

The Highland Scots and the Scotch-Irish:
Choosing Sides in the American Revolution

Lisa Parresol

Literature and Language Department
University of North Carolina at Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804-8509

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Gwen Ashburn

Sam Thomas of the Historical Center of York County, South Carolina summarizes the Battle of Kings Mountain in his work The Dye is Cast: The Scots-Irish and Revolution in the Carolina Back Country.

Arriving at the base of Kings Mountain on October 7, the Americans held another Council of War. The motley force realized that none of the commanders outrank any of the other commanders, and so, they decided on a very democratic plan of battle. Each of the American forces would be given a position at the base of the mountain from which to attack, and each would look to their own sector.

Encircling the mountain, the Americans attacked at noon by clambering up the rough, wooded slopes towards the top. The British forces, armed with muskets, constantly fired too high to stop the approaching rebels. On the other hand, the American rifles, and the excellent marksmanship exhibited by the rebels began to take a toll on the defenders. Three times the British counterattacked with a bayonet charge, each time driving the Americans back down the sides of the mountain, only to then have to climb back up the sides under fire, and each time followed closely by the Americans.

One by one the American forces reached the summit of the mountain and surrounded Ferguson's rapidly declining force. The British commander's whistle was constantly heard trying to rally his troops. Ferguson was cut down in a hail of rebel bullets and his second-in-command, Abraham de Peyster took over. The rebels fired into the huddled British troops as fast as they could load and fire again. Several attempts were made to surrender, but many of the Americans, crying 'Tarleton's Quarter, Tarleton's Quarter,' (a phrase which throughout the Backcountry came to mean 'take no prisoners') continued to fire. Eventually the American officers were able to restrain their men and the battle came to an end.ⁱ

Although it remains a controversial issue, many historians consider the Battle of Kings Mountain to be the turning point for the American Revolution in October of 1780. The two opposing sides were the American Patriots, also known as Whigs, and the British Loyalists, also known as Tories. The British Loyalists

were, for the most part, American colonists who were loyal to the King of England. The Patriots were Americans who wanted their freedom from the rule of the King of England. The Loyalists had been winning the war until the tide was turned in the favor of the Patriots at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

The Patriots that fought at the Battle of Kings Mountain came from the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and present East Tennessee. The ethnic groups that formed this company included Germans, Swiss, English, Welsh, Irish, French Huguenots, and especially Scotch-Irish. The Scotch-Irish, as they are known in America, are known as Ulster Scots in the British Isles. While some texts refer to this ethnic group as Scots-Irish, most texts refer to them as Scotch-Irish. They were once Lowland Scots who had moved to Ulster, which is in Northern Ireland. This ethnic group will be addressed in detail in a later portion of this text.

The Loyalist forces that fought at the Battle of Kings Mountain came mostly from the Coastal and Piedmont areas of the Carolinas and Georgia. The eastern region of the southern colonies was populated primarily by the English and Scottish Highlanders. The Scottish Highlanders, also known as Highland Scots, will also be addressed in detail further in the text. The Scotch-Irish, which were a separate ethnic group from the Highlanders, also populated certain towns in the east; but, according to James G. Leyburn in his book The Scotch-Irish: A Social History,ⁱⁱ they most certainly did not side with the Loyalists. The Scottish Highlanders, on the other hand, were at first divided amongst themselves as to what side they would fight. If they sided with the Patriots, they might lose their lands, but if they sided with the King they might be harassed by the Patriots.ⁱⁱⁱ In the end, the majority of the Highland Scots sided with the King. The only professional soldier of the King's arms from the British Isles to fight at the Battle of Kings Mountain was the leader, Major Patrick Ferguson.^{iv} Ferguson was also a Highland Scot.

The majority of the opposing participants in the Battle of Kings Mountain, as well as prior southern battles, were the Scotch-Irish versus the Highland Scots. It appeared that the American Revolutionary War in the Carolinas was a civil and religious conflict between the Highlanders and the Lowlanders of Scotland.^v The questions that arise are who were these two ethnic groups, where did they come from, why did they emigrate, and why did they choose opposite sides in the American Revolution. To answer these questions, a critical look at the separate histories of these two groups is necessary.

North Carolina was originally chartered in 1663 by the English.^{vi} Bath was the first incorporated town, established in 1706. In an effort to stabilize the colony of variously growing ethnic groups, the Governors of the Carolinas established the Anglican Church just as England had done in the past with its neighbors Scotland and Ireland.^{vii} The two ethnic groups, Highland Scots and Scotch-Irish, seemed to be reliving their historical problems with England due to the establishment of the Anglican Church in the colonies. Both of these groups immigrated to America to begin a new and better life.

