

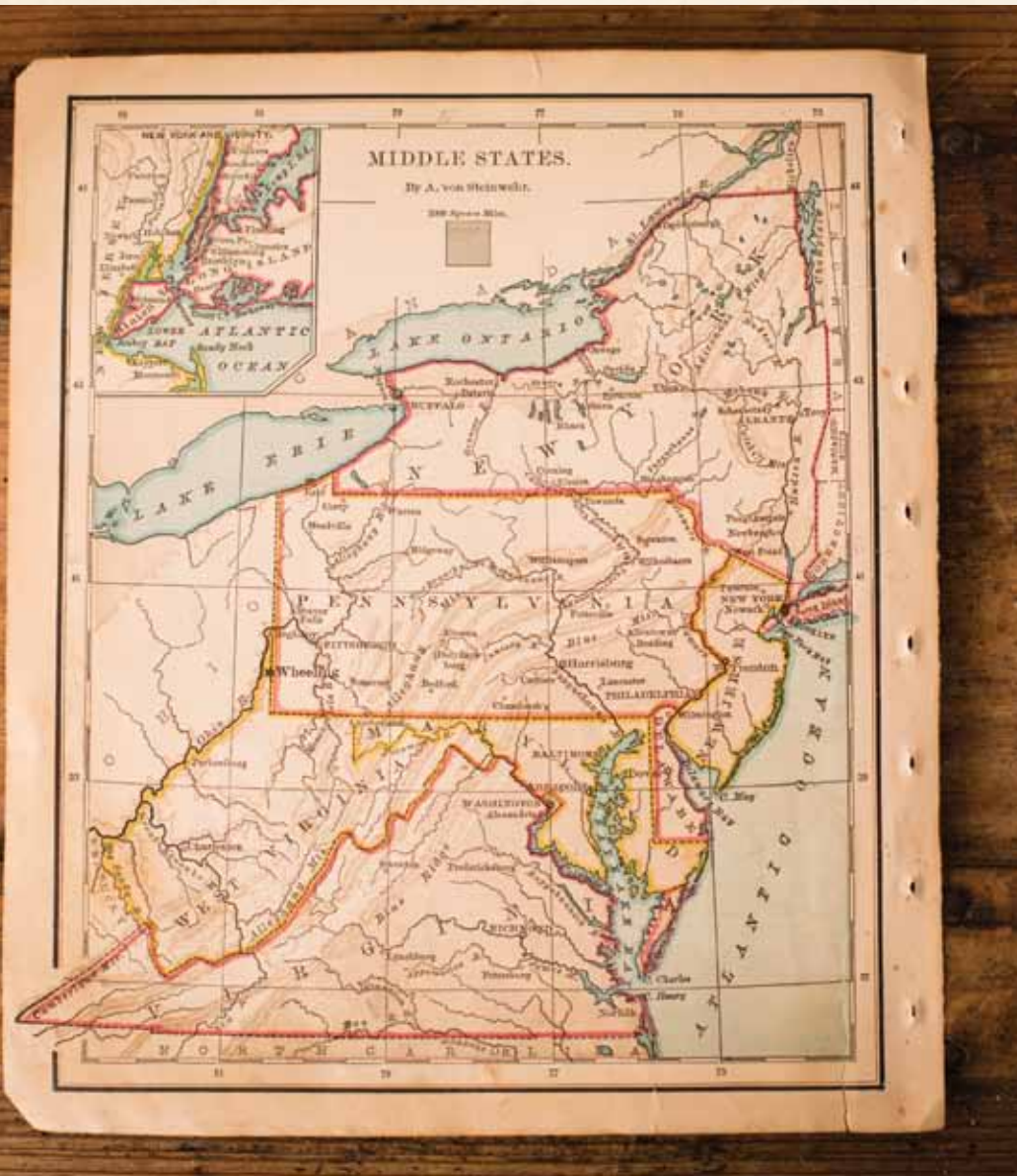
ULSTER & PENNSYLVANIA

Ulster-Scots and 'the Keystone State'



**Ulster-Scots
Community
Network**

www.ulster-scots.com



Introduction

The earliest Ulster-Scots emigrants to 'the New World' tended to settle in New England. However, they did not get on with the Puritans who controlled government there and whom they came to regard as worse than the Church of Ireland authorities they had left behind in Ulster. For example, when the Ulster-Scots settlers in Worcester, Massachusetts, tried to build a Presbyterian meeting house, their Puritan neighbours tore it down. Thus, future Ulster-Scots emigrant ships headed further south to Newcastle, Delaware, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, rather than the ports of New England.

Pennsylvania was established by William Penn in 1682 with two objectives: to enrich himself and as a 'holy experiment' in establishing complete religious freedom, primarily for the benefit of his fellow Quakers. George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, had visited the region in 1672 and was mightily impressed.

As the historian D.H. Fischer has observed in *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York, 1991):

William Penn was a bundle of paradoxes - an admiral son's who became a pacifist, an undergraduate at Oxford's Christ Church who became a pious Quaker, a member of Lincoln's Inn who became an advocate of arbitration, a Fellow of the Royal Society who despised pedantry, a man of property who devoted himself to the poor, a polished courtier who preferred the plain style, a friend of kings who became a radical Whig, and an English gentleman who became one of Christianity's great spiritual leaders.

The region had fertile soil, large deposits of iron ore, coal, copper and other useful minerals, forests of oak, walnut and chestnut, many creeks and tributaries running into the Delaware river which assisted inland navigation, a temperate climate, and friendly natives. It was these considerations which prompted Penn to seek a formal charter from Charles II.

