

ULSTER SCOTS IN CANADA

By Brian E. McConnell *

Road sign in Tyrone, Ontario



A road sign for Tyrone in the Province of Ontario is a reminder of County Tyrone, one of the Counties in Northern Ireland or Ulster. It may be an indication that Canada's settlement was effected by immigrants from Northern Ireland or Ulster but what was the role of Ulster Scots? Canada is the second largest country in the world. Its northerly location and varied geography influenced settlement. Furthermore, the shared English and French history effected its development uniquely as did its border with the United States. Barely 15 years after the Battle of Quebec in 1759 when the British triumphed over the French for control of Canada, two County Donegal men with Ulster Scots roots met as leaders of opposing armies to determine its future. Richard Montgomery, born in 1738, who spent most of his childhood in Donegal led an American army which invaded Canada in 1775 and marched on Quebec. The defence of Quebec was directed by Sir Guy Carleton, who was born in Strabane, County Donegal in 1724. Montgomery was killed while leading the attack and the Americans retreated. Carleton later served as Commander -in - Chief, British North America and oversaw the resettlement of Loyalists from the Thirteen Colonies after the American War of Independence. Since he believed it would be a breach of faith not to honor the British policy of freedom for the Negro he ensured that Negro slaves of American Loyalists were evacuated to Nova Scotia and given their freedom. Subsequently he was chosen Governor - in - chief and also Governor of Quebec, Governor of New Brunswick, Governor of Nova Scotia, and Governor of Prince Edward Island. In retirement he moved to England where he died in 1808.



Early Ulster Scots Settlers

Gravestones like the one above salute early Ulster Scot settlers who came to Canada. This stone erected by the Campbell family was for one of their Kin, John Campbell, who became a successful farmer and prize winning raiser of sheep in Ontario.

John Kenneth Galbraith, noted Economist and U.S. Ambassador, who was born in 1908 at Iona Station, Ontario and grew up in rural southwestern Ontario, described the Ulster Scots of the area he knew in his youth as:

" (It) was evident at a glance that they were made to last. Their faces and hands were covered not with a pink or white film but a heavy, red parchment designed to give protection in extremes of climate for a lifetime. It had the appearance of leather, and appearances were not deceptive. This excellent material was stretched over a firm bony structure on which the nose was by all odds the most prominent feature."

According to Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth in their book "Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement" (published by University of Toronto Press and Ulster Historical Foundation in 1990) greater than 50 per cent of the immigrants to Canada from Ireland were Protestant and they estimate a large number of them came from Ulster or were Ulster Scots. By 1842 Canada had approximately 160,000 settlers who had been born in Ireland and more than 50,000 were likely Ulster Scots.

In the 1760s settlement of Ulster Scots began in Nova Scotia, one group coming after first settling in New Hampshire, USA and another directly from Northern Ireland. They came mainly from Counties Donegal and Derry and settled near present day Truro. Some were sympathetic to the American Revolution.

Samuel George William Archibald, born February 5, 1777 in Truro, Nova Scotia, was the grandson of David Archibald, an immigrant from Ulster. He studied law, became a lawyer, judge and political figure in Nova Scotia. He was elected to represent Halifax County from 1806 to 1836 and Colchester County from 1836 - 1841 in the House of Assembly. Later he became chief justice of Prince Edward Island. It is said after he was born he was christened Samuel **George Washington** Archibald.

Charlotte County, New Brunswick received some Ulster Scots families who had wanted land in Nova Scotia but being unsuccessful to obtain it there moved north. Others who arrived at the Port of Saint John settled in the Saint John River Valley. Some moved further north in New Brunswick to the area along the Mirimachi River.

In 1810 John Gray from Newtown Stewart, County Tyrone was the first settler of Tyrone, Ontario. His letters home praised the area and encouraged other relatives to make the move. Henry Paton, a brother-in-law, was the first to come. They were followed by brothers John and William McClung. The McClungs opened the first general store. James Gray, a son of John Gary, became a Minister to the local settlers.

During the War of 1812 emigration from Ireland ceased but after the return to peace it resumed in 1815. Ulster Scots immigrants located in parts of New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. The major ports for their arrival were Saint John and Quebec City. Cheap passage during the early 1800s led many to see British North America as a stop on the way to the United States.

