Early in December, I went on a walking tour through the old Irish community in downtown Brooklyn. With the howling wind and frigid temperature, I expected few to show. I was wrong. About forty brave souls trooped along behind our expert guide.

It began at Borough Hall, which served as the administrative capital of the proud city of Brooklyn before it became part of New York City in 1898. We walked only a few blocks before we arrived at the homes of some the most famous Irish and Scotch-Irish, who lived side by side, in the city of Brooklyn. One of the most interesting was the house of William E. Robinson who came from Tyrone, Ireland in 1836. He was elected as the local congressman and appointed by Lincoln in 1862 as the collector for internal revenue. Robinson was a journalist by trade and employed by the New York Tribune. Most people knew him as “Richelieu,” which was his pen name. He was the best writer that the Tribune owner Horace Greeley had to offer.

The shocking thing about the Robinson house is that it was situated just ‘round the corner from the local Orange Hall, which itself should be no surprise as Robinson was a northern Protestant. However, Robinson was no Orangeman and instead is famous today in the annals of New York Irish history for his strong support for an Irish revolutionary organization called the Fenians.

An equally amazing story recently appeared in a lengthy article in the New York Times about another Brooklyn native, Dorothy Day, who died in 1980. The Catholic Irish in the New York City area have traditionally been liberal democrats, but in recent years they have been moving rapidly to the right, as evidenced by the likes of Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity of the Fox Network. The new Cardinal for the City's archdiocese is Timothy Dolan and he too is known for his strong conservative views.

It therefore comes as a big surprise to many (including the New York Times) that Dolan is now promoting the campaign for beatification of Dorothy Day, a champion of the poor and downtrodden, thus significantly advancing her chances of becoming a saint in the Catholic Church. So why is this surprising?

Well, consider that Dorothy's father was Scotch-Irish from Tennessee and that she was raised a Protestant and that for her entire life she was a “fiery social activist” who protested war. The Times writer adds “she had an abortion as a young woman and at one point flirted with joining the Communist Party.” She also spent time in jail for her support of farm laborers in California. During the early 1900s Day wrote on women's rights, free love and birth control.

In spite of these views, the Times quotes Cardinal Dolan at a recent bishops’ meeting, “I am convinced she is a saint for our time. She exemplifies what’s best in Catholic life, that ability we have to be ‘both-and’ not ‘either-or.’ ” The bishops voted unanimously to move forward with Day’s canonization cause.

A Scotch-Irish saint? Now that’s a surprise!

Bill McGimpsey, President
as a developing industrial city at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, and showed how the shipyards fitted into this vision. Succeeding galleries built on this vision and showed the early stages of construction of the ship. A unique part of the tour then followed. Visitors entered capsules that moved in three dimensions through areas of the shipyard: one experienced the sights and sounds of the building process.

Eventually, one disembarked from the capsules and saw the images of the ship ready for launching. Being able to see through the windows the real slipways and the surrounding land enhanced this experience and made the launch seem real.

The following galleries contained mock-ups of staterooms and other parts of the ship, as well as a number of prints and drawings. One gained a vivid picture of life on board, both for the privileged and the poor.

The next stage detailed the events leading up to the crash and to the crash itself. There were the cables sent on that last night, and then the build up to the moment of impact: one actually felt the shock. The evacuation and its attendant confusion were shown vividly. What followed was the pickup at sea for those who survived. The remaining stages detailed the official investigations that took place, and the ensuing reports. There were a number of interesting documents here both from Belfast museums and from overseas. At the final stage one saw excellent visuals of the discovery of the wreck and of a number of artifacts: some of the work here is ongoing.

There were other new experiences: the National Trust has opened a new visitors’ center at the Giants’ Causeway. This provides a number of interesting visuals about the Causeway, and there is information both about the scientific background and also about the legends (Finn McCool, etc.) associated with this part of Ulster.

For me, the major purpose of this trip was the Nineteenth Ulster American Heritage Symposium, held this year in Omagh in County Tyrone. The next symposium, UAHS XX, will take place in Athens, Georgia, in June 2014: there are tentative plans for a follow-up session at Quinnipiac University, Connecticut.

As always, I enjoyed my visit. I found excellent new restaurants everywhere: do go and try them. However, the warmth and friendliness of the Ulster people is the prime reason for a visit. Go and become acquainted with our Ulster cousins.

Joyce Alexander

**UAHS’12** It was always a bit of an embarrassment to admit to people that I had never been to the Ulster Folk Park near Omagh, especially since I had made so many visits to Northern Ireland over the years. When the XIX Ulster American Heritage Symposium (UAHS) was announced, with their big event at the Mellon Center in the Park, I figured this was my chance to correct the matter.