The Highland Scots began pouring into the coastal areas of North Carolina in the 1730s and continued immigrating for decades.^{viii} The Scotch-Irish immigrated to North Carolina from two different directions. They came in smaller numbers via ship to the Carolinas, as the Highlanders and others had done, as early as the mid-to-late 1730s. By 1754, there were two Scotch-Irish settlements in the coastal region. The one to the east of the Highlander's settlement was small but the one to the west was large enough to gain a derogatory

nick name. Since it was located between the Pee Dee and Catawba Rivers of South Carolina, the Highlanders called it the “Scotch-Irish Mesopotamia.”^x The other direction from which the Scotch-Irish immigrated to the Carolinas was from Virginia through the western mountainous region and down into the Piedmont via the Great Wagon Road which originated at Philadelphia. The Great Wagon Road was used by white settlers predominantly between the years 1744 and 1774..

To identify and understand the Scottish Highlanders, it is necessary to understand where they came from and why they emigrated. Duane Meyer states from his book, The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776, that “the Highlanders were mostly descended from the Irish Gaels.”^x They settled in Scotland within the mainland and island areas north and west of a line that lay along the foothills of the Grampian Mountains. A few of the Highlanders moved to Ulster since Northern Ireland is only twenty-two miles from one point on the Kintyre peninsula.^{xi} In the early seventeen hundreds, the Highlanders were secluded by the Grampian Mountains from the Lowlanders and Englishmen and so were able to maintain their Gaelic language and feudal society.

The Scottish clans each had a chief, to whom the clansmen gave ultimate power. Parcels of land were traded for strict allegiance. Their agricultural methods and tools were very poor and many people starved to death from the lack of products. Women were mostly responsible for the agricultural labor. This tribal society crumbled with the conflict over the English and Scottish thrones. Queen Elizabeth I, of England, died in 1603 leaving the English throne to the thirty-seven-year-old King of Scotland, who himself had ascended the Scottish throne at the age of two. James then became King of England (James I) while remaining King of Scotland (James VI). In 1707, during Queen Anne’s reign, Scotland and England were united as one Kingdom and became known officially as Great Britain. The House of Stuart ruled until 1714 when Queen Anne died. During the first half of the 17th century, there was conflict between the Anglican Church of England and the Calvinists of Scotland. The Royalists wanted to appoint religious leaders so they could better control the people. The Calvinists or Presbyterians protested and, even under duress, continued to fight back for decades.^{xii}

At the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the House of Hanover took over the throne with George I. The Highlanders wanted the House of Stuart to remain in power with James Stuart, the Pretender. The Latin version of the name James is Jacobus. These revolutionaries became known as Jacobites. What they really wanted was for England and Scotland to be under two separate governments.^{xiii} James never became King; but his son Charles, during the 1740s, campaigned his way through Scotland and won the allegiance of the Highlanders. Charles and the Jacobites moved through Scotland and overtook Edinburgh. Charles claimed his father as King then continued his campaign to England. The Lowlanders were not as enthusiastic for Charles and in fact favored the Hanoverians.

In 1745, the son of King George I - William, Duke of Cumberland - defeated Charles and the Jacobites. He was well liked in England but despised in Scotland. This King and his government made laws to disband the clan system in 1746. The Highlanders were forbidden to wear their traditional “highland cloaths” or carry weapons. Land rights were changed so that the clan relationship became a landlord, tenant, and subtenant relationship. In other words, it went from a hereditary inheritance system to an economic system where the payment of rent became the exchange for land instead of military service.^{xiv} After the death

of Charles in 1746, a large number of Highlanders were exiled or voluntarily removed themselves to the Cape Fear River area of North Carolina.^{xv}

Approximately three hundred and fifty people had already emigrated from Argyll to North Carolina in 1739. Since Argyll is located at the peninsula of Kintyre, which is the closest point to Northern Ireland, it is believed that these Highlanders were influenced by their fellow Scots in Ulster. There is also a belief that the people left because of the current situation with the practices of the landowner, the Duke of Argyll. Argyll and a few other landowners raised the rents so that it became too expensive to remain on the land. When the opportunity came for the families to emigrate, they left under the direction of Neill McNeill of Ardelay and Coll McAlester of Bulinakill.^{xvi}