The proposed name of 'Sylvania' which means 'forest land' in Latin was, at the insistence of the King, prefixed with 'Penn' as a tribute to William Penn's father Admiral Penn. Thus Pennsylvania means 'Penn's Woods' or 'Penn's Forests' and the state still accounts for nine percent of the United States' woodland.

First Frame of Government, the Colony's constitution drafted by Penn, guaranteed liberty of conscience. Thus, Ulster Presbyterians, who many argued had 'sacrificed home and homeland rather than capitulate to religious tyranny' could anticipate a friendly reception in Pennsylvania. In 1717 Jonathan Dickson of Philadelphia reported that there had arrived from 'the north of Ireland many hundreds in about four months' and during the summer 'we have had 12 or 13 sail of ships from the North of Ireland with a swarm of people'. Early in 1725 James Logan, the Ulster-born secretary of Pennsylvania, noted a growth in the number of Scotch-Irish in the colony and in 1729 he observed:

It looks as if Ireland is to send all its inhabitants hither, for last week not less than six ships arrived, and every day, two or three arrive also. The common fear is that if they thus continue to come they will thus make themselves proprietors of the Province.

In 1731 the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania acknowledged that the colony had 'considerable numbers' of Germans and people from 'the north of Ireland' among its inhabitants. On the eve of the American Revolution Benjamin Franklin estimated that the Scotch-Irish and their descendants accounted for a third of Pennsylvania's population of 350,000 and that they occupied more than half the seats in the colonial assembly.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Pennsylvania was a thriving colony, rich from agriculture and trade. It had a culture of minimal and relatively uncorrupt government and religious toleration.

In 1790, according to Louis Wright, the Scotch-Irish accounted for 14.3% of the total white population of America. David Noel Doyle breaks down this figure thus: New York 11%, Maryland 11%, North Carolina 13 %, Virginia 14%, Pennsylvania 21%, South Carolina 24% and Georgia 27%.

According to the 2006–2008 census, the five largest estimated ancestry groups in Pennsylvania are: German (28.5%), Irish (18.2%), Italian (12.8%), English (8.5%) and Polish (7.2%). Only 2.0% claim Scotch-Irish ancestry and 1.7% claim Scottish ancestry. Why do the Scotch-Irish and Scots account for such a comparatively modest proportion of the population of the modern state? A number of possibilities may be suggested. First, the impact of the sheer scale of nineteenth and twentieth-century immigration from Europe must surely be an important factor. Secondly, the Scotch-Irish were 'a restless people' who were constantly on

the move. In the first instance they gravitated towards western Pennsylvania, especially the area around Pittsburg. Then, many of them poured through the 'Cumberland Gap', just north of where the modern-day states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia converge. This region became 'the seed plot and nursery' of Ulster-Scots settlement in north America. Finally, the title of Patrick Griffin's book, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton NJ, 2001), suggests yet another explanation. Unlike other immigrants, the Scotch-Irish did not become hyphenated Americans. They simply became Americans. It is also possible that some of those who identified themselves as Irish in 2006–2008 census may well be people with only a hazy appreciation of their Scotch-Irish ancestry. Some of those who consider themselves to be of Scottish ancestry may actually be Scotch-Irish.

Why is Pennsylvania known as 'the Keystone State'? Again there are a number of possible explanations. Geography provides the first: the state's central location in the original Thirteen Colonies. History provides a second: many of the key documents of the American Revolution, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were drafted and approved in Pennsylvania. Economically, the state acted as a bridge between the industrial north and the overwhelmingly agricultural south, Pennsylvania straddling the divide. Finally, especially the stylized version depicted on the state's car number plates, Pennsylvania bears a strong resemblance to a 'key stone'.

James Logan

1674 - 1751

James Logan was born in Lurgan, County Armagh, on 20 October 1674, the son of Isabel Hume Logan and Patrick Logan, a Quaker school teacher. Both his parents had Scottish ancestry.

In 1689, the Logan family moved to Bristol where, in 1693, James replaced his father as schoolmaster. In 1699 he travelled to Philadelphia as William Penn's secretary.

He held a succession of political offices in rapid succession: including commissioner of property (1701), receiver general (1703), clerk (1701), and member (1703) of the provincial council. He was elected Mayor of Philadelphia in 1722 and served as the colony's chief justice from 1731 to 1739. In the absence of a governor, he served as acting governor of the colony from 1736 to 1738.

Despite his Quaker background, he opposed Quaker pacifism and war tax resistance, and encouraged pacifist Quakers to give up their seats in the Pennsylvania Assembly so that it could make war requisitions.

Through Logan's influence Ulster-Scots played an important part in the extension of the frontier. Logan encouraged Ulster-Scots settlement in the colony and welcomed them as his 'brave' fellow-countrymen. He wanted the Ulster-Scots to act as buffer between his fellow Quakers and the Indians (and, to a lesser extent, land hungry Marylanders).



In 1720 he wrote:

At that time we were apprehensive from the Northern Indians ...I therefore thought it might be prudent to plant a settlement of such men as those who formerly had so bravely defended Londonderry and Enniskillen as a frontier in case of any disturbance ... These people if kindly used will be orderly as they have hitherto been and easily dealt with. They will also, I expect, be a leading example to others.

He ended up feeling sorry for the Indians whom he felt were treated harshly by the Ulster-Scots settlers, claiming that 'a settlement of five families from the north of Ireland gives me more trouble than fifty of any other people.'

Ulster-Scots were not worried by legalities. To Logan's acute annoyance, they increasingly settled on land without bothering to secure legal rights to it. According to Logan they 'alleged that it was against the laws of God and nature, that so much land should be idle, while so many Christians wanted it to labour on, and raise their bread'.

Logan engaged in a wide range of mercantile activities, especially fur trading, with such success that he became one of the wealthiest men in the colonies.

