<sup>65</sup> The report also illuminated how some shipmasters or ship owners viewed the transportation of emigrants as a good business opportunity. The *Nancy* and the *Edinburgh* twice freighted passengers across the Atlantic. Finally, the data’s incompleteness and the Campbeltown officials’ testimony indicated that for all that they now knew about emigration from their district, additional activity probably remained hidden from their view.

Despite the data’s incomplete nature the Greenock customs collectors and their counterparts in Campbeltown shed greater light on the principle causes of emigration. According to their sources rent racking and the high price of provisions hurt common Highland and island tenants. Proprietors’ efforts to assert more control over their lands and their tenants by renegotiating tacks “Chaffed” tacksmen who then “published their Resolution to go to America” and take the poor with them.<sup>66</sup> Shipmasters and owners encouraged it further for the money they could make in indenting servants or charging them for passage and freight; the idyllic visions of America “reported to [Scots] by their friends” eroded their connection to Scotland.<sup>67</sup>

The sheriffs and parish ministers likewise reported problems in getting data. Miller received information from the counties of Argyle & Bute, Murray, Nain, and Ross. Whereas the customs collectors had provided data on specific ships linked to points of departure, this second set of reports focused on the communities from which the emigrants had originated. For example, the Campbeltown port officials stated that in 1772 and 1773, 187 people had departed from the area. Archibald Campbell, under whose jurisdiction the port of Campbeltown fell as

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<sup>65</sup> Campbeltown Collector of Customs to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 23 February 1774, Campbeltown Outport and District Records, Collector to Board, Letter Book, 1772-1776, CE82/1/3/203, GCA.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., CE 82/1/3/202, GCA.

<sup>67</sup> Greenock Customs Collectors to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 13 December 1773, Ibid., CE60/1/7/197, GCA.

the sheriff of Argyle & Bute, provided Miller with a breakdown of that figure by presbytery and parish. It revealed that 163 men, women, and children, or 87% of the emigrants, had come from parishes within the presbytery of Kintyre, which encompassed the isles of Arran, Gigha, Jura, and Islay. The number and percentage actually increased when an additional report came in from the Parish of Kilmuir on Arran stating that fifty-eight men and forty-three women had left in the same period. It meant that 264 out of 288, or 91%, of the emigrants had departed from Kintyre.<sup>68</sup> Campbell also noted that several parishes had not supplied returns.

**Table 5.2: Parish Returns from the Highlands and Western Isles, 1772-1773**

<b>County</b>	<b>Presbytery</b>	<b>Total</b>
Argyle and Bute	Cowal	1
	Kintyre	264
	Inverary	16
	Lorn	7
	Mull	No returns
Ross	Not stated	835
Murray	Elgin	21
	Forres	60
	Aberlour	51
	Abernethy	12
Nairn	Nairn	83
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350<sup>69</sup></b>

<sup>68</sup> Report of Emigration to America from the Shires of Argyll and Bute in 1772 and 1773, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164c enclosed in Miller to Suffolk, 25 April 1774, SP 54/45/164a, TNA. Interestingly, both Sheriff Campbell and the Campbeltown Customs collectors claimed credit for the idea to extend their inquiry back to 1769. See Archibald Campbell to Miller, 3 March 1774, SP 54/45/164b, TNA.

<sup>69</sup> Report of Emigration to America from the Shires of Argyll and Bute in 1772 and 1773, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/45/164c, TNA; List of Persons who have Emigrated from the Shire of Ross, To America during the Years 1772 and 1773, made up and Transmitted To The Right Honble The Lord Justice Clerk by Mr. George McKensie Sherriff

The census returns from the county sheriffs give insight into with whom Scots chose to emigrate. The sheriffs subdivided their numbers into men, women, and children. The figures strongly hinted at the emigration of entire families. In Ross-shire, for example, more than half of the 835 people had emigrated from parishes on the Isle of Lewis, the property of the Earl of Seaforth. In the parish of Barvas, seventy-two men, seventy-one women, and 134 children boarded ships in 1772 and 1773. The parish of Uig revealed a similar distribution with twenty-seven men, eighteen women, and forty children. The tabulator of the Murray and Nairn results conveniently noted family units and found at least twenty-two families among the 227 total emigrants from those two counties. The evidence lent credibility to reports in newspapers or claims in pamphlets that Scots emigrated as “complete colonies” composed of families.

Sheriff Campbell cited the same causes of emigration as had the customs collectors in Campbeltown and Greenock. Importantly, he reframed some of those comments within the context of Scottish military participation in the Seven Years War and the new imperial reality that conflict produced. Scots serving in North America “lived plentifully, having had the Kings pay, and provisions besides.” They sent home encouraging tales of the American landscape, stories that took on greater meaning when some servicemen returned home to find proprietors raising rents. In his view, landlords had made a mistake in elevating rents to their new levels all at once instead of gradually increasing them over time. Tacksmen, having failed to persuade the proprietors to offer more favorable terms, convinced the common people to emigrate. The claims of former servicemen, along with the “exaggerated accounts” Scots in America wrote to “delude and mislead the ignorant unwary people,” and general poverty inspired transatlantic resettlement.

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Substitue of said Shire, State Papers: Scotland SP 54/45/164e, TNA; List of the Emigerants to America from the Countys of Murray and Nairn in the Years 1772 & 1773, State Papers: Scotland, SP SP 54/45/164f, TNA.

He did not expect it to stop. The clerics had found that “Emmisarys are going about to Engage” more people to take passage to America.<sup>70</sup>

But two important counties failed to return any data to Miller. By the time that he sent his findings to the Earl of Suffolk in April 1774, he had neither statistics from the sheriff of Inverness nor any word from the sheriff of Caithness & Sutherland.<sup>71</sup> The Isle of Skye was in the former county. Miller learned “from various Informations, that the Emigrations from that County have been considerable,” especially from Skye, and yet he could not provide the government with a reliable number of people who had left the lands of Norman MacLeod of MacLeod or Sir Alexander MacDonald. Nor, he might have added, did he wish to speculate given that his goal was to give Whitehall as precise a figure as possible.

Caithness & Sutherland did yield some results. The sheriff had not replied to his query, but fortunately for Miller the superintendent of the Countess of Sutherland’s estates answered the call. Captain James Sutherland had prepared such an account for the Countess’s Tutors. They later instructed him to transmit that report to Miller in Edinburgh.<sup>72</sup> Sutherland believed that at least 735 of the Countess’s people had emigrated in this period. The Sutherland numbers, combined with the data supplied by the Campbeltown port officials and the other sheriffs, showed that since the late 1760s a minimum of 3,435 Scots went to North America.<sup>73</sup> The total figure was obviously too low. Miller had no data from the Isle of Skye, the county of Inverness, or several other parishes. For all that the reports revealed to the government, they also made clear that important gaps existed in the knowledge. The unknown was as disturbing as the known. It made it more difficult to determine emigration’s scope and anticipate its consequences.

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<sup>70</sup> Archibald Campbell to Miller, 3 March 1774, State Paper: Scotland, SP 54/45/164b, TNA.

<sup>71</sup> William Nelthorpe, secretary to the Scottish Board of Customs, sent a letter from the port officials directly to the Lords of the Treasury. See below.

<sup>72</sup> Minute Book Entry for 30 November 1773, Sutherland Papers, Minute and letter book of the Tutors of the Duchess-Countess, 1766-1782, Dep 313:725, NLS.

<sup>73</sup> Miller did not include the Greenock numbers in his report to Suffolk.

## *Defining a Revolution*

Events in North America added a sense of urgency to Miller's final report. In December 1773, a group of Bostonians dressed as Mohawk Indians dumped a shipment of East India Company tea into Boston Harbor. The insurgents destroyed the tea in protest to Parliament's passage of the Tea Act, which lowered customs duties on the company's product in order to undercut American smuggling operations and prop up the financially imperiled corporation. When word of the tea's destruction reached Great Britain in January 1774, Lord North and Parliament pursued legislation to punish all Bostonians and make an example of them for the other American colonists. In March, Parliament passed the Boston Port Act, the first of a series of laws collectively known as the Coercive Acts. It closed Boston's port until the citizens repaid the cost of the tea, putting into place an economic boycott of the town.

Miller framed his April 1774 update to Suffolk within the context of the imperial crisis. The lack of a complete data set did not deter him from laying out a bleak scenario. The available numbers, accompanying explanations, and his own recent experiences told a story of discontent that birthed a "spirit of Emigration to America" in the Highlands that now "begins to spread itself in the Low Country." A seemingly localized Highland problem became a broader social phenomenon that grew to encompass Scotland's vital manufacturing, farming, and merchant centers in the Lowlands. Moreover, it captivated not just poorer people, but "the better sort of farmers & Mechanics," that could afford to live reasonably well at home despite "the decay of our Manufactures." For Miller, the Paisley weavers's trial and the formation of the Scots American Company of Farmers were indicative of this "alarming" development.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 25 April 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164a, TNA.

On a grander scale emigration's spread from the Highlands into the Lowlands represented more than just a Scottish dilemma. Miller sought to convince Suffolk that it was a British imperial one as well. He had detected a shift in emigrants' motivations. In language that mirrored James Boswell's observation of the dance "America" on the Isle of Skye, he surmised that "Studium rerum Novarum [The Study of Revolution] begins to operate" among the people. The "Motive of Attaining a better situation in America" swept up Scots in a manner that captured the imaginations of poor and comfortable subjects alike. In other words, the perception of America as a world more prosperous than Scotland now supplied the primary impetus to emigrate. The original alleged causes—rent racking, a new Highland social order, poverty, and unemployment—remained important, but Miller believed that America's pull had become so strong that emigration would continue even if officials took steps to ameliorate the people's condition. That marked a transformation in which the desire to emigrate became detached from short-term local problems and instead latched to the prospect of long-term success in the colonies.

Emigration, then, resulted in the loss of both population and social control. Miller's analysis of its larger implications also contained logic that had informed the Proclamation of 1763. Imposing a measured approach to westward settlement and preserving the North American interior for native peoples was as much about retaining influence over colonists as it was preventing violence in the backcountry. The greater the physical distance that separated colonists from the more settled parts of the American provinces, the weaker authority colonial and imperial governments exerted over them.

Miller claimed that emigration produced similar results. Individual departures were of little consequence to Scotland and the empire; families and emigrant associations were far more

dangerous. Families entailed the loss of Scottish citizens and their ability to produce future supplies of workers and soldiers. The family was also the “Natural tie” that anchored a patriarch to his country. Once the “chief object of that attachment” had removed to another place, it destroyed the relationship between a man and his native land. That, in Miller’s estimation, completed the transfer of one’s allegiance to that new locality. Moreover, subscribers to an association, like families members, “fortify one another in the resolution” to emigrate.

Participants in the Scotch American Company had a financial stake in the enterprise’s success, but if they had lingering doubts social pressure from their fellow bondholders and the “Emissarys from America” reinforced their convictions.<sup>75</sup> In short, by suggesting that disgruntled Scots now identified with America independently of their conditions in Scotland, and that they would likely emigrate despite turmoil in the colonies, Miller implied that they too would resist British authority.

### **The Register of Emigrants**

The Earl of Suffolk received the port and parish data along with Miller’s general report at a moment of great tension in the British capital. There was, as one historian has described, “a national mood of retribution in Britain.”<sup>76</sup> Determined to restore order in Massachusetts Bay and provide protection for royal officials in the colonies, Lord North called for Parliament to build upon the Boston Port Act by passing additional coercive legislation. The Massachusetts Government Act and the Administration of Justice Act commanded Parliament’s attention in the spring of 1774. It easily passed the acts. In light of the American crisis, Suffolk considered

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 53.

Miller's report a bit of good news. While agreeing that associations were "peculiarly dangerous," he was relieved that the number of emigrants was "by no means as great as it had been generally represented." He urged Miller and other "Gentlemen of Weight" in Scotland to discourage further emigration.<sup>77</sup> A befuddled Miller thought that Suffolk had missed his point. It was not past emigration that mattered; it was what those trends suggested about future.<sup>78</sup>

Yet, Whitehall did consider future emigration as a potential imperial problem. Despite its immediate focus on the political turmoil in the colonies, the government was indeed monitoring the outflow of British subjects to North America. Miller's October 1773 report on the Paisley weaver trial triggered this second investigation. The Lords Commissioners of the Treasury commanded port officials throughout Great Britain to transmit weekly returns "of all Persons who shall take Passage on board any ship or Vessel to go out of the Kingdom" to London.<sup>79</sup> Although the Earl of Dartmouth served as the King's secretary of state for the colonies, Lord North, First Lord of the Treasury, and his colleagues assumed oversight of the project. The Lords Commissioners oversaw Britain's internal economy and the ports fell under their jurisdiction. Their direct involvement demonstrated Miller's success in convincing key government officials that continued emigration possibly threatened Britain's domestic and imperial interests.

The order's scope marked the Lords Commissioners' level of concern and their desire to test Miller's arguments. They applied the charge to port officials in both Scotland and England in

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<sup>77</sup> Suffolk to Miller, 13 May 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/165, TNA.

<sup>78</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 30 May 1774, *Ibid.*, SP 54/45/166, TNA.

<sup>79</sup> John Robinson, secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, sent the command to the Scottish Customs Board on 8 December 1773. The Board in turn sent a circular letter to port officials in Scotland containing the order on 15 December 1773. These actions are recorded in Entry for 15 December 1773, Scottish Board of Customs. Minute Book, 5 Aug 1771 to 10 Nov 1774, CE1/13, NRS. The circular letter's text is also recorded in Stornoway Outport and District Records, 1773-1778 Board to Collector, CE86/2/2/35, NRS. The Lords Commissioners later clarified their order to mean that port officials should gather intelligence on out-bound passengers for North America and the West Indies only. They were not required to take note of passengers for Europe, Ireland, or any of the British crown's channel dependencies. See Bailyn, *Voyagers*, 71n5.

order to capture data on all individuals leaving the country and to see if the so-called “epidemic” had spread south as some had feared. Port officials were also instructed to capture demographic information that far exceeded Miller’s original mandate. The Lords of the Treasury wanted to know the age, sex, social class, occupation, former residence, the intended destination, the reason for leaving, and other relevant information for every individual who left Great Britain. Treasury officials could then use the data to address questions like which colonies attracted the most emigrants, whether or not the dreaded emigrant associations possessed wide influence in certain communities, if “useful” people really were abandoning their country, and how many men emigrated as opposed to women.

To gather the requested intelligence port officials had to interview each person boarding a ship. Although the customs officials at Port Wigtown on Scotland’s southwestern coast groaned at the idea of taking “such a Minute Account of every Individual person,” they and their colleagues across the country began sending weekly reports to their superiors in London or Edinburgh.<sup>80</sup> Reports sent to the Board of Customs in the latter capital were retransmitted to the Lords Commissioners.

In Scotland, information began to flow into Edinburgh almost immediately. In the final weeks of 1773, for example, Greenock officials compiled two lists (now lost) and sent them to their superiors.<sup>81</sup> In the early days of the New Year, these same administrators reported on three ships, the *Aurora*, the *Janet*, and the *Grandvale*, transporting a combine total of eighteen people

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<sup>80</sup> Wigtown Customs Officials to the Commissioners of the Board of Customs, copy, 23 March 1774, Treasury Records, T47/12, TNA.

<sup>81</sup> Port Glasgow Customs Officials to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 24 December 1773, Greenock Collector to Board 12 August 1772 – 16 December 1774, CE60/1/7/204, GCA; Same to Same, 30 December 1773, Ibid., CE60/1/7/209, GCA.

to the Caribbean islands of Jamaica and Nevis.<sup>82</sup> Detailed passenger lists began to arrive from other Scottish ports in earnest soon thereafter.

The order's rapid implementation explains why Thomas Miller never received data from a number of key regions such as the county of Inverness. The Board of Customs did in fact receive a few reports from Inverness and other locations in response to Miller's request, but the board's secretary, William Nelthorpe, decided that the Lords Commissioners' command overrode it. He redirected the correspondence to London, which put them in the hands of the Lords Commissioners months before Miller presented the results of his investigation.<sup>83</sup>

Letters from Fort William on Scotland's western coast, Wigtown in the southwest, and Inverness in the northeast gave the Lords Commissioners an early preview of Miller's findings. They also provided them with the names of individuals organizing schemes or promoting emigration. Fort William officials reported on John MacDonald of Glenaladale's efforts to resettle Catholics from South Uist and other Scots from the mainland on St. John's Island. Importantly, they noted that Glenaladale had purchased his property from Lord Advocate James Montgomery, although they gave no indication that Montgomery had encouraged the plan. The best information they had suggested that 230 people, including 100 men, fifty women, and eighty children were aboard. The administrators also had data on the emigration of the MacDonells of Glengarry. They found that 425 people composed of 125 men, 100 women, and 200 children sailed for Albany, New York. And while they could not provide a precise number, the Fort William officials believed that "two or three Vessels" had sailed from the Isle of Skye in recent

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<sup>82</sup> Port Greenock. A List of Passengers from the Port from the 30th December 1773 Exclusive to 6th January Inclusive, *Ibid.*, CE60/1/7/213, GCA; Port Greenock. List of Passengers from the Port of Greenock from the 6th January 1774 Exclusive to 13th January Inclusive., *Ibid.*, CE60/1/7/216, GCA.

<sup>83</sup> William Nelthorpe to John Robinson, 13 December 1773, Treasury Records, T1/499/112, TNA; Same to Same, 11 January 1774, *Ibid.*, T1/500/231, TNA.

years, with one carrying at least 400 emigrants.<sup>84</sup> In Inverness, port officials were “strangers” to fully reliable numbers, yet they did have imperfect knowledge about John Pagan and John Witherspoon’s Nova Scotia enterprise. They understood “Mr. Widderspoon” to be merchant.<sup>85</sup> Wigtown officers had unconfirmed reports that approximately 160 people intended to emigrate from their district and had intercepted promotional letters that advised emigrants to take only cash and clothing with them to America.<sup>86</sup> Officials in all three locations concurred with their colleagues on the causes of emigration.

### *The Catalogue of Ships*

The semi-speculative nature of the reports from Wigtown, Inverness, and Fort William showed the Lords Commissioners’ wisdom in ordering a comprehensive census for all out going passengers. They sought greater certainty about ongoing emigration, perhaps anticipating the incomplete nature of the data on past departures from Scotland and Miller’s struggle in getting the information. If William Nelthorpe had sent them to Thomas Miller for inclusion in his analysis, thus providing a more complete geographic and demographic portrait of recent migrations that supported Miller’s concerns, then it is possible that the Lords Commissioners may have evaluated the new emigrant returns in a different light.

The Lords Commissioners’ interpretation of these letters and the emigrant returns, however, was a function of the time needed to collect and produce a reliable data set as well as the manner in which they received them. It took Miller six months to gather sufficient

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<sup>84</sup> Glen Campbell and Duncan McPhaill to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 13 December 1773, Treasury Records, T1/499/113-115, TNA.

<sup>85</sup> Roderick Mackenzie and Alexander Watson to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 3 January 1774, Treasury Records, T1/500/232-233, TNA.

<sup>86</sup> J. McCulloch and William MacConnel to Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 5 January 1774, Treasury Records, T1/500/235, TNA.

information before he felt confident enough to declare Scotland in a state of crisis. When the Lords Commissioners read his report in mid-May 1774, they had received about seven emigrant returns accounting for nearly 900 people. The data showed that emigration continued, and passengers stated the now familiar reasons for their departures, but it was too soon for the Lords Commissioners to draw any reasonable conclusions. They also did not see the numbers as Miller saw his own or as we can see them now. In London, John Tomkyns, the assistant to the Inspector General of Imports and Exports, labored furiously along with his clerk to assemble and aggregate the data acquired in English ports. They tabulated over 5,000 names and provided the Lords Commissioners with reasonably prompt updates about emigration from England. The Scottish Board of Customs did not appointment a person to a similar position. Nelthorpe simply retransmitted emigrant returns to his counterpart in London. No one prepared a running tally of Scottish departures as Tomkyns had done for the English emigrant returns. Scottish port data arrived piece meal in the British capital where the Lords Commissioners read them before laying them aside.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, the Lords Commissioners monitored Scottish departures passively for nearly two years. Fortunately, many of these emigrant returns survive in English and Scottish archives.

**Table 5.3: Departures from Scottish Ports, December 1773 to September 1775**

Return Filed	Ship	Final Port of Or Origin	Destination Port or Colony	Total Passengers	Average Age.
January 1774	<i>Aurora</i>	Greenock	Nevis	5	21
January 1774	<i>Janet</i>	Greenock	Jamaica	9	18.11
January 1774	<i>Grandvale</i>	Greenock	Jamaica	4	29
February 1774	<i>Commerce</i>	Greenock	New York	212	21.38
May 1774	<i>Friendship</i>	Stornoway	Philadelphia	106	18.01

<sup>87</sup> See Bailyn, *Voyagers*, 70-76, 89-92. The amount of incoming English material was so extensive that in August 1774 Tomkyns requested money to hire a clerk. The Lords Commissioners granted the request. Entry for 4 August 1774, Treasury Minutes, T29/44/43, TNA. For example of how the Lords Commissioners handled the Scottish data, see 31 May 1774 when they (with Lord North absent) read Nelthorpe's letter covering Thomas Jann's recruitment of indentured servants in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. Entry for 31 May 1774, Treasury Minutes, T29/43/ 392, TNA; William Nelthorpe to John Robinson, 17 May 1774, Treasury Records, T47/12/14, TNA.

May 1774	<i>Adventure</i>	Kirkcudbright	New York	66	20.96 <sup>88</sup>
May 1774	<i>Matty</i>	Greenock	New York	52	23.63
May 1774	<i>George</i>	Greenock	New York	172	21.69
May 1774	<i>Bachelor</i> <sup>89</sup>	Leith	Wilmington, NC	280	N/A
May 1774	<i>Gale</i>	Stranraer	New York	147	21.29
August 1774	<i>Ulysses</i>	Greenock	Wilmington, NC	93	27.27
August 1774	<i>Magdalene</i>	Greenock	Philadelphia	24	26.91
September 1774	<i>Diana</i>	Greenock	Wilmington, NC	36	23.95
September 1774	<i>Jamaica</i>	Greenock	Jamaica	10	18
September 1774	<i>Sally</i>	Greenock?	Philadelphia	58	22.52 <sup>90</sup>
September 1774	<i>Marlborough</i>	Kirkwall	Savannah, GA	55	20.36
October 1774	<i>Countess of Dumfries</i>	Glasgow	Charlestown, SC	17	27.52
November 1774	<i>Peace &amp; Plenty</i>	Stornoway	New York	59	20.15
December 1774	<i>Carolina Packet</i>	Campbelton	North Carolina	62	N/A
March 1775	<i>Friendship</i>	Glasgow	Quebec	8	22.85
April 1775	<i>Christy</i>	Greenock	New York and Georgia	45	29.54
April 1775	<i>Ulysses</i>	Greenock	North Carolina	11	29
April 1775	<i>Lilly</i>	Greenock	New York	186	26.29 <sup>91</sup>
April 1775	<i>Glasgow Packet</i>	Greenock	Salem, Massachusetts	30	23.38
May 1775	<i>Friendship</i>	Leith	Philadelphia	97	19.34
May 1775	<i>Jackie</i>	Stranraer	New York	81	22.31 <sup>92</sup>
May 1775	<i>Lovely Nelly</i>	Dumfries	St. John's Island	66	21.08
June 1775	<i>Monimia</i>	Greenock	New York	154	29.54 <sup>93</sup>
June 1775	<i>Ajax</i>	Greenock	North Carolina	2	22.5
June 1775	<i>Jamaica</i>	Kirkcaldy	New Brunswick, NC	20	N/A
June 1775	<i>Commerce</i>	Greenock	New York	152	22.73
July 1775	<i>Isobella</i>	Greenock	Jamaica	27	21.38 <sup>94</sup>
July 1775	<i>Georgia</i>	Greenock	Georgia	24	21.81 <sup>95</sup>
July 1775	<i>Chance</i>	Greenock	Antigua	4	24.5
July 1775	<i>Christy</i>	Greenock	Georgia	9	28.6
July 1775	<i>Clementina</i>	Stornoway	Philadelphia	212	20.24
August 1775	<i>Glasgow Packet</i>	Fort William	New York	251	N/A
September 1775	<i>Jupiter</i>	?	Wilmington, NC	136	21.1
September 1775	<i>Marlborough</i>	Kirkwall	Savannah, GA	53	20.95

<sup>88</sup> The average age calculation for the *Adventure* takes into account only 31 people. Thirty-five emigrants had boarded the ship at other ports and the Kirkcudbright customs officers did not interview, perhaps assuming it had been done elsewhere.

<sup>89</sup> The *Bachelor* did not complete its journey. It wrecked off of the Shetland Islands in early 1773. The 280 figure comes from the *Caledonian Mercury*, 2 May 1774.

<sup>90</sup> Average age approximate. Several women and children did not have ages listed.

<sup>91</sup> Average age approximate. It is likely lower as the customs collectors did not list the ages for four adults nor any of the seventy-one children aboard.

<sup>92</sup> Some of the passengers intended to go on to North Carolina.

<sup>93</sup> Average age approximate. The calculation includes adults only. Customs officials did not list the ages for sixty-four children, meaning that the real average is lower.

<sup>94</sup> No age given for two passengers.

<sup>95</sup> One woman did not give her age.

Undated	<i>Lovely Nelly</i>	Dumfries	St. John's Island	65	18.88
			<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,111 passengers</b>	<b>23.18 avg. age</b>

The data is incomplete. The majority of the port officials followed the Lords Commissioners' instructions to the letter, yet on occasion some cut corners. In May 1774, for example, thirty-one people boarded the *Adventure* at Kirkcudbright for passage to New York. Thirty-five people were already aboard, having embarked at different ports. Officials in Kirkcudbright only recorded details on people who set sail from their jurisdiction and merely noted the number of emigrants already on the vessel. They probably assumed that their colleagues in the other ports had interviewed the other passengers. Sometimes they did not include Scots that just went to visit the colonies. In October 1774, the *Jamaica Packet* left Edinburgh's port of Leith carrying a number of emigrants to the West Indies and North Carolina. Among the passengers was Janet Shaw, a well-to-do woman traveling to visit her brother, a plantation owner near Wilmington. She is not listed on the return.<sup>96</sup> In other cases customs officials did not capture information on children. In June 1775, the deputy collector and tide surveyor in Greenock cleared out the *Monimia* for New York with 154 people aboard, however they did not record the names or ages of the child passengers.

A number of returns are also missing or were never created.<sup>97</sup> No official record exists, for example, of the *Baliol*, which in August 1774 carried Flora MacDonald and her family from Campeltown to North Carolina. In many cases customs officials judged on their own, as they did in Janet Shaw's case, who was considered an emigrant and who was not. It is less surprising, then, that there are no returns that list passengers from Greenock and Glasgow to Virginia and

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<sup>96</sup> Evangeline Walker Andrews, ed., in collaboration with Charles McLean Andrews, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the years 1774 to 1776*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923).

<sup>97</sup> The returns presented here are from Glasgow city archives and National Archives in Kew.

Maryland. In the second half of the eighteenth century merchant houses in Glasgow and its surrounding environs dominated the transatlantic tobacco trade with the Chesapeake colonies. Conglomerations such as those headed by Alexander Speirs set up stores in the colonies to facilitate trade with American planters.<sup>98</sup> They employed or indented young Scotsmen like the brothers James and William MacLeod to run these corporate outposts.<sup>99</sup> Because port officials probably looked upon these people as transient “sojourners” instead of permanent settlers, they did not make note of them.<sup>100</sup>

The above list accounts for at least 3,111 people from late December 1773 to September 1775. That number is far too low. In August 1775, Thomas Miller, frustrated by the government’s inaction, asked the Scottish Board of Customs for an abstract account of the returns. The commissioners reported that between January 1, 1774 and July 5, 1775 a total of 3,607 Scots went to America from Scottish ports.<sup>101</sup> Departures after mid-July only increased that total. Moreover, the figures do not take into account Scots who may have emigrated out of English ports.

Despite the data’s limitations the returns permit concrete observations. First, the emigrants were mostly young people and male. The average age of the passengers on 37.5 of these ships was 23.18 years. Second, most were farmers, artisans, or servants, the kind of youthful and productive laborers that Miller feared were abandoning the country. Third, many Scots emigrated with their families. Fourth, emigrant associations operated with some success.

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<sup>98</sup> T.M. Devine, “A Glasgow Tobacco Merchant during the American War of Independence: Alexander Speirs of Elderslie, 1775 to 1781.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1976): 501-13.

<sup>99</sup> William MacLeod went to Maryland on a five-year contract in 1770. His brother James was in Virginia by 1773. William MacLeod to Donald MacLeod, 1 September 1770, MacLeod of Geanies Papers, MS. 19297, ff.18-18, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter “NLS.” James MacLeod to Donald MacLeod, 24 August 1773, *Ibid.*, ff.9-10, NLS.

<sup>100</sup> Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

<sup>101</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 14 August 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/168, TNA.

In February 1774, for example, the *Commerce* carried mostly Paisley and Glasgow weavers and “spinsters” to New York. They cited “Poverty and to get Bread” as their reasons for leaving.<sup>102</sup> Later that summer the *Ulysses* transported ninety-three Scots to North Carolina from Kintyre, home to Port Campbelton. The mostly farming families fled “High Rents & Oppression.”<sup>103</sup> The “want of employment” compelled artisans, servants, and farmers in May 1775 to sail for Philadelphia aboard the *Friendship*. The ship departed from Leith, Edinburgh’s port, and contained local Scots as well as some from distant places such as Aberdeen, Sutherland, and Caithness in the north.<sup>104</sup> The farmer families on the *Bachelor* made a similar journey. The 280 people from Caithness and Sutherland, some of them the Countess of Sutherland’s tenants, traveled to Leith where they embarked for North Carolina. After the *Bachelor* set sail in 1773 storms damaged the vessel and forced the captain to put into port in the Shetland Islands. Most of the passengers never made it to America.<sup>105</sup> The people on the *Monimia* fared better. They were members of the United Company of Farmers for the Shires of Perth and Stirling. Like the Scots American Company of Farmers, these families from Glasgow, Stirling, and Perthshire resettled in what is now modern Vermont.<sup>106</sup>

Not every Scot emigrated due to unemployment or racked rents. Donald McIntire, 43, a schoolmaster from Perthshire possessed a “Fervent zeal to propogate Christ. knowledge” in New York.<sup>107</sup> Agnes McAwan, 33, left Galloway because “she sees others leaving it.”<sup>108</sup> Agnes Adair, 25, and Tibby McNabb, 20, went to North Carolina to find husbands.<sup>109</sup> Most, however, cited the

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<sup>102</sup> *Commerce*, Treasury Records, T47/12, TNA.

<sup>103</sup> *Ulysses*, August 1774, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>104</sup> *Friendship*, May 1775, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>105</sup> *Bachelor*, May 1774, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>106</sup> *Monimia*, June 1775, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>107</sup> *Commerce*, June 1775, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>108</sup> *Gale*, May 1774, Ibid., TNA.

<sup>109</sup> *Ulysses* April 1775, Ibid., TNA.

“hope of procuring a better livelihood,” as the servants and farmers on board the *Clementina* did before the vessel sailed from Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, for Philadelphia.<sup>110</sup>

The consolidated data also reveals what the government could know about the emigrants’ preferred colonial destination. In the late 1760s and very early 1770s, North Carolina attracted the bulk of known emigrants. Hillsborough and the Board of Trade were certainly aware of its popularity as they urged George III to reject the provincial assembly’s tax incentives and deny the petition from Isle of Skye merchants for 40,000 acres of land. Thomas Miller’s report also highlighted the colony’s appeal. The Lords Commissioners’ emigrant returns showed that North Carolina remained an important destination. At least 640 people sailed directly for the province and more intended to settle there after disembarking at another American port. They also illuminated a decisive shift toward New York. The known evidence indicates that a minimum of 1,577 people sailed for the colony, more than double the number who went to North Carolina or who sailed to Philadelphia. This is not to argue that the emigrants who went to New York stayed in that colony, as some of the Scots featured in earlier chapters did not, but the numbers do point to the success of Scottish soldiers-turned settlers, American proprietors, and emigration promoters in wooing Scots to the provincial backcountry.

## Conclusion

Together, the two government probes into Scottish emigration reflected Thomas Miller’s success in convincing key British officials that it posed a risk to the empire. He, like Hillsborough and Pownall, believed that the transatlantic resettlement of domestic subjects in America weakened British authority in the colonies and compromised their economic

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<sup>110</sup> *Clementina*, July 1775, Ibid., TNA. Most of these passengers were from the mainland and not the Isle of Lewis.

dependency on the mother country. Rioting in major Scottish cities and his experiences during the Paisley weavers' trial in 1773 informed his view that a Highlands-only problem had migrated south into the home of Scotland's manufacturing and merchant community. The surviving evidence demonstrates that this was true. More important was Miller's perception that emigrants' motives had changed. In his mind this "epidemic," as he and other observers called it, expanded because common Scots now believed they had a greater chance of prosperity in America than they did at home. Put another way, rent racking, poverty, and oppression now did less to push Scots onto passenger vessels than did the colonies pull at them from across the ocean.

The greater challenge lay in persuading Whitehall that emigration was as grave a threat to Britain's American empire as some had claimed. Hillsborough's resignation mattered a great deal in this respect. His absence from the administration deprived Lord North's cabinet of a powerful anti-emigration voice at a time when the government focused its attention on restoring British authority in the colonies. The Earl of Suffolk's reaction to Miller's findings and the manner in which the Lords Commissioners consumed port data reflected the government's skepticism. However disagreeable emigration might well be, the Lords Commissioners' reading of the English emigrant returns did not suggest to them that depopulation was at hand. They did not ask for a consolidated account of the Scottish port data until late August 1775, and did so only after Miller supplied Suffolk with some preliminary figures.<sup>111</sup>

The government's inaction also reflected the fact that British officials were unsure of what could or should be done to stem the flow of people across the Atlantic. As we saw in the previous chapter, at the King's direction Suffolk rejected the Earl of Seaforth's application for a contingent of troops to assist civil authorities in stopping emigrants on the Isle of Lewis.

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<sup>111</sup> Entry for 29 August 1775, Scottish Board of Customs. Minute Book, 14 November 1771 to 31 October 1776, CE1/14/189, NRS.

Deploying “any forcible Opposition to the Spirit of Emigration might prove more likely to increase then diminish it.”<sup>112</sup> Both John Pownall and Miller separately suggested that Parliament could “put this trade [in emigrants] under some restraints” by imposing heavy regulations on the ships transporting emigrants to America, but an early draft of a potential bill leaked to the press in late 1773 and met with public scorn for its proposed restraints on a free British subject’s right of movement within the empire.<sup>113</sup> Even if the government had a compelling reason to stop domestic subjects from emigrating it would be politically difficult and constitutionally questionable.

War changed the calculus. The commencement of hostilities between Massachusetts Minute Men and the British forces on April 19, 1775 and the outbreak of a wider colonial rebellion soon thereafter did not stop the flow of Scottish emigrants to the colonies. In the summer of 1775, for example, the *Glasgow Packet* sailed for New York with 251 people aboard. Customs officials at Fort William pleaded with the outbound Scots not to go without success. The emigrants had been “assured New York and the parts they were bound to were not in Rebellion, that they did not think themselves in any Danger of being forced to serve either in His Majesty’s troops, or the Provincials[‘]” forces.<sup>114</sup> The persistence of Scottish, however, created unexpected opportunities to implement restrictions on emigration and transform feared liabilities into imperial assets. Once again the proponents of these solutions were not found in London. They came from Scotland.

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<sup>112</sup> Suffolk to Seaforth, 2 June 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 45/54/167e, NRS.

<sup>113</sup> Bailyn, *Voyagers*, 63-65; Miller to Suffolk, 4 July 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/168, NRS.

<sup>114</sup> Fort William Customs Officials to Scottish Commissioners of the Customs, 3 September 1775, Treasury Records, T47/12/105, TNA.

## **Chapter 6: Scottish Emigration and the Problem of Imperial Law**

In April 1774, Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller offered the British government a solution to Scotland's alleged emigration crisis. He did not believe that Scots who carried money with them and purchased land in the colonies could be persuaded to return home. They, like Flora and Allan MacDonald, were now property owners with a vested interest in improving the land and their lives in America. The poor were another matter. Forced to pay for their passage by indenting themselves to shipmasters or their employers, Miller had been given to understand that they "are certainly in a worse situation than they were at home."<sup>1</sup> The British government could turn this supposed discontent to empire's advantage if it agreed to pay for wayward emigrants' return.

Just as it once remade Scottish soldiers into military migrants in the colonies, Miller believed that the government should transform disgruntled Scots into anti-emigration promoters. Seeding them in different parts of the Scotland "would more effectually open the eyes of the people, and cure them of their passion for America." It was as much an attempt to find a reasonable solution to "so great a Calamity as that of the depopulation" of Scotland as it was an acknowledgement that determined emigrants paid little mind to their social superiors who tried to talk sense into them.<sup>2</sup> And it was a means to slow departures without the use of legal or military force. If Miller and other Scots looked upon emigration as an epidemic, then perhaps importing disappointed people could be the cure.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Miller to the Earl of Suffolk, 25 April 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/164a, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Hereafter "TNA." For examples of alleged discontent see "Extract of a letter from a Gentleman in New York to his friend in Edinburgh, dated April 6" in *Reading Mercury*, 13 June 1774.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The government briefly entertained Miller's idea before ignoring it. Suffolk doubted that the plan work anyway given that the people that Miller wanted back in Scotland were likely "under special Contracts of Service in the Colonies."<sup>3</sup> The government would have to buy out emigrants' indenture contracts and subsidize their passage home, an expensive proposition with no guarantee that it would have the desired effect. Nevertheless, Suffolk sent it on to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury for their opinion.<sup>4</sup> They did not endorse the plan either.<sup>5</sup>

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Miller's suggestion to recall disaffected emigrants from America contained a broader set of ideas that Scots pursued as war broke out in the colonies. Whereas he had originally stressed emigration as the depopulation of productive laborers from Scotland's manufacturing and agricultural centers, the acceleration of the imperial crisis in the months after the Boston Tea Party in December 1773 redirected some of the conversation to the military value of male settlers and their questionable loyalty to the crown. For some members of the landed gentry and political establishment, Scottish emigrants remained a liability in Britain's struggle to hold onto the colonies. By comparison, few British citizens raised any alarms over English emigrants. Scotland's important role in the Seven Years War cast a long shadow over the new conflict and informed the ways in which key figures in the Scottish elite viewed continued emigration.

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<sup>3</sup> Suffolk to Miller, 13 May 1774, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/165, TNA.

<sup>4</sup> Suffolk to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, 13 May 1774, State Papers: Treasury Correspondence, 1763-1775, SP 37/22/92, TNA.

<sup>5</sup> In a later letter to Lord Advocate Henry Dundas, Suffolk indicated that some sort of arrangement was put into place, but I have found no evidence to suggest that this was the case. It is possible that Suffolk was referring to British subjects who had fled the colonies after the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775. See Suffolk to Dundas, 13 September 1775, Secretaries of State: State Papers Domestic, George III, 1760-1783, SP 37/11/122, TNA; Alexander Campbell to Duncan Campbell of Glenure, 2 August 1775, Papers of the Campbell Family of Barcaldine, 1739-1961, GD170/1065/1, The National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NRS."

The threat and onset of war in America did not mean that a ban on emigration in 1775 was inevitable.<sup>6</sup> Imperial law and the British Constitution were barriers to any immediate solution. It was also unclear if Parliament's statements and actions against the colonies gave the government greater powers to stop free British subjects from traveling within the King's dominions. The King's authority was another matter. The monarch possessed great prerogative powers to control the movement of his subjects, and yet few could imagine a King using them in Britain eight decades after Parliament's triumph in the Glorious Revolution significantly curtailed the monarch's prerogative. But moments of crisis inspired creative actions. The ascendancy of a key Scottish politician at a crucial moment made a ban possible. Lord Advocate Henry Dundas found a way around the legal impasses. When in September 1775, Dundas issued orders that effectively prevented Scots from departing from their home ports, he did so having built on earlier efforts to stop emigration and overcoming constitutional objections to restraining British subjects. And to do that, the upstart and ambitious Dundas deployed powers normally reserved for the King.

## **Legal Maneuvers**

The brief 1773 attempt to curtail emigration by heavily regulating the emigrant trade reflected the legal and political challenges that Scottish and British officials faced in preventing the loss of Scotland's useful people. James Boswell captured this dilemma as he reflected on his journey to the Western Isles with Dr. Samuel Johnson. Emigration had struck his companion "as

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<sup>6</sup> For suggestions that it was inevitable, or that the ban emerged outside of a broader legal context, see Bernard Bailyn with Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 56; J.M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815* (Edinburgh and Winnipeg: Edinburgh University Press and The University of Manitoba Press, 1982), 23; Ian Adams and Meredyth Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603-1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers LTD, 1993), 136.

a very serious evil” and Boswell thought that Johnson would cast “it in such a light as to alarm Government” in the published account of their tour. He doubted, however, that any remedy that Johnson proposed would be consistent with “the British Constitution.” Boswell did not see how the government could act without infringing on citizens’ rights.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as the historian Bernard Bailyn has argued, “there was in fact no agreement [among British subjects] whether or not the government *could* legally constrain the movements of British subjects from one British territory to another, or whether it *should* do so.”<sup>8</sup> To outright deny Scots passage to America technically violated the Treaty of Union of 1707. The treaty granted all British subjects “full Freedom and Intercourse of Trade and Navigation, to an from any Port or Place within the said united Kingdom, and the Dominions and Plantations thereunto belonging.”<sup>9</sup> The Scottish Parliament had acceded to the treaty in large measure for Scots to gain access to England’s overseas empire, and with that agreement came the right of movement within the empire without restraint.

The British Parliament did create regulations that governed some aspects of emigration in the interest of protecting the empire’s commercial interests. In the early eighteenth century it enacted legislation that criminalized the recruitment of laborers for resettlement in foreign countries.<sup>10</sup> Those laws did not apply to the American colonies because they were British dominions. The proposed 1773 bill was in the spirit of the earlier acts. It would have forced every “Man bred to Husbandry, Labouring Work or Service” to purchase a license, essentially a

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<sup>7</sup> James Boswell to Bennet Langton, 10 April 1774, in Chuancey Brewster Tinker, ed., *Letters of James Boswell* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924), 1:198-199.

<sup>8</sup> Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 53.

<sup>9</sup> Articles of Union, 1707. Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, accessed 7 January 201, [http://www.parliament.uk/documents/heritage/articlesofunion.pdf]

<sup>10</sup> “An Act for the effectual punishing of Persons convicted of seducing Artificers in the Manufactures of *Great Britain or Ireland*, out of the Dominions of the Crown of *Great Britain*; and to prevent the Exportation of Utensils made use of in the Woollen and Silk Manufactures from *Great Britain or Ireland*, into foreign Parts; and for the more easy and speedy Determination of Appeals, allowed in certain Cases, but an Act made in the last Session of Parliament, relating to Persons employed in the several Manufactures therein mentioned.” 23 George II. C.13. [1750] John Raithby, ed., *The Statutes at Large, of England and of Great-Britain: From Magna Carta to the Union of the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, 1811), 10:528.

work visa, to leave the country. The “Mechanic [and] Manufacturer” would be forbidden to leave altogether.<sup>11</sup> The restrictions would have applied to Great Britain and Ireland.

Public commentators in England and Scotland considered such “compulsive” measures as an odious violation of British rights. At best the legislation might increase “the people’s discontent” and encourage what it was meant to stop.<sup>12</sup> At its worst it was, as one observer from Argyllshire suggested, “a cruel, tyrannical measure” unworthy of the British Parliament.<sup>13</sup> That, as another writer put it, was because “a Briton is a Freeman and Citizen of the World” and “to abridge the People of a Right” to free movement was “an Insult to the Nation.”<sup>14</sup> The bill, in the eyes of another author, was the “most base and infamous” ever laid before the public.<sup>15</sup> When asked what the government should do Charles James Fox, an opponent in Parliament of both Lord North and the King, shrugged and said he “knew not positively” and thought that British officials should “*make it worth the people’s while to stay at home.*”<sup>16</sup> As we have seen Scottish proprietors pursued a variety of strategies to that end. Critics urged the British legislature to follow suit. One author proposed that Parliament force the landed class to share the burden by breaking up their estates into small farms for the poor to work.<sup>17</sup> In a letter to Lord North, another writer believed that imposing price controls on bread would help to alleviate suffering among the poor. Keeping the people happy at home, he argued, meant having a good supply of “soldiers and sailors” on hand in the event of a war.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Britannus, “To the Printer of the Public Advertiser,” *Public Advertiser* (London), 16 November 1773.

<sup>12</sup> *Kentish Gazette*, 8 December 1773.

<sup>13</sup> *Kentish Gazette*, 29 January 1774.

<sup>14</sup> “An Englishman to the Printer of the Public Advertiser, November 17, 1773,” *Public Advertiser* (London), 20 December 1773.

<sup>15</sup> “Clericus to the Printer of the Public Advertiser, December 6, 1773,” *Public Advertiser* (London), 21 December 1773.

<sup>16</sup> *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 December 1773. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>17</sup> Clericus to the Printer of the Public Advertiser, December 6, 1773,” *Public Advertiser* (London), 21 December 1773.

<sup>18</sup> W. to Lord North, *Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser* (London), 14 December 1773.

### *Searching for a Backdoor Through the Linen Trade*

The public backlash against the leaked 1773 bill forced Parliament to consider more subtle means of slowing the pace of emigration in ways that spoke to Scotland's important role in the British Atlantic economy. By the 1770s Scots held a central position in the linen manufacturing and export trade. Weavers, such as those that rioted in Paisley, Glasgow, and other cities spun cloth that merchants shipped to colonial markets. The British government protected Scottish along with Irish linen merchants and artisans through stiff duties on European imports.<sup>19</sup>

Despite protective measures increased foreign competition, colonial smugglers, and the 1772 financial crisis sent the linen trade into decline. In the weeks after they passed the Boston Port Bill, Members of Parliament engaged in a significant debate on the state of the linen trade and how to revive it. Emigration was an important theme. In a lengthy report to the House of Commons, Richard Glover testified on behalf of English linen merchants that Scotland's manufacturers suffered not from foreign competitors, but from the financial crisis born of Scottish merchants' liberal credit use. He explicitly rejected any connection between Scottish emigration and a downturn in the linen trade. Glover argued instead that the landed gentry and greedy tacksmen bore much of the blame for depopulation, while other Scots went to America on their own accord.<sup>20</sup>

Glover's testimony did not sit well with MPs representing Irish and Scottish interests. They argued for new regulations to protect domestic industry and deny the colonies access to the

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<sup>19</sup> Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, towards Industrialisation* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 108-109.

<sup>20</sup> Testimony of Richard Glover in the House of Commons, 20 April 1774, *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to The Year 1803. From Which Last-Mentioned Epoch It Is Continued Downwards in The Work Entitled, "The Parliamentary Debates." A.D. 1771-1774* (T.C. Hansard, 1813), 17:1111-1135.

tools and talent with which they might compete with British manufacturers.<sup>21</sup> Colonists did engage in some homespun that produced cloth of poor quality compared to British wares. American consumers preferred British-made goods. It was an economic advantage that policy makers did not wish to lose.<sup>22</sup> The resulting legislation, which took effect on July 1, 1774, criminalized the exportation “of the several tools or utensils made use of in preparing, working up, and finishing, the cotton and linen manufacturers.” Violators of the law risked the confiscation of their tools and a £200 fine.<sup>23</sup>

The bill sought to make emigration a less attractive option by making it difficult for Scottish or Irish weavers to practice their trade in America. In this way, so the thinking went, it protected the domestic industry and its labor force while ensuring continued American dependency on British linen manufactures. It was an underhanded attempt to restrict emigration without imposing constitutionally questionable and politically unfeasible restraints on the people or their means of transportation to the colonies.

What the act’s supporters failed to consider was that the bill’s targeted emigrants generally sold their possessions—including the tools of their trade—or indented themselves to fund their passage across the Atlantic. Once in the colonies they purchased new implements, settled on farms, or engaged in different forms of employment. Moreover, it is difficult to know how much influence we can assign the bill in structuring individual emigrants’ decisions. The emigrant returns in the Treasury records tell us why emigrants left, and not why others remained behind. Before the act took effect Scottish customs officials recorded eleven ships bearing 1,053

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<sup>21</sup> Speech of General Henry Seymour Conway and Speech of George Dempster of Dunnichen, 17 May 1773, in *Ibid.*, 17:1151, 1154-1158..

<sup>22</sup> T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 68-70.

<sup>23</sup> 14 George III c. 71. — “An Act to Prevent the Exportation to Foreign Parts of Utensils Made Use of in the Cotton, Linen, Woollen, and Silk Manufactures of this Kingdom,” in Sir William David Evans, ed., *A Collection of Statutes connected with the General Administration of the Law* (London, 1836), 6:175-177.

people to America. Afterward at least thirty ships carrying nearly 2,000 people sailed to the colonies.<sup>24</sup> While the total number of people and ships rose after July 1, 1774, the average number of passengers fell from 95 to 66 people. If emigration had continued at its former pace 850 more passengers would have departed after July 1774. It is possible that the bill played some role in suppressing the emigrant trade, although other factors such as the deterioration of relations between Great Britain and America probably had greater influence. Nevertheless emigration continued long after fighting started in the colonies. The bill failed to achieve its subtle end.

### *The American Crisis and the Promise of Imperial Law*

The more immediate crisis in the American colonies soon overshadowed Parliament's struggle to find a politically agreeable way to regulate emigration. It commanded the government's immediate attention. The Coercive Acts did not bring the colonists to heel as intended. Instead, Americans renewed their protests against what they claimed were unconstitutional infringements on their rights as British subjects. Committees of Correspondence in Massachusetts, New York, and other colonies organized a resistance movement that culminated in the formation of a Continental Congress. In Suffolk County, Massachusetts, colonists issued a series of resolves calling for an economic boycott of British goods. Delegates from twelve colonies met in Philadelphia in September 1774 to coordinate a response to Parliament and to beseech the King to intercede on their behalf. Congress authorized the "Continental Association," an economic boycott on British imports to take effect on December 1, 1774, and sent a petition to George III requesting the repeal of the hated coercive legislation. The

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<sup>24</sup> See Table 5.3 in Chapter 5.

delegates believed that disrupting trade and appealing directly to the King would force Parliament to back down.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, colonists in Massachusetts continued to defy the Massachusetts Government Act. The bill negated the colony's charter, stripped the General Court (the legislature) of its power to elect the members of the governor's council, prevented town meetings without the governor's consent, and concentrated power in the colonial executive. In October 1774, Governor Thomas Gage dissolved the General Court, but the representatives refused to leave. They reformed into an extra-legal Provincial Congress and assumed the General Court's powers. Local militia began drilling and stockpiling weapons and ammunition in anticipation of a conflict.

Parliament responded to the Continental Association, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, and the colony's defensive measures with new legislation and a statement that recast the American crisis in new terms. In a February 1775 joint address of both houses of Parliament to the King, the imperial legislature declared, "that a rebellion at this time actually exists within" Massachusetts.<sup>26</sup> It passed the New England Restraining Act to isolate the colonies in that region from the rest of America. The new law built on the Boston Port Bill by limiting the trade of the New England colonies to Britain and the West Indies only. A subsequent restraining act expanded the original bill's scope to include several colonies that had agreed to the Continental Association.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Richard R. Beeman, *Our Lives, Our Fortunes, and Our Sacred Honor: The Forging of American Independence, 1774-1776* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 31-40.

<sup>26</sup> "The Joint Address of both Houses to the King on the Disturbances in North America, 8 February 1775," in *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to The Year 1803*, 18:297.

<sup>27</sup> "An act to restrain the trade and commerce of the provinces of Massachusetts's Bay and New Hampshire, and colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island, and Providence Plantation, in North America, to Great Britain, Ireland, and the British islands in the West Indies; and to prohibit such provinces and colonies from carrying on any fishery on the banks of Newfoundland, or other places therein mentioned, under certain conditions and limitations." in William MacDonald, ed., *Documentary Source Book of American History, 1606-1913* (New York: The MacMillan

The competing British and American economic sanctions did not suggest to Scotland's emigration opponents an answer to their problem. Careful observers among the Scottish gentry and political elite noted that Parliament's statement on Massachusetts did, however, open a potential pathway to stopping emigration. In declaring that colony in rebellion Parliament urged George III to "take the most effectual measures to enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature."<sup>28</sup> That vague statement seemed to authorize the King to use any means necessary to restore law and order in Massachusetts and beyond, a sentiment that George III affirmed in both in his reply to Parliament's address and in his later message "that some addition to his forces by sea and land will be necessary for that purpose."<sup>29</sup> It was also nebulous enough to raise the possibility that the King or Parliament could use it as a justification for taking action at home in the interest of preserving British rule abroad.

Sir James Grant of Grant and his inner circle believed that Parliament's declaration of rebellion and its apparent blanket authority to the King provided the legal cover necessary to suppress emigration. The chief of Clan Grant once represented Elginshire in Parliament and owned a great deal of property in Strathspey in the northeastern Highlands. In the 1760s and 1770s, he was at the forefront of the improvement movement to modernize agricultural production and to build towns imbued with Enlightenment rationality. In 1765, Sir James founded Grantown along the River Spey, a planned settlement created as an industrial hub for the region. Like the similarly constructed New Town in Edinburgh, Grantown's orderly grid-layout

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Company, 1920), 173-176. The original bill did not encompass the other colonies because Lord North mistakenly believed that they opposed the Continental Association.

<sup>28</sup> "The Joint Address of both Houses to the King on the Disturbances in North America, 8 February 1775," in *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to The Year 1803*, 18:297.

<sup>29</sup> George III to the Joint Houses of Parliament, 8 February 1775, in *Ibid.*, 298; Same to Same, 10 February 1775, in *Ibid.*, 298.

contrasted with the more random urban forms in Scotland.<sup>30</sup> Like any other member of the landed gentry Sir James feared the loss of his tenants to America. His reputation for dealing fairly with his tenants distinguished him from other Highland proprietors and earned him the local nickname, “The Good Sir James.” He, too, viewed emigration from an imperial perspective and came to share Thomas Miller’s belief that it compromised Scotland and the empire.

Applying Parliament’s declaration to emigration required the reconceptualization of Scottish migration as a military threat. Miller danced around that notion in his earlier warnings to the government, and public commentators had conveyed similar thoughts in newspapers and pamphlets. The idea that emigration deprived the government of access to soldiers and supplied the Americans with potential supporters gained greater resonance when Parliament invoked “rebellion” and George III signaled his intention to augment British forces in the colonies. The memory of the Seven Years War and Scotland’s crucial role remained ever present. In March 1775, Sir James’s estate factor argued that point to him. James Willox, whose true surname “MacGregor” had been outlawed in 1603 following a period of clan civil wars, warned Sir James that, “Emigrations is now become very serious.” It had become more difficult to find servants and laborers than it had been during the previous war. Waiting until the “highlands of Scotland is Depopulated” to do something about it risked another “bad Consequence” beyond the loss of economic resources. Willox believed that “highlanders will be a more formidable Malitia in America than the Americans are represented to be and, give Government much more trouble than they are aware of, some time hence.” Preventing them from emigrating preserved “a treasure to the state, when its exigencies require a number of good soldiers and sailors.” Highlanders had proven their worth as soldiers in America once before. They might well again, Willox argued,

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<sup>30</sup> The only substantial biographical treatment of Sir James is G.M. Fraser, *The Good Sir James: The Life and Times of Sir James Grant of Grant of Castle Grant* (Kinloss, Morayshire, Scotland: Librario, 2012).

just not in the way that the government would expect. Once in America they would be “more than lost they will be in opposition to Britain some time hence” unless the government gave them relief from their suffering and reasons to remain loyal.<sup>31</sup>

Wilcox implored Sir James to petition Parliament with a request to take action before emigration gave the Americans a strategic advantage. Public works projects or price controls on grain might keep the people employed, fed, and in Scotland. He wanted on a grand scale what the administrators on the Countess of Sutherland’s or the Earl of Seaforth’s lands tried on local levels. Prospective emigrants needed to be given reasons to remain at home and loyal to the crown. Otherwise disgruntled Highlanders might join Americans in rebellion. A similar request came from John Forbes, the government assigned estate manager for some of the forfeited Jacobite estates, including the executed Lord Lovat’s.<sup>32</sup> These arguments, along with his own reading of the imperial landscape, convinced Sir James to petition the government. In his view, Parliament’s having “declar’d America to be in a State of Actual Rebellion” created a legal framework to “prevent Ships of Emigrants from sailing at present” that avoided any questions of constitutional impropriety. A ban would save “deluded” people from “immediate Destruction” and buy time for the government to address emigration’s root causes.<sup>33</sup>

Sometime during the day of April 19, 1775, Sir James sat down at his desk and composed a letter to Lord Advocate James Montgomery. An ocean away, perhaps at the very moment that Sir James touched pen to paper, Massachusetts Minutemen engaged British forces at Lexington and Concord. What General Thomas Gage described to the Secretary at War as “an Affair that

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<sup>31</sup> James Wilcox to Sir James Grant of Grant, 25 March 1775, Papers of the Ogilvy family, Earls of Seafield 1205-1971, GD248/509/1/47-9, NRS.

<sup>32</sup> In the letter cited in the following footnote, Sir James noted that he had heard that Forbes would lobby him to write the government. Forbes replied that the leading figures in the surrounding area all believed that Sir James was the best person to undertake the task. See Forbes to Sir James, 18 April 1775, Papers of the Ogilvy family, Earls of Seafield 1205-1971, GD 248/244/7/14, NRS.

<sup>33</sup> Sir James to John Forbes, 16 April 1775, Papers of the Ogilvy family, Earls of Seafield 1205-1971, GD 248/244/7/12, NRS.

happened here on the 19<sup>th</sup> Instant” became the opening battle in the American War for Independence.<sup>34</sup> Sir James chose to write Montgomery instead of his local Member of Parliament because the Lord Advocate was the King’s chief political and legal officer in Scotland. Technically, the office holder spoke on that kingdom’s behalf in national politics and functioned as a kind of eighteenth-century version of the modern-day Scottish First Minister. If his letter did not find Montgomery in London, Sir James instructed the bearer to deliver it directly to Lord North. He wished to have his emigration assessment directly in the hands of those men in positions of national power and authority.

Sir James made his case for direct government intervention in three ways. First, he noted that the government had adopted “other regulations in regard to America,” meaning the Coercive and Restraining Acts, to which he could have added recently issued Orders in Council that banned the exportation of weapons and gunpowder to the colonies.<sup>35</sup> He argued that Parliament’s declaration of rebellion gave the government expansive powers to stop emigrant laden ships from sailing in the interest of national and imperial security. It would be “a proper & prudent Regulation of Internal police” that preserved the King’s subjects for Britain and prevented “those poor deluded people” from sailing into conflict. Second, preventing departures, particularly from Greenock “from whence they commonly embark,” would “show the Highlanders that his Majesty attends to their Safety.” Sir James believed that George III had to demonstrate the kind of paternal benevolence that many clan chiefs no longer did. He tied that behavior directly to Highlanders’ anticipated military service, leaving it to Lord Advocate Montgomery or Lord North to infer that once in America, Highlanders might not rally to the King’s standard. Finally, Sir James, like Thomas Miller, argued, “the frenzy will extend universally” in the absence of

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Gage to Lord Barrington, 22 April 1775, War Office Papers, WO 1/2/90, TNA.

<sup>35</sup> Orders in Council, 5 April 1775, Minutes of the Privy Council, PC 2/118/473, TNA.

preventative measures because “the Highlanders are so connected by intermarrying.”<sup>36</sup> He believed that interwoven families were like a piece of fraying tartan cloth. Pulling at a loose thread eventually undid the whole fabric.

Sir James’s letter arrived in London amidst a flurry of reports of war-like preparations in the colonies.<sup>37</sup> Published letters from General Gage warned that Massachusetts’s colonists were amassing an army and that war was increasingly likely.<sup>38</sup> Virginia’s provincial leaders had recommended that colonists form “volunteer companies of infantry and troops in each county” in the event of an “emergency.”<sup>39</sup> Initial accounts of the engagements at Lexington and Concord hit British newspapers beginning in late May.<sup>40</sup> Lord North immediately focused the government’s attention on responding to this new phase of the American crisis and to the deployment of military resources in the colonies. If he saw Sir James’s letter he did not act on it, perhaps not sharing his assessment that Parliament’s recent actions provided sufficient legal authority to stop ships from leaving port. As we will see in the next chapter, however, Lord North may have had an alternative motive for silently consenting to emigration. Lord Advocate Montgomery, of course, had little incentive to pursue Sir James’s recommended course of action. He was complicit in emigration through his activities on St. John’s Island.

But the onset of war in America coincided with a change in the Scottish political leadership that brought a far more aggressive and ambitious man to power. In late May 1775, just as word reached London of the fighting at Lexington and Concord, the King elevated James Montgomery to Lord Chief Baron of the Scottish Exchequer and installed thirty-three year old

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<sup>36</sup> Sir James to James Montgomery, 19 April 1775, Papers of the Ogilvy family, Earls of Seafield 1205-1971, GD 248/244/7/2, NRS.

<sup>37</sup> 28 April 1775, *Edinburgh Advertiser*; 9 May 1775, *Edinburgh Advertiser*.

<sup>38</sup> 9 May 1775, *Edinburgh Advertiser*.

<sup>39</sup> “By a ship arrived a Greenock from Philadelphia in twenty one days, we have the following intelligence,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 12 May 1775. The report from Williamsburg, Virginia is dated April 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Scots Magazine* (May 1775), 229-231; 2 June 1775, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 2 June 1775.

Henry Dundas as Lord Advocate. His appointment marked a turning point in the quest to prevent Scottish subjects from emigrating to America. The brash young Dundas wanted to make his mark on national and imperial politics. The American crisis and emigration gave him that opportunity and the chance to wield powers normally reserved for the king.

### **“Harry the Ninth,” the Uncrowned King of Scotland**

In 1785, James Boswell raged against Henry Dundas and his domination of Scottish politics. Although no longer Lord Advocate by this time, Dundas essentially acted as Scotland’s political manager and worked to bend the kingdom’s political scene to his will. Boswell feared that his old schoolmate’s sponsorship of a bill in the House of Commons to reduce the number of justices in the Scottish Court of Session (the civil court) from fifteen to ten members violated the Treaty of Union and constituted an attempt to gain greater influence over Scottish civil law. In his hastily prepared *Letter to the People of Scotland*, Boswell crowned Dundas as “Harry the Ninth” in false tribute to the great power that he possessed in northern Britain.<sup>41</sup> Over the next twenty years Dundas went on to hold a number of cabinet posts in the British government, including Secretary of State for War and First Lord of the Admiralty, before accusations of financial misappropriation and an impeachment trial in the House of Lords ended his political career.<sup>42</sup>

Dundas’s elevation to Lord Advocate ten years earlier marked the real beginning of his political ascent. Born in 1742 to a politically prominent family, Dundas became Scotland’s

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<sup>41</sup> James Boswell, *A Letter to the People of Scotland, on the Alarming Attempt to Infringe the Articles of the Union, and Introduce a Most Pernicious Innovation, by Diminishing the Number of the Lords of Session* (London, 1785), 6.

<sup>42</sup> For a comprehensive treatment of Dundas’s career, see Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992).

Solicitor General in 1766 at the age of twenty-four and in 1774 he was elected to represent Midlothian in Parliament.<sup>43</sup> A jealous Boswell begrudgingly acknowledged that Dundas had some “strong parts,” but excoriated him as “a coarse, unlettered, unfanciful dog.”<sup>44</sup> This harsh assessment masked Dundas’s boldness and his willingness to chart his own course in order to gain greater political prominence.

Parliamentary debates over the American crisis gave Dundas an early chance to publicly express his conservative view of the empire and his willingness to use forceful means to restore order in the colonies. Lord North, his patron, hoped to avoid imperial civil war and proposed a “Plan of Conciliation” in which Parliament suspended its right to exercise its taxation powers in exchange for the colonial assemblies’ commitment to raise revenue for the common defense.<sup>45</sup> To the prime minister’s surprise his supporters objected to the plan and they defeated it. In his first speech in Parliament, Dundas rebuked conciliation “in very strong terms” and shared the majority sentiment that Britain should “never accede to any concessions whatever...until the Americans did, in direct terms, acknowledge the absolute supremacy of this country.”<sup>46</sup> In gaining that recognition of colonial dependency Dundas enthusiastically supported the New England Restraining Act. He rejected Charles Fox’s assertion that limiting New England’s trade left the colonists there with little choice but to starve or rebel.<sup>47</sup> In reality, Dundas argued, the bill

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<sup>43</sup> Dundas’s family was no stranger to high office in Scotland. His father, Robert Dundas of Arniston, had been Lord Advocate in the early 1720s, sat in parliament in the 1720s and 1730s, and later served as Lord President of the Court of Session in the late 1740s and early 1750s. Henry’s half-brother, also a Robert, served as Solicitor-General for Scotland in the mid-1740s, and sat in Parliament in the next decade while serving as Lord Advocate from 1754-1760. See Holden Furber, “Henry Dundas : first viscount Melville, 1741-1811, political manager of Scotland, statesman, administrator of British India,” (PhD. Diss., Harvard University, 1929).

<sup>44</sup> James Boswell to the Reverend William Temple, 22 May 1775, in Tinker, ed., *The Letters of James Boswell*, 1:225.

<sup>45</sup> Furber, “Henry Dundas: First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811,” 5. For Lord North’s proposal see “Speech of Lord North in the House of Commons on his Plan of Conciliation, 20 February 1775,” in *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to The Year 1803.*, 18:323

<sup>46</sup> “Mr. Dundas,” *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>47</sup> “Speech of Charles Fox in the Debate on the Bill for Restraining the Trade and Commerce of the New England Colonies,” 6 March 1775, *Ibid.*, 386.

“was merciful” because the colonists’ “disobedience would have justified the severest military execution.” It gave colonists a third option beyond starvation or rebellion: submission.<sup>48</sup> His eagerness to use strong measures against the colonists anticipated a willingness to adopt a similar approach to emigrating Scottish subjects.

### *Accelerations*

In the meantime, the American revolt accelerated in the summer of 1775. Provincial forces trapped General Gage and the British Army in Boston following the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord. Reports out of the city suggested that the Americans were prepared to continue in arms until the imperial government relented in its policies.<sup>49</sup> One British officer “cooped up” along with his men and surrounded by an “undisciplined set of raga muffins” did not believe that the colonists would be convinced of their folly until “many of them are destroyed.”<sup>50</sup> In New York, a writer expressed surprise that Scots continued to emigrate despite the circumstances. “It is melancholy,” he wrote, “to see the delusion of your poor people coming over here. I have seen many hundreds of them that had come out who were convinced of their error; and those that had it in their power were agreeing for their passage home again.”<sup>51</sup> It is difficult to know if and how many Scots sought passage home as the writer indicated. Port

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<sup>48</sup> “The Solicitor General of Scotland,” *Ibid.*, 387-388.

<sup>49</sup> “Extract of a letter from a gentleman at New-York to his friend at Edinburgh, dated May 1,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 16 June 1775; *The Scots Magazine*, June 1775, pg. 298-299; “From an officers to his friend at Edinburgh, dated, Camp at Boston, May 13,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 14 July 1775.

<sup>50</sup> “Extract of a letter from an officer at Boston, to his friend at Edinburgh, dated May 23,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 7 July 1775.

<sup>51</sup> A gentleman from New York writes to his friend at Edinburgh,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 25 July 1775.

officials were bound to record outgoing passengers and not returning people. It is likely that the paper's editor inserted the letter to discourage further departures.<sup>52</sup>

News of the British Army's Pyrrhic mid-June victory at the Battle of Bunker Hill arrived in Britain in late July.<sup>53</sup> Thrice General Gage's men assaulted provincial lines before sending the rebels to flight in a costly engagement that removed any doubt of the Americans' willingness to wage war in defense of their principles. One man in Boston expressed bewilderment at the sight of "several emigrants from Scotland [that] have of late arrive[d] here" despite the turmoil in the city. Although they could not have known about the battle beforehand, the writer could not understand why the emigrants did not stay at home until the British had settled matters on "this infatuated continent." He confidently predicted that once the Americans had been subdued or destroyed "there will be room enough for [one] thousand [people] to sit down upon *estates already cleared*" in the colonies.<sup>54</sup> If Scots exercised patience they might have the already improved land of their choosing.

The battle did produce some war refugees and warnings against further emigration. Alexander Campbell, a veteran of the Seven Years War, settled with his family in New York in 1774 where he established a grocery business that counted the army as its largest client. Known to friends and family as "Sandie," he volunteered for the British at Bunker Hill and during the course of the battle suffered "four Wounds by Balls the last of them brock (sic) my Right Leg

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<sup>52</sup> John Donaldson edited the *Edinburgh Advertiser* in this period. His father Alexander, a book publisher who made his name reprinting English titles in the 1760s and 1770s, founded the paper in 1764 to promote Scottish news and interests. See Richard B. Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 315.

<sup>53</sup> General Gage's letter to the Earl of Dartmouth along with casualty lists and an American version of the events appeared in an "Extraordinary" edition of the *Edinburgh Advertiser* on 29 July 1775. News of the battle arrived in London four days earlier.

<sup>54</sup> "Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Boston, dated June 20th, to his friend in town", *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 4 August 1775. Emphasis in the original.

just under the Calf.”<sup>55</sup> Sandie’s letter to his father about the battle and his injuries passed through Greenock where his father’s cousin, also named Alexander, served as the port’s deputy comptroller. The customs official had interviewed many emigrants headed for the colonies in previous months at the behest of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and he read Sandie’s letter with a great deal of alarm. More troubling, however, were the thirty or forty passengers aboard the same ship that carried the letter. They fled the colonies after Bunker Hill and provided accounts of the battle and the risk that emigrants now faced in America. “I have often seen and heard of Scots Emigrants to America, but never untill now of American Emigrants to Scotland,” he wrote to Sandie’s father. “For God sake make the news of the arrival of Emigrants as publick as possible to see and prevent our deluded Country men from emigrating to a Country, when nothing but Anarchy and Confusion Reigns.”<sup>56</sup>

If Alexander’s father publicized the American emigrants’ arrival—no mention of them appears in newspapers—they and other accounts of the recent hostilities in the colonies failed to dissuade all Scots from emigrating. Departures that customs officials and the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury knew about did abate following numerous sailings in June and July 1775, but they did not willingly cease altogether. In late August or early September the New York-bound *Glasgow* sailed from Fort William loaded with 251 people mostly from Inverness-shire. Customs officials found that the passengers, half of them male and many of fighting age, did not expect the New England rebellion to affect them in New York nor did they believe that American or British officials would try to recruit them into their respective armies.<sup>57</sup> Two more

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<sup>55</sup> Major Alexander Campbell to Duncan Campbell of Glenure, 25 June 1775, Papers of the Campbell Family of Barcaldine, GD170/1063/25, NRS. For a brief summary of Campbell’s life see Stana Nenadic, “The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families, c. 1730-1830,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 85, (2006): 88-89.

<sup>56</sup> Alexander Campbell to Duncan Campbell of Glenure, 2 August 1775, Papers of the Campbell Family of Barcaldine 1539-1961, GD170/1065/1, NRS.

<sup>57</sup> Fort William Customs Officials to Scottish Commissioners of the Customs, 3 September 1775, Treasury Records, T47/12/105, TNA.

vessels with a combined total of 186 passengers sailed for North Carolina and Georgia followed soon thereafter.<sup>58</sup>

By August, Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller abandoned his view of emigration as an economic problem, too. He joined with Sir James Grant of Grant and others to see it now as a matter of imperial security, having never stopped investigating after his initial report to Whitehall. In an update to the Earl of Suffolk, Miller reported that emigration “till continues, and of late has encreased.” He sensed that the revolution that he had spoken of in his first dispatch, (that the promise of prosperity and property in the America along with the emigration of whole families had destroyed an individual’s attachment to their native land), had taken on a different form. In his view “the Arts and Adress of American Agents & Emissarys” corrupted common Scots, particularly Highlanders, with “American principles” before they left the country. In other words, promoters had convinced emigrants to embrace the ideological foundations upon which colonists based their resistance to British authority and the on-going departures despite the war indicated emigrants’ acceptance of those ideals.<sup>59</sup>

Miller wove Highlanders’ Seven Years War legacy into his argument to bolster his point. These “insidious Arts & falsehoods” could obstruct the army’s recruiting efforts in the Highlands and transform the Highlanders already in America into “the best Recruits for their Rebellious Armyes.” He called on Parliament to do now in a time of war what it had not during peace: impose regulations that controlled the flow of Scots to America. He stopped short of calling for any outright ban, no doubt well aware of the political and constitutional challenges that action presented. Miller proposed an alternative solution. Knowing precisely whom left and where they went remained a problem despite the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury’s orders. “The

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<sup>58</sup> See Table 5.3 in Chapter 5.

<sup>59</sup> Miller to Suffolk, 14 August 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/168, TNA.

Agents for America” recruited “whole shipfulls of Men, without any restraint” in “every Remote bay or Creek” and consequently customs officials never had the opportunity to interview the emigrants. Finding some way (that Miller never specified) to force these ships to make contact with port officials would give the government a more refined sense of the emigrant population and a chance for men like Greenock Deputy Comptroller Alexander Campbell to talk Scots out of going to America.<sup>60</sup>

### *The King's Prerogative*

Pressing business in London left Suffolk and other government officials with little time to consider Miller's warnings. George III and his minsters were finalizing a new proclamation that spelled out the obligations of British subjects at home and in America to end the colonial rebellion. The King had made it a priority. It will put “people on their guard,” he wrote to Lord North, “and also as it shews the determination of prosecuting with vigour every measure that may tend to force these deluded people to submission.”<sup>61</sup> Parliament was also out of session and unable to act of Miller's report anyway.<sup>62</sup> It sat in Suffolk's office for two weeks before he replied that emigration “is an Affair that shall be considered” and expressed his “wish any Method could be immediately hit upon to prevent it.”<sup>63</sup> If the government developed one he would let Miller know, once again leaving it to the Scottish political leadership to take the initiative.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> George III to Lord North, 18 August 1775, in W. Bodham Donne, ed., *The Correspondence of King George The Third with Lord North From 1768-1783: Edited from the Originals at Windsor, with an introduction and Notes* (London: John Murry, 1867), 1:263-264

<sup>62</sup> The King in Council issued orders proroguing Parliament from 27 July to 14 September 1775. On 6 September that order was extended to 26 October. Orders in Council, 26 July 1775, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/119/75, TNA; 6 September 1775, Ibid., PC 2/119/93, TNA.

<sup>63</sup> Suffolk to Miller, 31 August 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/192, TNA.

One potential solution did remain that mirrored the argument that Parliament's declaration of rebellion gave the government expansive powers. Technically, the monarch possessed prerogative powers to stop subjects from leaving the British Isles under special circumstances. In 1693, the Court of King's Bench in England ruled in *Sands v. Child* that "the king by his prerogative may stop the ship of any subject, and shut up the ports of the kingdom at his pleasure, especially where the safety of the nation is concerned, viz. in time of an imminent danger" and "as he may stop *the ships*, so he may restrain *the persons* of his subjects from departing the kingdom, lest they should assist his enemies."<sup>64</sup> Since the Anglo-Scottish Treaty of Union placed all ports under the jurisdiction of the crown of a united kingdom this ruling extended to Scottish ports as well. The famed legal scholar Sir William Blackstone later clarified how the king could use this power. Citing seventeenth-century English jurist Sir Edward Coke, Blackstone argued in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* that the king "may prohibit any of his subjects from leaving the realm" during a time of war by issuing a proclamation, which had the force of law.<sup>65</sup>

What the legal scholars did not make clear is whether "war" and rebellion" were interchangeable nouns. The former invoked conflicts between independent states while the latter better described how the British thought about the American War for Independence—as an imperial civil war between members of the empire. The constitutional problem of restricting internal movement within the empire remained, and there is no evidence to suggest that George III entertained the idea of issuing a proclamation to stop ships and their passengers. Parliament's power relative to the monarch's further complicated this question. Parliament offered William of

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<sup>64</sup> Emphasis in the original. "Sands v Childs," 1693, in Thomas Leach, *Modern Reports; or, Select Cases Adjudged in the Courts of King's Bench, Chancery, Common Pleas, and Exchequer* (London, 1793), 4:189.

<sup>65</sup> William Carey Jones, ed., *Commentaries on the Laws of England by Sir William Blackstone* (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Company, 1915), 271; Edward Coke, *The Third Part of the Institute of the Laws of England: Concerning High Treason, and other Pleas of the Crown. And Criminal Causes* (London, 1817), 162.

Orange and his wife Mary the throne during the Glorious Revolution of the late 1680s on the condition that they agreed to limitations on the monarch's power. In the 1770s, as we have seen, many of the people who called for the government to intervene in emigration expected that Parliament, not the King, would employ its statutory authority to stop Scots from boarding transport ships. Sir James Grant of Grant had implied that Orders in Council could resolve this tension by treating a prohibition on the exportation of people no differently than weaponry. Yet, bypassing the legislature invited even greater public outcry than that which accompanied the leaked 1773 bill to impose stiff regulations on emigrating subjects.

Ironically, George III did issue a proclamation that made it possible to bring Scottish emigration to an end. The aforementioned business that delayed Suffolk's reply to Miller was the preparation of the King's "Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition." It was announced on August 23, 1775. The King called on all of his subjects to assist the government in extinguishing the American rebellion and to "disclose and make known all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which they shall know to be against us, our crown and dignity." Just as Parliament's earlier declaration had led Sir James and his correspondents to broadly construe its meaning as a way to prevent ships from leaving port, the new Proclamation afforded wide latitude to "all our Officers, as well civil and military...to use their utmost endeavours to withstand and suppress such rebellion."<sup>66</sup> This blanket authority became the legal basis for denying Scottish emigrants passage to America.

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<sup>66</sup> Minutes of the Privy Council, 23 August 1775, Privy Council: Registers, PC 2/119/82-84, TNA.

British officials in London briefly turned their attention to Scottish departures in the days following the Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition. The Lords Commissioners of the Treasury ordered the Scottish Board of Customs to produce “An Abstract Account of the Total Number of Persons emigrated from the different Ports” under the Board’s jurisdiction from December 1773 to the present day.<sup>67</sup> Unlike the English customs board, the Scottish board never appointed an individual to continually aggregate the incoming data. Nevertheless within a week they had prepared a document “distinguishing the number of Men, Women, and Children” down to August 25<sup>th</sup> and drafted a cover letter to send along with it.<sup>68</sup> The timing of the Treasury’s command one day after the King’s proclamation suggests that the Lords Commissioners found some merit in Miller’s arguments and perhaps wished to find a legal way to use the proclamation to shut up Scottish ports. It is important to note that the Lords Commissioners did not attempt to implement any restrictions on English emigration. Nor did Miller or Sir James have English counterparts pressing the Lords Commissioners or the secretaries of state that the depopulation of England threatened imperial security and British authority in America. The emphasis remained on how Scotland’s “epidemic” could undermine the empire.

In Edinburgh, Lord Advocate Henry Dundas received alarming new evidence that compelled him to act immediately. Newspapers reported that two ships, mostly likely the *Jeanie* and the *Lord Dunluce*, were anchored off the Isle of Gigha and taking on passengers from the Kintyre peninsula and surrounding region. Gigha lay just off the peninsula opposite the Isle of

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<sup>67</sup> An extract of John Robinson’s letter dated August 24th covering this order is within the minutes of the Scottish Board of Customs. The Commissioners received the charge on August 29th, and ordered an account to be made up immediately. Entry for 29 August 1775, Minutes of the Scottish Board of Customs, 14 November 1774 to 31 October 1776, CE1/14/189, NRS.

<sup>68</sup> Entry for 31 August 1775, Ibid., CE1/14/191, NRS.

Islay and was in Port Campbeltown's jurisdiction. Many Scots had departed from that area since the 1760s on their way to North Carolina or St. John's Island. Both vessels provisioned in Ireland before making their way east into Scottish waters from where they intended to transport emigrants to the Cape Fear River valley. The vessels were said to have a capacity for 150 people each and the passengers "seem no way intimidated" from emigrating to America despite the outbreak of war.<sup>69</sup>

The Scottish Board of Customs had adjourned for the weekend when on Saturday, September 2, 1775, the board secretary, Stephen Moyse, opened a letter from Dundas advising the commissioners of the two ships off of Gigha. Noting that the "Government has not hitherto seen cause to take any Coercive Measures to prevent such Emigration," he nonetheless argued that the American crisis demanded some kind of action. Dundas asked the commissioners to command its subordinates in the ports "to postpone the Clearing out of such Ships with Emigrants till further Order" and to try to prevent vessels they had already cleared out from sailing until they had consulted with officials in the Scottish capital. Moyse did not wait for the board to reconvene on the following Monday. He quickly dispatched letters to the Ports of Glasgow, Stornoway, Oban, and Campbeltown—key points of departure for emigrants—with orders for port officials to follow Dundas's wishes. Moyse instructed them to conduct "this Important Business in as private a manner as" possible to avoid agitating the passengers or crew aboard the vessels.<sup>70</sup> The last thing that Moyse wanted was panic among the emigrants or the

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<sup>69</sup> Quotation from *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 August 1775. Notice of the vessels also appeared in the *Edinburgh Courant* on or about the same date, as reported by the Scottish Board of Customs. Entry for 4 September 1775, Scottish Board of Customs. Minute Book, 14 November 1771 to 31 October 1776, CE1/14/196, NRS. The newspapers did not give the vessel's names, but Port Campbeltown officials named them in a report to the Scottish Board of Customs. Port Campbeltown Customs Officials to the Scottish Board of Customs, 8 September 1775, Port Campbeltown Records: Collector to Board, 1772-1776, Glasgow City Archives, The Mitchel Library, Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom, CE82/1/3/71-74. Hereafter "GCA."

<sup>70</sup> Dundas's letter survives in the minutes of the minutes of the Scottish Board of Customs. The newspaper reports on the two ships suggest that Dundas wrote it sometime between 28 August and 2 September 1775. Entry for 4

men whom they paid to transport them to America. Widely announcing a delay of an undetermined length risked shipmasters putting to sea in fear of a temporary restriction become permanent. Dealing with each ship quietly would allow port officials to control the narrative.

The September 2<sup>nd</sup> orders did not constitute an outright emigration ban. Delaying vessels in port bought time for customs officials to convince passengers of their folly and to search for weapons, ammunition, and other supplies useful to the American rebels. And it allowed Dundas more time to think through the legal implications of expanding the scope of these orders to include stopping emigrants from leaving. Only the King could stop ships from leaving port via proclamation, and Dundas was no king, but George III had unwittingly given him a tool in the form of the Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition. Scots in Edinburgh were aware of the proclamation by August 28<sup>th</sup> when the *Caledonian Mercury* published its text and the Earl of Suffolk had sent copies of it to senior Scottish politicians shortly after its announcement.<sup>71</sup> There is little doubt that Dundas knew of it when he read about the ships off of Gigha. Notice of both appeared in newspapers on the same date. The initial order to delay clearing out ships bought him a few days to examine the proclamation and consult with other legal minds about applying it to emigration.

By September 4<sup>th</sup>, Dundas had arrived at a solution to stop Scottish emigration for the duration of the American War for Independence. In a meeting with the Scottish customs commissioners, Dundas presented new evidence that among the many Scots emigrating to the colonies “some of them [went] with Money, arms and amunition” and argued that if left

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September 1775, Scottish Board of Customs. Minute Book, 14 November 1771 to 31 October 1776, CE1/14/196, NRS. Previous historians have ignored it, or conflated it with Dundas’s letter of 4 September 1775, possibly because the substance of the two letters appear in the same entry containing Dundas’s final order of the latter date. For an example of conflation see Adams and Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope*, 136.

<sup>71</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 August 1775; Suffolk to the Duke of Argyll, Lord Justice Clerk, and Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, 25 August 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP46/54/48, TNA; Miller acknowledged receipt of the document in Miller to Suffolk, 7 September 1775, Ibid., SP46/54/50, TNA.

unchecked these items “may afford aid and Support to the Rebels.” Emigrants did carry money with them across the Atlantic, but whether they carried weapons is harder to determine from the extant sources. Importantly, Dundas claimed to have come into possession of this evidence only *after* he had “received His Majestys Proclamation for suppressing Rebellion and Sedition.” No mention of these items appears in Moyses instructions two days earlier. Their alleged presence indicated a possible intent to commit treason. Dundas made it clear during the meeting that the king’s proclamation provided him with the legal authority to issue a new set of orders. And just in case the commissioners questioned the propriety of these new commands he brought Alexander Murray, Scotland’s solicitor general, with him to reinforce this point.<sup>72</sup>

The new orders danced around the king’s prerogative power. Dundas instructed the commissioners to command “Your Officers at the several Ports not to Give any Clearances to Ships bound to America, than have on board more than their proper crew.”<sup>73</sup> He sent dispatches containing nearly identical language about potentially treasonous emigrants and his proclamation-derived legal standing to the deputy admirals and sheriffs in Scotland instructing them to assist port officials in the execution of their duty.<sup>74</sup> Dundas avoided any conflict with the king’s authority to shut up the ports and prevent ships from sailing (as Sir James Grant of Grant hoped Parliament would do) by implementing restrictions on crew complements.

However, Dundas was well aware that these orders amounted to a ban on emigration, intruded on the King’s power to keep his subjects in Great Britain, and infringed on Parliament’s right to regulate shipping between the mother country and the colonies. That is why he issued the

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<sup>72</sup> Henry Dundas to the Scottish Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 4 September 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/172d, TNA. Dundas described appearing before the board in person along with Alexander Murray in Dundas to Suffolk, 4 September 1775, *Ibid.*, SP 54/45/172a, TNA.

<sup>73</sup> Dundas to the Scottish Commissioners of the Board of Customs, 4 September 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/172d, TNA.

<sup>74</sup> Dundas to the Sheriffs Deputes, 4 September 1775, *Ibid.*, SP 54/45/172b, TNA; Dundas to Admirals Deputes, 4 September 1775, *Ibid.*, SP 54/45/172c, TNA.

commands to Scottish authorities first before informing Whitehall what he had done. He felt it was better to ask for forgiveness in the course of rooting out treason and suppressing the rebellion than waiting for permission from authorities in London. To Lords North, Suffolk, and Edward Thurlow (England's attorney general), Dundas claimed that he had no choice but to act as it was "impossible to dive into the secret Intention of these Emigrants." These Scots might well be innocent, and yet "there is great reason to believe" they would "be put under the unavoidable necessity of assisting the Rebels" once in colonies.<sup>75</sup> Dundas assured William Eden, Suffolk's undersecretary of state, that he understood that his conduct bordered on the unconstitutional. Absent the "Rebellion in America, it would be wicked to keep your subjects at home by force," but sacrifices had to be made in a "free country" to preserve the greater imperial interest.<sup>76</sup>

The new orders quickly reached Scottish port and county officials. Port officers stopped clearing out ships pursuant to their instructions while local authorities partnered with the clergy to disseminate the message. In Inverness-shire, the county's justices of the peace transmitted copies of Dundas's orders to parish ministers stating their intention to enforce them and asked the clerics to make this known among their people. A relative of Sir James Grant of Grant toured the clan chief's lands with a copy of the resolution to put it "into our ministers hands in order that he may publish it from the pulpit" immediately after the coming Sunday's religious service.<sup>77</sup> They sought to use the clergy in the same manner as the Countess of Sutherland's tutors had once employed Assynt's parish minister to preach against emigration. Now the

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<sup>75</sup> Dundas to Suffolk, 4 September 1775, TNA: State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/45/172a. I have not found Dundas's letters to North or Weddburn. In a letter to William Eden, undersecretary of state under Suffolk, Dundas mentioned that he wrote the two men informing them of his actions. Dundas to Eden, 5 September 1775, The Auckland Papers, The British Library, London, England, United Kingdom, ADD MS34412 f. 352. Hereafter "BL."

<sup>76</sup> Dundas to Eden, 5 September 1775, *Ibid.*, f. 356, BL.

<sup>77</sup> James Grant, younger, to Sir James Grant of Grant, [N/A] September 1775, Papers of the Ogilvy family, Earls of Seafield 1205-1971, GD 248/52/1/23, NRS.

ministers preached compliance to the law and their duty to the king in ending the American rebellion.

The time it took to send Dundas's commands over eighteenth-century roads to distant ports and rugged mountainous counties meant that some emigrant vessels sailed away before officers received them. They arrived too late in the Orkney Islands, ten miles north of the Scottish mainland, to stop the *Marlborough* from sailing for Savannah, Georgia with fifty-three indentured servants aboard.<sup>78</sup> It is the final ship mentioned in the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury's emigrant records.

Nor did the orders arrive in time to detain the *Jeanie* or the *Lord Dunluce*. Port Campbeltown officials actually began to implement Dundas's first set of instructions to delay all departures and report back on their status before they had received the final directive. The *Lord Dunluce* had already called at Campbeltown and paid customs duties before dropping anchor off Gigha to wait for more passengers. The vessel sailed with an estimated 300 people before port officials could delay her further. They had more success with the *Jeanie*. The ship had on board rum and molasses that the captain claimed was for the passengers' use. He requested permission to disembark without first landing the items and clearing them through customs. The Campbeltown officials refused by citing a section of the 1764 Sugar Act designed to crack down on illegal smuggling.<sup>79</sup> The delay forced the *Jeanie's* captain to send his passengers's personal effects on ahead to North Carolina via another ship while the customs administrators seized his goods.

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<sup>78</sup> Scottish Commissioners of the Customs to John Robinson, 25 September 1775, Treasury Records, T47/12/109, TNA.

<sup>79</sup> 4 Geo. III Chap. 15. Sec. 30. "The Sugar Act," *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, accessed 1 June 2016, [[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/sugar\\_act\\_1764.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/sugar_act_1764.asp)]. The Campbeltown officials mistakenly wrote "Chap. 5" in their letter to the Scottish Customs Commissioners. Chap. 5 is the Royal Family Act of 1763.

The collector and the comptroller warned their superiors in Edinburgh that they had few other means to stall the *Jeanie* once they had confiscated the illegal items.<sup>80</sup> The men sent to inspect the ship did, however, make one other discovery. The tide surveyor found among the passengers “one Gun and the lock and Barrel of another Gun with five pounds of Gunpowder.” Here were the arms and ammunition Dundas claimed as justification for preventing emigration, only he could not have known about these particular pieces. The Campbeltown officials confiscated them under the existing Orders in Council that prohibited the exportation of such items to the colonies. Once they had secured the rum, molasses, and weapons they had no ability to detain the vessel any longer. It sailed for North Carolina with 245 people aboard. Dundas’s new orders arrived in Campeltown one day later.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

Dundas faced only minor criticism for his actions. Some critics argued quite correctly that the Lord Advocate usurped the legislative process and encroached on the king’s prerogative.<sup>82</sup> Six months after the order went into effect fellow Scottish politician John Johnstone ridiculed Dundas in Parliament. Following a Dundas comment that Scotland valued the “Principles of Liberty,” Johnstone argued that liberty could not exist in a country that “tamely submitted” to an officer of the crown who stopped “subjects of Britain from going to any Part of

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<sup>80</sup> Campbeltown Collectors to Board, 8 September 1775, CE82/1/3/73, Port Campbeltown Records: Collector to Board, 1772-1776, GCA.

<sup>81</sup> Campbeltown Collectors to Board, 9 September 1775, Ibid., CE82/1/3/75, GCA; Same to Same, 9 September 1775, enclosing “Return No. 56 of Seizure of One Gun one barrel and one lock of a Gun and five pounds of Gunpowder,” Ibid, GCA.

<sup>82</sup> “To the Printer of the Edinburgh Advertiser,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 29 September 1775; “To the Printer of the Edinburgh Advertiser, Glasgow, Oct. 13, 1775,” *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 20 October 1775.

his Majesty's Dominions they thought proper." Dundas leapt to his feet and began to vigorously defend his conduct before his friends persuaded him to calm down.<sup>83</sup>

In general, however, Dundas had support where it mattered the most. That included George III, who approved of his Lord Advocate's strategy.<sup>84</sup> The King had no objection to restraining Scottish emigrants in the interest of preserving the empire and his subjects from destruction. Dundas found similar approbation in the newspapers.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Scottish public opinion by and large favored the British government's efforts to bring the Americans to heel in the early years of the rebellion. Scotland's parliamentary delegation supported the government's position, as did moderates in the Church of Scotland. Orthodox clerics, like the emigrant John Witherspoon, expressed greater sympathy for the Americans and their interpretation of the imperial constitution. Leading intellectuals, with the major exception of David Hume, mostly supported the government's authority. Glasgow merchants initially opposed the war in fear that it would compromise their ability to collect debts from Chesapeake planters and other American producers, but relaxed their opposition once they suffered less than they had imagined.<sup>86</sup>

Dundas's order stood for the rest of the war. It successfully ended out migration from Scottish ports. No evidence indicates that additional ships sailed from the remote bays or creeks, as Thomas Miller feared. Disseminating the order through local law enforcement and the clergy, coupled with fresh reports of the war and the resumption of military recruiting in Scotland, helped to convince Scots that the conflict in America had expanded beyond New England's borders. Proprietors used the war to their advantage as well. The "troubles in Boston" frightened

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<sup>83</sup> Dundas to Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, 16 March 1776, Papers of the Montague-Douglas-Scott Family, Dukes of Buccleuch: Political Papers, Mainly Letters from Henry Dundas, GD224/30/1/9-11, NRS.

<sup>84</sup> Dundas to Suffolk, 21 September 1775, State Papers: Scotland, SP 54/46/51, TNA.

<sup>85</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 06 September 1775; "To the Printer of the Edinburgh Advertiser. Edin. Oct. 18, 1775." in *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 20 October 1775.

<sup>86</sup> Dalphy I. Fagerstrom, "Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11 (1954): 252-275.

residents on the Isle of Arran who had intended to emigrate to North Carolina. The landholders increased those fears and convinced islanders that “they will be pressed for sea or land service each before” they reached American shores.<sup>87</sup> That is not to suggest that some Scots did not make their way to the colonies via Liverpool or some other English port, only to emphasize what Dundas achieved in Scotland. He reached deeper into the well of British authority, moving beyond Sir James Grant of Grant’s perspective on Parliament’s declaration of rebellion, and used the authority in George III’s own proclamation on the revolt to deploy a modified form of the king’s prerogative.

What Dundas also likely knew by September 1775 was that he was not the only one who had developed an innovated solution to Scotland’s emigration problem. At the behest of Allan MacLean of Torloisk, the British government authorized a secret plan to employ Scottish emigrants in service to the imperial state. Much of the desire to restrict emigration stemmed from a belief that Scots, especially Highlanders, would make for good soldiers in the colonies. Dundas’s orders were meant to deprive the Americans of that benefit. MacLean’s task was to turn emigrants into British soldiers.

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<sup>87</sup> Hector McAlester to Alexander McAlester, 22 August 1775, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Chapter 7: The Secret Strategy of the Final Recruitment: Emigration and War in the Early Years of the American Revolution

In the spring of 1776, the Scottish lawyer and politician Henry Erskine poetically lamented Scotland's role in the imperial civil war. Erskine, who in 1783 rose to become Lord Advocate, published "The Emigrant. An Eclogue" in the pages of the *Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh Amusement*. In the poem, Erskine adopted the persona of a Scottish Highlander bidding farewell to his native land as he prepared to sail with his wife and two surviving sons for North America. Erskine's protagonist, whose "silver grey" hair and "rough face had seen a better day," watched as a ship swayed at anchor in a nameless port. Driven away from his land by an "avaricious tyrant" for a landlord who raised rents beyond what the old Highlander could pay, the vessel stood ready to carry the Emigrant and his family to a "foreign land to seek a grave." Near the end of the poem, Erskine's Emigrant offered a warning:

On you, dear native land, from whence I part;  
Rest the best blessing of a broken heart.  
His hostile legions on Britannia's strand,  
May she not, then, th' alarm found in vain,  
Or miss her banish'd thousands on the plain,  
Still may she conquer, without aid of those  
Who fly their *friends*., — but never fled their *foes*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Emigrant. An Eclogue. Occasioned by the late numerous Emigrations from the Highlands of Scotland," *Weekly Magazine, or, Edinburgh Amusement* 31 (21 March 1776): 399-400. Emphasis in the original. Erskine published under the name "Scots Spy." The piece appeared under his name in 1796. See Henry Erskine, *The Emigrant. A Poem to which is added, Dr. Smollet's Ode to Leven Water* (Glasgow, 1796).

Erskine placed into his Emigrant's mouth the suggestion that the loss of so many Highlanders deprived the British state of future soldiers. That belief inspired the creation of a policy to stop Scots from emigrating to North America in September 1775. It was predicated on the idea that American Patriots could (or did) successfully convince alienated and disaffected people to join the rebellion. It emerged from the same mindset that led Thomas Miller, James Boswell, Dr. Samuel Johnson, and Sir James Grant of Grant to see a revolution at work in Scotland. Emigration and all that caused it destroyed the bonds between women, men, and their native soil. Their willing removal to a continent engaged in rebellion called into question their loyalty to their king and country.

Dundas's legal maneuvering to suppress their means of transportation to the colonies was the latest gambit in a decade-old competition between America and Scotland over people. Yet, it could do little to assist British officials in winning the loyalty of those already in America. Prompters sold a colonial world of prosperity in recruiting Scots to New York, St. John's Island, North Carolina, and other colonies. Regardless of the war, some Scots still believed that they would be "fine Ladies and Gentlemen and to enter into a Land flowering with Truth and Honey."<sup>2</sup> Emigrants faced the difficult choice of choosing between suitors with two different visions for America's future.

Twenty years after the British government turned to Scotland to fight an imperial war in America, conflict once again entangled the two British dominions. The early years of the American War for Independence engendered a new competition for the loyalty of Scottish emigrants with far greater stakes. Much as colonial promoters, American proprietors, and Scottish lairds vied for emigrants before the war, the authorization of an ambitious strategy to

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander McAlester of Court to Alexander McAlester, 20 August 1775, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

recruit emigrants into British forces occurred within a similar framework. Both American leaders and British authorities recognized emigrants, especially Highlanders, as potential threats or important assets to their respective causes. Allan MacLean of Torloisk and his fellow officers believed that emigrants could be useful in Britain's fight to suppress the rebellion. Colonists such as John Witherspoon envisioned a role for Scots in an independent America. They competed with each other for the emigrants' fealty and at the same time attempted to mitigate any risk that these people posed to British or American authority. In emigrants they both saw a pathway to victory or defeat in this new war for the fate of Britain's American empire.

### **The Proposal**

The high politics of the emigration ban masked a secret initiative to recruit Scottish emigrants into the British Army. Its existence may indicate another reason why Lord North and his fellow cabinet ministers did not pursue their own strategy to restrain emigration despite warnings of emigrants' questionable loyalty. In a way, permitting emigration to continue prepositioned forces in the colonies without the actual appearance or the cost of deploying troops to Massachusetts, New York, or North Carolina. Like the pressure to investigate Scottish departures and the search for a legal means to keep Scots at home, however, the idea to recruit emigrants in America originated in Scotland.

Allan MacLean of Torloisk on the Isle of Mull persuaded Lord North and the King that he could raise a regiment among the men who had settled in the colonies. MacLean sided with the Stuart Pretender in the mid-1740s. He managed to escape to the Netherlands and he served in the Scots Brigade until the French captured him in battle. In 1750, he accepted George II's offer

of amnesty and returned to Britain. The Seven Years War gave MacLean, as it did other Jacobites, the chance to prove his loyalty to the Hanoverian line. He joined the Royal American Regiment in 1756 and served in New York's northern borderlands for the next five years before raising his own Highlander regiment near the end of the war. Some of his men later settled on St. John's Island.

MacLean went on half-pay, a form of semi-retirement for officers not on active duty, before returning to active service in the early 1770s.<sup>3</sup> He, too, believed that emigrants in America had a military utility, just not in the way that emigration's opponents imagined. Dundas had argued that stopping emigration preserved the Highlands "as a Nursery of strength and Security to the Kingdom" that bred men "born to be soldiers."<sup>4</sup> He assigned the transformation of the clan chief into a proprietor as the primary reason Highland Scots fled to America. MacLean, himself a laird, believed that emigrants could be a bastion of much needed strength for the British Army in the colonies. He sought to appeal to a lingering sense of clanship to bring men together in defense of the empire.

In early 1775, MacLean approached Lord North with a proposal to recruit emigrants in America.<sup>5</sup> Parliament had just declared the New England colonies to be in a state of rebellion. That action had motivated Sir James Grant of Grant to argue for new regulations restricting emigration, and although it probably gave MacLean some inspiration for his proposed mission, there does not appear to be any relationship between the proponents of these restrictions and the war veteran. They operated independently of each other. The need to maintain secrecy meant that very few individuals beyond George III, Lord North, and select military officers had knowledge

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<sup>3</sup> G. F. G. Stanley, "MACLEAN, ALLAN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed June 24, 2016, [[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/maclean\\_allan\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/maclean_allan_4E.html).]

<sup>4</sup> Dundas to Eden, 5 September 1775, The Auckland Papers, The British Library, London, England, United Kingdom, ADD MS34412 f. 355.

<sup>5</sup> Lord North to George III, 17 February 1775, The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, England, United Kingdom, GEO/MAIN/1960. Hereafter "RA."

of the plan. They did not wish for word of it to leak to America lest the leaders of the emergent rebellion learn of a plot to bolster loyalist support in the colonies.

The secret endeavor required getting MacLean to North America without arousing anyone's suspicion. He suggested a stratagem to conceal the true nature of his expedition: have the King grant him lands in America "as a pretext for going there," land that he promised to give back once he had completed his mission and returned home. The site of a Scot traveling to inspect his lands in America would not have been out of the ordinary given the King's grants to other individuals, and in light of continued emigration. George III thought that the scheme deserved consideration.<sup>6</sup> In early April, the King authorized the mission.<sup>7</sup> He did not grant MacLean the lands as part of the ruse, but the Scottish officer did maintain that cover story once he made it to the colonies.

MacLean waited until after George III had consented to his strategy to discuss his compensation. In the event that he died in battle, MacLean asked for a generous annual pension for his wife and land grants for any future children.<sup>8</sup> An incredulous George III balked at the size of the pension request, which may have exceeded £100. It had "the air of either of being actuated by the over cunning his Countrymen are accused of" or the confidence that "his services cannot be supplied by any other person." If MacLean did not accept a more reasonable pension and regular pay as Lieutenant Colonel Commandant, George III was certain that General Gage could find someone else to do the job.<sup>9</sup> MacLean wisely accepted the offer. He sailed for New York

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<sup>6</sup> George III to Lord North, 17 February 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/1961. MacLean's proposal was included as an enclosure to this letter, but it is now missing. The substance of it is in the letter cited in the following footnote.

<sup>7</sup> George III to Governors William Tryon of New York and Josiah Martin of North Carolina, (Secret), 3 April 1775, in E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1857), 8:562.

<sup>8</sup> Lord North to George III, 4 April 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/2001.

<sup>9</sup> George III to Lord North, 4 April 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/2002.

aboard a mail packet instead of a regular passenger ship to avoid detection.<sup>10</sup> From there he took passage to Boston on a vessel bearing general dispatches to meet with Gage and begin his work.<sup>11</sup>

### *Anti-Scottish Sentiment*

The newly minted Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Allan MacLean sailed into a colonial world in some places rife with anti-Scottish sentiment. In the mid-1770s, Anglo-American planters in the Chesapeake and New England merchants grew increasingly uncomfortable with the dominant role Glaswegian corporations played in the transatlantic economy.<sup>12</sup> This was especially true in Virginia and Maryland where Glasgow merchants such as Alexander Speirs established stores in Virginia's Northern Neck, Oxford, Maryland, and other coastal communities to engage in commerce. These Scottish "Tobacco Lords" assumed control of that trade in the 1750s and emerged as dominant players in the Atlantic economy with some unintended consequences.

The historian Albert Tillson has shown that the Scottish use of credit to lubricate the tobacco trade created a crisis of authority among Anglo-Virginians like George Mason. He and his fellow planters believed that indebtedness to Scottish merchant houses compromised their own personal independence. Worse still for Mason and his ilk, the stores sold goods on credit and extended it to poorer whites, thereby weakening the social control wealthy planters could exert over the lower classes by lending money to their social inferiors. During the imperial crisis

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Montgomery to Peter Van Brugh Livingston, 8 August 1775, in *Journals of the Provincial Congress, Provincial Convention, Committee of Safety and Council of Safety of the State of New-York 1775-1776-1777* (Albany: Thurlow Weed, 1842), 1:104. Here after "JPCNY."

<sup>11</sup> Cadwallader Colden to Dartmouth, 7 June 1775, *DCHSNY*, 8:588.

<sup>12</sup> For New England see, Colin Nicolson, "A Plan "To Banish All the Scotchmen": Victimization and Political Mobilization in Pre-Revolutionary Boston," *Massachusetts Historical Review* 9 (January 2007): 55-102.

planters feared that Scottish merchants would use poorer whites' debt as leverage to convince them to break with the Virginia gentry and side with the British.<sup>13</sup> James MacLeod, a store clerk in Virginia, complained that planters "Choose to pay as little of their debts particularly to Scotsmen" as they could.<sup>14</sup> The Maryland planter elite held similar beliefs. After the war began one Maryland politician relished the prospect of driving Scottish merchants out of the colonies.<sup>15</sup> William MacLeod, James's brother, then serving as a clerk in Maryland found that "a mans being a Scotchman is sufficient to condemn him" and that they were "looked upon as the greatest enemys to America."<sup>16</sup> Notwithstanding MacLeod's exaggeration it was a difficult time to be Scottish in Virginia and Maryland.

Anglo-Virginians lambasted Scots in print and in public. In October 1774, the *Virginia Gazette* ran a London commentary that described how a "*Scotchman*" carefully usurped an individual's business and life. When he is "first admitted into a house, [he] is so humble that he will sit upon the lowest step of the staircase." Slowly, however, he convinces his host to show him the kitchen, the parlor, and the dining room. Soon he will turn the owner "out of doors, and, by the assistance of his *countrymen*, keep possession forever."<sup>17</sup> In Mecklenburg County, a man calling for the expulsion of Scots gained 300 signatures on a petition before "the Parson of the Parish (one Cameron from the Highlands) followed him & gave him a good & most complete

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Tillson, *Accommodating Revolutions: Virginia's Northern Neck in an Era of Transformations, 1760-1810* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 153-174. Tillson nicely refutes Andrew Hook's claim that American mistrust of Scots was broad based and rooted in the memory of the 1745 rebellion by showing how anti-Scottish sentiment was prominent in some colonies because of the way Scots operated in them. See Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study in Cultural Relations, 1750-1835* (Glasgow and London: Blackie, 1975), 54.

<sup>14</sup> James MacLeod to Donald MacLeod, 23 June 1775, MacLeod of Geanies Papers, The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom, MS.19297, ff.13-14. Hereafter "NLS."

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Johnson, Jr. to Horatio Gate, 18 August 1775, in Peter Force, ed., *American Archives: Fourth Series. Containing A Documentary History of the English Colonies in North America, From the King's Message to Parliament, of March 7, 1774 to The Declaration of Independence by The United States* (Washington, D.C., 1840), 3:155.

<sup>16</sup> William MacLeod to Donald MacLeod, 8 September 1775, MacLeod of Geanies Papers, MS.19297, ff.48-49, NLS.

<sup>17</sup> *Virginia Gazette* (Pickney), 20 October 1774.

caning.”<sup>18</sup> In a play entitled *Patriots* by Robert Mumford, three Scotsmen, “M’Flint,” “M’Squeeze,” and “M’Gripe” are drug before a Virginia committee of safety to answer for their offense. When M’Flint inquired into the nature of their crimes, once committeeman replied that “they are Scotchmen; every Scotchman being an enemy” to America.<sup>19</sup>

Virginia governor John Murray, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunmore, did little to rehabilitate his countrymen’s image. The Scottish nobleman and the Virginia elite in the House of Burgesses never enjoyed good relations. When the war broke out Lord Dunmore seized control of military supplies in Williamsburg. Confrontations with colonial militia forced him to seek refuge aboard a British warship in the York River from where he rallied loyal Scots in Norfolk to the King’s standard and directed raiding parties against rebel forces. He also issued a proclamation in November 1775 that promised freedom to slaves that served the king against their Patriot masters. Anglo-Virginians’ long feared slave insurrections and Lord Dunmore’s actions confirmed in their minds that the governor would use any means necessary to defeat them.<sup>20</sup>

The anti-Scottish sentiment manifested itself in ironic ways. In August 1775, the Virginia Convention of Delegates, an extralegal assembly that assumed power in the colony after Dunmore dissolved the House of Burgesses, met to appoint the colonels of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment. The two leading candidates were of Scottish descent. The primary candidate, Dr. Hugh Mercer, had proper military credentials. The former Jacobite had fled to the colonies in the 1740s and later served alongside George Washington as a colonel in the French and Indian War. The other candidate, Patrick Henry, was a first generation Scottish-American. He was the son of

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<sup>18</sup> James Gilchrist to Captain James Parker, 22 December 1774, in “Jameson—Ellegood—Parker,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 13 (July 1904): 69.

<sup>19</sup> Courtlandt Canby, ed., “Robert Munford’s *The Patriots*,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 6 (July 1949): 461.

<sup>20</sup> For Lord Dunmore’s reign see, James Corbett David, *The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America—with Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping, Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Illegal Royal Weddings* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013). See also Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

early eighteenth century emigrant from Aberdeenshire. Henry had little military experience beyond riding at the head of the Hanover County militia to confront Lord Dunmore. Mercer edged out Henry by a single vote on the first ballot.<sup>21</sup> In the debate that followed some delegates openly objected to Mercer because he was a “North Britain.”<sup>22</sup> That, in their minds, rendered him untrustworthy and likely to betray the American cause. Henry’s commitment to American liberty was much less in doubt. He had led Virginian resistance to the Stamp Act and more recently helped to drive Dunmore into the river. The delegates gave Henry the command. Mercer died at the Battle of Princeton in January 1777 as a brigadier general in the Continental Army.

Scots in New York and North Carolina experienced less ethnic tension in the years before the war. MacLean hoped to recruit his Highlanders primarily from these colonies.<sup>23</sup> They did not engender the kind of hatred Scots in the Chesapeake faced because they were predominantly farmers settled on newly opened lands and not businessmen entangled in complex financial relationships with Anglo-American clients. Settling in ethnically cohesive communities at distances from the main population centers helped as well. Highlanders did not linger in the city of New York. They passed through it on their way to Albany and settlements north and west of that place. The one major instance of violence—the Green Mountain Boys’ raid on Lt. Colonel John Reid’s settlers—resulted from conflicting land claims and not ethnic hostility. In North Carolina, the significant presence of Lowland merchants in Wilmington and Highlanders in Cumberland and the surrounding counties since the 1730s helped to establish an entrenched ethnic minority. The merchants played an important role in the colony’s life long before the

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<sup>21</sup> *Proceedings of the Convention of Delegates*, 5 August 1775, enclosed in Lord Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, 24 September 1775, Correspondence, Original – Secretary of State, Virginia Part I, CO 5/1353, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, London, United Kingdom. Hereafter “TNA.”

<sup>22</sup> Cato to Messrs. Dixon and Hunter, c. February 1776, *American Archives* (1843), 4:1519-1520.

<sup>23</sup> This is expressly stated in the Earl of Dartmouth’s letter to General Gage informing him of MacLean’s mission. Dartmouth to Gage, 15 April 1775, Records of the British Colonial Office, Class 5, CO 5/91 Part 1 (Microfilm), Center for Research Libraries, Chicago, Illinois. Hereafter “CRL.”

imperial crisis and American Revolution. By contrast, the Scots in the Chesapeake were more recent and aggressive additions to those colonies.

### *Organizing The Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment*

What MacLean and his subordinates discovered was that recruiting Scots in the New York and North Carolina backcountries was not be as easy as they might have imagined. War had broken out by the time that MacLean disembarked in New York. General Gage welcomed all that support he could get as provincial forces besieged his army in Boston in the aftermath of Lexington and Concord. When MacLean arrived in the Boston in May 1775, Gage informed the Earl of Dartmouth that the remaining New England colonies had risen in rebellion, Philadelphians and New Yorkers “are arming,” and colonists in the Southern provinces had followed the same course.<sup>24</sup>

The back parts of North Carolina and New York looked like sources of hope to British authorities. The young governor in the former colony, Josiah Martin, repeatedly assured Gage in the spring and summer of 1775 that the Highlanders in the backcountry would maintain the King’s authority if called upon. More than seven hundred people had resettled there in the preceding months. Martin could not fathom why the Scottish landlords did not do more to protect their own interests and incentivize their people to remain at home. Nevertheless, he believed that their loss was a gain to the colony and to the British Army.<sup>25</sup> Alexander McAlester thought otherwise. The Coercive Acts had “roused the spirrit of every true american” in the colony and

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<sup>24</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, 25 May 1775, Ibid., CO 5/92 Part 2, CRL.

<sup>25</sup> Josiah Martin to Dartmouth, 10 March 1775, William Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, (Raleigh, N.C.: P. M. Hale, Printer to the State, 1886), 9:1159; Martin to Gage, 16 March 1775, Ibid., 9:1167; Martin to Dartmouth, 23 March 1775, Ibid., 9:1174.

the royal provincial government closed the colony's land office in 1775, which "is very hard on the Emigrants that is coming in" as it prevented them from acquiring land patents. Beyond that he had heard no complaint from anyone who had emigrated.<sup>26</sup> McAlester took that as an indication that they, too, shared the American perspective on the dispute with Britain.

British leaders had high expectations for New York. In a dispatch marked "secret," Dartmouth instructed Lt. Governor Cadwallader Colden to assist MacLean and "guard against any discovery of the real object" of the his mission.<sup>27</sup> MacLean made preparations to travel to Johnstown along the Mohawk River as part of his recruiting efforts.<sup>28</sup> Johnstown was now the seat of the recently created Tryon County. It served as a rallying point for resistance to Patriot rule. The inhabitants of Tryon as well as Gloucester and Cumberland counties, all three formerly part of Albany County and the locations of significant Scottish settlement, refused to send delegates to the new Provincial Congress that was engaged in a struggle with royal authorities for control of the colony.<sup>29</sup> Sir William Johnson had died the previous summer and left his lands to his son, John, while his nephew, Guy, became the new Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He also left the legacy of a partially restored Highland social order that bound several hundred Highland emigrants to him on his Kingsborough lands. The Scots from Lochaber and the MacDonells of Glengarry adhered to Sir William because he had offered them land on good terms with promises of protection and a willingness to maintain the social authority of the minor Scottish gentry. Sir William was also a loyal subject of George III and both his son and nephew maintained that allegiance. MacLean sought to appeal to that legacy.

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander McAlester to John Boyd, 4 January 1775, McAllister Family Papers, #3774-z, SHC.

<sup>27</sup> Dartmouth to Colden, 5 April 1775, Cadwallader Colden, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1923), 8:281. MacLean delivered this letter to Colden.

<sup>28</sup> Colden to Dartmouth, 3 July 1775, *DCHSNY*, 8:588.

<sup>29</sup> Colden to Dartmouth, 7 June 1775, *Ibid.*, 8:580.

The formal recruiting process began when Gage issued MacLean orders to recruit two battalions of ten companies each. The corps would be called the “Royal Highland Emigrants.” Gage’s beating order authorized MacLean to recruit “such Highlanders, or other Loyall subjects” that he could in any of the American colonies. MacLean was to rendezvous his recruits on Lake Champlain—right where many Scottish military emigrants had settled and from where they could take in supplies from Canada—or any place “Most Practicable” should the preferred option be unavailable.<sup>30</sup> He eventually decided to make his headquarters in Halifax, Nova Scotia and base the regiment’s operations there. Later orders specified that recruits would receive a land bounty in exchange for their service on terms far more generous than that which the rank and file had been offered in the Proclamation of 1763. The King would grant recruits 200 acres of land in any American colony, pay all fees associated with the grant, forego quit rents for twenty years, and grant married men an additional 50 acres for their wives and for each child.<sup>31</sup>

Gage commissioned a number of experienced officers for the regiment’s two battalion Duncan Campbell joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion as a captain under Major John Small’s command. He came to Boston in 1774 with the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot. Before that he was a resident of Dutchess County, New York.<sup>32</sup> Small was a veteran of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and had remained on nearly continuous active duty since the Seven Years War ended. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion also included a familiar name, John MacDonald of Glenaladale.<sup>33</sup> The leader of the Scottish Catholics on St.

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<sup>30</sup> Gage to Allan MacLean, Beating Order, 12 June 1775, (copy), MacLaine of Lochbuie Papers, 1630-1904, GD174/2091, NRS. A second copy is in the War Office Papers, Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment, WO 28/4/211, NRS.

<sup>31</sup> “Bounties in Land to Soldiers enlisting in the Company of Royal Highland Emigrants,” Captain William Dunbar’s Company, Quebec, 1 August 1775, in Peter Force, *American Archives*, accessed 25 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A78370>]; Certificate of Duncan McArthur, 18 December 1775, in *Ibid.* The 200 acres was double what the King had originally authorized. George III to Governors William Tryon of New York and Josiah Martin of North Carolina, (Secret), 3 April 1775, *DCHSNY*, 8:562.

<sup>32</sup> Examination of Captain Duncan Campbell, enclosed in John Hancock to the New York Provincial Congress, 26 October 1775, *JPCNY*, 1:188.

<sup>33</sup> List of Officers - 2nd Battalion Royal Highland Emigrants, 1777, War Office Papers: Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment, WO 28/4/288, TNA.

John's Island had explored opportunities in the older mainland colonies before deciding to stay on his island. MacLean and Small convinced him to join their new regiment despite his lack of military experience.<sup>34</sup> Six out of the seven captains in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion served in the 60<sup>th</sup> (Royal American) Regiment and the 78<sup>th</sup> (Fraser's Highlanders) Regiment during the Seven Years War.<sup>35</sup>

The British army commanders implemented a strategy to recruit Scottish emigrants already in the colonies and those that were on their way. This necessitated cooperation with British warships operating in American waters. While Gage was commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America, Vice Admiral Samuel Graves held the command of the North American Station, which was charged with the naval defense of the American mainland. Graves and one of his subordinates, Captain George Vandeput of the *H.M.S. Asia*, worked with Gage and MacLean to find new recruits. MacLean sent several of the new regiment's officers to recruit in New York, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and North Carolina.<sup>36</sup> The need for men now was very great. One month after the army's costly victory at Bunker Hill, Gage ordered Duncan Campbell and Lt. Symes, formerly a surgeon's mate in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, to take a transport ship to the city of New York and bring on board any men willing to serve. They were "particularly to attend to the arrival of ships expected from Scotland" and explicitly commanded "not to suffer any of those emigrants to join the rebels on shore; and to give every encouragement to all the Scotch and other nations that will join you." Campbell and Symes were instructed to coordinate their efforts with Captain Vandeput once they had arrived in New York.<sup>37</sup> Major Small soon left to raise men

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<sup>34</sup> F. L. Pigot, "MacDONALD OF GLENALADALE, JOHN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed June 27, 2016, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macdonald\_of\_glenaladale\_john\_5E.html].

<sup>35</sup> Return of the Dates of Commissions of the Officers present of His Majesty's First Battalion of Royal Highland Emigrants, 2 March 1777, War Office Papers: Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment, WO 28/4/216, TNA.

<sup>36</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, 12 June 1775, CO 5/92 Part 2, CRL; Same to Same 24 July 1775, Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Gage to Campbell and Symes, 18 July 1775, enclosed in Examination of Captain Duncan Campbell, itself enclosed in John Hancock to the New York Provincial Congress, 26 October 1775, *JPCNY*, 1:188.

in Nova Scotia. MacLean prepared to head north for the Mohawk River.<sup>38</sup> Gage sent two more men, Lt. Colonel Donald McDonald and Captain Donald MacLeod, to meet with Highlanders in North Carolina.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Plot Uncovered*

The Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment began its life as a secret project to bolster British forces in America and prevent Scottish emigrants from joining other colonists in resisting British authority. Carelessness and cavalier attitudes nearly upended the entire mission almost immediately. In mid-June 1775, New York provincial forces captured Sergeant Angus McDonald. Under interrogation by a committee of the Provincial Congress, McDonald revealed that Major Small had approached him months before and asked him to be ready to recruit soldiers for a battalion if and when the time came. When MacLean appeared in New York with orders to raise an emigrant regiment, Small set McDonald to work. While MacLean traveled to Boston to confer with Gage, McDonald took “the names of upwards of forty men, who had promised to enlist in a battalion, [and] to wear Highland dress.”<sup>40</sup> McDonald was captured with a letter stating the rewards that emigrants would receive for joining the regiment.<sup>41</sup> The committee well knew that many Highlanders lived in Albany County and the surrounding region. Did British forces intended to recruit there? McDonald’s answer was revealing. From what he knew

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<sup>38</sup> Colden to Dartmouth, 3 July 1775, *DCHSNY*, 8:588.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Johnston to the Wilmington Committee of Safety, 21 July 1775, in Leora H. McEachern and Isabel M. Williams, eds., *Wilmington-New Hanover Safety Committee Minutes* (Wilmington: Wilmington-New Hanover County American Revolution Bi-centennial Association, 1974), 48.

<sup>40</sup> Entry for 14 June 1775, Journal of the Provincial Congress of New York, *JPCNY*, 1:42.

<sup>41</sup> Deposition of Angus McDonald, 14 June 1775, *Ibid.*, 43.

no man had enlisted from that county, but only because “there is no person there to engage them.”<sup>42</sup> The Provincial Congress sent McDonald to a military prison camp in Connecticut.<sup>43</sup>

McDonald’s capture and confession put American politicians on a heightened state of alert. It “has raised a violent suspicion against Scots and Highlanders and will make the execution of Coll Maclean’s Plan more difficult,” Lt. Governor Colden informed Dartmouth.<sup>44</sup> MacLean did not help his cause either. When he returned to New York from Boston, MacLean left on board the vessel a copy of Gage’s orders to raise the regiment. Provincial forces captured that vessel, the schooner *Neptune*, in August 1775 and with it the commanding officer and MacLean’s papers.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, Brigadier General Richard Montgomery of the Continental Army learned that MacLean had passed through northern New York on his way to Canada to link up with Guy Johnson, who had fled to Montreal in the spring with some American loyalists and Mohawk Indians. A bateau pilot testified that MacLean revealed to him the nature of his mission and even his cover story about visiting a land grant. Once in Oswego, MacLean “boasted of his exploit, [and] put on a red coat” to join Johnson in Canada.<sup>46</sup> In October, American forces captured Captain Duncan Campbell, Lt. Symes, and several of their recruits after their transport ran aground off of New Jersey. Their testimony before the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety revealed that Campbell had sought out recruits among his Dutchess County neighbors. Campbell managed to get about sixty volunteers to Boston before he and the newer recruits fell into Continental hands.<sup>47</sup> He was confined to a prison in Philadelphia after his interrogation.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> New York Provincial Congress to Major General David Wooster, 14 June 1775, Ibid., 43.

<sup>44</sup> Colden to Dartmouth, 3 July 1775, *DCHSNY*, 8:588.

<sup>45</sup> The examination of Capt. Melancton Lawrence before a committee of the Congress on the 24th day of August 1775, *JPCNY*, 1:119.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Montgomery to Peter Van Brugh Livingston, 8 August 1775, Ibid, 106.

<sup>47</sup> 25 October 1775, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, accessed 27 June 2016, [<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwjc.html>]. Generic link omitted in subsequent footnotes. Hereafter “JCC.” John Hancock to the New York Provincial Congress, 26 October 1775, with enclosed examinations, *JPCNY*, 1:188.

The revelations about the emigrant regiment made North Carolina's patriot leaders deeply suspicious of the recently arrived Highlanders. Rumors circulated in the colony that Allan MacDonald, Flora MacDonald's husband, intended "to raise Troops to support the Arbitrary measures of the Ministry against the Americans in this Colony." The Wilmington Committee at Safety demanded to know if this was true.<sup>48</sup> It was. Eager to please his superiors and preserve the King's authority in the colony, Governor Martin secretly commissioned MacDonald and his son-in-law, Alexander MacLeod, to raise a battalion from among the Highland emigrants. These men were later folded into MacLean's regiment.<sup>49</sup> (Indeed, Martin's faith in the Highlanders was so complete that in late 1775 he convinced Lord North and George III to open a southern campaign in the colony with the support of emigrant Highlanders.)<sup>50</sup> Patriot leaders also watched for the men that Gage sent to recruit Highlanders. Samuel Johnston, a member of the colony's provincial congress, received intelligence that Lt. Colonel McDonald and Captain MacLeod had made it to New Bern and were on their way into the backcountry on the pretense of visiting friends. It behooved all, Johnston wrote the Wilmington Committee, to capture these men, and see to "the necessity of securing the Highlanders" for the American cause or ensure that they did not support the British Army.<sup>51</sup> Suspicions of Cumberland County in particular increased when its committee of safety allowed some secret dispatches to become public.<sup>52</sup>

The discovery of the plot also further illuminated the distinctions between the two Highlander communities in the New York and North Carolina backcountries. New York did not have the kind of older Scottish settlements that the southern colony did. It offered MacLean and

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<sup>48</sup> Minutes for 3 July 1775, in McEachern and Williams, eds., *Wilmington-New Hanover Safety Committee Minutes*, 36.

<sup>49</sup> Martin to Dartmouth, 12 November 1775, *CRNC*, 10:325.

<sup>50</sup> John Pownall to George III, 12 September 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/2184; Lord North to George III, 15 October 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/2195; George III to Lord North, 16-17 October 1775, RA GEO/MAIN/2202.

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Johnston to the Wilmington Committee of Safety, 21 July 1775, in McEachern and Williams, eds., *Wilmington-New Hanover Safety Committee Minutes*, 48.

<sup>52</sup> Minutes for 11 August 1775, in *Ibid.*, 51-52.

Gage access to experienced military emigrants who had fought in the previous war and later chose to accept land grants from the King in that colony. Their migration in service to the imperial state helped to win George III an expanded American empire. In exchange for their loyalty, something many of these Highlanders withheld from his grandfather, the King made them colonial proprietors. Protecting that property, and a sense of fealty to the sovereign who granted it, gave Highlanders a vested interest in maintaining British authority. That basic sense of loyalty held true for the Highlanders who settled on Sir William Johnson's lands. Sir William and his family were deeply invested in the life of the empire. The MacDonells of Glengarry and other Highlanders sought out Sir William for his willingness to act as a fictive clan chief. His death shifted their affections to his son, John, who determined to follow his father's course. It explains why Scots were among the 400 men on Sir William's lands who signaled their intention to join MacLean's regiment.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, significant divisions existed in North Carolina's Scottish communities. The geographic divide between the Lower Cape Fear Region and the backcountry was not so much a factor as was the era that Scots emigrated to the colony. Both Samuel Johnston's fear of the Highland recruiters and Alexander McAlester's belief in the righteousness of the American interpretation of the imperial constitution point to this divide. Johnston and McAlester were both relics of the 1730s migration that brought Scots to the colony. Johnston was born in Dundee and was the nephew of the late governor Gabriel Johnston, the man who did much to encourage Scottish settlement in that earlier period. McAlester's father had been one of the leaders of the Cross Creek settlement. They and their descendants had as much interest in protecting their property as their fellow Scots did in New York, but over the course of forty years had internalized an American perspective on empire—the "American political principles" that

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<sup>53</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, 20 September 1775, CO 5/92 Part 3, CRL.

concerned Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller so greatly—and believed that Parliament had overstepped its constitutional authority. Yet, many of the newer arrivals, such as Allan MacDonald, retained an affinity for the idea of the British Empire as it existed and for the King who stood at its head. This should not surprise us, despite the hardships many emigrants had faced in Scotland, because McAlester and other men promoted emigration into the empire as the way to preserve their rights as British subjects. George III's British America made it possible to recapture the rights that greedy Scottish proprietors denied them. Some of the promoters' very arguments for emigration formed one of the Loyalists' justifications for remaining loyal to the crown.

### *Consequences*

The intelligence lapses and the Continental Army's invasion of Quebec beginning in the late summer of 1775 complicated British recruitment efforts and forced commanders to make adjustments. The Americans sought to wrest Quebec from British control and convince the province's French-speaking inhabitants to join the rebellion. MacLean managed to raise 100 men for the regiment in Quebec, which he later deployed against American forces in defense of Montreal. As part of their campaign Continental troops seized control of Ticonderoga and Lake Champlain to prevent the British from sending men and supplies into New York. It also made it impossible for the 400 men on Sir William Johnson's lands to cross into Canada and join the emigrant regiment.<sup>54</sup>

More significantly, knowledge of the recruitment plan compelled Vice Admiral Graves to issue a new set of orders to Captain Vandeput and the crew of the *H.M.S. Asia*. Graves ordered

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<sup>54</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, 20 September 1775, CO 5/92 Part 3, CRL.

them to intercept any emigrant-laden ships coming from Great Britain or Ireland and “not to suffer one of them to Land, but to send the Ship or Vessel round to Boston.”<sup>55</sup> That paid some dividends. In October, the *Asia* stopped the *Glasgow Packet*, a ship that had made a run to Salem, Massachusetts earlier in the year with thirty emigrants aboard.<sup>56</sup> In the fall, Scottish port officials recorded 251 people aboard when the ship left Fort William. Graves gave the figure as 255 souls. Vandeput stopped the ship from entering New York and sent her to Boston as ordered. Graves confidently predicted that most of the men would enlist in the army. Unaware of Dundas’s actions, he argued to the Admiralty that it “surely can never be right to Continue to people a Country in absolute rebellion against Us.” Graves sent the women and children to Halifax.<sup>57</sup> A resolution written aboard the *Glasgow Packet* contains the name of nine men who agreed to enlist in the emigrant regiment.<sup>58</sup> Evidently, more men did so after the ship came into Boston. Graves later reported that they “have all entered into His Majesty’s Army.”<sup>59</sup> The lack of regiment returns for the rank and file makes it difficult bear out this claim.

The intelligence victories inspired American attempts to counter MacLean’s influence and eliminate potential threats in the colonial backcountry in two major ways. First, the Americans tried to recruit Highlanders into patriot forces or at least convince them not to join the British Army. Amazingly, the ever-resilient Donald MacLeod of Kilmarie, that man who so vexed the Earl of Seaforth’s estate managers on the Isle of Lewis and later headed up a failed effort to recruit Scots for Beekmantown, asked New York officials for a commission to raise a

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<sup>55</sup> Samuel Graves to Philip Stephens, 26 September 1775, Admiralty Papers: Admiral Graves Papers, ADM 1/485/793, TNA. Graves issued the order on the 24th.

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 5, Table 5.3.

<sup>57</sup> Graves to Stephens, 4 December 1775, Admiralty Papers: Admiral Graves Papers, ADM 1/485/1033, TNA.

<sup>58</sup> Resolution [of] the Royal H[ighland] emigrants on board the Glasgow packet, 23 October 1775, MacLaine of Lochbuie Papers, 1630-1904, GD174/2093, NRS.

<sup>59</sup> Graves to Stephens, 28 December 1775, Admiralty Papers: Admiral Graves Papers, ADM 1/485/1117, TNA.

body of Highlanders for the colony's defense.<sup>60</sup> MacLeod's latest attempt at self-reinvention came to nothing. A year later, Captain James Stewart was more successful.<sup>61</sup> He recruited Highlanders for a New York Independent Company, but Stewart's commanding officer described these men as "a horrid collection of soldiers" and "the very last sweepings of hell."<sup>62</sup> They were not the finest men. A Court Martial later found one Hugh Lacey guilty of "Impudence and Disobedience" to Stewart's orders for which he was sentenced to receive twenty lashes. Fortunately, for his sake, George Washington pardoned him before the whip could tear his flesh.<sup>63</sup>

The North Carolina Provincial Congress and the Continental Congress each dispatched separate groups of men to compete with Allan MacDonald and MacLean's emissaries. The former body sent Alexander McAlester and his brother-in-law Farquard Campbell, both delegates from Cumberland County, along with nine other men to urge newly arrived Highlanders "to unite with the other Inhabitants of America" in defense of their rights.<sup>64</sup> McAlester once again implored his fellow Scots to choose America. The Continental Congress later sent spiritual reinforcements in the form of two Presbyterian ministers. Congress directed them to talk with the Highlanders about "the nature of the present dispute between Great Britain and the colonies" and dissuade them from joining the enemy.<sup>65</sup> The colony's congressional delegates knew that religion held a central place in a Highlander's life. They wanted to use

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<sup>60</sup> Donald MacLeod to the New York Committee, 7 June 1775, in Force, *American Archives*, accessed 25 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A85488>]; Petition of Donald MacLeod to the New York Provincial Congress, 8 June 1775, accessed 25 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A103931>].

<sup>61</sup> Entry for 25 July 1776, *JPCNY*, 1:542.

<sup>62</sup> William Malcolm to John McKesson, 6 September 1776, in Force, *American Archives*, accessed 25 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A89349>].

<sup>63</sup> General Orders, 6 August 1776, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008). Hereafter "PGW:DE."

<sup>64</sup> Entry for 34 August 1775, Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, *CRNC*, 10:174

<sup>65</sup> Entry for 28 November 1775, *JCC*.

parsons whom Highlanders looked upon “with great respect” just as Scottish proprietors had employed them to challenge the emigration promoters. Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter spent four months preaching “the American side of the question” with mixed results.<sup>66</sup>

Second, American Continental and provincial military leaders moved to disarm and defeat Loyalist Highlander forces. Soon after George Washington assumed command of the Continental Army in June 1775, he ordered Major General Philip Schuyler to monitor and report on the state of the New York borderlands.<sup>67</sup> Tryon County had descended into chaos in the weeks following the Battle of Bunker Hill. Patriots attacked the county sheriff after he removed a liberty pole and threw several American sympathizers into jail. Sir John Johnson put “four hundred Men partly Scotch Highlanders in Arms” to protect the sheriff.<sup>68</sup> Allan McDonell of Collachie, the clan leader who negotiated with Sir William on behalf of his people, served as one of Sir John’s subordinates.<sup>69</sup> MacLean wanted these men in Canada to help resist the American invasion. Sir John and his Highlanders began to stock pile weapons and ammunition in Johnstown. Congress decided to eliminate the threat and ordered Schuyler to disarm them and take their leaders prisoner.<sup>70</sup> In late January 1776, Schuyler marched west from Albany with provincial militia to “disarm the Malignants.” The Americans captured eight cannon and a number of smaller guns in addition to “Six of the Chiefs of about two hundred and fifty or three hundred Scotch Highlanders.” The chiefs, Allan McDonell among them, were sent to a Philadelphia prison.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> North Carolina Delegates to Elihu Spencer, 8 December 1775, *The Letters of the Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789*, accessed 27 June 2016, [<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwdg.html>]. See also, Joseph Hewes to Samuel Johnston, 4 January 1776, *Ibid.* Hereafter “*LDC*.” Generic link omitted from the remaining footnotes.

<sup>67</sup> George Washington to Philip Schuyler, 25 June 1775, *PGW:DE*.

<sup>68</sup> Schuyler to Washington, 6 August 1775, *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Thomas McKean to Schuyler, 13 April 1776, *LDC*.

<sup>70</sup> Entry for 30 December 1775, *JCC*; Committee of Congress to Schuyler, 1 January 1776, *LDC*.

<sup>71</sup> Schuyler to Washington, 22 January 1776, *PGW:DE*.

Schuyler met with little resistance from the less than 500 men at Johnstown. The same could not be said for the American forces that moved against the Highlanders in North Carolina. In early 1776, British generals, bolstered in part by Governor Martin's near certainty that the arrival of British troops would bring Highlanders flying to the King's standard, finalized plans for an expedition to the colony. Major General Sir Henry Clinton sailed from Boston to the Cape Fear River with two companies of light infantry and some Highlanders to exhort their fellow countrymen to battle.<sup>72</sup> Martin issued formal commissions to several men in the backcountry, including nine Highlanders in Cumberland County, to raise companies of soldiers in anticipation of the British Army's arrival.<sup>73</sup> The now Colonel Allan MacDonald and his fellow officers began to assemble men at Cross Creek.<sup>74</sup> They seized control of the boats on the waterway and marched 900 men, mostly "highland banditti" to Campbeltown.<sup>75</sup> By mid-February, Loyalist forces under the overall command of Brigadier General Donald McDonald, one of MacLean's original officers, amassed an army around 4,000 men.<sup>76</sup>

But the Loyalist forces encountered a number of problems. American officials had intelligence reports containing the basic outline of the British plan. They feared what Martin desired: Highlanders coming out in droves for the King.<sup>77</sup> The Loyalists had recruiting difficulties as well. Far from Cross Creek, Moravian settlers near Salem (modern Winston-Salem) observed that "some hundreds of men gathered" sixty miles south of the village in the belief that Governor Martin himself would lead them into battle. Finding "only a Scotch officer,

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<sup>72</sup> William Howe to Dartmouth, 16 January 1776, *CRNC*, 10:412.

<sup>73</sup> Josiah Martin, Commissions, 10 January 1776, in Force, *American Archives*, accessed 25 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A97834>].

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Person to William Person, 12 February 1776, *CRNC*, 10:450.

<sup>75</sup> William Purviance to the North Carolina Provincial Council, 23-34 February 1776, *CRNC*, 10:468.

<sup>76</sup> 6 March 1776, "Salem Diary 1776" in Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh, Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1922), 3:1054.

<sup>77</sup> William Hooper to Joseph Hewes and John Penn, 6 February 1776, *LDC*.

in whom they had little confidence,” most of the men enjoyed the officer’s hogshead of rum most “industriously” and then fled when they heard reports that an American contingent was marching to intercept them.<sup>78</sup> The Loyalists massing at Cross Creek had also been given to believe that Martin would come among them with British troops. Some began to desert when the governor did not appear. General McDonald led a dwindling army south toward Wilmington. His objective was to reach the coast and then link up with the expected British troops. Continental and provincial forces numbering about 3,500 men marched out of Wilmington and New Bern to block his advance.<sup>79</sup>

McDonald had less than 1,000 men (most of them Highlanders) when he demanded that his American opponents lay down their arms and swear allegiance to George III by noon on February 20, 1775 or face the consequences.<sup>80</sup> His exchange with the American officer, Colonel James Moore, is important for what it revealed about how McDonald and his Highlanders conceptualized the empire’s purpose. In ordering McDonald to adhere to the Continental Congress, Moore asked him to inform the Scots under his command “before it is too late, of the dangerous and destructive precipice on which they stand.” North Carolinians, he argued, had given impoverished Scots a “favourable reception” in the colony and lamented the “ungrateful return” they now made for that kindness. Moore made his sentiments plain lest any emigrant mistake him. They were “engaged in a cause in which they cannot succeed” and their persistence in it “must end in their utter destruction.”<sup>81</sup> In his final communication, McDonald made sure that Moore understood why his emigrant Highlanders remained loyal. They had no “greater

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<sup>78</sup> The Bagge MS. 1776 in Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, 3:1026; 6 February 1776, “Salem Diary 1776,” Ibid., 3:1054.

<sup>79</sup> William Purviance to the North Carolina Provincial Council, 23-34 February 1776, *CRNC*, 10:468.

<sup>80</sup> Donald McDonald to James Moore, 19 February 1776, Ibid., 11:276.

<sup>81</sup> Moore to McDonald, 20 February 1776, Ibid., 11:278.

obligations” than to the monarch who had “enabled [them] to visit this western region” and settle the land.<sup>82</sup>

Seven days later Moore and his fellow patriots routed McDonald’s men and put them to flight eighteen miles north of Wilmington at the Battle of Moore’s Creek Bridge. They killed an estimated seventy of McDonald’s men against the loss of just one soldier.<sup>83</sup> The Americans took the British general prisoner along with Allan MacDonald, twenty-three other officers, and most of the rank and file. The officers, like their fellow Scots taken along the Mohawk River, were sent to prison in Philadelphia where Congress ordered them into “close confinement.”<sup>84</sup> The Philadelphia Committee of Safety recognized the continued influence that the Highlander officers had with their fellow Scots and authorized additional security for them.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, their disastrous defeat at Moore’s Creek Bridge broke Highlander support for a Loyalist counter insurgency. They never again seriously threatened the colony.

### **John Witherspoon’s Declaration**

The successful American campaigns against Scottish emigrants in North Carolina and New York following the discovery of Allan MacLean’s plan did little to lessen American distrust of them. George Washington celebrated the defeat of “those universal Instruments of Tyranny the Scotch” at Moore’s Creek, but he remained wary of Sir John Johnson and the Highlanders at Johnstown.<sup>86</sup> Sir John had been allowed to stay on his land on the condition that he did not try to

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<sup>82</sup> McDonald to Moore, 20 February 1776, *Ibid.*, 11:278-279.

<sup>83</sup> Moore to Cornelius Harnett, 2 March 1776, *Ibid.*, 283-285.

<sup>84</sup> List of Loyalist prisoners from the Battle of Moore’s Creek Bridge sent to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, enclosed in a letter of 22 April 1776, *Ibid.*, 11:294-295.

<sup>85</sup> Philadelphia Committee of Safety, 25 May 1776, in Force, *American Archives*, accessed 26 June 2016, [<http://amarch.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/niu-amarch%3A95458>].

<sup>86</sup> Joseph Reed to Washington, 23 March 1776, *PGW:DE*; Washington to Reed, 1 April 1776, *Ibid.*

assist British forces. Philip Schuyler found “further proofs” of Sir John’s continued hostility and gave orders to have him arrested and “all the Highlanders to be removed.”<sup>87</sup> He sent 300 men into Tryon County to “bring away the Highlanders & their Families” and to make Sir John “a close prisoner.”<sup>88</sup> The Americans arrived too late to capture Sir John. He managed to escape into Canada with some settlers and Mohawk Indians. Several hundred Highlanders remained behind and wanted to stay on the land. Schuyler refused to let the adult men stay “unless a competent Number of Hostages are given at least five out of a hundred, on Condition of being put to Death if those remain should take up arms.”<sup>89</sup> Instead, he left a force behind to oversee them and keep them out of the war.<sup>90</sup>

#### *An Editorial Intervention*

Many American patriots shared the Virginian George Washington’s assessment of Scots as instruments of British ministerial tyranny. The imperial government’s plot to rally Scots in the provincial backcountry fed this sentiment. Its decision to once again recruit Highlanders in Scotland for service in North America only made it grow. George III authorized Simon Fraser, the former Jacobite and commander of the 78<sup>th</sup> Regiment during the French and Indian War, to raise a new regiment to fight the American rebels. It was the first of several new regiments added to the army.<sup>91</sup> In early June 1776, American privateers captured part of Fraser’s regiment, about 600 men, when their transports became separated from the main convoy off the coast of

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<sup>87</sup> Schuyler to Washington, 16 May 1776, Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Schuyler to Washington, 21 May 1776, Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Schuyler to Elias Dayton, 27 May 1776, enclosed in Schuyler to Washington, 31 May 1776, Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Schuyler to Washington, 31 May 1776, Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> For the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland Regiment’s formation and journey to America see Colin Campbell, “The 71<sup>st</sup> Highlanders in Massachusetts, 1776-1780,” *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (July 1958): 200-214; (October 1958): 265-275; (January 1959): 2-16; (April 1959): 84-91.

Massachusetts.<sup>92</sup> The interrogated prisoners said, “that thirty two sail of Transports came out with them under convoy of a Frigate of thirty two Guns with three thousand Highlanders on board all bound to Boston.”<sup>93</sup> The perception of Scots as ministerial tools to destroy American liberty appeared in Thomas Jefferson’s initial draft of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson charged the king with “transporting large armies of Scotch and other foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death desolation and tyranny already begun” by British forces in the colonies. In Jefferson’s construction the “Scotch” were a provincial, almost foreign, people on the periphery of the British Empire sent by a tyrant to enslave Americans.<sup>94</sup>

The unflattering reference to the “Scotch” did not survive the process of editing the Declaration of Independence. The Reverend John Witherspoon, one of emigration’s foremost champions, struck it out. Witherspoon had just taken his seat in the Continental Congress as a delegate from New Jersey when Jefferson and his fellow committee members delivered the draft declaration.<sup>95</sup> He feared that Jefferson’s remark would alienate the colonial Scottish community from the Patriot cause. Equally important, he worried that construing Scotsmen as the bringers of “death desolation and tyranny” would dissuade other Scots from resettling in the new United States at the conclusion of a now war for independence. Witherspoon had spent the years before the war promoting Scottish emigration and planting his fellow countrymen on his lands. He understood that the declaration was as much of a promotional pamphlet designed to convince others of the promise of America’s future as it was a clarification of the colonists’s conception of the imperial constitution. Scots, he believed, had a place in this new empire and the document

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<sup>92</sup> Artemas Ward to George Washington, 9 June 1776, *PGW:DE*; Ward to Washington, 16-17 June 1776, *Ibid*; Washington to Schuyler, 28-29 June 1776, *Ibid*.; Joseph Hewes to James Iredell, 28 June 1776, *LDC*.

<sup>93</sup> Ward to Washington, 9 June 1776, *PGW:DE*.

<sup>94</sup> Entry for 28 June 1776, *JCC*. Pauline Maier has identified the passage in question as Jefferson’s work. See Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 140-141.

<sup>95</sup> Entry for 28 June 1776, *JCC*. The New Jersey Provincial Congress appointed Witherspoon and the other delegates on June 21st, and transmitted its instructions to them on the following day.

announcing its creation needed to strike an inclusive tone if Americans hoped to settle western lands they stood to gain by defeating the British. Jefferson's remark stood to frustrate that process once the conflict was over.<sup>96</sup>

### *The Final Recruitment before Peace*

But Witherspoon went beyond his quiet role in revising the Declaration of Independence to make one final public appeal to his Scottish brethren. To the printed edition of a public sermon that he delivered in the weeks before joining Congress, Witherspoon attached *An Address to the Natives of Scotland, residing in America*. The tract had an external Scottish audience in mind as much as an internal one. It unnerved him "to hear the word *Scotch* used as a term of reproach in the American controversy," which he attributed to colonists' consumption of the anti-Scottish rhetoric in John Wilkes's radical newspaper, *The North Britain*, in the 1760s.<sup>97</sup> He could imagine that Scots who had arrived in the colonies "within the last fifteen years," felt some unease "when they heard Wilkes and those adhered to him extolled and celebrated" by the Sons of Liberty and other Patriots.<sup>98</sup>

To allay those misgivings Witherspoon promoted American independence to his "*Countrymen and Friends*" by deploying the same language of political economy that he had

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<sup>96</sup> Yale president Ezra Stiles observed that neither Witherspoon nor James Wilson of Pennsylvania could "bear any Thing in Congress which reflects on Scotland," noting that Witherspoon in particular struggled to cast Scotland and its people in positive light. Entry for 23 July 1777 in Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., L.L.D.*, Franklin Bowditch Dexter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2:184. Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee's grandson, also named Richard Henry Lee, identified Witherspoon as the delegate who moved to strike out "Scotch" from the Declaration. Richard Henry Lee, *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee and His Correspondence* (Philadelphia: William Brown, 1825), 2:184.

<sup>97</sup> John Witherspoon, *The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men: A Sermon, Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May, 1776. Being the General Fast Appointed by the Congress Through the United Colonies. To which is Added, An Address to the Natives of Scotland, Residing in America*, (Glasgow, 1777), 39.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

used to sell Scots on Pictou, Nova Scotia or Ryegate in the New Hampshire grants. America had “rich and valuable soil and an extensive country,” but as in his Pictou retort, claimed that the British colonies had thrived because settlers enjoyed “British liberty” and relative autonomy in pursuit of their own happiness.<sup>99</sup> Yielding to Parliament would have transformed the colonies into tributary states. Reconciliation, therefore, was no longer possible. It was predicated on submission to Parliament, and its policies would stifle American improvement. Independence would enable the new states to form “plans of government upon the most rational, just, and equal principles.” And it would be “a real advantage, to the island of Great Britain” by liberating the American economy from self-interested parties in London.<sup>100</sup>

Just as Witherspoon imagined emigration would force Scottish proprietors to rethink their land management policies, independent and unconstrained Americans could pursue industry, “the strength and wealth of a nation,” and stimulate industry in Great Britain through economic competition.<sup>101</sup> Parliament’s tax schemes would have increased revenue, but that income would only have fed avaricious “placemen and pensioners” seeking royal favor.”<sup>102</sup> The argument reflected his earlier characterization of Scottish proprietors. From his perspective proprietors raised rents in the self-interested pursuit of wealth that drove many of their people to resettle in the colonies. Britain’s North American empire theoretically counterbalanced proprietors’ actions by enabling Scots to emigrate there. In a similar vein, he claimed that an independent American economy, freed from a mercantile scheme of a guaranteed colonial market that “make a people less careful to work as well and as cheap as others,” would spur industry and improvement in

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 54.

Britain.<sup>103</sup> “If the trade of America has hitherto been of so great benefit to England,” he asked, “how much more valuable may it be when these countries shall be still more highly improved, if she shall continue to enjoy it?”<sup>104</sup> It was an argument for the future potential of America, and the Scots who might wish to emigrate there, as much as it was for the independence of the United States.

Witherspoon’s defense of the American cause and of independence received little attention in the United States. It did, however, draw criticism in Scotland in late 1776 and 1777. Hugo Arnot, a Scottish Episcopalian writer working under the pseudonym “Thomas the Rhymer” dedicated his poetical attack on Patriot clerics to “Doctor Silverspoon, Preacher of Sedition in America.” He charged Witherspoon with encouraging “political drunkenness” by gaining “an *honest livelihood* by exerting their respective endeavours, conducive...[to] *the destruction of their country*.”<sup>105</sup> In Glasgow, an annotated version of Witherspoon’s tract appeared. The editors took note of its “most rebellious sentiments” and the “nerve to induce his [Scottish] country to imbibe his political sentiments.”<sup>106</sup> In footnotes the editor, “S.R.” attack Witherspoon’s central religious premises, and in commenting on the *Address* accused him of supporting independence out of his own self-interest, suggesting that Witherspoon wanting to be “employed to plan a [new] system of government,” which “would considerably gratify his ambitious mind.”<sup>107</sup> It was a fair assessment. True, Witherspoon had championed emigration and independence upon higher ideals, but as landholder he had a stake in the game. Witherspoon received similar criticism in

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> [Hugo Arnot], *The XLV. Chapter of the Prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer, In Verse: With Notes and Illustrations, Dedicated to Doctor Silverspoon, Preacher of Sedition in America* (Edinburgh, 1776), 6.

<sup>106</sup> Witherspoon, *The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men. A Sermon Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May, 1776. Being The General Fast appointed by the Congress through the United Colonies. To Which Is Added, An Address to the Natives of Scotland residing in America. The Second Edition, with Elucidating Remarks* (Glasgow, 1777), ii.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 46n.

*The Scots Magazine* as well.<sup>108</sup> It was clear that he failed to persuade many Scots of advantages of American independence for Britain and the Scottish people.

## Conclusion

For much of the early 1770s, many of Scotland's leading politicians and landed men argued that the depopulation of their country via emigration to America threatened British authority in the colonies. Equating emigration with disloyalty in a time of increasing tension between Britain and America, Lord Advocate Henry Dundas used the outbreak of war to ban emigration and eliminate a potential liability. Allan MacLean of Torloisk convinced the King and Lord North that emigrant Highlanders could be an asset to the empire long before Dundas developed the legal justification for suppressing emigration. Where as Dundas as did others argued that the destruction of the old Highland social order had done much to detach Scottish men and women from their native land, MacLean correctly surmised that for many emigrants this sense of alienation did not extend to George III or the idea of an empire that included America. Scotland and America united in one empire made their emigration possible. MacLean convinced Lord North and the King that many of these emigrants would fight for that empire, especially if promised more land.

The secret British strategy to recruit emigrant Scottish Highlanders in the colonies met with mixed results. The quick discovery of the plot frustrated the efforts of MacLean's officers to gain the support of Highlanders in New York and North Carolina. American officials's proactive response to the machinations through political persuasion and military intervention neutralized

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<sup>108</sup> Richard Sher, "Witherspoon's Dominion of Providence and the Scottish Jeremiad Tradition," in Richard Sher and Jeffrey Smitten, ed., *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 58-61.

many of the soldiers that MacLean, General Gage, Governor Martin, Lord North, and the King hoped would form the tip of a spear thrust into the American rebels' backs. MacLean remained stationed in Canada for the rest of the war. Promoted first to Adjunct General of the British Army in Canada and later to Brigadier General, he oversaw Montreal's defenses. The Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment continued to have problems raising men and it was not until 1780 that it was fully regimented into the army as the 84<sup>th</sup> Regiment.

What the regiment did achieve to a greater degree was to convince American leaders that Dundas had been correct in his perception of Highlanders as liabilities in the colonies. The two sides just disagreed on the details. Many colonists already entertained negative views of Scots by the time MacLean began his work. His limited success only made American suspicions of Scots grow, and when a new regiment of fresh Highland recruits appeared off the American coast, Thomas Jefferson expressed in an early draft of the Declaration of Independence the sentiments many Americans held of Scots in America.

John Witherspoon's quiet efforts to remove Jefferson's dark allusion to Scots from the Declaration later compelled him to publicly address anti-Scottish rhetoric in the colonies and once again promote America as an ideal place for his former countrymen. Only this time, if all went well for the rebelling colonists, Scots could live in an America independent of Britain, and yet still enjoy many of the advantages of the old imperial union. This, as Witherspoon knew, was only talk until the war ended.

## **Conclusion: Voyages Home**

Flora MacDonald and John Witherspoon took two different paths to North America in the decade after the Seven Years War. The latter man and his wife emigrated to New Jersey in 1768 to become the president of the College of New Jersey. He acquired property in Nova Scotia and modern Vermont, promoted those lands to Scottish emigrants, and later joined the American rebellion against British authority as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Witherspoon scrubbed the Declaration of Independence of its demeaning allusion to Scots as the instruments of British tyranny and appealed to his fellow Scotsmen to support the American cause. Flora departed the Isle of Skye in 1774 with her husband and children for North Carolina. They fled a crumbling Scottish Highland social order and financial difficulties to join friends and family in a new Scotland situated in the provincial backcountry. The MacDonalds lived first in Cumberland County before purchasing a farm in nearby Anson County. There the American War for Independence caught up with them. Flora's husband, Allan, and her son, Alexander, answered Governor Martin's call to suppress the rebellion. The two men later became part of Allan MacLean's 84<sup>th</sup> Highland Emigrant Regiment, an initially secret unit composed of emigrant Highlanders recruited from North Carolina, New York, and Nova Scotia that the British government hoped would help restore order in the colonies.

The MacDonalds and the Witherspoons were among several thousand Scottish men, women, and children who emigrated to North America beginning in the mid-1750s through the first year of the American War for Independence. Scots lived in a time of great change in the British Atlantic World. Scotland's greater integration with the imperial state and Britain's triumph over the French in North America during the Seven Years War had unexpected

consequences. The traditional clan hierarchy that structured Highland society began to evolve in the early eighteenth-century as clan chiefs reassessed their relationships with their clansmen. Men such as Norman MacLeod of MacLeod on the Isle of Skye abandoned an older notion of clanship rooted in reciprocity and embraced a new view that characterized his people simply as rent-paying tenants that supplied his income. He and other chiefs spent less time among their people on their lands, as the people expected, and more time in London or other cosmopolitan places. These changes ruptured the bond between a chief and his people. The British government's post-Jacobite Uprising reforms accelerated this evolution by attacking aspects of Highland culture that the government believed bred rebellion. It sought to break the connection between a chief and his clan, and reorient their loyalties to the British King.

Lowlanders experienced great change as well. Merchants in Glasgow and Edinburgh acquired a greater share of the transatlantic tobacco business and established stores in colonies such as Virginia and Maryland to facilitate trade with American planters. The merchants exchanged goods such as linens for tobacco and other crops, and made great use of financial credit to make it all work. A financial crisis in 1772 demonstrated the perils of relying too much on credit. A bank collapse in Scotland contributed to economic disruptions that threw many labors and artisans out of work and drove up the price of provisions for consumers. They, like their Highland cousins grappling with the transformation of clan chiefs into landlords, explored emigration to America as viable alternative to hardship at home.

Broader imperial transformations in North America did much to drive Scottish emigration in this period. The British government's need for men to fight the French on the continent led it to risk the remilitarization of the Highlands in a bid to recruit men into the army only a few years after the failed Jacobite Uprising. The deployment of those forces to North

America exposed Scots with few prospects for landownership at home to good land in the New York borderlands between Albany and Quebec, ground over which they marched, fought, and bled. The government's imperial land reforms in the war's aftermath created a chance for Scottish soldiers and officers to acquire property in the colony. The Royal Proclamation of 1763's provision that allocated land to war veterans helped to establish a Scottish emigrant community in northern New York. They encouraged their fellow Scots to come to America after the war.

The military emigrants in New York joined other Scots in North Carolina to promote emigration in the face of social change in Scotland. Settlers in the southern colony's backcountry sent letters to friends and families in the Western Isles that promised a better life and plentiful land in the colony. They exploited the social crisis in these regions to sell Scots on the value of emigrating to America. Promoters such as Alexander Campbell of Balole carried these messages to the Isle of Skye, where Flora MacDonald and her family heard them, onto the Isle of Lewis, the northern Highlands, and deep into the Scottish interior. Other Scots such as John Witherspoon as well as American and British officials emerged to compete with North Carolina's champions to find settlers for their lands in Nova Scotia, St. John's Island, and New York.

Emigrants faced a bewildering array of choices and they sought to build patronage networks with prominent men to help them navigate the colonial and imperial landscapes. In New York, Sir William Johnson competed with other proprietors to win Scottish tenants for his lands along the Mohawk River. Military emigrants allied with him to acquire land, and they in turn provided him with people for his Kingsborough lands. Sir William adopted the manner of a clan chief from an earlier era in Scottish history to appeal to subsequent waves of emigrants who

arrived in New York. On St. John's Island, a group of Catholic Scots fleeing persecution on the Isle of South Uist purchased lands from Lord Advocate James Montgomery, who quietly promoted his property in contravention to British regulations governing the island's settlement. Witherspoon demonstrated his ability to shift tactics after he received criticism for hawking his Nova Scotia lands. He carefully developed a relationship with the agents for the Scotch American Company of Farmers to sell them his land in what is now Vermont.

Scots facing difficult circumstances in Scotland, and the promoters who championed their emigration, developed a view of the empire in which it provided a solution to domestic problems. Many of the promoters and proprietors adopted this view out of their own self-interest, but the significant number of emigrants between 1773 and 1775 suggests that Scots agreed with this imperial perspective and internalized it. The Scottish proprietors who waged campaigns to prevent their people from leaving well understood that the promoters had crafted an idyllic vision of America that greatly appealed to their people. Devastating winter storms in the early 1770s only deepened the common Scot's conviction that the land had failed him. Proprietors, more specifically their estate managers, struggled to convince the people to stay, often with mixed results.

But growing concern over the implications of Scottish emigration for both Great Britain and the empire moved key Scottish politicians to action. When changes in the British imperial leadership left Lord North's cabinet without a strong anti-emigration advocate, it opened the door for Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Miller to become one of emigration's most vocal opponents. Miller initially viewed it as a problem of political economy. He feared that the depopulation of Scottish laborers and artisans would bolster provincial economies, and weaken Americans' dependency on British markets. However, as emigration continued Miller rethought his position

and concluded that a revolution was underway, one that severed the connection between a Scotsman and his country. The acceleration of the imperial crisis in North America informed this view as Miller, and then, Henry Dundas, imagined that Americans might entice Scots into helping them resist British authority in the colonies. In the months after the war began, Dundas found a clever way around legal roadblocks to use George III's powers to implement a ban on emigration. He believed that the long-term benefits of denying Americans access to potential Scottish soldiers outweighed any constitutional objections to the restriction of a British subject's free movement within the empire.

What Dundas may have known was that the King and the Prime Minister had authorized a secret plan to recruit Scottish emigrants in New York and North Carolina into the British Army. They intended this new regiment and its leader, Allan MacLean, to augment existing British forces. In the summer of 1775, MacLean deployed recruiters into colonies with significant concentrations of Highlanders to rally Scots to the King's standard, and provincial officials dispatched their own recruiters to counter their influence. Allan MacDonald answered MacLean's call. In early 1776, while American militia disarmed and captured the leaders of the Highlanders on Sir William Johnson's lands, Continental and Provincial forces engaged Loyalist Highlanders at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. MacDonald became an American prisoner.

These collective stories illuminate an alternative understanding of the American revolutionary era, one that exists side-by-side the traditional focus on the imperial constitutional crisis that culminated in a civil war between the American colonies and Great Britain. Emigration bound America and Scotland together in ways that shaped the development of the colonies in the post-Seven Years War period and later informed how some Scots interpreted the tumultuous events in North America in the 1770s. The empire was a means to achieve prosperity

for Scots dealing with social change and economic hardship, while for others the empire began to work against Scotland's and ultimately Great Britain's interest. Emigration in this period was not simply the continuation of settlement from a previous era or the prologue to the peopling of British Canada in the years after the American Revolution; it was a product of many of the same transatlantic developments that resulted in a breach between Great Britain and the colonies. The experiences of the individuals in these pages tell us much about how people across social-strata and geographic space dealt with significant change in the revolutionary moment.

## Homecomings

Flora MacDonald's journey did not end with the Highlanders' defeat at Moore's Creek Bridge and neither did John Witherspoon's after he signed the Declaration of Independence. Eventually, both made their way back to Scotland. One returned home as a Loyalist refugee; the other went back as the citizen of a new nation.

In the weeks after the engagement at Moore's Creek Bridge, American forces raided Flora's home along Cheek's Creek in Anson County as part of a broader campaign to pacify the backcountry. She fled with her younger children to a home in neighboring Moore County and remained there for two years. Her husband's experiences were not much better. After his capture Allan was confined to a jail in Halifax, North Carolina for two months after local authorities granted him parole on the condition that he stayed within the town's limits. He was later transferred to a Philadelphia prison.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Hewes to Samuel Johnston, 4 June 1776, *The Letters of the Delegates to Congress*, accessed 25 June 2016, [<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwdg.html>]. Hereafter "LDC." Generic link omitted in the remaining footnotes.

In the summer of 1776, the Continental Congress agreed to allow Allan and his son, Alexander, to be on parole in Reading, Pennsylvania. They mingled there with Highlanders from Sir William Johnson's lands and began to petition Congress to exchange them for American officers in British hands.<sup>2</sup> In April 1777, fourteen months after their capture, Allan complained that their weekly allowance of two dollars was insufficient to pay for their room and board. He again asked to be exchanged.<sup>3</sup> Three months later a frustrated Allan urged Congress to negotiate a transfer as quickly as possible. He asked them to "at least sympathize with me" as "My Wife is in North Carolina 700 Miles from me in a very sickly tender state of health, with a younger Son, a Daughter, & four Grand Children" to care for.<sup>4</sup> That summer the British under General Sir Henry Clinton threatened Philadelphia. British forces later captured the capital of the nascent American nation, but not before Congress permitted Allan to go to New York to negotiate an exchange for himself and his son.<sup>5</sup> He succeeded in November 1777.

Meanwhile, Flora appeared before the North Carolina Provincial Congress to ask permission to go to New York to join her husband. Her "Spirited behavior when brought before the Committee of Rascals" succeeded in gaining the congress's leave to travel north.<sup>6</sup> In 1778, Allan went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to assume command of a company in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the

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<sup>2</sup> Entry for 9 July 1776, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, accessed 25 June 2106, [<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwjc.html>]. Hereafter "JCC." Generic link omitted in the remaining footnotes.

<sup>3</sup> Petition of Allan MacDonald, 10 April 1777, reprinted in J.P. MacLean, *Flora MacDonald in America: with a brief sketch of her life and adventures* (Lumberton, N.C.: A.W. McLean, 1909), 68.

<sup>4</sup> Allan MacDonald to John Hancock, 18 July 1777, reprinted in *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>5</sup> Entry for 21 August 1777, *JCC*.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander McDonald to Allan MacDonald, 31 December 1777, in "Letter-Book of Captain Alexander McDonald, of the Royal Highland Emigrants, 1775-1779," *Collections of the New-York Historical Society for the Year 1882* (New York: Printed for the Society, 1883), 387. See also, An Account of Flora MacDonald's Family on her Return from America, and of her Late Husband, c. 1792. GD1/53/88, The National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom. Hereafter "NRS." In this narrative, the author wrote that Flora appeared before the Provincial Congress to secure the release of her husband and son. The surviving evidence does not support this claim. The narrative was written two years after her death and the author appears to have confused a number of details.

84<sup>th</sup> Regiment. He remained in that position for the rest of the war.<sup>7</sup> Flora returned to the Isle of Skye one year later. To fund her journey she sold many of her possessions, including the china set that now rests in Patrick Henry's home. The war took more than her property. Two of her sons, Alexander and Ranald, died in the King's service.<sup>8</sup>

Flora was one of an estimated 60,000 Loyalists driven into exile by the imperial civil war and one of 13,000 people who went to Great Britain.<sup>9</sup> Over half of the total Loyalists went to British Canada, including many of the McDonell's of Glengarry, who resettled in Quebec at the war's end.<sup>10</sup> Scots were undoubtedly among the so-called "Late Loyalists" that removed to Upper Canada in the 1780s and early 1790s. After attempt to make a life in the new American republic, they concluded that it better suited their own interests to swear allegiance to the King. The crossed the northern international border and participated in the construction of a new British North America.<sup>11</sup>

The numbers suggest that many Scots who had fought for the crown or sympathized with the British during the war remained in the new United States. One important example is Archibald McCall. He illuminates the challenges that Scots and other suspected loyalists faced in protecting their interests in Revolutionary America. Archibald was a moderately wealthy merchant from a prominent Glaswegian merchant family. He settled in Virginia in the early 1750s to help run the family business. By the onset of the Revolutionary he had amassed an estate in Tappahannock, Virginia valued at £46,000, including 1,500 acres of land, numerous

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<sup>7</sup> List of Commissions of the Royal Highland Emigrants, c 1780, War Office Papers, WO 28/4/255, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, England, United Kingdom. Hereafter "TNA."

<sup>8</sup> An Account of Flora MacDonald's Family on her Return from America, and of her Late Husband, c. 1792. GD1/53/88, NRS.

<sup>9</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 357.

<sup>10</sup> Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Alan Taylor, "The Late Loyalists: Northern Reflections of the Early American Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 27 (Spring, 2007): 1-34.

mills and granaries, and roughly 40 slaves. Part of his wealth also included his father-in-law's estate, which had been left to his daughters.<sup>12</sup>

In 1775, Archibald fled Virginia after the Essex County Committee of accused him of supplying Lord Dunmore's troops with bread and flour. Even though McCall denied the charge, and the Committee later acquitted him of it, the accusations expedited his departure from the colony. He sailed for Scotland in late 1775.<sup>13</sup> He left his estate in the hands of his cousin, George McCall. As it turns out, the Essex County Committee had been right to suspect him. Archibald later admitted, and Lord Dunmore confirmed, that he had supplied provisions to the governor's soldiers.<sup>14</sup> Archibald's relocation to Scotland and his cousin George's oversight of his Virginia estates forced them to act creatively to protect the family property during the war. Their pronouncements of Loyalism to Great Britain and Virginia were means to an end, not the end of the means.

Archibald was naturally concerned for his valuable business interest and the patrimony due his daughters. He did not expect the rebellion to carry on for long.<sup>15</sup> When it did and he could not return immediately to Virginia, Archibald became anxious to ensure his family's well being in Britain. He also feared for his property's survival in the face of confiscation efforts by the revolutionary state. Together, Archibald and George utilized the mechanisms of the imperial and revolutionary states to defend their interests.

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<sup>12</sup> A Memorandum of Property A. McCall left behind him in Virginia, Received 1 November 1782, American Loyalist Claims, AO 13 Series II, Claims H-M, Virginia [www.ancestry.com]. I am grateful to my friend and colleague Alexi Garrett for introducing me to the McCall family and for graciously agreeing to allow me to intrude on her work. For her treatment of Catharine McCall and her business interests in the early republic, see Alexandra Garrett, " 'I have yet much to say about the Negroes': Catharine Flood McCall's Slave Enterprises in Early Republican Virginia" (Master's thesis, Department of History, University of Virginia, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Hunter), 18 November 1775.

<sup>14</sup> To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majestys Treasury, The Memorial & Petition of Archd McCall late Merchant of the Colony of Virginia, 4 March 1778, American Loyalist Claims, AO 13 Series II, Claims H-M, Virginia [www.ancestry.com]. Dunmore vouched for McCall's petition and his provisioning of loyalist forces in an endorsement dated 5 March 1778.

<sup>15</sup> Archibald McCall to George McCall, 6 May 1778, in Ewing, ed., "The Correspondence of Archibald McCall and George McCall, 1777-1783," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 73 (July 1965): 323.

In March 1778, Archibald filed a petition with the Lords of Treasury asking for financial support while he remained in exile. Archibald and his youngest daughter, Catharine, were then in mourning. His eldest daughter Elizabeth had died six months earlier while attending a London boarding school.<sup>16</sup> He argued that the war and trading restrictions had made it impossible to receive remittances from his estates. He asked the government for “temporary relief” until he and his remaining daughter could return safely to Virginia.<sup>17</sup>

What Archibald did not know at the time was that the new Virginia state government had enacted legislation that threatened his property. In late 1777, the legislature passed an act sequestering the property of British subjects until the war’s end. The new law prevented property owners from receiving the profits from their estates in the interest of keeping financial resources out of the British government’s hands. It authorized the appointment of commissioners to oversee sequestered property.<sup>18</sup> Archibald’s assets fell under the act’s purview.

George kept Archibald abreast of these developments in a full and candid correspondence. It allowed Archibald to adjust his strategy accordingly. George attempted to persuade Governor Patrick Henry that Archibald’s property should not be subject to sequestration. He reasoned that the estate was “not British but American property,” implying that because it had been entrusted to him as the administrator, and he had not been suspected of working against the American cause, the property should remain unencumbered. Governor Henry did not agree. Archibald’s residence in Britain qualified him as a British subject. In the law’s eyes his residency assigned to him a British identity that extended to his Virginia property.

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<sup>16</sup> Archibald McCall to George McCall, 6 May 1778, Ewing, ed., “Correspondence,” 323.

<sup>17</sup> To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty’s Treasury, The Memorial & Petition of Archd McCall late Merchant of the Colony of Virginia, 4 March 1778, American Loyalist Claims, AO 13 Series II, Claims H-M, Virginia [www.ancestry.com].

<sup>18</sup> “An act for Sequestering British Property, enabling those indebted to British subjects to pay off such debts, and directing the proceedings in suits where such subjects are parties” in William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the year 1619* (Richmond, 1821), 9:377-379.

However, all was not lost. George succeeded in gaining an official appointment as the estate's commissioner.<sup>19</sup> It meant that Archibald's property remained nominally in family hands.

When Archibald learned that the state of Virginia had sequestered his property he hedged his position by filing an amended Loyalist claim with the British Government.<sup>20</sup> The government had postponed his original petition. He complained that he had gone into greater debt supporting his family despite the fact that as "one of the first Loyal Families in Glasgow" he had gone to great lengths to assist the government.<sup>21</sup> Archibald enlisted the support of two powerful Scottish politicians, Lord Frederick Campbell and Lord Advocate Henry Dundas, to press the Lords of the Treasury to give him a hearing.<sup>22</sup>

Dundas's letter is particularly instructive for what it suggests about Archibald's larger strategy. Dundas wrote that Archibald wanted all of the paperwork back in the event that the government decided not to entertain his petition. The exiled merchant feared that he would permanently lose his property if it became known in America that he had indeed supported Lord Dunmore and solicited government aid. Archibald, as Dundas put it, wanted to "tell His own Story" if and when he managed to return to Virginia.<sup>23</sup> In other words, Archibald needed his identity and his sense of loyalty to remain fluid in order to take advantage of opportunities as they became available. He made no mention of having filed a claim with the government in his letters to George lest they be seized in transit to Virginia.

Archibald's amended claim also reflected the fact that both he and George had failed to secure passports from British or American authorities that would permit his return. Archibald

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<sup>19</sup> George McCall to Archibald McCall, 15 May 1778, in Ewing., ed., "Correspondence," 327-328; Minute entry for 19 March 1778 in H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia* (Richmond, 1932), 2:105.

<sup>20</sup> AM, Amended Claim, 14 June 1779, American Loyalist Claims, AO 13 Series II, Claims H-M, Virginia [www.ancestry.com].

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Lord Advocate Henry Dundas to Sir Grey Cooper, 23 June 1779; Lord Frederick Campbell to Sir Grey Cooper, 4 July 1779, both *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Dundas to Sir Grey Cooper, 23 June 1779, *Ibid.*

was desperate to go back to Virginia. He believed that returning willingly would provide sufficient cause for the state to release his property.<sup>24</sup> George pestered the state delegates for help; he wrote to Virginia's Continental Congressmen, and even sent on a petition from Archibald's mother-in-law to the Virginia General Assembly asking them to authorize passports for Archibald and his daughter.<sup>25</sup> He had little luck in convincing anyone to help them.

In the interim, the Virginia legislature repealed the Sequestration Act and replaced it with a far more sobering piece of legislation. In May 1779, the state government adopted a confiscation statute.<sup>26</sup> George informed his cousin that unless he returned by December 1779 he would lose his estate permanently.<sup>27</sup> George once again sprung into action in defense of Archibald's property. He convinced Virginia officials to delay confiscation of Archibald's estate until December 1781 and he finally succeeded in gaining Archibald and his daughter the coveted passports. But the documents miscarried in their journey across the Atlantic.<sup>28</sup> Archibald never received them. He was in Britain in April 1782 when the state escheated his estate.<sup>29</sup>

McCalls on both sides of the Atlantic launched last-ditch efforts to save the estate by professing Archibald's loyalty to the Virginia and British governments. This was possible on the one hand because Archibald had carefully concealed his request for aid from American eyes. On the other hand continued disruptions in communications between Britain and North America

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<sup>24</sup> Archibald McCall to George McCall, 20 May 1778, in Ewing, ed., "Correspondence," 333-336.

<sup>25</sup> George McCall to Archibald McCall, 17 November 1778; GM to AM, 26 January 1779; George McCall to Archibald McCall, 7 March 1779. All Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "An Act Concerning escheats and forfeitures from British Subjects," in Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large*, 10: 66-71; Elizabeth Flood petition, 1779 Legislative Petitions to the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession Number 36121, Box 218, Folder 4, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Hereafter "LVA."

<sup>27</sup> George McCall to Archibald McCall, 3 July 1779, "Correspondence," 344.

<sup>28</sup> George McCall to Archibald McCall, 28 November 1779. Ibid., 345; George McCall to Archibald McCall, 20 February 1780, Ibid., 348; George McCall to Archibald McCall, 28 August 1780, Ibid., 351; George McCall to Archibald McCall, 2 October 1780; Petition of Elizabeth Flood, n.d., presented to the House of Delegates on 18 May 1782. Legislative Petitions, Essex County, Record Group 78, LVA.

<sup>29</sup> Petition of Elizabeth Flood, n.d., presented to the House of Delegates on 18 May 1782. Legislative Petitions, Essex County, Record Group 78, LVA.

meant that George, Archibald, and his mother-in-law could act independently of one another in pursuing separate strategies.

In Britain, Archibald amended his Loyalist claim for a second time. In 1782, he sent the government a property schedule totaling £46,000 for an estate that he now feared he had lost. It does not appear that he ever received a hearing.<sup>30</sup>

In Virginia, Archibald's mother-in-law, Elizabeth Flood, and George McCall pleaded with the House of Delegates to release the property. They argued that Archibald had always demonstrated "the warmest attachment to his Country" and he desired to return with his daughter to become citizens of the United States. But Flood and McCall cleverly placed greater emphasis on the sixteen-year-old daughter's property rights in their appeal. The young girl had had no say in her being sent to Britain. It was therefore unfair to deny her right to inherit her grandfather's and her father's estates. By focusing the Delegates' attention on the daughter Catherine, Flood and McCall tried to redirect their attention away from Archibald and the doubts that Virginia officials might still entertain about him.<sup>31</sup>

The strategy of the Virginia-based McCalls worked. In 1783, Archibald and his daughter returned to the new United States to retake possession of their property.<sup>32</sup> They also had received support from prominent Virginians who attested to his attachment to the United States.<sup>33</sup> Archibald wisely never revealed his involvement with Lord Dunmore during the war or his subsequent appeal to the British Government for compensation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A Memorandum of Property A. McCall left behind him in Virginia, Received 1 November 1782, American Loyalist Claims, AO 13 Series II, Claims H-M, Virginia [www.ancestry.com].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Archibald was back in Virginia as least by August 1783. See Archibald McCall to Benjamin Harrison, 4 August 1783, Library of Virginia: Governor's Letters Receive, July 1776 to November 1784, LVA.

<sup>33</sup> John Edmonson, John Brockenbrough, Henry Clements, Richard Banks, Mace Clements to Benjamin Harrison, 24 July 1783, in Ibid., LVA.

<sup>34</sup> Governor Benjamin Harrison's proclamation of 2 July 1783 prohibiting former Loyalists from returning to the state delayed McCall's return.

Archibald McCall and his daughter returned to the United States just as John Witherspoon was preparing to leave it. Witherspoon had left Congress in late 1782 and returned to his duties at the College of New Jersey. The college suffered damage during the war. To acquire the funds needed to rebuild the college, Witherspoon, along with former Continental Congressman and Pennsylvania president Joseph Reed, undertook a fund raising expedition to Britain in December 1783. Despite Witherspoon's understandable reservations about traveling to Britain so soon after the conclusion of peace, the college Trustees believed that the men would find a favorable reception among Britons interested in education and religion.<sup>35</sup>

Witherspoon hoped to renew emigration to the now independent United States. Prior to his departure, he inquired with George Washington about the availability of the general's lands along the Ohio River. Not prepared to give a definitive answer then, Washington later wrote to Witherspoon and advised him that he had 30,000 acres to lease along the Ohio and Great Kanawha rivers. Washington preferred to lease, not sell, his "Lands which are beautifully situated upon fine navigable rivers," hopefully to "particular Societies, or religeous (sic) Sectaries with their Pastors." New settlers, he believed, would be more inclined to live "in a new & rising Empire" if they lived among "friends in a small circle," and therefore remain stable tenants. Washington included a copy of an advertisement for Witherspoon to show to prospective settlers.<sup>36</sup>

Londoners gave Witherspoon a chilly reception. Dispatching two former Continental congressmen, including one who had signed the Declaration of Independence, so soon after imperial disunion was a poor fund raising strategy. Scotland seemed more welcoming.

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<sup>35</sup> For an overview of Witherspoon's mission in England and Scotland see, Varnum Lansing Collins, *President Witherspoon: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), 2:138-143.

<sup>36</sup> George Washington to John Witherspoon, 10 March 1784, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008). Hereafter "PGW:DE." For the enclosure see "Advertisement: Ohio Lands," in *Ibid*.

Witherspoon received word from his friend and fellow minister Charles Nisbet of Montrose, that “many hundreds, I might say thousands, on this coast would willingly emigrate to America, could they find any opportunity of getting passage.” Nisbet, a known supporter of the Americans during the war, reported receiving numerous letters and personal entreaties since the peace asking for advice on emigrating to the United States. Tradesmen presumed that Witherspoon held “a commission to carry some of certain trades out with you,” and they begged Nisbet for a letter of introduction. He implored Witherspoon to do what he could to relocate Scots to America. The “lower ranks” were in “a state of the most abject servitude and poverty” owing to high rents and the “deadness of trade and manufacturers,” a reflection of a post-war recession and proprietors who had not altered their practices since before the war.<sup>37</sup>

Nisbet gave Witherspoon reason to pause. The government’s official publication, *The London Gazette*, printed extracts of the laws prohibiting foreign recruitment of artisans and manufacturers around the same time that London newspapers announced Witherspoon’s arrival.<sup>38</sup> Violators faced fines and imprisonment for their actions. Only a few years earlier, when James Grant of Grant and Henry Dundas searched for a legal means to prevent emigration, those laws had not applied to British North America.

But now the emigration laws applied to the new republican United States. From England Witherspoon had informed Washington he would only mention his lands to a “few Confidential Friends.” In Scotland, “the Spirit of Emigration is very strong” and the “common sort much more favourable to [the United States]” than the “better sort of People.” Perhaps fearing that British authorities might intercept his letters, he reported that he had received but declined several requests for emigration assistance. He promised to make known Washington’s proposals,

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<sup>37</sup> Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., “Scottish Emigration to America: A Letter of Dr. Charles Nisbet to Dr. John Witherspoon, 1784,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 11 (April, 1954): 283, 286.

<sup>38</sup> *The London Gazette*, 10 February 1784.

but that Scots facing high rents at home were unlikely to lease lands in America, even at lower rates. They wanted private property. He suggested that Washington adopt his Ryegate strategy — sell a tract of surveyed land to “any body of Emigrants” and keep part of it.<sup>39</sup> As he told Washington later, however, he, Reed, and other Americans in Britain were convinced that “they were strictly watched.” The hostile atmosphere and the laws persuaded him “that it was unsafe for me or any American to have a visible Hand in bringing out Emigrants.” Witherspoon dared not do so despite personal pleas from Nisbet and others.<sup>40</sup>

Despite these complications Witherspoon, who remained connected with Ryegate personally and financially for much of the rest of his life, achieved some success while in Britain. He returned to the United States in September 1784. In announcing his arrival in New York, *The Freeman’s Journal* commented that Witherspoon had “arrived with several clergymen, and a number of settlers designed for Vermont,” Scots who would try to make a life in a new republican empire.<sup>41</sup>

The emigrants who journeyed with Witherspoon to the United States were among several thousand Scots who resettled in North America in the years after the American Revolution. J.M. Bumsted has estimated that between 1776 and 1803 at least 13,111 Scots emigrated to the United States or British Canada. Nearly 77% of those people went to the latter, with a large spike in departures between 1801 and 1803.<sup>42</sup>

There was resurgence in emigration activity for reasons that mirrored conditions in the pre-American War period. High rents, land use reforms, promotion of British Canada, and poverty influenced the decision of many Scots to leave for North America. Parliament decided to

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<sup>39</sup> John Witherspoon to George Washington, 7 June 1784, in *PGW:DE*.

<sup>40</sup> Witherspoon to Washington, 14 April 1785, *Ibid*.

<sup>41</sup> *The Freeman’s Journal: or, The North-American Intelligencer*, 22 September 1784.

<sup>42</sup> J.M. Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815* (Edinburgh and Winnipeg: Edinburgh University Press and The University of Manitoba Press, 1982), Appendix A. Table III, 229.

intervene. A powerful lobbying group emerged after the war to press the British government on emigration reform. The Highland Society called for regulations governing conditions on ships that carried emigrants, including specified quantities of provisions, berth size, and a maximum passenger complement. On the one hand such legislation would protect emigrants from unnecessary harm. On the other the new rules would force ship owners to spend money to comply with them. Passing on those costs to the emigrant drove up the price of passage and created a disincentive to emigrate. In May 1803, Parliament passed “An Act for regulating the Vessels carrying Passengers from the United Kingdom to his Majesty’s Plantations and Settlements abroad, or to Foreign Parts, with respect to the Number of such Passengers.” The legislation received additional assistance from transatlantic disruptions associated with the Napoleonic Wars. Between 1804 and 1815 only an estimated 3,400 Scots went to North America.<sup>43</sup> The Highland Society counted Henry Dundas among its members and he remained a powerful force in Scottish politics. Nearly thirty years after he deployed the King’s powers to stop emigration in a bid to preserve Britain’s American empire, Dundas had a hand in shaping what remained of it.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 129-154.

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