In 1746, after the Rebellion of the prior year, the government brought about new practices in agriculture and the land leasing system. The landowners throughout the Highlands introduced the new practices. The owners raised the rent or mortgages of the lands issued to the “landedmen” or “tacksmen.” These land grants were known as tacks and the men who leased the tacks were called tacksmen. The tacksmen, in turn, raised the rents of the subtenants or cotters. Prior to 1746, the tacksmen were the military leaders of the cotters and under the service of the landowners. After the law was made forbidding the Highlanders to serve in the military, the tacksmen continued to serve as middlemen in the process of land leasing.^{xvii} The tacksmen did continue to act as leaders for the community as Meyer states: “Sometimes, as appears to be the case in the 1739 migration, the tacksmen who led the migration paid all transportation costs, and those who made the voyage agreed to work for the tacksmen for a specified time.”^{xviii}

By the 1770s, the rents were raised so high that the tacksmen were having to subsidize the rents of the cotters. The need for the prior clan style military structure was obsolete so the landowners started to open up the tack leases to anyone by auction once a tacksman’s lease expired.^{xix} Once a new lease was signed by a tenant, he in turn was not allowed to sublet but was required to maintain the land alone. This set the stage for the new system of agriculture. The old system had been unproductive. Families had previously shared unfenced land for herding as well as farming. They changed from the old “infield/outfield” system to the new system of field and crop rotation.^{xx} This was more productive for the Lords but it also required more available land which was obtained by forcing out the middle men. Hence, due to these pressures, many wealthy tacksmen emigrated to North Carolina where land was more plentiful. Once lands became less populated, many landowners changed the use of their lands from cultivation to raising sheep for the English army.^{xxi} With less available lands, more people sought a better life in the new world.

At the same time, the colonies were looking for emigrants to populate their lands. Various newspapers printed advertisements and letters from those who had already emigrated to encourage their fellow countrymen to follow them to the new world. There were also private letters circulating throughout Scotland and Ireland that expressed the good life people were living since they had emigrated. Some later advertisements were letters of recommendation for certain ships and captains which were pleasant for travelers. If these letters and advertisements were not reasons to emigrate, they certainly helped families make the final decision to move.^{xxii}

The largest numbers of Highlanders settled in North Carolina, New York, and Nova Scotia. The Highlanders of all three places tended to be Loyalists

in the American Revolution. Nova Scotia even became a safe haven for Loyalists who fled to Canada from the colonies.^{xxiii} Those who settled in North Carolina resided in towns around the Cape Fear River area which was the only waterway into North Carolina. This area is geographically known as the coastal plains. This is the area to which the first large group of Highlanders immigrated in 1739.

The Highlanders continued many of their former practices in the new land, including the Gaelic speech, the Presbyterian Church, the sharing of outfield lands for herding, and their use of poor farming techniques. The plow was of no use since they did not cut down trees or their root systems. They simply debarked the tree, killing it, in order to allow sun light to filter down. Meyer quotes John F. Smyth who visited North Carolina during the Revolution. "An English traveler exclaimed at the ominous appearance of the fields with dead trees, and he marveled that the planters were seldom hurt by falling trees or branches."^{xxiv} They continued to exhaust the land and move to better land, thereby confirming themselves as a mobile society.

The Highland Scots did combine their farming occupation with other skillful means of making a living like the following men in North Carolina that Meyer describes. "John Campbell was, in addition, a surveyor; John Clark, a tailor; Angus McDugal, a weaver; Neil McNeil, a shoemaker; Allen Cameron, a millwright; and Patrick McEachin, a blacksmith."^{xxv} They brought their old skills with them but they acquired new skills as well. They learned to plant Indian corn among other crops. Many of the previous subtenants had to learn English as well. The tacksmen were already familiar with the English language.

The Presbyterian religion remained the same. They had to contract the services of a minister who had been college educated in Scotland until schools were later organized in America. Hugh McAden served as a temporary minister for the Scotch-Irish and Highlanders in the Cape Fear area. Many of the Highlanders still only understood Gaelic so he was not of much use to them. Later in 1758, James Campbell of Pennsylvania was hired to be the minister for the area. He was originally from Argyllshire, so he understood both languages. He would eventually be an influential supporter of the Patriots, tearing the community apart in their choice as to which side they would fight for in the American Revolution.^{xxvi}

To identify and understand the Scotch-Irish, also known as the Ulster Scots, it is necessary to understand where they came from and why they emigrated. Some of the same information is repeated because they share a similar history with the Highland Scots and they were influenced by the same third party, the English. They were originally the offspring of the Angles of Northumberland, then they became the Lowlanders of Scotland.^{xxvii} Like the Highlanders, the Lowlanders were influenced or harassed by the English. Before England made its ultimate changes to the Scottish culture, all of Scotland was under a feudal system of government through to the beginning of the seventeenth century.^{xxviii}