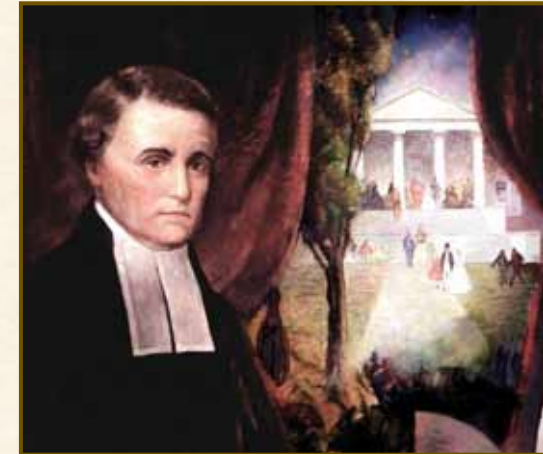
An enthusiastic bibliophile, he collected a personal library of over 3,000 volumes. When he died, the Loganian Library was set up in Philadelphia; containing over three thousand volumes, it was the first free public library outside Boston.

Logan was also a natural scientist whose primary contribution to the emerging field of botany was a treatise that described experiments on the impregnation of plant seeds, especially corn. He tutored John Bartram, the American botanist, in Latin and introduced him to Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist, physician, and zoologist. He was also a mentor of Benjamin Franklin, who published Logan's translation of Cicero's essay 'Cato Maior de Senectute' ('On Old Age'), the first translation of a Latin text to be published in North America.

Francis Alison

1705 - 1779

Francis Alison, the son of Robert Alison, a weaver, was born at Leck, near Letterkenny, County Donegal. He was probably educated at the Royal School, Raphoe. He emigrated to America in 1735 after graduating from Glasgow University where he had been a student of Francis Hutcheson, the Ulster-Scots philosopher and 'Father of the Scottish Enlightenment'. A Presbyterian minister and teacher, Alison played a significant role in transmitting Hutcheson's political thought to the American colonies and in shaping American public opinion prior to American independence.



Endowed with a formidable intellect, Alison ran an academy in Philadelphia and was acknowledged by Benjamin Franklin to be 'a man of great ingenuity and learning'.

Alison has a three-fold significance in American history: as a Presbyterian minister, as an educationalist and as a political thinker.

Alison was hostile to 'the Great Awakening', the first of a series of religious revivals in America, which began in the 1730s. Key figures in the first 'Great Awakening' were Jonathan Edwards (a Congregationalist who is still widely held to be America's 'most important and original philosophical theologian'), George Whitefield (who combined Calvinism with Methodism) and Gilbert Tennant (a Presbyterian minister who was born in County Armagh). Alison was firmly on the 'Old Side' of the argument which strongly emphasized an educated ministry and decorum in worship. Advocates of the 'New side' of the argument, by contrast, stressed the importance of enthusiasm, emotion and a conversion experience.

The 'New Side' protagonists denounced their critics as 'dry, sapless, unconverted ministers'. In response, Francis Alison and his allies denounced their 'New Side' opponents as devilish and disorderly and in 1741 they signed a protest which expelled Gilbert Tennant and other 'New Side' clergy from the Philadelphia Synod.

Upon the reunion of the two sides in 1758, which created the new Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Alison preached the opening



sermon entitled 'Peace and Union', taking his text from Ephesians 4:4-7. Alison never deviated from his 'Old Side' interpretation of theology. Alison is an example of a man who was radical in his politics but conservative in his theology, a by no means unusual combination.

A man of great intellect, Alison was frequently employed as a teacher both within and without the church. John Dickinson of Delaware, the author of the very influential *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* and a patriot politician in the vanguard of the American Revolution, hired Alison to tutor his children. Ultimately, Alison may be regarded as the Father of the University of Delaware. This academic institution traces its origins to 1743, when Alison opened up his 'Free School' in his home in New London, Pennsylvania. The school changed its name and location on many occasions, becoming the Academy of Newark in 1769 (chartered by the colonial government). Since Delaware was part of the Pennsylvania colony until 1776, the academy was denied a charter as a college in order to prevent competition with the University of Pennsylvania (then the College of Philadelphia of which Alison became Vice-Provost in 1755). In 1833, the General assembly for the State of Delaware passed the 'An Act to Establish a College at Newark', and in 1834 Newark College opened. It changed its name in 1843 to Delaware College and it merged with the Academy of Newark. In recognition of Alison's intellectual prowess, the University of Glasgow conferred a Doctorate of Divinity on him in 1756.

It is widely known that three of Alison's pupils were signatories to the American Declaration of Independence: Thomas McKean, Charles Thomson (Secretary of the Continental Congress) and James Smith.

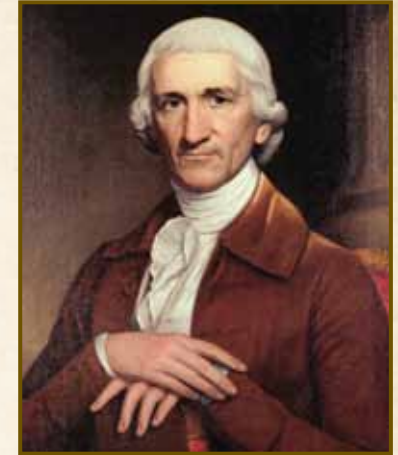
However, James E. Doan of Nova Southeastern University has delved further. He has uncovered information relating to forty-six students who studied with Alison before 1767 and who, thus, would have reached adulthood by the time of the American Revolution . Of these, fifteen served in the Continental Congress between 1776 and 1783; twenty-five served in Washington's army, sixteen held office in the new states; five received important executive appointments from the Continental Congress. Only five are known to have been loyalists.