I went to the Symposium, which ran three days, from June 27 – 30. I enjoyed the papers presented so much that I never managed to get as much as a peek at the Folk Park.

After the last presentation, when I realized the significance of my failure to go outside, I made a mad dash into the Park, camera flashing in every direction, just so I could say I had actually been there. I did experience a few frantic minutes of pleasure before the facility closed for the evening.

You might be wondering how the papers could have been that good to keep me occupied for the entire three days. With three parallel sessions running at any one time, there was almost always a great paper being presented. And,
even if I did find the occasional gap, there was no way to scurry around the Folk Park in 30 minutes and be back for the next blockbuster session.

I would suggest to you that the upcoming combined Scotch-Irish Identity Symposium and Scottish Games in June 2013 has the potential to be every bit as stimulating and fun. By combining the games with the symposium sessions there is the opportunity for a wider Scotch-Irish experience for all who attend.

Then, in 2014, the next UAHS will be held in Athens, Georgia (it alternates location between the U.S. and Ulster). It is being organized over here by our very own Council Member, Sam Thomas, and I think it will be an equally great experience. A parallel program is planned in Connecticut, but details of that part are not yet known. Watch for more information from us as the year unfolds.

I think now is a good time to start your long-range Scotch-Irish planning.

Bill McGimpsey
CALL FOR PAPERS

“Scotland, Ulster and America: Ties That Bind?”
Seventh Scotch-Irish Identity Symposium

York, South Carolina, June 6 – 7, 2013

sponsored by the Center for Scotch-Irish Studies and the Culture and Heritage Museums of York County
in conjunction with the Clover Scottish Games and Scotch-Irish Festival in Clover, South Carolina, June 7 – 8, 2013

Scots migrated to the Irish province of Ulster in large numbers during the seventeenth century and later. Ulster Scots began migrating to America in the eighteenth century where they were known as Scotch-Irish. We Americans tend to see that traffic as all one way – Ayrshire to Antrim to South Carolina – and lock it into a pre-1800 time frame.

Cultural exchanges of many kinds have linked Scotland, Ulster, and America over four centuries and continue today. Presbyterianism gave many a common identity. Until 1849 Ulster Scots looked to Scottish universities to educate their ministers, doctors, lawyers, and educators, including many who later migrated to America. Scottish and Irish music crossed the Atlantic and American gospel songs and bluegrass traveled to Ulster. The rebirth of an Ulster Scots identity has focused on the Scots language and Highland Games and bagpipe contests, while Americans renew their Scotch-Irish heritage with Kirkin’ o’ the Tartan and Scottish dancing.

The Seventh Scotch-Irish Identity Symposium will explore ways in which Scotland, Ulster and America have influenced one another down to the present time. We invite papers investigating the links among these three that persist or persisted at one time in such areas as language, migration and settlement, commerce and business, religion and religious history, music, literature, fraternal orders, heritage tourism, family history and genealogy.

We ask that you read the requirements for Symposium presentations in the statement on Goals and Standards on the Society’s website www.scotch-irishsocietyusa.org. Please direct any questions to Michael Scoggins at micscoggins@chmuseums.org or to Dr. Richard K. MacMaster at rmacmast@ufl.edu.

Abstracts approximately 250 – 300 words, together with a brief C.V., should be sent to conference organizer Michael Scoggins as file attachments (Microsoft Word preferred) as soon as possible, but no later than January 31, 2013. Authors will be informed by February 15, 2013 if their abstracts have been accepted. Texts for accepted presentations will be due on or before March 15, 2013.

The Symposium will include a reception in the Jane Bratton Spratt Room at the Mc Celvey Center, 212 East Jefferson Street, York, SC on Thursday evening, June 6, 2013, from 7:00 – 9:00 pm. The symposium proper will take place in the Lowry Family Theater at the Mc Celvey Center from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on Friday, June 7, 2013.

This year the symposium is being held in conjunction with the annual Clover Scottish Games and Scotch-Irish Festival, which takes place in nearby Clover, SC, on June 7 – 8. Symposium attendees are welcome to attend both the reception for the Clover Scotch-Irish Festival and the festival itself. There is no charge for either event. The festival reception will be held at the Greater Clover Chamber of Commerce, 118 Bethel Street, Clover, SC, from 7:00 – 9:00 pm on Friday, June 7, and the festival itself will take place at the Clover Memorial Stadium on Saturday, June 8, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. The exact schedule for the festival has not been set yet, but festival activities typically include Scottish athletic competitions, piping and drum exhibitions, Celtic music, step dancing, genealogy and clan tents, border collie demonstrations, local vendors, children’s activities, and of course food! Further details will be made available on the Scotch-Irish Society website in the coming months. You can also contact Mike Scoggins at micscoggins@chmuseums.org.
Scotch-Irish Foundation Dissolves

The Scotch-Irish Society of the USA has operated in close affiliation with the Scotch-Irish Foundation for a number of years. Both have always been independent entities, each having different approaches to a common interest in historical discovery, preservation and dissemination of the Scotch-Irish experience in America.

Some individuals were active in both organizations. Over time, informal cooperation between the two organizations resulted in cooperative arrangements that simplified operations. For example, contributions to the Scotch-Irish Foundation could be combined when paying of Scotch-Irish Society membership dues. The deposit amount earmarked for the Foundation would then be combined with others so marked and forwarded to the Foundation.

Recently, the Scotch-Irish Foundation dissolved. The decision remains consistent with the Foundation's founding purpose of historical document preservation. Over the past few years, the Foundation has been struggling trying to maintain its original mission, that being collection and preserving books and materials about the Scotch-Irish for generations to come. The collection is housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Times have changed. The limited size of the Foundation's portfolio, the nature of current markets and costs, particularly if professional investment management was required, caused the Foundation's board to take a prudent step to dissolve and transfer all assets to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The dissolution effectively ends the existence of the Scotch-Irish Foundation.

Funds were transferred from the Foundation to the Society to guarantee current Life Members. All assets were transferred from the Foundation to the HSP to maintain and grow the collection of books and manuscripts. Financial assets were set up in a designated fund to acquire additional Scotch-Irish books and manuscripts.

The Society will no longer receive Life Member applications nor will it accept funds designated for the Scotch-Irish Foundation.

Tom Campbell, Treasurer

The 2012 issue of the Journal of Scotch-Irish Studies will be available early in 2013. The cover price is $22.00 per copy (plus shipping and handling) but, as always, Members of the Society in good standing may obtain this issue for the discounted price of $15.00, plus a shipping and handling charge in the continental United States of $3.25 per copy (total $18.25). This issue contains the following papers:

Edmund Rogers, Canada and the Scotch-Irish Society of America

Thomas Daniel Knight, The Other Scotch-Irish: A Six-Generation Analysis of Social and Economic Change in the George Magee Family of Maryland and Georgia, 1683-1865

Trevor Parkhill, Migration in the Ulster Museum Permanent History Gallery

Richard K. MacMaster, Scotch-Irish Identity in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania

Peter E. Gilmore, From Rapho to Rostraver: Ulster Place-Names and the Eighteenth-Century Scotch-Irish Migration across Pennsylvania (Part 2)

Michael C Scoggins, A Revolutionary Minister: The Life of the Reverend Alexander Craighead

BOOK REVIEW

MEMBER’S CORNER

Eric J. Newell, past-president of the Scotch-Irish Society (1999), passed away on October 31, 2012. His tenure in the Society focused on expansion of the membership, notably through the establishment of regional chapters which allowed members to hold official functions in order to increase membership and interest, as well as expand an understanding of Scotch-Irish culture.

Eric was Vice President and Controller of the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company until he retired. He was an enthusiastic traveler, having traveled to over fifty countries. A member of a variety of organizations, he was a Past Master of the largest Orange Order Lodge in North America, a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society and a Master Mason. He was a member of the Scotch-Irish Foundation. He also held memberships in a number of financial accounting organizations.

Eric was born in Canada in 1930. His parents were both from Northern Ireland. He met his wife, whose parents had emigrated from Ulster, in Toronto, Canada. Wayne Newell, who is a Member of the Council, in remembering his father, said, “Wherever he was, he was always proud of his Scotch-Irish heritage and attempted to increase the visibility of the Scotch-Irish Society.”

Letter to the editor — Andrew Jackson

Upstate residents of South Carolina may quibble a bit with your statement that Andrew Jackson was born near Camden. Unless some new history has been discovered that I do not know about, Jackson was born in the home of one of his Crawford relatives in “the Waxhaws,” a geographical section known for its reeds and available land. The current village, nearer Lancaster, Rock Hill, and Fort Mill, S.C., as well as Charlotte, N.C. – all closer than Camden, I think – is in North Carolina. As best I can recall, the Andrew Jackson State Park is situated at the site of the Crawford homestead and very near the North Carolina border. For this reason, North Carolinians often claim Jackson as one of their own, even though Andy always identified himself as a South Carolinian by birth. His parents are buried in the Old Waxhaw Cemetery, some five miles from the park, well within South Carolina, and on the road to Rock Hill. (The data I use is indebted to my recollection of ANDREW JACKSON, BORDER CAPTAIN, but I do have a pamphlet or two purchased at the park and one from near the grandparents home in Northern Ireland.) I regret that I have yet to visit Jackson’s home and farm in Tennessee. We can agree that he was Scotch-Irish in birth and culture, I think.

I enjoyed the Newsletter and appreciated the variety of topics treated. Even though they were largely of a historical nature, they were scattered geographically. As a retired professor of English, who came to the Scotch-Irish topic as a result of an Irish specialization, a visit to museums in all parts of Ireland, and a study of Irish national archives topics in Leinster, I have broad interests and enjoy essays on literature, language, history, folklore, anthropology, music, and other subjects – the more varied the better!

Jack Weaver, Emeritus Professor of English, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, S.C.

Thank you to our Members, for your past support of Scotch-Irish history and culture through your donations to the Scotch-Irish Society of the USA, the Center for Scotch-Irish Studies and the Scotch-Irish Foundation.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Class of 2014 — Joyce M. Alexander, PhD, David Borland, Thomas N. Campbell, Michael Scoggins, Charles Snoddy
Class of 2015 — Charles Blair, PhD, Richard K. MacMaster, PhD, Frederick E. Stewart, Jr., Samuel Thomas

The Society has one vacant Council seat to fill for the Class of 2015. If you would be interested in serving on the Council please contact us.
Congratulations to Council Member Dave Borland on the publication of his latest novel. "In A Moment’s Time" is a contemporary novel which takes place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and concerns Hugh Sloan, of Scotch-Irish heritage, who at fifty feels he has finally achieved his most productive, stable and fulfilling state of life. However, at his annual physical, he is shown a dark spot near the base of his brain "in a very difficult location."

The novel ultimately portrays how the power of forgiveness can affect both the person who receives it and the one who offers it... in a moment’s time. Dave’s novel is available online at: Friesenpress.com/bookstore or through amazon/kindle.

The Ulster Historical Foundation is currently making plans for a lecture tour in the USA/Canada in March 2013. Some dates have already been confirmed and others are yet to be decided. They are interested in any group that would like to offer a program. This is an opportunity to help arrange a Scotch-Irish research workshop in your area. If you are interested contact: Fintan Mullan, Executive Director, Ulster Historical Foundation at www.ancestryireland.com

Editors note: The lecture tour above and summer school announcement on page 12 are projects of the Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF). The Scotch-Irish Society of the USA has no financial (or other) connection with the UHF. We are simply passing on information that might be of interest to our Members.

CALL FOR PAPERS
The “Paxton Boys” and Conestoga Massacre 250 Years Later
December 13 – 14, 2013 Lancaster, PA

Paper proposals are invited for a mini-conference commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Conestoga Massacre, to be held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, December 13 – 14, 2013. Co-sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies and LancasterHistory.org, the conference will provide a scholarly component for a broader program of public events at the newly renovated and expanded Lancaster Campus of History at the Lancaster County Historical Society and at related sites in the city of Lancaster.

The conference organizers seek proposals for papers of approximately fifteen pages in length from scholars whose work explores the causes, immediate consequences, and long-term legacy of the events of December 1763. We are particularly interested in papers that focus on the Conestoga Indians, local Lancaster history, Native American relations with Pennsylvania, and the broader political implications of the massacre. Interdisciplinary work from historical, archaeological and literary perspectives is particularly welcome.

Please submit proposals of approximately 500 words, along with curriculum vitae, to mceas@ccat.sas.upenn.edu no later than Friday, February 1, 2013. Accepted panelists will be notified by March 15. Papers will be due for pre-circulation no later than November 1, 2013. Some support for participants’ travel and lodging will be available.

Old-Time Smoky Mountain Music, produced by the Great Smoky Mountains Park’s nonprofit educational partner, Great Smoky Mountains Association, has been nominated for a 2013 Grammy Award. The CD includes 34 historic songs, ballads and instrumentals recorded in 1939 by “songcatcher” Joseph S. Hall.

The little-known Smoky Mountain recordings were collected by Joseph S. Hall, as a young graduate student, on a project to collect genuine “Smokies” speech and music. The creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the 1930s forced hundreds of families to pack up and leave their mountain homes and relocate elsewhere. Hall’s mission was to preserve as much as he could before the unique culture had dispersed.

The performers Hall recorded were influenced both by their unique traditions as well as modern inventions like record players and radios. Even though the stereotypical mountain cabin had no such appliances and its residents were thought to be utterly cut off from the outside world, in reality, even in 1939, many folks gathered around their music machines to listen to stars like Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family, and Roy Acuff. Their music evolved like music everywhere, blending the old and new, the local with the national. Songs featured on the CD include “My Home is in the Smoky Mountains,” “Don’t Forget me Little Darling,” “Mule Skinner Blues,” “Ground Hog,” “On Top of Old Smoky,” and “Up on Pigeon River.”

Three scholars, integral to the development of the CD and its extensive liner notes, were Society Member Dr. Michael Montgomery of the University of South Carolina, Dr. Ted Olson of East Tennessee State University, and Park Ranger Kent Cave of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Michael Montgomery has dedicated decades to preserving Hall’s works and publishing materials related to his collections, including the “Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English.” The CD can be purchased for $14.95 plus S&H (if not a member) at the bookstore for the Great Smoky Mountains Association. Go to www.nps.gov/grsm
Musicologists date the beginnings of modern country music to the advent of mechanical recording technology in the early 1920s. As this technology became available, there was a concerted effort on the part of the fledgling music industry to record traditional country performers. As several modern scholars have pointed out, the identification of this music as “hillbilly” by record companies and radio stations created the mistaken impression that it was solely the product of Southern mountaineers and hill folk. Generally overlooked by this misconception were the contributions of Southern textile mill workers and “urban cowboys,” who played an important and unheralded role in the development and dissemination of early country music. The influence of the Southern textile mill workers on early country music is not surprising considering their heritage, which was to a great extent the same heritage as that of the settlers of the Appalachian foothills and mountains: Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from the north of Ireland. Furthermore, these mill workers were not indigenous townspeople, but had originally lived on the rural farms of the Carolina Piedmont and the Appalachian Mountains before economic hardships forced them to seek employment in the mills.

These “poor mountaineers, who barely kept their families fed” (to paraphrase the theme song from The Beverly Hillbillies TV show) brought their love of traditional country music with them, and they played a major role in the commercialization of that music in the 1920s and 1930s. The advent of electromechanical recording technology in the early 1920s enabled record companies to capture the traditional country music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the newly developed shellac phonograph discs, which were eventually standardized at 78 rpm. Almost inevitably, however, the commercialization of this music also transformed it and inadvertently heralded the twilight of the old-time string band era.

As had been true throughout the history of country music, the fiddle was the dominant instrument in the early recordings, and the Scotch-Irish tradition is dramatically documented in many of these first generation country records. The earliest country music recordings were made by Alexander Campbell “Eck” Robertson (1887-1975), a Scotch-Irish fiddler from Texas who cut ten songs for the Victor Talking Machine Company (forerunner of RCA Victor) in 1922. Robertson learned to play fiddle from his grandfather, father and uncles, who were also traditional country fiddlers, and his style has been described as “unmistakably Celtic” by many listeners. He recorded four duets at the Victor studio in New York City on June 30, 1922, along with an older country fiddler named Henry C. Gilliland (1845-1924). These tunes included “Arkansaw Traveler” and “Turkey in the Straw,” which were classics of old-time fiddle music. The following day Robertson recorded six fiddle tunes, all solo except for “Sally Gooden,” an old Scotch-Irish instrumental which he recorded with a piano accompaniment; it became his best known song. He also cut some unissued sides, including the medley “General Logan Reel/Dominion Hornpipe” which showcased his Scotch-Irish dance-fiddle style.

Another Scotch-Irish fiddle player often cited as one of the progenitors of country music was “Fiddlin’ John” Carson of Georgia (1868-1949). Carson was born on a farm in Fannin County in the north Georgia mountains, and learned to play on an old Stradivarius-copy fiddle brought from Ireland to America in the early eighteenth century. Following in the footsteps of many other “poor mountaineers,” Carson and his family moved to Atlanta in 1911 to work in the cotton mills. Between 1914 and 1922, he attended the annual Georgia Old-Time Fiddlers’ Convention and was proclaimed “Champion Fiddler of Georgia” seven times. In 1922, he visited Atlanta’s fledgling radio station WSB and became the first old-time country fiddler to perform on a live broadcast, which brought him national recognition. On June 14, 1923, Okeh Records engineer and talent scout Ralph S. Peer (1892-1960) visited Atlanta and made acoustic recordings of Carson performing “The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane” and “The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster’s Going to Crow,” which quickly became best sellers.
Although not the first country music recordings, Carson's records are considered seminal efforts because of their tremendous popularity, which demonstrated the commercial potential of country music to the American record industry. Ralph Peer quickly recognized the widespread appeal of this style and coined the term “hillbilly music” in order to classify it for the recording industry; in so doing, he effectively captured the music's racial, rural and regional origins.

Fiddlin’ John certainly had a longer and more successful recording career than Eck Robertson, and he embraced the commercialization of his music much more enthusiastically than Robertson ever did. He was also the first country recording artist to come out of the Southern textile mill culture. Carson was born in the Appalachian mountains of northern Georgia, but it was the cotton mills that lured him to Atlanta and introduced him to the new urban technologies of broadcast radio and recorded music, which in turn brought his playing to the attention of the world.

John S. Baltzell (1860-1934) was another early recording artist who unmistakably embodied the Scotch-Irish dance-fiddle tradition. Baltzell's family was Pennsylvania German, but he grew up in Knox County, Ohio, an area that received a large number of Scotch-Irish settlers from Virginia and Pennsylvania in the early nineteenth century. His style shows marked similarities to another “pioneer fiddler” named John A. McDermott (1869-1957) of New York State. McDermott's family came from Ulster, and his playing emphasized the older British styles. Like many other traditional country fiddlers, Baltzell was also fond of cross-tunings for his dance tunes, including a D tuning with the low G string raised to A.

Between September 1923 and April 1928, Baltzell recorded fifty-two instrumental dance songs—quadriilles, schottisches, reels, polkas, waltzes and jigs—for the Edison, OKeh and Victor record labels in New York City. His records were also immensely popular, so much so that some of his sides were re-released under pseudonyms like “Hiram Jones” and “John Barton.” A few of his early recordings featured a piano accompaniment, but most were unaccompanied dance tunes with an occasional vocalist calling the dances. The Scotch-Irish influence on Baltzell's playing is clearly evident in the songs he recorded, which included “Durang Hornpipe Medley,” “Farmer’s Medley Quadrille,” “Electric Light Schorische [sic],” “Gilderoy’s Reel,” “New Century Hornpipe,” “S. J. Rafferty’s Reel,” “Flowers at Edinburgh,” “Scotch Reel,” “Paddy Ryan’s Favorite Irish Jig,” “Kenion Clog” and “Highland Fling.” Like Fiddlin’ John Carson, he also recorded his own versions of the Eck Robertson classics “Arkansas Traveleer” and “Turkey in the Straw.”

The tremendous popularity of hillbilly music in the live radio broadcasts of the 1920s, along with the success of the early OKeh and Victor recordings of that music, prompted other national record labels like ARC, Columbia, Crown, Decca, Gennett, Montgomery Ward, Paramount, Sears and Vocalion, to seek out and record old-time country musicians from the Carolina Piedmont, Appalachia and elsewhere. As the industry developed, musicians were able to earn income from recording sessions, radio broadcasts and live concerts, and what had been a strictly amateur pastime increasingly became a full-time profession. The commercialization of folk music during this era also facilitated a great deal of cross-fertilization between country, blues, jazz and gospel musicians. This process had in fact been going on for years, but the availability of records and the proliferation of live music on radio broadcasts made it even more widespread.

The second, even more significant phase of early country music recordings took place in Bristol, Tennessee, in July and August of 1927, and these were to prove to be of much greater importance for the metamorphosis of old-time hillbilly music into commercially successful country music. In early 1927 Ralph Peer, who by this time had left OKeh and joined the Victor Talking Machine Company, decided to transport the newly perfected electrical recording equipment—which was much more portable and reliable than the old mechanical equipment—to the South in order to record rural folk musicians, most of whom were unable to travel to New York City. After recording a number of blues and gospel musicians in Savannah and Charlotte during February and March, Peer decided to add a third stop in Bristol so he could tap into the wealth of hillbilly musicians who inhabited southern Appalachia.

The “Bristol Sessions,” as they came to be known, proved to be the “big bang” of country music. Nineteen acts—some solo artists, some groups—recorded seventy-six songs between July 25 and August 8, 1927. Peer conducted additional sessions in 1928, but these proved to be of lesser importance. Most of the acts recorded in Bristol did not achieve lasting fame, but two of them did. Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family made their professional debuts during the Bristol Sessions and went on to become country music’s first superstars. James Charles “Jimmie” Rodgers (1897-1933) was a singer and guitarist from Meridian, Mississippi whose blues-inflected style and railroad-worker background earned him nicknames like “The Singing Brakeman,” “America’s Blue Yodeler,” and, eventually, “The Father of Country Music.” The Carter Family of Maces Spring, Virginia, consisted of Roots and Rhythms continued on page 12.
2014 Ulster American Heritage Symposium

Since 1976, folks from Ulster and America have come together every two years for an old fashioned gathering. Meeting on one side or the other of the Atlantic pond they trade their pikes and broadswords for the barbs of their tongues in a unique conference – the Ulster American Heritage Symposium.

Athens, Georgia, home to the University of Georgia, the country’s oldest state-chartered university and listed as one of the top five small cities to retire to, will serve as the next host of their gathering. In 2014, from Wednesday, June 25 until Saturday, June 28 the Scottish and Irish brogue will mix with the more often heard Southern drawl on the streets and in the pubs of downtown Athens as scholars, academicians, genealogists and interested participants descend upon the city to present new research and ideas, and to encourage and promote public awareness of the shared history and culture of Ulster and North America. The Athens 2014 theme, "Contacts, Contests, and Contributions: Ulster-Americans in War and Society," will aim to explore the transatlantic emigration, settlement, and continued experience of people from Ulster, and to present new research that challenges habitual ways of thinking about these emigrants, their roles in American life, and their legacies.

So get your plans in order (and perhaps sharpen a pike or two) and join us as the “Classic City” puts out the welcome mat for a very vibrant Symposium. Watch for the Call for Papers and more on UAHS Athens, in the next Newsletter.

The Scotch-Irish in the Shenandoah Valley

Charles Blair

Scotch-Irish settlers in Pennsylvania were always seeking cheaper land and more opportunity as they moved to the Susquehanna River and beyond. At the same time colonial authorities in Virginia were looking for settlers to occupy the Great Valley and to serve as a buffer between the eastern part of the colony and the French and Indians to the west. Efforts to recruit settlers were directed toward the north and soon Scotch-Irish and German settlers in Pennsylvania started to migrate to the Valley and followed what was known as the Warrior Path.

By the early 1730s settlements were established on Opequon Creek near the present city of Winchester and on the Triple Forks of the Shenandoah River near the present city of Staunton. Land was available and the flow of new settlers from Pennsylvania increased. Forests were cleared, homes were established, and meeting houses were organized. Because these early settlers were Presbyterians and dissenters from the established Anglican Church, they sought and were given permission by the colonial authorities to establish their own meeting houses.

During the 1750s the growth of the settlements was slowed by the French and Indian War that raged in the Valley and the Alleghenies Mountains to the west until 1763. Many fled back to Pennsylvania or east of the Blue Ridge to escape the conflict. The Reverend John Craig, a native of County Antrim in Ulster, urged those at the Augusta Meeting House near Staunton to stay and many in his congregation and elsewhere heeded his advice and remained on their farms.

When peace returned a society of yeoman farmers continued to develop. Agriculture was diversified and included wheat, Indian corn, hemp and livestock. This agricultural society differed from that east of the Blue Ridge which was based upon tobacco and slave labor and which sought to emulate English country life. Gradually wheat became the major crop and the Valley resembled in some ways the wheat economy of Pennsylvania.

Soon trade quickened and what had been the “Warrior Path” became the “Great Wagon Road” which stretched from the Carolinas to Philadelphia. Some who travelled this road settled in Virginia, but others continued on to the Carolinas and later to Kentucky. Many of the Scotch-Irish who settled in the Valley also heard the call of cheaper lands and migrated to the south and west to again establish new farms and homes.

The independence and individualism of these early Scotch-Irish settlers caused them to be ardent supporters of the American Revolution and many either fought or supported efforts to secure independence from Great Britain. While slavery existed to a lesser degree in the Valley than it did elsewhere in Virginia, the majority of Valley residents gave support to the Confederacy during the Civil War. Death and destruction were visited upon many Scotch-Irish homes during that conflict.

Today, the traveler on Interstate 81 can see the Alleghenies to the west and the Blue Ridge to the east. On the fertile land between the mountains reside many descendants of early Scotch-Irish and German families. On occasion, it is possible to see an Old Order Mennonite family in horse and buggy travelling by the site of an 1740s Presbyterian meeting house. The Shenandoah Valley occupies a unique place in American history and the history of the Scotch-Irish.
Thomas McKean
1734 – 1817, Lawyer and Statesman

William John Shepherd

Thomas McKean was an energetic lawyer and reforming statesman of Scotch-Irish (Ulster Scots) heritage, who served both Delaware and Pennsylvania during the era of the American Revolution and Early Republic. As a founding father, he was a formidable public figure with a reputation for honesty, integrity and independence as well as for vanity, irascibility and litigiousness. He is also widely credited as being the father of the independent American judiciary and the political spoils system.

McKean was born on March 19, 1734 in New London Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. He was the second son of tavern keeper William McKean and Letitia Finney. William was the fourth generation from Argyll, Scotland, who was born about 1705 in Londonderry, in Ulster, and immigrated to Pennsylvania with his mother around 1725. Letitia was also born in Ulster of Scottish heritage and her family settled on a plantation in New London around 1720. Young Thomas received his education under Presbyterian minister Francis Allison at where he was a law apprentice under his cousin David Finney, 1750-1754.

Thereafter, Thomas practiced widely in Delaware as well as in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In Delaware, he achieved a surprising number of legal appointments and elective offices, in particular as a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress of 1765-1766. It was there that he persuasively argued that each colony have an equal vote regardless of population, which set a precedent for the future United States Senate. He became Speaker of the Delaware Assembly, 1772-1773, and represented Delaware in the Continental Congress, 1774-1776, where he served on dozens of committees and signed the Declaration of Independence. He also worked on framing Delaware’s first constitution, and after opponents blocked his re-election to Congress, returned to Delaware in early 1777 where he was again Speaker of the Delaware Assembly as well as Acting President (Governor).

Establishing a residence in Philadelphia in 1774, he began to also serve Pennsylvania in various capacities, mainly as a Colonel of Philadelphia militia stationed at Perth Amboy, New Jersey, in 1776, and as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania from 1777 to 1799. He opposed the radical Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776, though he served as Chief Justice under it, because he believed that not doing so would damage the cause of independence.

Returning to Congress again as a representative for Delaware in late 1777, McKean supported the Articles of Confederation and argued for a federal court of appeals, as well as attacking administrative waste and corruption. He was President of Congress from July to November 1781, despite the efforts of enemies who attempted to force him to surrender either the Presidency or his judicial position.

As a federalist, McKean worked in 1787 to ratify the Federal Constitution in Pennsylvania, pronouncing the frame of government ”the best the world has yet seen,” and he authored a clause providing state funded education for the poor during the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1789. As Chief Justice, his conservative decisions, such as upholding proprietor’s property rights and strongly supporting libel laws, generally reflected his honest and just nature, conversely, such decisions also fomented repeated conflicts with both the Assembly and the military authorities.

In 1799, McKean’s strong Anglophobia secured Jeffersonian support for his election as Governor of Pennsylvania over Federalist James Ross after a bruising political campaign. As Governor, 1799-1808, he brought about a revolution in state politics by imposing a spoils system that removed his political enemies from office and replaced them with friends, something Andrew Jackson would elevate with notoriety to the federal level after winning the presidency in 1828.

McKean was a dedicated advocate of a strong executive and independent judiciary, who continually frustrated attacks made by radical Republicans. He vetoed bills extending the jurisdiction of justices of the peace, opposed impeachment attempts of Supreme Court judges and refused efforts to revise the constitution.

Accused of nepotism by radical newspapers, McKean instituted libel suits against opponents and pressured the Assembly to impose more drastic penalties for libel. In 1806-1807, his legislative enemies attempted to impeach him for various improprieties, mostly trivial, but exaggerated as “high crimes and misdemeanors.” However, his supporters delayed the proceedings until McKean retired in relative peace in 1808.

McKean died a fairly wealthy man at the venerable age of 83 in Philadelphia on June 24, 1817, and was buried in the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery. He had married well, first in 1763 to Mary Borden of Bordentown, New Jersey, and, following her early decease, in 1774 to Sarah Armitage of New Castle, Delaware, having several children with both. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati and his published works include The Acts of the General Assembly of

Thomas McKean continued on page 12.
Contact Bill McGimpsey or Carole Smith.

You can do as much or as little as time allows:-)

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Roots and Rhythms continued from page 9.

Alvin Pleasant “A. P.” Carter (1891-1960) on vocals, his wife Sarah Dougherty Carter (1898-1979) on autoharp, guitar and vocals, and their sister-in-law Maybelle Addington Carter (1909-1978), who was also Sarah’s first cousin, on guitar and vocals. The Carters were all born and raised in southwestern Virginia, where they were immersed from an early age in the tight harmonies of Appalachian gospel and shape-note music. They would become country music’s first supergroup, and their recording and performing careers would last much longer than Rodgers, who died at the age of 35 from tuberculosis.

Both Rodgers and the Carter Family contributed immensely to the perpetuation of traditional Anglo-Celtic balladry. Within that framework, however, their musical styles embodied several different traditions. Rodgers’ music was deeply rooted in Anglo-Celtic storytelling and ballad singing, but it was also heavily influenced by the black blues singers he heard growing up in Mississippi. The Carter Family, on the other hand, more clearly exemplified the vocal and instrumental church music and folk songs of the southern Appalachian Mountains and their Scotch-Irish Calvinistic forbears. While the songs for which Rodgers and the Carter Family became most famous would not come until later, the Bristol Sessions set them on the path for stardom and guaranteed their place in the country music pantheon.

The traditional Southern folk music associated with Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family remained popular throughout the 1930s, but following the end of World War II several factors changed this music and sent it down two markedly different paths. In fact, some scholars maintain that prewar hillbilly music really began to diverge with the recordings of Rodgers and the Carter Family. In this view, Rodgers’ music became the basis for modern country, with its emphasis on individual singing and songwriting, acoustic guitar accompaniment and increasing utilization of popular musical styles. On the other hand, the Carter Family, with their heavy reliance on traditional songs and melodies and their “customary high-nasal harmony” vocals, laid the foundation for postwar bluegrass or “mountain music.”

Mike Scoggins is historian in residence at the McCelvey Center, in York, South Carolina, which will be hosting the Scotch-Irish Identity Symposium in June 2013.

Stay in touch!

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