Like other monarchs before him, King James wanted to unite England, Scotland, and Ireland under one cultural system. In 1610, King James tried to subdue the "wild Irish" by developing a government plantation in Ulster, North Ireland. The Irish were Gaelic speaking and Catholicism was their religion. Due to a variety of factors -- land ownership, religion, and language -- the Lowland Scots, for the most part, did not mix with the native Irishmen other than for business purposes. The King's idea was to send in English speaking Protestant

settlers from England and the Scottish Lowlands. King James excluded the Highlanders from the plantation.^{xxxix}

The language of the Highlanders was still Gaelic as it was in Ireland, due to their isolation behind the Grampian Mountains which range down the middle of Scotland. The language of the Lowlanders was English, due to their constant exposure to the Englishmen who were located just to the southeast of them. The largest land grants were given to the high ranking Scottish and English men. They were called undertakers. Small land grants were given to military men or administrators of English or Scottish descent. They were known as servitors. The King gave the grants to the undertakers who then gave grants to servitors. The servitors rented land to lesser ranking Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen. The Irishmen were considered at the lowest standing in rank. These three ethnic groups together created a new and often hostile society.^{xxx}

The English took the least amount of lands, but due to the power of the King and the Anglican Church, they were usually the ones with the most influential power.^{xxxi} The Irish natives had very little power in Ulster by the design of King James. The Lowland Scots were somewhere in the middle but eventually overpopulated the other two groups. Many poor people came to Ulster from England and Scotland to rent from the undertakers and servitors. There were also other members of the English and Scottish societies to populate Ulster. Keller states “Younger sons excluded from inheritance, well educated people without great wealth, small landowners, and tenants with some means also arrived.” Some religiously motivated emigrations from Presbyterian Scotland occurred, but the Anglican English tried to control it.^{xxxii}

Between 1649 and 1660, a new government ruled England. Puritans executed Charles I and changed England to a Presbyterian system of church government. This government hurt the people of Ireland. The House of Stuart was restored in 1660 with Charles II. At that point, England centralized the political and economic powers of all three countries. Through many acts and laws, the English government alienated the Ulster Scots of Ireland. Whenever the Ulster Scots began to prosper or lead in front of England financially, the English government blocked their way and pushed them back down.^{xxxiii}

Charles II died in 1685 leaving James II as his successor. James II was Roman Catholic. He antagonized the Protestants by calling for the toleration of Catholics so they forced him out in 1688. William III was placed on the throne. He allowed the Presbyterians to have power in the Irish parliament. This new situation attracted even more settlers from the Lowlands in the 1690s.^{xxxiv} This advantageous system of government ended in 1702 with the death of William III and the succession of Queen Anne.

Queen Anne was a Tory who did not approve of the Presbyterian power in Ireland. She forbade them from serving in any governmental office and took fundamental powers away from the Presbyterian ministers. They could not legally perform marriages, funerals, or even teach school. All of the people of Ireland were required to pay tithes to the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. The Anglican, Irish upper class gained a distinct advantage over the other two ethnic groups.^{xxxv} In 1707, the United Kingdom was formed between Scotland and England by the Act of Union. The Lowland Scots found themselves better off in Scotland than in Ulster, so the migration virtually ceased.^{xxxvi}

The Ulster Scots found an outlet for their frustrations with their economic successes. They flourished in the eighteenth century in the linen trade.

Keller says that “linen production became a family craft as farmers’ wives and children spun linen yarn from flax grown on Ulster fields. Each nearby town became a linen exchange, where the farmers went to haggle with drapers and to strike commercial bargains.”^{xxxvii} Ships went back and forth between the new world and the old world with additional flax for the linen trade. Since there was empty space on the ships returning to America, quite a few Ulster Scots began to emigrate in the early eighteenth century to improve their lives and avoid the problems of overpopulation.^{xxxviii} There were also many poor people from rural counties to leave Ireland. The poor were created by the influential English and the subservient Irish Parliament. This parliament ruled that “Scotch-Irish wool growers were forbidden to sell their product to any buyers except the English.”^{xxxix} This was England’s answer to the problem of the Ulster Scots’ prosperity to the disadvantage of English merchants.