Although Alison did not live to see the outcome of the great political events which he helped set in motion, Kerby Miller, the American historian, claims that Alison 'perhaps more than any other figure, helped prepare Pennsylvania's Scots-Irish for their prominent role in the American Revolution'.

Charles Thomson

1729 - 1824

Charles Thomson was born in Gortead, near Maghera, County Londonderry, in 1729. After the death of his mother in 1739, his father, a Presbyterian linen bleacher, emigrated to the British colonies in America with Charles and two or three brothers. The father died at sea, and the boys arrived in America as penniless orphans, robbed of all they possessed by the ship's captain.



A kindly blacksmith in New Castle, Delaware, took Charles under his wing and, as we have just noted, he was educated in New London by Francis Alison. In 1750 he became a Latin tutor in Philadelphia and by the end of the decade had developed an absorbing interest in for politics.

Unfortunately we know comparatively very little about this clearly significant period of Thomson's life because he destroyed all his papers and correspondence between the late 1750s and the 1770s. However we do have the testimony of John Adams, the second President of the United States, that in Pennsylvania politics Thomson played a role comparable to that of Samuel Adams in Massachusetts politics. In other words, he was one of the leading lights of the movement that became the American Revolution and



was one of the principal architects of the American republic and its political culture.

Between 1774 and 1789 he was Secretary to the Continental Congress. Through those 15 years, the Congress saw many delegates come and go, but Thomson's presence as Secretary to the Continental Congress provided strong continuity. His role as secretary to Congress was by no means limited to clerical duties.

Thomson's thinking was allegedly very close to that of George Washington. According to biographer Boyd Schlenker, Thomson 'took a direct role in the conduct of foreign affairs'. Fred S. Rolater has even suggested that Charles Thomson was essentially the 'Prime Minister of the United States'.

The American Declaration of Independence is written in Thomson's hand. Although he did not strictly speaking sign the original document, his name (as secretary) appeared on the first published version of the Declaration. Thomson also designed the first Great Seal of America and chose what was widely considered the *de facto* motto of the United States: 'E pluribus unum' (One out of many), an expression of Thomson's fervent belief in the importance of the unity of the States. It was Thomson who in 1789 conveyed Congress's invitation to George Washington at his Mount Vernon home in Virginia to become first President of the United States.

Thomson resigned as secretary of Congress in July 1789 and handed over the Great Seal, bringing an end to the Continental Congress. An active Presbyterian and church elder, he spent his final years working on a translation of the Bible. He also published a synopsis of the four Gospels in 1815. In retirement, Thomson also pursued his interests in scientific research relating to agriculture and beekeeping.

Although Thomson had his critics and detractors who prevented him securing employment in the service of the newly established United States after 1789, his widespread reputation for integrity gave rise to a proverb: 'It's as true as if Charles Thompson's name were to it.'

There was no one better placed to write a history of the American Revolution than Thomson. He completed such a history but then unfortunately, to the chagrin of historians ever since, decided against publication and destroyed even his notes. Historians contrive to impose a greater coherence on the past than was obvious to those who lived through events, a point fully appreciated by Thomson in his explanation of why he declined publish his eyewitness account of the activities of 'the Founding Fathers':

I ought not, for I should contradict all the histories of the great events of the revolution, and show by my account of men, motives and measures, that we are wholly indebted to the agency of Providence for its successful issue. Let the world admire the supposed wisdom and valor of our great men. Perhaps they may adopt the qualities that have been ascribed to them, and thus good

may be done. I shall not deceive future generations.

Condoleezza Rice, the former US National Security Advisor and Secretary of State, makes much the same point in *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London, 2011) by quoting the English historian C. V. Wedgwood: 'History is lived forwards but written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning and we can never wholly recapture what it was to know the beginning only.'

Mary Draper Ingles

1732 - 1815

Although born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mary Draper Ingles' story is not exclusively a Pennsylvania one because she was a pioneer and early settler in the Shenandoah Valley of western Virginia. George Draper, her father, had emigrated from Donegal in 1729. The Draper family subsequently established Draper's Meadow, close to Blacksburg, Virginia. In 1750 Mary married William Ingles and gave birth to two sons: Thomas in 1751 and George in 1753. Mary was abducted by Shawnee Indians after the Draper's Meadow Massacre of 1755 and was taken to Big Bone Lick, Kentucky. From there she escaped, making a harrowing trek over 850 miles of rough terrain to return home. She and her husband established Ingles Ferry across the New River in 1762. Her remarkable story has been a source of inspiration to both authors and filmmakers.

John Dunlap

1747 - 1812

John Dunlap, who was born in Strabane, County Tyrone, printed the first copies of the Declaration of Independence and was one of the most successful American printers of his era.

In 1757, aged ten, he was sent to Philadelphia to work as an apprentice to his uncle, William Dunlap, a printer and bookseller in that city.

In 1766 William Dunlap sold his stock of books and put his printing house in the care of his nephew in order to pursue his religious studies. Two years later, William Dunlap was ordained as an Anglican priest and took charge of the parish of Stratton in Virginia. John



eventually bought his uncle's business, paying him off in installments. During this period John Dunlap's close friend Dr Benjamin Rush recalled that John was so poor that he lived in his shop, sleeping on the floor under his counter.



Nevertheless, John managed to earn a living printing sermons, broadsides and handbills. In November 1771 Dunlap felt sufficiently confident to embark upon publication of the *Pennsylvania Packet, or General Advertiser*, a weekly newspaper. The paper proved to be a success. On 4 February 1773 he married Elizabeth Hayes Ellison, a widow from Liverpool.