Between 1827 and 1830 Inverness County, Quebec was settled on the 2nd and 3rd ranges by Ulster Scots from Counties Tyrone and Armagh. The families of Hogg, Marshall, Henderson, Davidson, Little, Ralston, Wright, Wilson, Belsher, McCarthy and Singleton had arrived in Quebec City and then travelled to their new home. Gwen Rawlings researched the local history of Inverness County and the genealogy of some of the families in her book "The Pioneers of Inverness Township, Quebec" (published by Boston Mills Press in 1979).

For 105 families from the Ards Peninsula of County Down the prime motivating factor in coming to Canada after 1820 was economic opportunity as discussed by Catharine Anne Wilson in "The Scotch - Irish Immigrant Culture of Amherst Island, Ontario" (published in Ulster and North America, Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch - Irish by The University of Alabama Press in 1997). Rents and lands were cheaper to purchase.

Adamsons, Armstrongs, Grahams, Croziers, and Pattersons were some of the families who settled in Peel County, Ontario (part of the present day city of Toronto). George Crozier from County Tyrone became a leader in the County. He came to Canada by way of New York as did John Eakins from County Fermanagh. Both served during the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837 which led to the establishment of responsible government for the province. These and other Ulster Scots settlers of the County who played a role in civic affairs on the local level as well as provincial and national are described by William Perkins Bull, K.C. in his book " From the Boyne to Brampton" (published by George J. McLeod Ltd, Toronto in 1936)

Most of Canada's arrivals from Ireland arrived before the Irish Famine. The number of arrivals peaked with 70,000 in Quebec City and about half that number in Saint John in 1847. Certainly a large number of these moved on to the United States. In 1848 the Emigrant Tax was doubled and with other increases in taxes the number of arrivals in Quebec City was a quarter of that of the preceding year. By 1855 immigration from Ireland had slumped to a few hundred per year and for the rest of the century remained low.

Presbyterian Faith

Ulster Scots settlers were not long in setting up churches to practice their faith. David Archibald, born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland on September 20, 1717, who was the first Justice of the Peace in Truro, Nova Scotia and later represented the Township in Parliament, headed a petition calling for a reverend. In 1770 Archibald was chosen to head the list of Elders of the Presbyterian Congregation.

In 1820 the first Free Presbyterian Church was established in Toronto by Ulster Scots and its Minister was Reverend James Harris sent out from Belfast by the Presbyterian Society of Ireland. He was also the first secretary of the Bible Society. Another native of Belfast, the Reverend David Boyd, became the Presbyterian Minister in Prescott, Ontario the same year.

The first Free Presbyterian Church in Saint John, New Brunswick was founded in 1843 when the local Presbyterians put out a call to Ireland and Reverend Robert Irvine from Ballynahinch, County Down, became their first Minister. The church was first located at the corner of Carmarthen and King Street East.

Other prominent Presbyterian Ministers from Ulster who moved to Canada before the middle of the 19th century included the Reverend William Moore of Ottawa and the Reverend William King who founded the Buxton Mission and Elgin Settlement, Canada West.

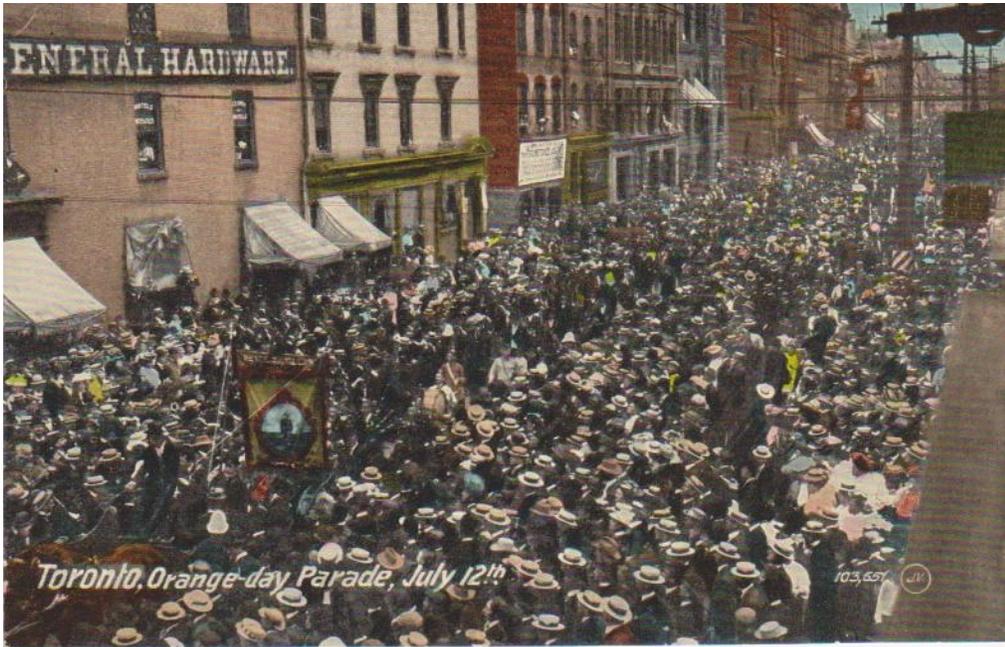
In many areas, as in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and parts of Ontario, where the Ulster Scots found their numbers not that large they shared their church with other Scottish and English settlers.