S. J. Connolly’s article, “Ulster Presbyterians: Religion, Culture, and Politics, 1660-1850,” describes the Presbyterians of Ulster. “The Presbyterians of Ulster remained throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth a well-defined separate group within Irish society. Their distinctive identity had three main components: religious, economic, and cultural.”^{xl} Keller’s article describes some recent studies of Presbyterianism. A schism developed in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Ulster, Ireland. Two different parties emerged: the Moderates in the Church of Scotland and the Orthodox or Popular party among the Ulster Scots. The Moderates were educated in Scottish Universities and they put a high emphasis on ethics. They allowed the Anglican government to appoint their religious leaders and so a close relationship developed between them and the Royalty of the United Kingdom. The Orthodox group would not allow the government to control their pulpits and so they developed a militant attitude. They were more evangelical and popular among the folk of Ulster.^{xli} This schism may have contributed to the animosity between the two groups even after they settled in the colonies of North America.

Economic struggles were only one of the reasons that the Ulster Scots left their home. They also left because of the severe restrictions that the ruling British authorities placed on their religious life.^{xlii} As they migrated to America, their identity changed in how they were referred to as a group. In Scotland, they were the Lowland Scots. In Ireland, they were the Ulster Scots. In America, they found it offensive to be called Irish since the Irish were naturally Catholic. They became known as the Scotch-Irish or Scots-Irish. Between 1717 and the early 1780s, approximately a quarter of a million Scotch-Irish Presbyterians immigrated to North America. The ports they headed for were Philadelphia, New Castle (Delaware), Charleston, Baltimore, and New York.^{xliii}

The Quakers were the first to settle Pennsylvania. They invited the Germans and the Scotch-Irish to their colony because these peoples would serve well in a buffer zone between themselves and the Indian tribes to the southwest. Philadelphia was the port of the greatest concentration of Scotch-Irish immigrants. They populated the colony so that available land became more scarce. The Quakers and the Germans ended up purchasing the best farm lands leaving cheaper and less productive lands for the Scotch-Irish. These people did not mind; in fact, they preferred these less desirable lands due to their prior experiences in land use. They, like the Highlanders, combined cropping with herding and hunting. They used up pieces of land until it wore out then they cut more fertile, forested land and used it up.^{xliv} Of course, there were those people

who adapted to the more productive farming techniques of the Germans and Englishmen; but the majority of Scotch-Irish considered that style of land use to be too expensive and labor intensive for the resources that they had available.

H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr., in their article “Scotch-Irish Frontier Society in Southwestern North Carolina, 1780-1840,” described the Scotch-Irish settlers. “Unlike the English in New England and the Germans in Pennsylvania, the Scotch-Irish did not settle in tightly knit, highly organized villages. They spread out across the land, surrounding themselves with the many acres that their style of farming required, ready to move should their soil become exhausted and their pastures restricted, but also willing to adapt.”^{xlv} They had moved so many times that “moving” became a hallmark of the Scotch-Irish character. Because of the constant movement, it became more difficult for the people to patronize a single Presbytery and so more Presbyteries had to be built as the community expanded and spread out.

By 1726, the need for Presbyterian ministers in the colonies could not be met by the schools in Scotland. Reverend William Tennant began the first Presbyterian school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.^{xlvi} An evangelical movement was occurring during this same time period. The emotionally charged movement was called the Great Awakening. This caused another schism in the Presbyterian Church by 1745. Many thought that this movement caused people to stray from the strict Calvinist doctrine. As Leyburn states, “Those opposed to the new evangelical attitudes and methods were called the Old Side, and those who favored these, the New Side or, contemptuously, the New Lights.”^{xlvii} The Great Awakening movement set the stage for the frontier settlers to convert to Baptist and Methodist Churches which had a ready supply of needed ministers. For a long time, the Presbyteries and meeting houses were the central structures that kept communities together. Since individual families settled separately on their own lands, rather than in villages as the other ethnic groups had done, the church was the glue that held people together.

The next remarkable event that affected the Scotch-Irish migration involved the relationships between the white settlers and the Indian nations. The Quakers in Pennsylvania maintained a friendly relationship with the local tribes due to their religious beliefs. There were two small Indian settlements in Virginia, one was Shawnee and the other was Tuscarora. Most of the others moved west of the Blue Ridge Mountains as the white settlers moved in. A large group of Catawbas lived in South Carolina, but they hunted all the way up into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The Cherokee lived in villages in the Appalachian Mountains in North Carolina. The peace was relatively stable until so many immigrants moved in that land became a premium commodity. The migrants moved south through Virginia and into North Carolina via the Great Wagon Road. This was a passage through the valleys of the Appalachian Mountains that had once been used by the Indians as hunting grounds.

In 1754, the French and Indian War began. The bigger picture was that this was a seven- year episode between England and France fighting in Europe and America. England controlled almost everything east of the Appalachian Mountains. France controlled Canada and they claimed the valleys of Ohio and Mississippi. France enlisted the help of the Native Americans in pushing the English colonists back to the coasts. The French convinced the Native Americans that if they succeeded, they could return to their former homes.

From the perspective of the settlers, this was a war between themselves and the Indians. They learned a new way of fighting from their new foes. Leyburn quotes B. J. Withrow in reference to the Indians; “His method of making war is never open and manly. He skulks in ravines, behind rocks and trees; he creeps out in the night and sets fire to houses and barns; he shoots down, from behind a fence, the ploughman in his furrow; he scalps the women at the spring, and the children by the roadside, with their little hands full of berries.”^{xlvi} Rouse gave a reason for some of the scalplings. He states, “to win the Indian’s support, the colony of Virginia paid them for scalps of French and enemy Indians.”^{xlix} The Shawnees were the fiercest in their violence against the colonists. In the Carolinas, the Cherokee Nation had the largest population of native people, but they were peaceful until 1759 due to treaties made with the English.

Sir William Johnson had helped keep the Great Wagon Road, from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas, relatively safe in 1758 with his skill in dealing with the Indians and ordering the destructions of French forts.ⁱ That peace was shattered once the French moved the Cherokees to fight against the colonists in 1759.ⁱⁱ The Cherokee Indian War began in 1759 and ended in 1763. The tribe was pushed to the western side of the mountains. The British made a proclamation in that same year forbidding any white settlements from being formed on the other side of the mountains. This imaginary boundary line was eventually crossed in earnest after the American Revolution, but the Scotch-Irish settled the Watauga Settlement in present East Tennessee illegally before the war.

Due to the defeat of the French and Indians, more than a thousand families moved into Western North Carolina.ⁱⁱⁱ This set up a division of major population centers between the eastern coast and the western mountains. Those in the west were small farmers and those in the east were generally plantation owners. The eastern gentry felt that since they had put their resources into quieting the Cherokees, the western “ruffians,” who were benefiting from the opened lands, should pay taxes to recompense for the losses of those in the east. There were no courts or other means of justice provided for those in the west. They were only sent officials to collect taxes. In self-preservation, both Carolinas in the west organized groups of vigilantes. Leyburn states, “By 1768 tension had reached the point of producing a ‘movement,’ the Regulation, whose members agreed to combine to take action, outside of the law, against exorbitant taxes and illegal fees.”^{liii} Western North and South Carolinas experienced similar neglect from the east but they organized their Regulator Movements for different reasons. South Carolina’s Regulators complained that there was no governmental representation at all. North Carolina’s Regulators complained that there was too much governmental invasion with unfair taxes and little or no justice.^{liv} In fact “Justice” became to mean independence from England in 1776.^{lv}

The Regulators were the law in Western Carolina. Rouse stated that “residents of the up country, calling themselves Regulators, took matters in their own hands and went after a band of men suspected of stealing horses.”^{lvi} The movement began in a peaceful manner of making petitions to the assembly and courts then became more violent in their expressions of dissatisfaction. Meyer states that, “The Regulators stopped paying taxes, invaded the courts to halt the proceedings, and whipped court officials whom they captured.”^{lvii} He also states, “If the Highlanders were involved with the Regulators during the early years of the movement, and they may well have been, they made no attempt to stand with the Regulators in the crucial year of 1771.”^{lviii}

May 16, 1771, Governor Tryon's army defeated the Regulators in Guilford County at the Battle of the Alamance. Josiah Martin became the last Royal Governor of North Carolina after Tryon left for New York to become Governor there. Martin became sympathetic with the Regulators and pardoned them all. Henceforth, he became associated with the movement and, as the American Revolution neared, his life was endangered due to the image he had made for himself. Eventually, he had made enemies on both sides. The revolutionary groups took control of the assembly and the helpless Governor ended up exiling himself to a warship anchored in the mouth of the Cape Fear River.^{lix} From here, he waged his campaign for the King.