During the Revolution, Dunlap served as an officer in the Philadelphia Cavalry, and saw action at the battles of Trenton, scene of George Washington's victory over the Hessians on 26 December 1776, and Princeton on 3 January 1777. Of the impact of these two American victories, G. O. Trevelyan, the nineteenth-century British historian, observed: 'It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world'.

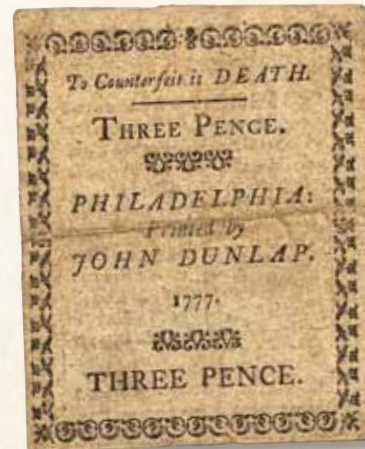
After the revolutionary war Dunlap continued to serve in the Philadelphia Cavalry the war, attaining the rank of major and leading Pennsylvania's cavalry militia to help suppress the largely Ulster-Scots inspired 'Whiskey Rebellion' in south-west Pennsylvania in 1794.

In 1776 Dunlap became an official printer to the Continental Congress. On 2 July of that year the Second Continental Congress voted to secede. Two days later, they approved the final wording of a public declaration regarding their decision, which we today call the Declaration of Independence. That evening John Hancock, the President of the Second Continental Congress, ordered Dunlap to print broadside copies of the declaration. Dunlap printed perhaps 200 broadsides, which became known as the Dunlap broadsides, which were the first published versions of the Declaration.

Dunlap also printed items for Pennsylvania's revolutionary government. In 1777 he took over the printing of the *Journals of the Continental Congress* from Robert Aitken, but lost the contract in 1779 after printing in his newspaper a letter from Thomas Paine that leaked news of the secret French aid to the Americans.

In 1784, Dunlap's paper became a daily with a new title: the *North American and United States Gazette*. Dunlap narrowly missed out on becoming the founder of the first daily in the United States. That distinction belongs to the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* which was launched in 1783. However, Dunlap's paper became the first successful daily.

Dunlap's major financial success came from real estate speculation. During the American Revolution, he bought property confiscated from Loyalists who refused to take Pennsylvania's new loyalty oath. After the war, he bought land in

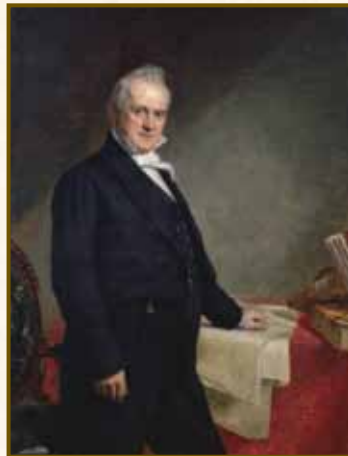


Kentucky. By 1795, when he was 48, he was able to retire with a sizable estate. Retirement did not agree with him. According to his friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dunlap became a drunkard in his final years and died of apoplexy in Philadelphia on 27 November 1812.

James Buchanan

1791 - 1868

James Buchanan, the 15th President of the United States, remains the only unmarried occupant of the White House. In February 1860 some ladies visited the Executive Mansion to pay their respects to the President. One of the ladies, before their departure, observed: 'We have looked all through this House – it is very elegant and well kept; but we have noticed one deficiency.' Buchanan replied: 'What is that, Madam?' 'That you have no lady of the house.' 'That Madam,' said Buchanan, 'is my misfortune, not my fault.'



Buchanan was a first generation Ulster-Scots President (like Andrew Jackson) and the last American President to be born in the eighteenth century. He was born on 23 April 1791, possibly in a log cabin, in Stony Batter, near Mercersburg in south-central Pennsylvania. Accounts of Buchanan's humble origins and the simplicity of the Presbyterian home in which he grew up may be greatly exaggerated.

James Buchanan and Elizabeth Speer, his parents, had left Donegal in 1783 to settle in Pennsylvania. The family had originally come from Deroran, near Omagh, County Tyrone. In the autumn of 1833 on his way home from his term as Minister to Russia James Buchanan paid a visit to his Ulster ancestral home. He greatly enjoyed the experience and in letter admitted: 'There I sinned much in the article of hot whiskey which they term punch'. He also observed that the local ladies were 'delightful'.

The young Buchanan attended school in Mercersburg and in 1807 he entered Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He graduated two years later and began the study of law. In 1812 Buchanan was admitted to practice and soon became a prosperous lawyer in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Politically, Buchanan started life as a Federalist. Thus, he strongly opposed the War of 1812 on the grounds that it was an unnecessary conflict. Nevertheless, when the British invaded the neighbouring state of Maryland he joined a volunteer unit and participated in the successful defence of Baltimore.

Buchanan's legal training enabled him to enjoy a long and successful career in politics, especially with respect to foreign affairs, as a member of Pennsylvania House of Representatives (1815-16), a member of U.S. House of Representatives (1821-31), Minister (Ambassador) to Russia (1832-34), United States Senator (1834-45), Secretary of State



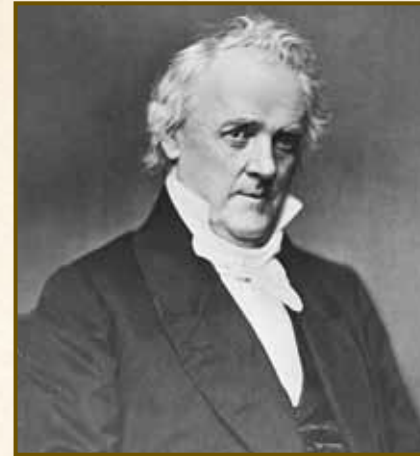
(1845-49) and Minister to the United Kingdom (1853-56).