The Reverend William Gregg, born July 5, 1817 at Killycreen, near Ramelton, County Donegal became the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in 1861. He came to Canada in 1846, and first ministered in Belleville, and then at Cooke's Church, Toronto in 1857. As well he was a Professor at Knox College in the city and also taught classes at the Montreal Presbyterian College. He also authored a book on the History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Loyalist Connection

As in parts of Ulster several years ago when the cry could be heard "Keep Ulster British" a variation of this "Keep Canada British" was heard and seen in parts of Canada up until as late as the 1970s. Throughout much of Canada's history there are signs of loyalty to Britain., The conflict between the colonial French and British governments, arrival of the Loyalists, membership in the British Empire, participation with Britain in the Boer War, World War I and World War II not only were signs of this connection but for some encouraged loyalty to Britain. This certainly has been more manifest in parts of Canada which received largest numbers of British immigrants and Loyalists. It was also supported by some Ulster Scots immigrants.

Ulster Scots arriving in Canada in the 1800s and later often brought with them a sense of loyalty to Britain. In particular members of Orange Lodges in Ulster who held as part of their beliefs support for the British Monarchy carried this with them to Canada. Toronto, the largest city in Canada by the early 1900s, was holding parades on the Twelfth of July which were larger than anywhere else in the world. It was nicknamed "The Belfast of Canada".



Toronto Orange Parade, July 12th

Two notable Ulster Scots who were elected as Mayor of Toronto and who were also active members of Orange Lodges were Edward Frederick Clarke and Warring Kennedy. Clarke was born in Ballieboro, County Cavan on April 24, 1850 and came to Canada in 1860s where he worked in Toronto at Globe Newspaper. He joined McKinley Loyal Orange Lodge No. 275 in Toronto and rose to become Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Canada. In 1888 he was elected Mayor of Toronto and also later elected as a member of the Provincial Legislature and later the Parliament in Ottawa representing Toronto West.

Warring Kennedy was born in 1827 in County Down and moved to Canada in 1858. He was a member of Temperance Loyal Orange Lodge No. 301 in Toronto, lay preacher, and Director of the Upper Canada Bible Society. In 1894 he was elected Mayor of Toronto. During the first half of the 1900s many of the elected members of the Council for the City of Toronto were members of an Orange Lodge. Every Mayor of Toronto elected in the 1900s until 1955 was an Orangeman.

Following the first World War some Ulster Scots who were veterans of the conflict choose to move to Canada. Those who had served with the Ulster Division founded the 36th Ulster Division Old Comrades Association. It established its own meeting hall and sponsored parades and assisted immigrants from Ulster.

Leaders in Government, Business, and Education

Canada as a country traces its birth to the constitutional conferences held in Charlottetown, Quebec and London, England which created the country in 1867. Sir Adams George Archibald of Truro, Nova Scotia, whose grandfather emigrated from Londonderry, Northern Ireland was a delegate to all three conferences and so named as one of the Fathers of Confederation of Canada. Other members of the Archibald family were also active in

Canadian politics including in recent years George Archibald who represented the riding of Kings North in the Legislature of Nova Scotia from 1984 until 1999.

Thomas David McConkey, born in County Tyrone in 1815, was another early Canadian political leader. He came to Innisfil Township, Ontario with his family in 1828. From 1860 - 1861 he served as Reeve for Simcoe County and in 1863 was elected to the legislature and re-elected to serve in Canada's first Parliament in 1867. Later he served as Sheriff for Simcoe County.



Thomas David McConkey

The February 18, 1911 issue of the 'Illustrated London News' declared "The T. Eaton Co. of Toronto can claim their stores are the greatest in the British Empire." Born in March 1834 two miles north of Ballymena, County Antrim, Timothy Eaton immigrated to Canada in 1854 and built a successful retail business which according to Forbes Magazine in 1992 enabled the Eatons family to have a net worth of U.S. \$1.2 billion.

The Eatons Company published a catalogue from 1884 to 1976, sponsored a Santa Claus parade in Toronto, and was renowned for its philanthropic good works. To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Eaton's on December 8, 1919, the employees as a gift erected a statue of Timothy Eaton in the Toronto Queen Street store. Rod McQueen, author of "The Eatons - The Rise and Fall of Canada's Royal Family" (published in 1998 by Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd.)

states that when Canadian Minister of National Defence, Doug Young, in the 1990s was asked about some policy and whether he could guarantee results, he said, " I'm not Eaton's.

Alan Blakeney, who became Premier of Saskatchewan, was born in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia on September 7, 1925 of Ulster Scots ancestry. He graduated from Dalhousie University in Halifax and then from Oxford University in England. He became a lawyer in the Province of Saskatchewan in 1950 and was elected to the provincial legislature and served as Premier from 1971 until 1982.

A Canadian of Ulster Scots roots who was appointed a member of the Order of Canada was Jack Gordon McClelland. His father was born in Ulster and after coming to Canada was a Bible salesman before he became a publisher and established McClelland & Stewart Publishing Co. in Toronto.

The ninth Prime Minister of Canada, Arthur Meighen, also had Ulster Scots roots. The Meighens were Presbyterians of Ulster stock from Londonderry He was born June 16, 1874 in Anderson, Ontario and graduated from University of Toronto. Gordon Donaldson in his book about Canada's Prime Ministers entitled "The Prime Ministers of Canada" wrote that Meighen's "gift for words was a weapon that he honed and polished." He grew up on a farm and rehearsed his speeches for school debates in the woods with only the birds and squirrels for an audience. First elected in 1908 from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba and became Prime Minister in 1920.

One of the most recent Canadian political leaders of Ulster Scots ancestry was Anne McClelland, who was Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, and served in the cabinets of Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Paul Martin in the 1990s. She was born on August 31, 1950 in Hants County, Nova Scotia and after completing her educations was a professor of law at the universities of New Brunswick and Alberta before being elected to the Parliament of Canada. Her Ulster Scots ancestors settled in Nova Scotia in the 1700s.

Ulster Scots also had influence in Canada in the field of education. The names of Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, and Carleton University, in Ottawa, Ontario have something in common. The three are all named after Ulster Scots. Mount Allison opened in 1843 and was named after Charles Allison, an Ulster Scot who was active in promoting education when he settled in New Brunswick. It was the first university to grant a degree to a woman of any university in the British Empire in 1875

McMaster University was established in the name of William McMaster in recognition of his support of education in Toronto and throughout southern Ontario,. McMaster was born in 1811 in County Tyrone and after moving to Canada was also a successful bank and President of the Bank of Montreal before helping to create the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He also served in the Senate of Canada from 1867 to 1887.

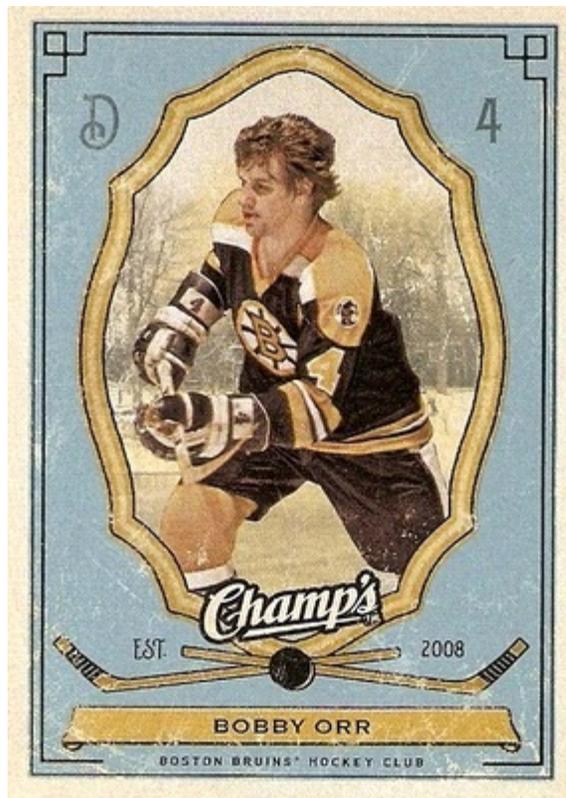
Carleton University was named after one of the first Ulster Scots to have an impact on Canada, Sir Guy Carleton from County Donegal who defended British North America and served as Commander-in-chief.

Ulster Scots in Canada Today

Reminders of Ulster can be found in place, street, and building names. In Toronto, the first football game played at night under lights took place in the Ulster Stadium on October 29, 1930 between Oshawa and Toronto Balmy Beach. There is also an Ulster Street in Toronto and in Winnipeg and an Ulster Arms Hotel in Toronto. Across Canada, there are two Belfasts, one in Ontario and another in Prince Edward Island as well as two Londonderrys, one in each of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In addition there is a Bangor, Enniskillen, , Donegal, Lurgan, and Tyrone, in Ontario, and Clones in Ontario and New Brunswick.

Ulster Scots immigrants as well as descendants of Ulster Scots settlers continue to contribute to life in Canada in many respects. They have not just left their mark in politics and business but in other ways too.

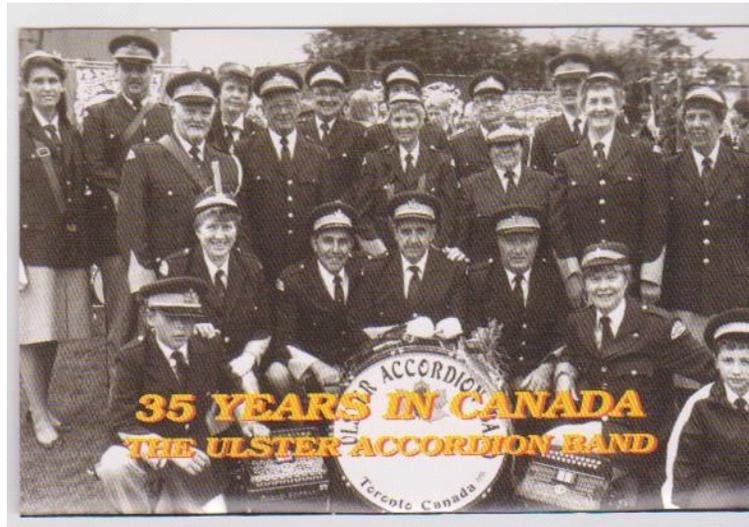
Canada's national sport, ice hockey, has been played by many Canadians including Ulster Scots and their descendants. Bobby Orr, former star defenceman in the National Hockey League who led his team the Boston Bruins to its first League championship in 29 years by winning the Stanley Cup in 1970 was an Ulster Scot descendant. His grandfather was born in Ballymena, County Antrim. Orr, born in Parry Sound, Ontario, was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame as the youngest player when he was 31 in 1979.



Daniel John McClellan, from Timmins, Ontario, who coached the Toronto Maple Leafs for four years and was voted National Hockey League Coach of the Year in 1971 was also of Ulster Scots ancestry.

Members of the Dill family from County Donegal, settled near Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1769. It is an area known as the 'Birthplace of Hockey' and also located in the Annapolis Valley which has a reputation as a major agricultural location within Canada. Howard Dill was the four time winner of World Pumpkin Champion for growing giant pumpkins. He died in May, 2008. His pumpkin seeds have been shipped all over the world.

The Ulster Accordion Band was formed in Toronto in 1954 by Ulster Scots and continues to entertain at events throughout the area. It is the official band of the 36th Ulster Division Old Comrades Association and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 11 in Toronto. It has approximately 50 members, which is comprised of three sections: accordions, percussion and color party. In July 1991 the Band traveled to France for the celebrations commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.



Members of Ulster Accordion Band of Toronto

In 1996 Ulster Scot folk musician and entertainer Willie Drennan resided in Nova Scotia and was the founding President of the Ulster Scottish Society of Canada. Many descendants of Ulster Scots are rediscovering their heritage through the internet and connecting to others with similar interests. Genealogy has led to some who simply thought of themselves as of Irish background finding out that there is much more to their roots. The next step for many is a trip back to Ulster to visit their ancestral home.

In February, 2011 a new facebook page called Canada's Ulster Scots was created as another way for Canadians of Ulster Scots ancestry to connect and share information about their heritage. See: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Canadas-Ulster-Scots/194314523916808>

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