Why did these two ethnic groups chose opposite sides in the American Revolution? To begin with, not everyone from one group or the other agreed with the opinions of his or her ethnic group. Kennedy names a group of Ulster-Scots who followed Alexander Chesney in their faithfulness to King George III, whom they believed was their benefactor. Kennedy says that, "it must be understood that the Scots-Irish fought on both sides. Sometimes father against son; brother against brother, and neighbor against neighbor were in battle. Ironically, some changed sides more than once as they conducted a bloody partisan civil war within the Revolution. The Scots-Irish were accustomed to fighting for their rights."^{lx}

There was also a division within the Highland Scot population. James Campbell of Pennsylvania had been hired in 1758 to minister in the Cape Fear Area. He was joined in 1770 by Reverend John McLeod who had arrived with a group of immigrants. They ministered to the Highlanders together until the outbreak of the Revolution. John McLeod was a Tory and James Campbell was an ardent Revolutionary Patriot.^{lxi} In 1775, the leadership of the Highlanders was split. John McLeod and several other new arrivals sided with Allan McDonald in their loyalty to the King. James Campbell and other long time members of the community were openly participating in the rebellion.^{lxii} McLeod was captured after fighting under General Donald McDonald at Moore's Creek Bridge. He was freed on the promise that he would leave the colony, which he did. Campbell left the Highlanders to minister to the Scotch-Irish in Mecklinburg and Guilford Counties.^{lxiii}

The above examples were the exceptions. Generally, the Scotch-Irish were Patriots and the Scottish Highlanders were Loyalists. The old religious divisions were appearing once again in the new world. Leyburn states, "it was reported that King George III characterized the Revolution as 'a Presbyterian war.'"^{lxiv} Leyburn quotes Edward L. Parker "An Episcopalian of Philadelphia said that 'a Presbyterian loyalist was a thing unheard of.'"^{lxv} Leyburn further quotes Jonathan Smith, "A Hessian captain wrote in 1778, 'call this war by whatever name you may, only call it not an American rebellion; it is nothing more or less than a Scotch Irish Presbyterian rebellion.'"^{lxvi} The Ulster-Scots had a history of being repressed then rising up to flourish in whatever way they could and then being repressed again by the Royal Household. Generally, they emigrated to escape from living under the thumb of the British government which tried to control their pulpits, purses, and politics.

The Scottish Highlanders became famous for their loyalty to the King since 1745 when Scotland was changed forever by the English. Meyer quotes from the American Archives, "In Virginia, Loyalists were referred to as 'the Scotch party.'"^{lxvii} Meyer further quotes Leonard Trinterud, "John Witherspoon

of Princeton, who gave dedicated support to the revolutionary cause, included in a sermon of May, 1776, an appeal to Scottish-born Americans to support the rebellion. He observed that so many Scottish people were faithful to the King that the word *Scotch* was becoming a term of reproach in America.^{lxviii} The Scottish Highlanders did have a long time history of rebelling against the English Crown but once Scotland and England were united by the Act of Union in 1707 by Queen Anne and after the Scottish rebellions of 1717 and 1745, the Highlanders learned to respect the Crown. Meyer states that a large group of Highlanders in North Carolina supported the King because of their renewed friendship with the House of Hanover. They also feared losing their lands and being attacked by the retired British officers living in the colony.^{lxix}

Just prior to the Battle of Kings Mountain, Major Patrick Ferguson released the prisoner Colonel Isaac Shelby and sent with him a message to the mountain men of Western Carolina. Ferguson's message was that if they did not stop fighting the British standard, he would "march his army over the mountains, hang their leaders, and lay their country waste with fire and sword."^{lxx} This threat stirred up the mountain men, which were a majority of Scotch-Irish, to not wait for Ferguson but to uproot and go after him. They used the fighting techniques that they had previously learned from the Indians when they engaged in the Battle of Kings Mountain. Many of the Loyalist Highlanders of North Carolina had already been defeated in 1776 at Moore's Creek Bridge, eighteen miles above Wilmington. This battle was so bloody that these Highlanders thought twice about joining Ferguson. Meyer states that many Loyalists left North Carolina and of those that stayed were unwilling to fight even if they were Loyalists at heart.^{lxxi} Some of the Loyalists, both Scottish Highlanders and Scotch-Irish, who fought with Ferguson came from the piedmont and coastal regions of North Carolina. Others came from Georgia and South Carolina. There were also 100 British soldiers from the King's American Regiment, the Queen's Rangers, and the New Jersey Volunteers; though, as stated before, only Ferguson actually came from overseas.^{lxxii}

There were a multitude of reasons as to why each ethnic group chose one side or the other in the American Revolution as deliberated in this paper. Generally, the Highland Scots were Loyalists because of their friendship ties to the Crown and for fear of losing what they had gained. Generally, the Scotch-Irish were Patriots because of their desire for independence from the Crown and their spirit of fearlessness that they had gained from their continuous movements from place to place. There are exceptions, as there always are in the human population.

Notes

ⁱ Sam Thomas, *The Dye is Cast: The Scots-Irish and Revolution in the Carolina Back Country* (Columbia, South Carolina: Palmetto Conservation Foundation, no date), 36. c. 1993.

ⁱⁱ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 305.

ⁱⁱⁱ 3. Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina, 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957, 1961), 152.

-
- iv 4. Wilma Dykeman, The Battle of Kings Mountain 1780: With Fire and Sword (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1978, 1991), 1.
- v Leyburn, 309.
- vi William S. Powell, North Carolina: A History (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1919, 1977, 1988), 4.
- vii Powell, 30.
- viii Meyer, 1.
- ix Meyer, 90.
- x Meyer, 4.
- xi Alexander Murdoch, ed., "A Scottish Document concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772," in North Carolina Historical Review, 67 (4), (1990): 438.
- xii Meyer, 6-9.
- xiii Meyer, 9-10.
- xiv Meyer, 11-16.
- xv Meyer, 19.
- xvi Murdoch, 1-2.
- xvii Meyer, 31.
- xviii Meyer, 28.
- xix Meyer, 32.
- xx Meyer, 35.
- xxi Powell, 38.
- xxii Murdoch, 446.
- xxiii Meyer, 66-68.
- xxiv Meyer, 103.
- xxv Meyer, 110.
- xxvi Meyer, 113-114.
- xxvii Meyer, 4.
- xxviii Leyburn, 15.
- xxix Leyburn, 94.
- xxx Tyler Blethen and Curtis Wood, Jr., From Ulster To Carolina: The Migration Of The Scotch-Irish To Southwestern North Carolina (The Mountain Heritage Center: Western Carolina University, 1983), 6.
- xxxi Leyburn, 96.
- xxxii Kenneth W. Keller, "The Origins of Ulster Scots Emigration to America: A Survey of Recent Research," in American Presbyterians, 70:2 (Summer 1992), 72-73.
- xxxiii Keller, 74.
- xxxiv Keller, 74.
- xxxv Keller, 75.
- xxxvi Leyburn, 107.
- xxxvii Keller, 75-76.
- xxxviii Keller, 76.
- xxxix Parke Rouse, Jr. The Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1995), 29.
- xl S. J. Connolly, "Ulster Presbyterians: Religion, Culture, and Politics, 1660-1850," in Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the

-
- Scotch-Irish ed. H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr. (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1997), 28.
- ^{xli} Keller, 77-78.
- ^{xlii} Billy Kennedy, The Scots-Irish in the Carolinas (Greenville, South Carolina: Emerald House Group Inc., 1997), 28.
- ^{xliii} Kennedy, 28.
- ^{xliv} Blethen and Wood, From Ulster to Carolina: The Migration Of The Scotch-Irish To Southwestern North Carolina, 22.
- ^{xlv} H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood, Jr. "Scotch-Irish Frontier Society in Southwestern North Carolina, 1780-1840," in Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish, 224.
- ^{xlvi} Blethen and Wood, From Ulster To Carolina: The Migration Of The Scotch-Irish To Southwestern North Carolina, 22.
- ^{xlvii} Leyburn, 279.
- ^{xlviii} Leyburn, 227.
- ^{xlix} Rouse, 7.
- ^l Rouse, 89.
- ^{li} Rouse, 80.
- ^{lii} Rouse, 91.
- ^{liii} Leyburn 303.
- ^{liv} Leyburn, 303.
- ^{lv} Rouse, 209.
- ^{lvi} Rouse, 208.
- ^{lvii} Meyer, 134.
- ^{lviii} Meyer, 135.
- ^{lix} Meyer, 137-138.
- ^{lx} Kennedy, 157-158.
- ^{lxi} Meyer, 114-116.
- ^{lxii} Meyer, 146.
- ^{lxiii} Meyer, 116.
- ^{lxiv} Leyburn, 305.
- ^{lxv} Leyburn, 305.
- ^{lxvi} Leyburn, 305.
- ^{lxvii} Meyer, 150.
- ^{lxviii} Meyer, 150.
- ^{lxix} Meyer, 156.
- ^{lxx} Dykeman, 28-29.
- ^{lxxi} Meyer, 160-161.
- ^{lxxii} Dykeman, 1-2.