With the demise of the Federalist Party, Buchanan became a Democrat, the party founded by Andrew Jackson. It was Jackson, a fellow Ulster-Scot who appointed Buchanan as Minister to Russia and James K. Polk, another Ulster-Scots president, who appointed Buchanan as his Secretary of State. In the former role, Buchanan developed an excellent working relationship with the Russian Foreign Minister and negotiated a favourable commercial treaty with Russia. In the latter role he dealt with 'the annexation of Texas' and the Mexican War. He was also involved in the Oregon boundary dispute and negotiations with the United Kingdom.

On his return from his three-year stint in London as ambassador to the Court of St James, Buchanan secured the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, and at the age of 65 became the oldest man to be elected to the Presidency up until that point.

Buchanan's tragedy was that his experience and expertise were in foreign policy but he became President at a period when the most pressing and urgent issues in American politics were domestic and probably intractable.

Buchanan's administration was bedevilled with rising tensions between North and South and the advocates of 'the South's peculiar institution' (slavery) and an increasingly vocal Abolitionist lobby. He inherited this situation and his stance on slavery did nothing to resolve the developing crisis. On the contrary, Buchanan's belief that slavery was wrong in principle but legal



under the Constitution left him politically hamstrung

Could Buchanan have averted the Civil War? To avoid civil war in the early 1860s would have required compromise but there was very little appetite for compromise, North

or South, and indeed it remains difficult to envisage what scope existed for compromise. Buchanan attempted to conciliate the Southern states and keep them from seceding from the Union over the issue of slavery. There is no evidence that a harder line against slavery would have done anything other than provoke the Southern states to secede a few years earlier than they eventually did. In his Message to Congress on 3 December 1860 Buchanan denied the legal right of states to secede but held that the Federal Government legally could not prevent them

Buchanan's policy of compromise was not unreasonable. Most presidents before him had adopted exactly the same approach, and even his more decisive and almost universally admired successor, Lincoln, persevered with conciliation as long as he could. Buchanan hoped that his policy would at least prevent the border states, the slave states of the upper South, from seceding. Therefore, arguably Buchanan deserves serious credit for the fact that Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri and the western part of Virginia (which split off as the state of West Virginia) did not succumb to the embrace the Confederacy.

It is doubtful if Buchanan could have done anything to prevent the slide towards secession and civil war and it is not difficult to have sympathy for the view that it was not Buchanan's fault. The Civil War stemmed directly from the failure of 'the Founding Fathers' to confront the issue of slavery. In the words of David Reynolds in *America, Empire of Liberty*: 'The South wanted to establish its own house, founded on slavery – citing the precedent of the American colonies breaking away from Britain in 1776 – but the North would not let it go – determined that the Union, the empire of liberty should remain whole and united'. Buchanan was an honest and intelligent man (probably far more intelligent than many men who have occupied the office) who by sheer hard work achieved two of the highest offices the United States has to offer. It was simply Buchanan's misfortune that his term as President coincided with the most horrendously difficult period in American history which would have beyond the capacity of any man to manage satisfactorily. It is difficult not to agree with the conclusion of a Pennsylvania judge who knew Buchanan well: 'He was cut out by nature for a great lawyer, and I think was spoiled by fortune when she made him a statesman'.



Thomas Alexander Mellon

1813 - 1908

A son of Andrew Mellon and Rebecca Wauchob, Thomas Mellon emigrated as a child from Camp Hill, Lower Castletown, near Omagh, County Tyrone, in 1818.

The modest Mellon family homestead, which is still there, formed the original nucleus of the Ulster-American Folk Park.

From Mellon's memoir, we know that the family sailed from Londonderry to St John's. This stage of the journey took twelve weeks. From St John's, New Brunswick, they sailed to Baltimore, Maryland. This stage of the journey took fortnight. From Baltimore to western Pennsylvania took a further three weeks by Conestoga wagon.

The family put down roots at Poverty Point in Westmoreland County, near Pittsburgh, where life was happy but Spartan. A visit to Pittsburgh left a profound impression on the mind of nine-year-old Thomas. He was particularly impressed by 'wealth



and magnificence I had before no conception of on seeing the mansion of prominent landowners Jacob and Barbara Ann Negley. At the age of fourteen, Mellon read and was greatly inspired by *the The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Franklin's rags-to-riches tale. When he was 17, he rejected his father's plans to set him up as a farmer and instead he attended Western University in Pittsburgh, read law with a prominent Pittsburgh attorney, and became a member of the bar in 1838. After a long and protracted courtship, in August 1843 he married Sarah Jane Negley, daughter of Jacob and Barbara Ann Negley, the family whose affluence had so impressed the young Mellon, and became the father of eight children.

In due course Mellon became an outstanding entrepreneur (largely through making shrewd and intelligent use of his wife's money), lawyer and judge and the patriarch of the Mellon family, enjoying a brilliant career which in material terms easily surpassed that of Benjamin Franklin. His most enduring achievement was perhaps the founding of T. Mellon & Sons Bank. By the end of the nineteenth century the Mellon Bank was largest banking institution in the United States outside of New York

In 1885 he published his autobiography, *Thomas Mellon and His Times*, primarily for the benefit of his progeny rather than for the general public. Although Mellon lived through the massive territorial and economic expansion of America, as well as the Civil War, his memoir offers comparatively few insights into a great many of the events through which he lived. Nevertheless, as

a memoir of one man's personal journey from the Old World to the New and from an agrarian to an industrial society, Mellon's account is of real value and of genuine interest. We learn of the importance of marrying for discretion rather than love, of the heavy responsibilities of a judge, of 'the Great Panic of 1873' (when he came perilously close to losing everything and half of Pittsburgh's ninety organized banks and twelve private banks failed- but prevailed, and was well placed to prosper when the economy again began to expand), of the declining work ethic and of the increase in crime which Mellon believed was a feature of the newly industrialized America, and about the (not always positive) transformative effects of new technology and invention.

