

# *the* Ulster-Scots & New England

*Scotch-Irish foundations in the New World*



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## The Five Ships

The amount of Scotch-Irish blood that flows in the veins of the people of New England is often underestimated. Indeed several cities and towns in New England were entirely founded by Ulster immigrants. One commentator has reckoned that between 1714 and 1720, 54 shiploads of Scotch-Irish arrived at Boston Harbour. One very significant event in this Diaspora occurred in 1718 when five ships full of Ulster Presbyterian emigrants landed in Boston, Massachusetts, under the leadership of their Minister, Rev. James McGregor. This particular group of migrants were not made at all welcome by the Puritan fathers of the city. Nonetheless some of these Ulster folk decided to 'stay put' in Boston. Almost immediately they were threatened that they would be placed on the 'tax roll' and 'woe betide them' if they couldn't pay the amount required by the Puritan burghers of the City.

However others in their party, in that late autumn of 1718, moved to Haverhill, Andover and Dracut where they could 'winter over' and establish their 'place' in the American Colonies. After six months had elapsed they had formed into three main settlements consisting of Worcester, Massachusetts; Nutfield (later Londonderry), New Hampshire; and Casco Bay, Maine.



## Maine

With respect to those who settled at Casco Bay, and the overall number of Scotch-Irish descendants in Maine, it is essential to note that there were also ships which travelled directly to the coast of Maine. To believe, as some commentators appear to, that the bulk of the Scotch-Irish in Maine are descended from the 'five ships' is as misleading as it would be to believe that all the Scots living in Ulster in the eighteenth century were descendants of the 'official' Plantation of Ulster in 1610, rather than families coming in waves by 'chain-migration' as they actually did over a period of time.

## Boston, MA

In Boston the Scotch-Irish founded a Presbyterian congregation on Long Lane (later known as Federal Street) under the Rev. John Moorehead. However, as a result of constant pressure and what amounted to a campaign of attrition, by 1786 this had been converted into a church of the 'Puritan' Congregational denomination.

## Worcester, MA

The Worcester Scotch-Irish community of 1718 originally consisted of 50 log cabins and thus 50 families, giving a population of approximately 200 people. At that time they were



*New England*

settled on what was effectively 'the frontier', some 40 miles west of Boston, and were subject to a constant fear of being attacked by Native Americans. Within the Worcester community, the Youngs were a particularly interesting family. William Young, who was a stone-cutter, designed and erected a monument to his father who was the patriarch of the community. Today this inscription is still clearly visible:

'Here lies interred the remains of John Young, who was born in the Isle of Bert (sic) near Londonderry, in the Kingdom of Ireland. He departed this life June 30, 1730, aged 107 years.'

This same family is credited with having introduced the 'Irish potato' into North America. The potato which, years earlier, Sir Walter Raleigh had brought to Europe from America was in fact a 'sweet potato' - a totally different plant.

In Worcester the local Puritans were determined to harass and threaten the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Not surprisingly, this gave rise to some of the Scotch-Irish of Worcester being 'on the move again' and they joined kinsfolk in nearby Framingham and Hopkinton. They also formed four new towns, namely Colerain (about 50 miles north west of Worcester), Pelham (30 miles west of Worcester) in 1738, Western (now Warren) in Worcester



*Scotch-Irish settlement*



County in 1741, and Blandford in Hampden County, Massachusetts, which was first settled by Scotch-Irish in 1735, but officially incorporated in 1741. Historically, the most seminal and significant of the towns arising from the, 'Five Ships Dispersal', was Londonderry, New Hampshire. From early on the city performed the role of centrifuge or 'distribution centre' for the further dispersal of Scotch-Irish people throughout New England. It also performed the unique role of maintaining and reinforcing Scotch-Irish culture and the historical perspective of these newcomers to the frontier at a truly revolutionary time in the creation of what was to become the United States.



Matthew Thornton

## Londonderry, NH

Londonderry was first settled by that group of Scotch-Irish who fled from Boston and 'wintered over' the tail-end of 1718/1719 near Portland in Casco Bay, Maine. Amongst this group was a young boy named Matthew Thornton, who was to move to Londonderry at a much later stage, and would grow up to become one on the 'signers' of the Declaration of Independence and emerge as one of the most eminent Americans of his time.

Even though the Thornton family stayed in Maine for a period, there were others in their party who were anxious to move on.

In April 1719 about twenty of the families in this group moved

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Thornton Esq".

Matthew Thornton

to Londonderry, New Hampshire, which was then called Nutfield due to the naturally rich abundance of its pecan and walnut trees. Within fifteen years this group had grown to 700 Presbyterians of communicant age and status. Most of these Scotch-Irish settlers had originally lived on the east side of the River Bann in and around the towns of Coleraine, Ballymoney, Ballymena and Kilrea. Their leader during this early period was James McKeen who was the brother-in-law of Rev. James McGregor. The latter joined the group about a month later on from Dracut, Massachusetts. Unlike many other Scotch-Irish settlements during the French and Indian Wars, Londonderry, New Hampshire, remained relatively free from attack. Many of its inhabitants believe that this 'peace' was theirs because Rev. James McGregor had been at college with Governor Vaudreuil of Quebec and had a lasting friendship with him that reached beyond the politics and factions of the day. Before the Revolutionary War Londonderry, New Hampshire, gave rise to other namesake settlements in New England and Nova Scotia. Places like Londonderry in Nova Scotia and Londonderry in Vermont may be seen as the Scotch-Irish 'grandchildren' of Londonderry in Ulster.

At its core the settlement at Kennebec, Maine, consisted of the



original Casco Bay families who had names such as Armstrong, Means, Jameson, Gray, Gyles and McDonald.

## Robert Temple

After Dummer's War (also known as Lovewell's War) Robert Temple, who had fought during the late war at Cork in Maine, brought in and settled a further five ships with 200 'new' Scotch-Irish families.



*Fort William Henry, Pemaquid*

## David Dunbar

In 1728 David Dunbar, a former soldier, was appointed as Surveyor General of the King's Woods in 'America and Nova Scotia'. His main objective was to produce supplies and resources for the Royal Navy and to conserve, in particular, white pine trees in the forests of Maine and New Hampshire. The white pine was particularly suitable for the construction of ship masts due to the fact that it contained more sap than other trees and this gave it durability and a flexibility which was so important to ships in strong winds on the high seas. Dunbar's objective was that of creating a separate province between the Kennebec and St Croix rivers. In 1729 he outlined plans to rebuild Fort 'William Henry' at Pemaquid which had been destroyed by a French/Indian attack in 1696, and to rename it Fort Frederick. In his letter to

the British authorities he mentioned that, as well as the existing Scotch-Irish settlers from Londonderry, New Hampshire, he also had, 'a great many hundred men of those who came lately from Ireland'. He added that these settlers were waiting in Pennsylvania where they had taken refuge from the ill-treatment that they had received in Boston. The plan was to offer each settler between 50 and 100 acres of land. Eventually fifteen families of these 'Dunbar settlers' put down roots in Maine. He described his settlers as being, 'originally from North Britain but last from Ireland.'

## Samuel Waldo

Shortly after Dunbar's venture came the efforts of yet another 'social engineer' - Samuel Waldo. He earned his living as a wealthy timber trader and 'mast agent'. Like Dunbar, he also was involved with this particularly lucrative line of naval business. Waldo was also interested in the deposits of lime which had recently been uncovered in Maine. In April 1735 he reached agreement with thirty-two Scotch-Irish families and nineteen families of other European background that, in return for building a house and clearing four acres of forest, they would each receive 100 acres of land. In a letter of 1736 Waldo outlined





further plans and claimed that he ‘expects a great number of Irish Protestants to arrive in these parts in a month or two’. He further revealed that he had ‘engaged three ships for that purpose whose passengers your petitioner has contracted with to settle on the land there’.

Within twelve months of writing this epistle he had indeed attracted a further twenty-five to thirty-five Scotch-Irish settler families to Maine. By 1753 Waldo’s son Samuel was actively recruiting in Ulster for a new settlement in New England, this time at Sterling (previously known as Voluntown) in Windham County, Connecticut.

No account of the Scotch-Irish in Maine would be complete without some mention of Belfast, Maine. Situated today in Waldo County, it was originally founded in the summer of 1765 by a surveyor named John Mitchell. Once again it was populated with Scotch-Irish stock from Londonderry, New Hampshire. Amongst the early settlers was James Miller, originally from Belfast in Ulster, and it was he who lobbied for the City to be named after the place of his birth. If he had not intervened it was in fact to be known as another, ‘Londonderry’.

## Divine Providence

Later movements carried Scotch-Irish settlers to virtually all the towns of western Massachusetts and also to most of the towns of Vermont. The Scotch-Irish who settled at Londonderry, New

Hampshire, who were central to much of this development, truly believed that, for all the challenges that their new home presented to them, they had God alongside them and that he had settled them in a good place.



*Belfast, Maine*

In 1869 one of their number wrote a poem to celebrate their good fortune and providential deliverance:

“Tis the robin’s wedding time,  
And a breath of plum and cherry  
Makes the air of Londonderry  
Sweet as Eden in its prime.”



## Londonderry, New Hampshire:

*Calvinist Orthodoxy and Echoes of the Great Siege*

### Rev. James McGregor 1677-1729

James McGregor was the Presbyterian Minister in Aghadowey, Co. Londonderry, who famously led his congregation and their friends in the 'Five ships' exodus in 1718 that eventually resulted in them building together the Scotch Irish settlement of Londonderry, New Hampshire. The *Encyclopedia of the Irish in America*, refers to him as 'the Moses of the Scotch-Irish in America'.



*Presbyterian Meetinghouse, Londonderry*

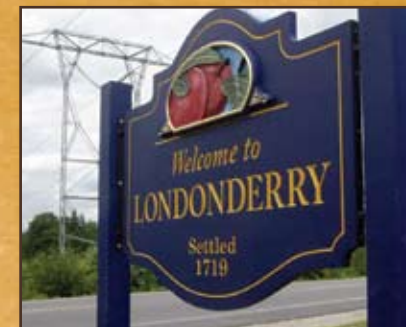
James McGregor is reputed to have been a full cousin of Rob Roy McGregor. When James was but a lad of twelve years old he found himself inside the Great Siege of Derry in 1688/89, and is reputed to have fired a cannon from the top of St. Columb's Cathedral in that city, by way of announcing that a merchant ship, *The Mountjoy*, had broken the boom or barrier that had been constructed across the River Foyle, to prevent supplies getting through to the starving Protestants within the walls who were besieged by Jacobite troops. The galant defenders had lasted for a miraculous 109 days. Rev. Edward Parker in his *History of Londonderry* (1851) offered this commentary on McGregor's role: 'Thus habituated to hardship and denial he was well prepared to share with the company who took possession of this spot, the toils, dangers, and sacrifices of ease and comfort, ever attendant

upon a new settlement.'

When James McGregor was Presbyterian minister of Aghadowey, he was nonetheless known as 'the Peacemaker'.

McGregor and his wife Maryanne had ten children, and lived in circumstances which were far from affluence. There were a few wealthy landowners within his congregation such as his father-in-law Elder David Cargill and his brothers-in-law James McKeen and Captain James Gregg. It is believed that they helped finance the voyage. Before departing, McGregor preached a last sermon from a text in Exodus: 'If thy presence goes not with me, carry us not up hence.'

On 4 August 1718, the *Robert*, a brigantine, arrived in Boston harbour with McGregor and sixteen families of his congregation on board. They were given a poor reception by the Bostonians and stigmatised as 'Irish'. McGregor wrote in disgust at this to Governor Shute. He protested about the 'Irish' label, saying that they were in fact Scots living in Ireland and stating his surprise 'when we so frequently ventured our all, for the British crown and liberties.' After taking temporary refuge in Dracut, Massachusetts, McGregor made his way to the spot that was later to be called Londonderry, New Hampshire. There, on 12 April 1719, at Beaver Lake he preached his first sermon in the New World.





Taking his text as Ezekiel 32:2, he asked God to provide 'a hiding place from the winds and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.'



*First framed house*

As the years passed, McGregor took the precaution of appearing in the pulpit each Sunday with 'his gun well loaded and primed', ready to repel any sudden Indian attack. However, Londonderry was never attacked by Indians. Some say that this was because they respected the Scotch-Irish for not stealing their land. Others claim that the reputation of these settlers was such that Indians were afraid to attack them. Or perhaps it was because there was no major river running through the town, as the Indians' preferred mode of transport was the canoe. Furthermore, the town had garrison houses in both East Derry and Derry village, and a log palisade or 'flankers', surrounded Rev. James McGregor's house.

On 21 June 1722 Londonderry received its charter from Governor Shute of Massachusetts and John Wentworth of New Hampshire on behalf of King George I of Great Britain and Ireland. James McGregor was no longer a poor man. His had been the first 'framed' house built in the town and he had also received three out of the 132.5 shares in the Londonderry

enterprise, plus a bonus of 250 extra acres of land. By the mid-18th century Londonderry was the second largest town in New Hampshire.

In 2004 the US Democratic Presidential candidate was John Kerry who, on his maternal side, was the sixth great grandson of James McGregor of Aghadowey and latterly, Londonderry, New Hampshire, the town which he had truly founded and developed.



## David McGregor 1710-1777

David McGregor was born in Co. Londonderry and travelled with his parents and siblings to New England. His father, James McGregor, was the Presbyterian Minister who led the exodus from Ulster, which has become known as, 'The Five Ships'.

In time he would follow his father into the ministry but the first reference that we find to his employment in Londonderry, New Hampshire, is in 1725 when he is recorded as the town's first school teacher.

He was later ordained and in 1737 when the pulpit became vacant at the First Parish Church, as the Presbyterian meetinghouse was called in Londonderry, many citizens felt that David would succeed to this position. After all, this had been the church of his father without whom arguably there would have been no Londonderry, New Hampshire.

However, the elders of the church had different ideas about that and instead they appointed the Rev William Davidson from Scotland. In theological terms, Davidson represented 'New Light' thinking and was an Arminian rather than an orthodox Calvinist.

The congregation were divided on the matter and those who held with David McGregor's viewpoint built their own church



Rev. David McGregor's house

and controversially levied a tax on each and every resident of the town regardless of their personal view on the matter. This became known as the West Parish Church and every Sunday some forty families crossed to the west of the city to worship there. By the same token, the same number of families travelled in the opposite direction to worship at First Parish Church. Often they met on the sidewalk *en route*.

David McGregor was to remain pastor of this congregation until his death in 1777.

Three years earlier in 1774, his son James opened a store in the East Derry Hill area of Londonderry.

David McGregor's daughter Margaret married Captain James Rogers. He was the brother of the more famous Major Robert Rogers who founded the corps of tough fighting men who were known as 'Rogers' Rangers'.

Much later, David McGregor's great granddaughter, Jane Means Appleton became the wife of Franklin Pierce, the 14th President of the United States.



Rev. David McGregor's grave



## Rev Matthew Clark

Rev Matthew Clark emerges from the history books as one of the great characters of the Londonderry settlement in New Hampshire.

Soon after the death of Rev James McGregor, Matthew Clark of Kilrea, Co. Londonderry, having been ordained as a Presbyterian minister in Ulster, came to New Hampshire and at the request of his former countrymen, took up pastoral responsibility at the First Parish Church, although he was never formally installed. He was aged about 70 years old when he came to the town and yet he took to his duties with great vigour.

Matthew Clark had been wounded at the Siege of Derry as a result of 'a ball grazing the temple,' and affecting the bone so that it never healed. The sore that was thus provoked was concealed using a black patch, as may be seen in any contemporaneous portrait of the cleric. His conduct in church, though no doubt serious in purpose, could never the less be very humorous and often expressed in his Ulster-Scots tongue. Here are some examples:

One Sunday morning Matthew Clark was preaching when a handsome young British officer in his bright red uniform entered the church and stood at the back. Many of the young ladies of the congregation were greatly taken with the sight of this fine



*Rev. Matthew Clark  
Note the visible wound sustained  
in the defence of Londonderry*

specimen of man, and began to snicker and whisper. Clark spoke to the young man as follows:

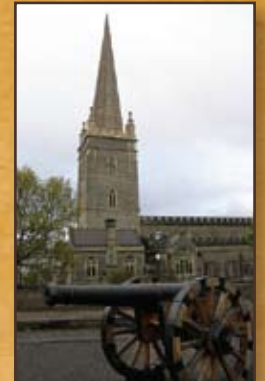
'Ye are a braw lad, ye ha'e a braw suit o'claites, and we h'ae seen them, ye may sit doon.'

On another occasion his preaching touched on Simon Peter's role at the Garden of Gethsemane and he remarked:

'Just like Peter, aye mair forrit than wise, ganging swaggering about wi'a sword at his side; an'a puir han'he mad' o'it when he cam'to the trial, for he only cut off a chiel's lug, an'he ought to ha'split doon his heid.'


Preaching from Philippians 4:13, Clark began one Sunday morning with the words, 'I can do all things.' He continued, 'Ay, can ye Paul! I'll bet a dollar o'that!' At this juncture he took a Spanish dollar from his pocket and placed it beside the Bible on the pulpit. Then with a look of mock surprise he proclaimed, 'Stop! Let's see what else Paul says! 'I can do all things through Christ, which strengthened me! Ay, sae can I, Paul; I draw my bet!' and he returned the dollar to his pocket.

Like David McGregor, Matthew Clark also taught in the local school and in 1729 was paid eighty pounds *per annum* to preach and an additional forty pounds if he would 'save our town from



*Cannon on the  
Walls of Londonderry, Ulster*





## Other notable Ulster-Scots settlers, their descendants and their legacies

keeping any other grammar school master’.

Matthew Clark was a temperate man who was, unusually for the time, a vegetarian. He married as his third wife the widow of Rev. James McGregor and when he died on 25 January 1735, in accordance with his special request, his body was carried to the grave by those who had stood alongside him on the Walls of Derry during the Great Siege.

### James Nesmith

*Presbyterian Elder, Londonderry New Hampshire*

Rev. Edward Parker informs us that the heads of the 16 families who first settled Londonderry, New Hampshire were as follows:

‘James McKeen, John Barnett, Archibald Cledinin, John Mitchell, James Sterrett, James Anderson, Randal Alexander, James Gregg, James Clark, James Nesmith, Allen Anderson, Robert Weir, John Morrison, Samuel Allison, Thomas Steele, and John Stuart.’

Of particular interest here is James Nesmith, who was also one of the original Londonderry Parish Church elders. In about 1714, while still in Ulster, he married Elizabeth McKeen, the daughter of James McKeen, a fellow pioneer settler. They had four sons: Arthur, James, John, Thomas and a daughter, Elizabeth

Parker puts it well when he tells us, ‘The descendants of Elder James Nesmith are very numerous, and are, with few exceptions, valuable members of society.’ Most people ‘of a certain age’ would agree that one of those descendants, who came much later, would also fit that description. In the 1960s Mike Nesmith was one of the most popular members of the hit television pop group, *The Monkees*.



## General John Stark

*'Live Free or Die'*

Archibald Stark, the father of John Stark, was born in Glasgow in 1697 and educated at the University of Glasgow. At a young age he moved with his father and family to Londonderry in Ulster where he married Eleanor Nichols who was herself the daughter of a Scottish immigrant. In 1720 he headed for New Hampshire where Rev. James McGregor and his band of followers had already acted as pathfinders. His was not a lone voyage of discovery, for he was accompanied by a party of adventurers from Ulster. It was a bad and difficult voyage on which his children died and on arrival of the emigrant ship in Boston in the late autumn of that year, it was clear that there was smallpox on board. So, in a by now familiar pattern, the ship travelled up to Maine where the Starks settled on the Sheepscot River near Wiscasset.

Eventually Archibald Stark, like many other Scotch-Irish immigrants in New England before him, made his way to Londonderry, New Hampshire. It was here that the future General was born on 28 August 1728. When he was eight years of age the family moved to Derryfield, now known as Manchester, New Hampshire.

In 1745 we find Archibald as a volunteer in a local militia company set up to protect the local people from attack by Indians. His sons, William, John, Samuel and Archibald, were all commissioned into



the British army. William, who was the eldest, served under General Wolfe at Louisburg and Quebec in French-controlled Canada.

John Stark lived at home with his family until 1752, when in late April of that year he was kidnapped by Abenakis whilst on a hunting trip. He was eventually freed just over two months later and greatly impressed his captors by the way in which he protected himself when being made to run the gauntlet as a ritual required by the terms of his release. During that time however John Stark gained great insight into the terrain as well as the hunting and warfare methods of the Native Americans and that was to prove inspirational and beneficial to him for the rest of his life. It was no surprise when the Governor commissioned John Stark as Second Lieutenant in Major Robert Rogers' Rangers. He fought against the forces of French General Baron Dieskau and was wounded and taken prisoner.

John Stark did not return to military service again until 23 April 1775, four days after the Battles of Lexington and Concord which marked the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. When he re-entered military service, it was against the British and with the rank of Colonel of the New Hampshire militia. He was subsequently given command of the 3rd New Hampshire Regiment and marched south to Boston to support the blockaded rebels there. Stark and his forces arrived just as General Howe landed troops and the Battle of Bunker Hill ensued. Drawing on his experience Stark was able to take a strategic view and read



British military minds and ‘plug gaps’ in the patriot American defences. He ordered what have been described as ‘withering’ fusillades which decimated British redcoat lines, particularly when they charged Stark’s Minutemen. Thus they were able to hold the situation until General Knox’s brilliant manoeuvre of cannons into place on Dorchester Heights.

The New Hampshire Regiment was subsequently attached to the Continental Army and Stark was offered a command. This he gratefully accepted and saw action in Canada in 1776 and thereafter at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. He was commissioned as a Brigadier General of the New Hampshire Militia. He was ordered to reinforce the Continental Army at Saratoga but instead he engaged British Hessians at Bennington. Before the battle he is quoted as rousing his troops with the words: ‘There are your enemies, the Red Coats and Tories. They are ours, or this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow.’ His wife did not become a widow but the battle is seen as a turning point of the War.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, John Stark retired and took little part in former officer reunions. When he was invited at the age of eighty-one to attend a reunion of Bennington veterans, Stark was too unwell to attend but wrote a letter to those



*Memorial to  
General Stark at Bennington*

attending the event. It contained the words for which he was to become renowned: ‘Live free or die: Death is not the worst of evils.’ In 1945 New Hampshire adopted the words ‘Live free or die’, as its state motto.

John Stark’s boyhood home at 2000 Elm Street, Manchester, New Hampshire, survives much the same today as it looked when his father Abraham Stark built it in 1736.



## General Henry Knox

*Revolutionary War Hero with a touch of Genius*

General Henry Knox's father, William, was a ship's captain who migrated from Londonderry to Boston in 1729. As his mother was widowed, young Henry decided to leave school at twelve years of age. Instead of attending college, Knox worked in a bookstore in Boston and shortly afterwards opened his own establishment. Knox read avidly, particularly on military subjects, and subsequently George Washington took the calculated risk of making him one of his four key Generals during the American Revolution. His most famous victory was at Dorchester Heights which overlook Boston Harbour. Knox, in an audacious and daringly brilliant move, brought across 60 tons of abandoned cannon from Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York to this important vantage point. The weaponry had been abandoned by the British after the French and Indian War and Knox had it transported on oxen-drawn sleds across dangerous frozen terrain.

As a result the British General Gage was unable to enter Boston where the Redcoats really needed to establish a strategic base. Today there is a Fort Knox in both Maine and Kentucky, the city of Knoxville in Tennessee and nine different states have a Knox County, all named in his honour.



## Robert Dinsmoor

*'The Rustic Poet of New Hampshire'*

In 1828 Robert Dinsmoor, 'The Rustic Poet of New Hampshire', published his *Incidental Poems*. Some of these were written in English and some were written in the 'Hamely Tongue', the language of his Ulster Scots ancestors.

His father's great-grandfather John Dinsmoor had come to Co. Antrim from Achenmead, near the River Tweed in Scotland, following a family dispute with his brother. He subsequently settled at Ballywattick which lies on the Coleraine side of Ballymoney and the Hearth Money Rolls show John living there in 1666. In the 1720s his son, also John, emigrated to America, not long after the exodus of Rev. James McGregor of Aghadowey who led his congregation in the 'famous five ships' that sailed to New England. That John, who was known in America as, 'Daddy Dinsmoor', settled at first in Maine at Fort George. There he enjoyed, as he believed, good relations with his Native American neighbours whose tribesmen often repeated to him the mantra, 'All one Brother'. Notwithstanding that, however, he was kidnapped by them and held in captivity for three months. The tribesmen's chief, befriended him during this period and eventually set him free to make his way to Boston initially and from there to the Scotch-Irish settlement of Londonderry, New





Hampshire. Many of the inhabitants of that town knew him and he was granted 100 acres by the proprietors. He was a stonemason by trade and so not surprisingly he built himself a stone house and sent word back to Ballymoney for his wife and children to join him in the New World.

In 1731 his son William was born and he was the father of Robert the poet who was born in 1757. That was just two years before the birth of that other Robert (also a poet) with whom he has been compared - Robert Burns. Although they were both writing in Scots and Dinsmoor was undoubtedly inspired by Burns, his style is nonetheless original to his own particular environment and circumstances. In the preface to Dinsmoor's *Incidental Poems*, the New England poet, John Greenleaf Whittier said of the comparison between the two contemporaries, who were writing 3000 miles apart:

'Burns is the bonny Doon flowing through the banks and braes of Scotland, and Dinsmoor is the Merrimack passing through our western soil and reflecting from its crystal bed the western scenery through which it passes.'

When Robert Dinsmoor was but a lad he made his first venture into poetry, writing in Scots about the death of his dog, Skip. The poem showed tremendous promise and emphasised the poet's sense of the equality that he believed existed amongst all God's creatures. This segment illustrates the point:

'Though like a lord man o'er ye rules,  
An' bang ye round wi' chairs an' stools,  
An' bruise ye wi' the auld pot buils,  
Mind not their powers—  
Their bodies maun gang to the mools,  
As weel as ours.'

The poem also contains a picture of both the constant threat to Scotch-Irish settlers on the frontier as well as the humour associated with even the most sacred of their observances:

'He try'd to keep the corn frae bears,  
An' help'd us ay to sing our prayers'.

At twenty years of age Robert married Molly, his childhood sweetheart, and in the years that followed, as well as serving in the military and a spell as a schoolmaster, he remained a farmer and a stout defender of the orthodox Presbyterianism of his forefathers.

A remarkable and personal piece by Dinsmoor was written in October 1820, a hundred years after his ancestor left Ballymoney. Yet it was scribed in a style that at once paid homage to Robert Burns and was at the same time the language of his Scottish and Ulster antecedents. The poem was written as a letter of thanks for the hospitality extended to him by a friend that he had visited in the Scotch-Irish settlement of Belfast, Maine:



*Dinsmoor's great contemporary, Robert Burns*



'Fare fa'ye Joe, my canty Ladd,  
Nae feckless whim can mak'thee sad;  
Whan gear comes linkin' in ye're glad,  
An' blithe ye feel;  
Mair frien's like you I wish I had,  
Wi' hearts as leal!  
Ilk dollar that ye sen' awa',  
May it return ere night wi' twa,  
And peace, an' plenty, bless your ha',  
An' a' concerns;  
An' nae misfortune e'er befa'  
Your wife an' bairns.

Surely anyone of us would be glad to be the subject of such a toast?

## Governor Robert Pinckney Dunlap

*A Servant of the People*

Robert Pinckney Dunlap, the sixth Governor of Maine, was born in Brunswick on 17 August 1794. His father was Captain John Dunlap and his paternal grandfather was Rev. Robert Dunlap who was born in Co. Antrim in 1715. Rev. Robert Dunlap graduated with an M.A. from Edinburgh in 1734 and emigrated to New England a couple of years later. In December 1746 he was called to minister in Brunswick and took up his position early in the following year. He preached to that congregation until October 1760 and died in the town in January 1776.



His son John, who was father of the Governor, was born at Dracut, Massachusetts, in 1738. He was known to have been a man of great physical strength and served as a soldier in the French and Indian War.

Robert Dunlap graduated from Bowdoin College in Maine in 1815. He read Law and was admitted to the Bar in 1818, opening an office in his home town of Brunswick and turning his attention also to politics. He was twice President of the Senate and elected Governor in 1833, standing as a Whig. He proved to be extremely popular in this role and was re-elected to it three times. Dunlap was dutiful and was reckoned to have served the people well. In 1843 he was elected as representative in Congress and served two terms.



Robert Pinckney Dunlap died of typhoid fever at his home in Brunswick in 1859. *The Portland Advertiser*, a paper which had often criticised his politics said of him, 'In private he was a man of purity of life, and enjoyed the good-will of all'.

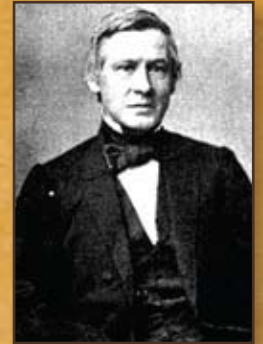


*R.P. Dunlap's grave*

## Asa Gray

*Darwinian Botanist and devout Presbyterian*

Asa Gray was born at Sauquoit, near Paris, New York, in November 1810. He was the great-great grandson of Matthew Gray of Worcester, Massachusetts, and as such was a descendant of the 1718 exodus from Ulster.



He became an M.D. in 1831 but decided to give up practising medicine in favour of studying Botany. In 1842 he was appointed as Professor of Natural History at Harvard University.

In 1872, and again in 1877, Gray travelled to the American West to carry out botanical research. On the latter trip he collected more than a thousand specimens. A very significant event took place at Kew in London when Gray met Charles Darwin. Darwin subsequently wrote to Gray requesting information about the distribution of various American flowers and Gray provided information that was very useful in the development of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. They were to enjoy a lifelong collegiate exchange of letters. Gray argued for conciliation between belief in God and Darwinism. He himself remained a devout Christian all his life. He wrote:

'I am, scientifically and in my own fashion, a Darwinian, philosophically, a convinced Theist, and religiously, an acceptor of the creed commonly called the Nicene, as the exponent of the Christian faith'.



As well as being elevated to the position of being a Member of the Royal Society of London, contemporary recognition was also achieved when the American Society of Plant Taxonomists established the Asa Gray Award in 1984 to honour a living botanist for his career achievements.

Asa Gray died in Cambridge, MA, aged 77 and his life was celebrated in these words of the New England poet, Robert Lowell:

‘Kind Fate, prolong the days well spent,  
Whose indefatigable hours  
Have been as gaily innocent  
And fragrant as his flowers.’



## Horace Greeley

*The conscience of America*

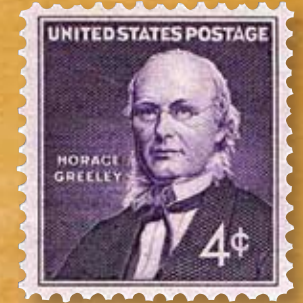
Horace Greeley was born on 3 November 1811 on a farm in Amherst, New Hampshire, the third of seven children.

His father's family was of English origin, but his mother, Mary Woodburn hailed from Londonderry, New Hampshire, and as a friend of the family put it, was 'of that fine old Scotch-Irish stock which settled the town'. The Woodburns had emigrated from the Garvagh area in 1718 and members of the family had been present at the Siege of Derry. Horace Greeley knew about those relatives and wrote about them later in life in one of his journalistic pieces.

On the farm in New England the young Horace carried out his share of the chores including 'riding the horse to plough' and 'picking stones'.

Londonderry, New Hampshire, was famous for its linen, the skills having been brought there by its Scotch-Irish settlers. Horace Greeley had an abiding memory of his mother seated at a spinning-wheel, regaling her children with endless songs, ballads and stories of life in Ulster where work skills were often intertwined with culture.

When he was fifteen Horace Greeley saw an advert for 'a boy wanted' by *The Northern Spectator* newspaper. His father





reluctantly allowed him to respond to this and to begin his five-year apprenticeship. Horace, who had a slight frame found the work heavy, particularly the shifting of the heavy wooden press. The job allowed plenty of time for private reading and Horace put this time to good use. Soon he was part of the local debating club and was writing for the newspaper, as well as carrying out the physical business of typesetting and printing.

By 1831 Horace Greeley was living in New York City and had joined the somewhat radical Universalist Church on Broadway. In 1834 he started to work on *The New Yorker* for which he had sole editorial responsibility for seven years. In 1841 he started his own newspaper, *The New York Tribune*. The paper took a very definite moral stance against the Mexican War, capital punishment and particularly against slavery.

By 1856 Horace Greeley was the author of several books and a member of the House of Representatives. The dominant strain in all these activities was his unrelenting articulation of his hatred of slavery. He helped found the new Republican Party and became very influential. During this period he allegedly coined the phrase, 'Go West Young Man'.


In 1860 Horace Greeley helped secure the Presidential nomination for the relatively unknown Abraham Lincoln. Later he was critical of Lincoln for not emancipating the slaves earlier in his term of office.

In 1872 Horace Greeley himself made a bid for the Presidency. His opponent was none other than Ulysses Simpson Grant, who was also of Scotch-Irish descent. The campaign was characterised by the vituperative cartoons of Thomas Nast which were aimed at Horace Greeley in particular. This was so much the case that Horace said he began to wonder whether he was running for 'the Presidency or the penitentiary'. Grant won the election by a landslide and shortly thereafter Horace Greeley lost control of *The New York Tribune*. This was a double blow and Greeley suffered a complete physical and mental breakdown and died within weeks of the election on 29 November 1872.

And thus was lost the Scotch-Irishman that had been described as 'the conscience of America'.







## New Hampshire & Maine's Ulster-Scots Heritage

*Yesterday and Today*

The year 1718 witnessed the exodus of the 'first five ships' which sailed from Ireland to Boston carrying 120 families from Ulster, mainly from the Bann Valley. They were led by Rev James McGregor who was a Presbyterian minister in Aghadowey, Co. Londonderry. Part of their motivation for uplifting themselves and removing to America was partially religious and partially economic. They sought to escape the burden of crippling rents and the impact of religious discrimination. They were also attracted by the promise of free frontier land. Ironically, the settlers were greeted in a fairly hostile manner and fled Boston. Initially this was a shock because as Presbyterians they believed that they would have much in common with Boston's burghers who were mostly Puritan descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers. Up until then the Scotch-Irish migrants had regarded these people as being almost their Calvinist brothers and sisters. However, when they were virtually banished from Boston's shores and this illusion shattered, they decided to split into two groups. One group headed for Worcester which is about forty miles west of Boston, and having been burned out there, proceeded to Nutfield (afterwards renamed Londonderry), New Hampshire. The second group sailed to the Eastern frontier and spent a frigid and freezing winter on board a ship in Casco Bay, Maine, close to what is now the town of Portland. Some of this group remained around Falmouth (now Portland) including John Armstrong, Robert Means, William Jameson, Joshua Gray, William Gyles

and a McDonald. The majority, however, fled to join their countrymen at Londonderry, New Hampshire – whilst another small group moved east to the shores of Lower Kennebec where they were joined by several hundred Scotch-Irish immigrants who settled on the shores of Merrymeeting Bay near Bath. Robert Temple brought five ships to the Maine shore in 1719 with 200 Scotch-Irish families and between 1729 and 1731. Col. Dunbar, an Ulster-Scot, moved interrelated clans of Co. Tyrone and Co. Antrim families from New Hampshire to Maine – largely as a buffer against the Abenaki St Francis Native Americans, allies of the French.

In 1759 an expedition left Portland to capture the mouth of Penobscot from the French. This group included Andrew and Joshua Gray who later settled there. Still living there today are Grays, Wears, Orrs and Doaks with some of these names coming from the original 1718 settlers in Boston.

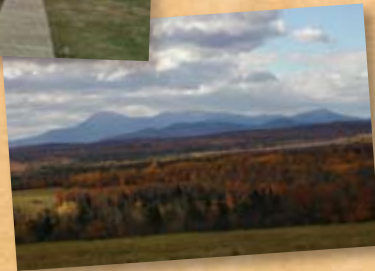
Other names still traceable today include those who were part of the 1730 Scotch-Irish who 'resettled' Townsend (Boothbay) - including the Montgomeries of East Boothbay. Others settled in Topsham, including the McFadden, McGowen, McConn, Vincent, Hamilton, Johnston, Malcom, McClellan, Crawford, Graves, Ward, Givern, Dunning and Simpson families.

In recent years there have been a number of accounts of the Scotch-Irish immigration into the south and south-eastern region



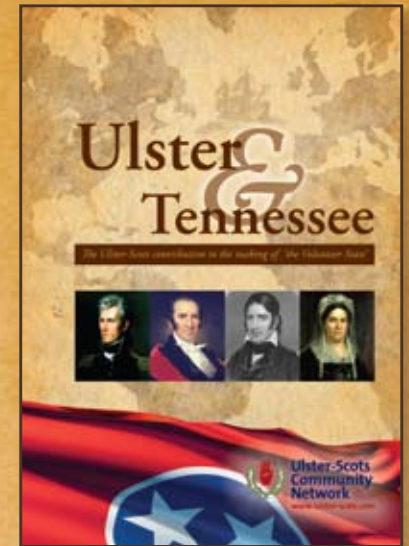
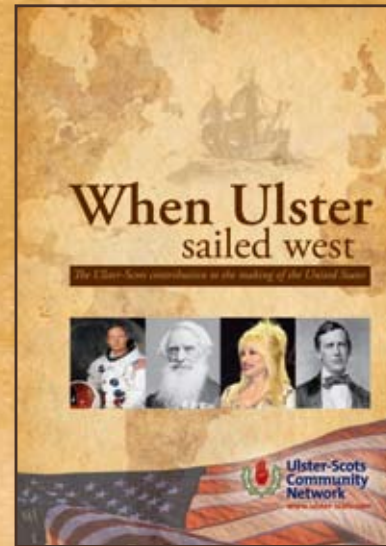
of the United States, with much emphasis being placed on the Appalachian mountain states. Much less has been written about those Ulster-Scots who settled in the 'Wilderness' of the North East.

Today there is much to celebrate, because a sizeable cohort of these 'Mainers', largely descendants of the 1718 exodus, have of their own volition, formed the *Maine Ulster Scots Project*, and have set themselves the goal of increasing awareness of the State's Ulster-Scots heritage. The project has initiated the collection and archiving of the histories of Maine's Ulster-Scots families. Their website may be found at [www.maineulsterscots.com](http://www.maineulsterscots.com)



Researched and written for the  
*Ulster-Scots Community Network* by Alister McReynolds, 2010









# Ulster-Scots Community Network

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