In 1882, Mellon retired from day-to-day management of the bank's affairs, transferring its management of his sons. He took the opportunity to travel and visited Ulster and Scotland. 'A warm admirer of Robert Burns', he visited Burns' cottage. He inherited his enthusiasm for Burns from his mother.

Mellon was a Presbyterian but not a particularly devout one. He was a member of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, the land for which had been originally contributed by his wife's family.

Mellon died on his 95th birthday. Thomas and Sarah Mellon are buried in Allegheny Cemetery, Pittsburgh.

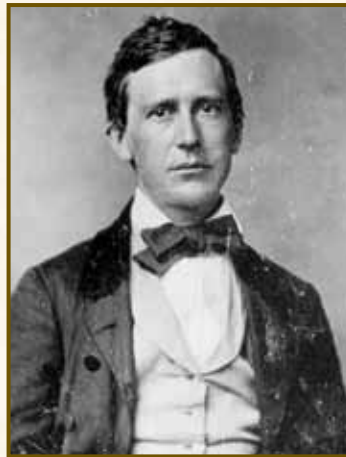
Thomas Mellon's son Andrew William Mellon was born in Pittsburgh in 1855, trained as a lawyer and assumed responsibility, along with his brother Richard Beatty Mellon (born 1858), for the

family bank in 1882. He was 'a chip of the old block' and, as we will see, became a major figure in both banking and industry in his own right. He was Secretary to the Treasury under Presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover. He was briefly ambassador to the United Kingdom between 1932 and 1933. A great patron of the arts, he endowed the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

Stephen Collins Foster

1826 - 1864

'The Father of American Music' was born in Lawrenceville (now part of Pittsburgh) in Pennsylvania on 4 July 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Curiously, Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd President of the United States and author of the Declaration, and John Adams, the 2nd President of the United States and a signatory to the Declaration, both died on 4 July 1826.



The White Cottage, the house in which Stephen was born, was located at 3600 Penn Avenue. Although the original house is no longer standing, there is a historical marker at the site.

Stephen was the son of William Barclay Foster, a Pittsburgh merchant and trader, and his wife, the former Eliza Clayland

Tomlison. He was descended on both sides from Scotch-Irish emigrants. Alexander Foster settled in Lancaster County in Pennsylvania in the late 1720s. James Foster, Stephen's grandfather, fought in the American War of Independence in the Patriot cause. Stephen's father served as quartermaster and commissary of the United States Army during the War of 1812.

Although formally untutored in music, Stephen he had a natural aptitude for music and began to write songs as a young boy. He absorbed musical influences from the popular, sentimental songs sung by his sisters; from black church services he attended with the family's servant Olivia Pise; from popular minstrel show songs; and from songs sung by black labourers at the Pittsburgh warehouse where he worked for a time. His parents were unsympathetic to his musical ambitions.

While working as a bookkeeper in his brother Dunning's business in Cincinnati, he wrote many songs, some of which he was able to sell to publishers.

On 22 July 1850 he returned to Pittsburg to marry Jenny McDowell (who inspired 'Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair'), a doctor's daughter. They had a daughter, Marion, who was born on 18 April 1851. She became a piano teacher in Pittsburgh and died on 9 July 1935.



Although a Northerner, who spent the greater part of his adult life in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and New York, his songs managed to capture the Southern plantation spirit in an authentic manner. In February 1852 he took a month long Mississippi River cruise to New Orleans, his only trip to the Deep South. He never visited the Swanee River.

Although his stated ambition was to become 'the best Ethiopian [that is, Negro minstrel] song writer,' he vacillated between composing minstrel songs (for which he is largely remembered) and songs in the sentimental 'respectable' style then popular.

Unfortunately, Foster lacked business acumen commensurate with his musical talent. In 1857 in severe financial difficulties he sold all rights to his future songs to his publishers for about \$1,900. Thus, the profits from his songs went largely to performers and publishers.

In 1860 Foster moved to New York. Opinions differ as to what role alcohol played in Foster's life but he may well have been struggling with alcoholism. In 1861 Jenny left him. There was a brief reconciliation the following year.

Foster died in Bellevue Hospital in New York City on 13 January 1864. In his biography *My Brother Stephen*, Morrison Foster describes his death as follows:

In January 1864, while at the American Hotel, he was taken with ague and fever. After two or three days he arose, and while washing himself fainted and fell across the wash basin, which



broke and cut a gash in his neck and face. He lay there insensible and bleeding until discovered by the chambermaid. She called for assistance and he was placed in bed again. On recovering his senses he asked that he be sent to a hospital. Accordingly he was taken to Bellevue Hospital. He was so much weakened by fever and loss of blood that he did not rally.

He had been living in abject poverty. In his wallet, there was found a scrap of paper that simply said 'Dear friends and gentle hearts', along with 35 cents in Civil War scrip and three pennies. He was buried, like the Mellons, in Allegheny Cemetery in Pittsburgh.

His legacy was about 200 songs, for most of which he wrote the words as well as the music. These include 'Camptown Races', 'Nelly Bly', 'My Old Kentucky Home', 'Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground', 'Old Dog Tray', 'Old Black Joe', 'Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair', and 'Beautiful Dreamer'.

Of Foster, Aaron Copland, the great American composer, observed: 'We have our national hero in Stephen Foster. More songwriter than composer, and with a

naturalness of feeling that places his melodies with the folk song, his simplicity and honesty are not easy to imitate. But this same simplicity and naturalness inspired a definite type of our own music.'

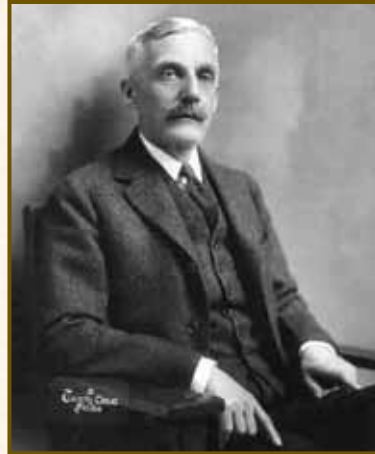
Bob Dylan has said: *'Anyone who wants to be a songwriter should listen to as much folk music as they can, study the form and structure of stuff that has been around for 100 years. I go back to Stephen Foster.'*

Andrew William Mellon

24 March 1855 - 26 August 1937

Andrew W. Mellon was the product of a truly remarkable American generation which witnessed the creation and accumulation of individual fortunes in by men like John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and Henry Clay Frick. Mellon was unique in that he excelled in four fields of endeavour: as a businessman and banker, as a politician and statesman, as an art collector, and as a philanthropist.

Andrew Mellon was the son of the Ulster emigrant Thomas Mellon. At an early age, Andrew joined his father Thomas, and his brother Richard, in the management of the family bank, T. Mellon



& Sons, which soon became the prime financial agent in facilitating the transformation of western Pennsylvania into one of the richest industrial regions in the United States (and the world) during the forty years before the Great War.

Andrew Mellon was an extraordinary judge of entrepreneurial talent. Among the many companies he helped to found and fund were ALCOA (the Aluminum Company of America), Carborundum (which manufactured abrasive products including belts, wheels, flap wheels and fibratex products for the metal finishing industry), Koppers (a global chemical and materials company based in Pittsburgh), and Gulf Oil (the eighth-largest American manufacturing company in 1941 and the ninth-largest in 1979). He rarely interested himself in the details of such businesses but acquired extensive holdings, which meant that by 1914 he was one of the richest men in the United States.

Mellon's wealth and name allowed him to dominate Republican politics in Pennsylvania but he was largely unknown outside the state until he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury in 1921 by Warren Harding, the 29th President of the United States.

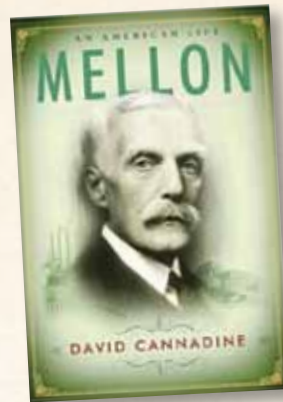
Now a national figure, he was strongly opposed to the League of Nations and he delighted in bringing business practices into government. During his long period



of office, Mellon cut taxes, enforced Prohibition, and presided over a period of such unprecedented financial prosperity ('the Roaring Twenties') that he was hailed as the greatest Treasury Secretary since Alexander Hamilton, George Washington's Secretary of the Treasury.

However by staying too long, he ended up shouldering responsibility for the Great Depression. He lost the confidence of President Hoover and early in 1932 he resigned from the Treasury. He was sent for a brief period as American Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

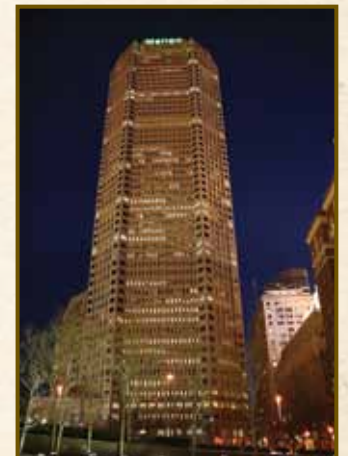
While this appointment marked the end of Mellon's public career, it was by no means the end of an interesting life. Since the end of the nineteenth century, he had been collecting paintings. Initially his purchases reflected the conventional taste of the Pittsburgh plutocracy, However after his move to Washington he became more discerning in his acquisitions. With encouragement from Henry Clay Frick, fellow industrialist, financier and life-long friend, and assistance from Sir Joseph Duveen, the British art dealer, and Knoedlers, the New York-based art dealers, Mellon specialized in Old Masters and British portraits, and by the early 1930s he had amassed the greatest collection of his generation. Indeed, at the very time his political career floundered, he scored his greatest triumph as a collector, purchasing twenty one masterpieces from the Hermitage in Leningrad for more than \$6 million.



During his life, Mellon gave away nearly \$10 million. Much of it went to educational and charitable institutions in his native Pittsburgh, but his most famous gift was of the money and the pictures to establish the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Ironically, at the very time this benefaction was being negotiated with the Federal Government, the seventy-nine year old Mellon was being prosecuted for tax evasion by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration. FDR hated Mellon as the embodiment of everything that was bad about the 1920s. Mellon strenuously denied the charges and confidently expected to be exonerated. He was but he did not live long enough to learn of his vindication. Nor did he survive to see the opening of the National Gallery.

Soon after Andrew Mellon's death, his daughter, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, set up the Avalon Foundation, and his son, Paul Mellon, established the Old Dominion Foundation. Like their father, both children were generous benefactors to many causes, and in June 1969, these two organizations were merged to form the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in his memory.





Ulster-Scots Community Network

www.ulster-scots.com

E: info@ulster-scots.com W: www.ulster-scots.com



Ulster-Scots Agency
Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch