

**Irish Immigrants in the
Land of Canaan:
Letters and Memoirs From
Colonial and Revolutionary
america, 1675–1815**

*Kerby A. Miller, et al.,
Editors*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Irish Immigrants

IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

W R I T T E N &

E D I T E D B Y

Kerby A. Miller

Arnold Schrier

Bruce D. Boling

David N. Doyle

Irish Immigrants

IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

*Letters and Memoirs
from Colonial and
Revolutionary America,
1675–1815*

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2003

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
São Paulo Shanghai Taipei Tokyo Toronto

Copyright © 2003 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

www.oup.com

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Irish immigrants in the land of Canaan : letters and memoirs from colonial and
revolutionary America, 1675–1815 / written and edited by Kerby A. Miller . . . [et al].
p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-19-504513-0; 0-19-515489-4 (pbk.)

1. Irish Americans—History—Sources. 2. Irish Americans—Biography.
3. Immigrants—United States—History—Sources. 4. Immigrants—United States—Biography.
5. United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–1775—Biography. 6. United States—History—Revolution, 1775–1783—Biography. 7. United States—History—1783–1865—Biography. I. Miller, Kerby A.

E184. I6 I683 2002

973'.049162—dc21 2002030363

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

IN MEMORY OF

Dennis Clark

E. R. R. “Rodney” Green

and

Franklin Scott

—*Beannacht Dé le hanmmnacha na marbh*

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE ※

Research for this book began in a sense some thirty years ago, when Kerby Miller first searched for Irish immigrants' letters and memoirs in Irish and North American archives and libraries. In the process, he encountered three other scholars also interested in Irish immigration: Arnold Schrier, a pioneer in the discovery and interpretation of such manuscripts; Bruce Boling, a specialist in Celtic and Hiberno-English philology; and David Doyle, an eminent historian of Irish-America. Over the years we each became increasingly intrigued by *early* Irish migration to the New World—by its complexity and diversity, by the inherent fascination of the first emigrants' few surviving letters and memoirs, and by our growing conviction that some of those documents shed new light on the crucial, formative stages of modern Protestant and Catholic Irish and Irish-American societies and identities. As a result, in the late 1980s we began the formal collaboration that has resulted in this book.

The letters, memoirs, and other documents included here record the experiences and perspectives of men and women who left Ireland for North America between the 1660s—when the authors of the earliest extant letters emigrated—and 1815, when the end of the Napoleonic Wars inaugurated a substantially different migration. We located and selected for publication manuscripts that, we believed, were both historically representative and inherently interesting. Then we conducted extensive background research, in primary and secondary sources, so we could interpret the documents and situate their authors and recipients in historical contexts.

Each of the book's chapters focuses on one or more specific immigrants and on the documents they wrote or dictated. Thus, the chapters constitute a series of historical essays; each can stand alone, but together they represent at once the disparate character, the common themes, and the mosaiclike texture of early Irish migration.

We begin with chapters that focus on letters, written from Ireland, that illustrate the background and causes of emigration, followed by a second set of chapters that present documents that exemplify the processes of Irish migration to the New World. Four other parts follow in which the documents and their immigrant authors are arranged according to the latter's New World occupations: farming; skilled and unskilled labor; commerce;

and the professions. The book's last part is composed of documents that illustrate Irish immigrants' diverse relationships to American political institutions and ideals, particularly in the late 1700s, when revolutionary events on both sides of the Atlantic were critical in shaping American, Irish, and Irish-American political cultures. In each part the chapters are arranged chronologically, according to the periodization of the documents contained therein, with one notable exception: those in part II are organized topically, according to the normal sequence of the migration process, from the emigrants' decisions to leave Ireland through their ocean voyages and initial settlements in the New World.

With the exception of lengthy memoirs that we have abridged, we present the letters and other documents as full texts that replicate, as closely as possible, the original manuscripts. This practice reflects our conviction that the documents are linguistically as well as historically important: that understanding how and why the immigrants expressed themselves in certain ways is crucial to appreciating what they wrote and the cultures that shaped their perceptions and interpretations of experience. However, our reproduction of the documents' original language has required an unusually large number of footnotes to clarify and explain their linguistic features. Those notes, in addition to others that provide historical information, obliged us to sacrifice the usual citations to nearly all the research sources on which the essays are based. Instead, those sources are listed, by chapter, at the end of the book.

We strove of course to uncover and publish documents illustrating the full range of the early Irish immigrant experience. Unfortunately, the low literacy rates that prevailed among poor immigrants and among Irish Catholics and women, generally, determined that members of those groups remain underrepresented, despite our success in locating a number of manuscripts that were dictated by immigrants who were both impoverished and illiterate. We present only one letter that represents Irish migration to what later became the Dominion of Canada. However, prior to 1815 very few Irishmen and -women migrated to mainland Canada, and only a handful of unrepresentative letters survive.¹

Since the choice of names for Ireland's inhabitants is often freighted with political significance, we must explain that we employ the term *Irish*, without quotation marks, simply to designate any or all of Ireland's inhabitants and emigrants. Likewise, we use the term *Scots-Irish*, also without quotation marks, as purely descriptive of Presbyterians, in Ulster and in North America, whose ancestors had migrated from Scotland to Ireland. We

1. Irishmen and -women emigrated to Canada prior to the American Revolution, but we could locate no letters or memoirs written by either the Catholic fishermen and servants who migrated to Newfoundland or the Scots-Irish farmers who settled in Nova Scotia. At least three caches of letters survive that were written by Irishmen who sojourned in or migrated directly to Canada between 1776 and 1815. One is a collection of letters written by Catholic priests in Newfoundland; see C. J. Byrne, ed., *Gentlemen-Bishops and Faction Fighters: The Letters of Bishops O Donel, Lambers, Scallon, and Other Irish Missionaries* (St. John's, Newfoundland, 1984). The others include letters written by members of the governing élite in early Upper Canada (now Ontario); see the Hugh Hovell Farmar Papers (Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa); and the Joseph Willcocks Letters (Metropolitan Toronto Central Library). These documents are unrepresentative of the few ordinary migrants to British North America, but they also indicate that prior to 1815 Irish migrations to Canada and the United States were quite separate and distinct, as were the social and political contexts in which they settled.

eschew the group descriptive *Ulster Scots* because its modern usage (primarily in Northern Ireland) implies a degree of ethnic continuity and exclusivity, from the 1600s to the present, that cannot be supported by historical evidence.² By contrast, the hyphen in *Scots-Irish* reflects the ethnic fluidity and ambiguity that more accurately describes the Ulster Presbyterian experience on both sides of the Atlantic. However, when we employ “Irish” or “Scotch-Irish,” in quotation marks, we refer to conscious “ethnic” or “national” group designations (or to their alleged characteristics) that have overt or covert political connotations and that may or may not correspond with their members’ actual ancestral origins or religious affiliations.

2. However, we do use the term *Ulster Scots* in a purely linguistic sense to designate the *language* (or dialect—scholars differ on that issue), closely akin to Lowland Scots, that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries prevailed in much of rural Ulster—primarily but by no means exclusively among Scots-Irish Presbyterians (see appendix 1).

This page intentionally left blank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ❀

In this book's long gestation, we have accumulated many debts. For financial support we are grateful to the Weldon Spring Foundation and the Research Council of the University of Missouri-Columbia, the Irish American Cultural Institute (now in Morristown, New Jersey), the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame, the Faculty Scholars Program of the University of New Mexico, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the faculty research support programs at Brown University, the Taft Memorial Fund at the University of Cincinnati, the Modern History Department at the Queen's University of Belfast, and, especially, the late Joseph Gannon of the American Irish Foundation.

For personal research aid, we thank Keith Brown and Mark Graham in Belfast; Robert Doan, Kathleen Ryan, and John Smolenski in Philadelphia; Coreen Hallenbeck of Albany, New York; and Bob Hunt, Mike Gamel, and, especially, Beth Ruffin McIntyre at the University of Missouri. For typing and computer assistance, we thank Cynthia Chermly, Laura Dauer, and Tillian Spitz at the University of Cincinnati and Mike Sullivan at the University of Missouri. Thanks as well to Nora Gibson of Charlottesville, Virginia, for her map-making skills. Special gratitude is due to Linda Brown-Kubisch, Laurel Boeckman, Marie Concannon, and other members of the research staff of the State Historical Society of Missouri. For their herculean efforts to locate the most obscure publications, we warmly acknowledge Josephine Johnson, Dolores Fisher, Sue Halaweh, Pat Holmes, and the other staff of the interlibrary borrowing service at the University of Missouri's Ellis Library. And thanks always to the History Department staff at the University of Missouri: to Patty Eggleston, Melinda Lockwood, Karen Pecora, Marie Sloan, and Nancy Taube.

In the lists of sources at the end of this book, we have tried to acknowledge the aid of all the individuals and institutions that helped us with research for each chapter. However, the assistance given by the following people merits our special thanks: the late J. R. R. Adams; Orlando Albillar; Tom Alexander; Ann Barry; Stefan Bielinski, Tyler Blethen; Maurice Bríc; Katherine Brown; John Bullion; Sharon Carson; Edward Carter; Marion Casey; Bill Crawford; Alun Davies; Jay Dolan; David Fitzpatrick; the late Col. J. R. H. Greeves; Tony Greeves; Beatriz Hardy; Kevin Herlihy; Ron Hoffman; Patricia

Horsey; Joy H. Jones; Tricia Kelleher; Lám Kennedy; John Devereux Kernan; C. I. MacAfee; Meg McAleer; C. W. P. MacArthur; John W. McConaghy; Brian McGinn; Ann McVeigh; Tony Malcolmson; Tim Meagher; Polly Midgley; Michael Montgomery; Jim Myers; Alice Naughton; Bruce Norman; Libby Nybakken; Trevor Parkhill; Rev. Donald Patton; Elizabeth Perkins; David Rixse; Barbara Rumsey; Philip Robinson; Mary Shackleton; Neddy Seagraves; Tony Stewart; Charles Stoner; Rev. Paul Thomas; Brian Trainor; Tom Truxes; Paul and Ellen Wagner; Anna Warren; Kevin Whelan, David Wilson; Curtis Wood; and Myrtle Yohe. Likewise, we are particularly grateful to all the staff at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; the Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland; the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum; and the National Library of Ireland.

For their patience, faith, and support over more years than they wish to remember, we are very grateful to Susan Ferber, Jessica Ryan, and the other editors and staff at Oxford University Press in New York and in North Carolina. For generous and insightful comments on various drafts and portions of our manuscript, we thank Kevin Kenny, Ted Koditschek, Linda Reeder, Bob Scally, LeeAnn Whites, and John Wigger. A second round of thanks is due to Lám Kennedy for graciously sharing the Irish demographic data that he and Kerby Miller compiled in the mid-1980s; thus, Kennedy shares whatever honors accrue from appendix 2, which presents much of this data for the first time.

None of the individuals just listed is accountable for the accuracy or the analyses of the material in this book. Many will surely disagree with our interpretations, and, indeed, we four collaborators have very different perspectives on many of the historical issues treated herein. Therefore, it should be said that Kerby Miller assumes final responsibility for much of the historical interpretation (especially concerning religion, politics, and identity), while Bruce Boling answers alone for the linguistic data and analyses.

Finally, we wish to express our love and gratitude to the spouses and children who so long endured our preoccupation with Ireland's early immigrants. This book could deservedly have been dedicated to them, but instead we take the opportunity to honor three Irish and immigration historians, former mentors and good friends, who died before they could witness one of the many results of their guidance and inspiration.

CONTENTS ※

INTRODUCTION 3

I ※

The Causes of Irish Emigration

1 James Wansbrough, 1700–1728	13
2 Alexander Crawford, 1736	24
3 David Lindsey, 1758	28
4 Henry Johnston, 1773–1800	30
5 Walter Corish Devereux, 1798	39
6 Margaret Wright, 1808	45

II ※

The Processes of Irish Emigration

7 Anonymous Poet, Mid- to Late 1700s	53
8 Rev. James MacSparran, 1752	55
9 Robert Parke, 1725	72
10 John Rea, 1765	82
11 James Orr, 1811	86
12 John Smilie, 1762	90
13 John O’Raw, 1809	94
14 Thomas Hinds, 1795	103
15 George Crockett, Jr., 1797–1807	107

III ※

Farmers and Planters

16 John Blake, 1675–1676	121
--------------------------	-----

17	Samuel McCobb, 1729–1772	128
18	Robert Witherspoon, 1734–1780	135
19	James Magraw, 1733	143
20	Mary Elizabeth McDowell Greenlee, 1737–1754	147
21	James McCullough, 1748–1758	156
22	Elizabeth Guthrie Brownlee Guthrie, 1755–1829	179
23	Daniel Kent, 1786–1794	184
24	John and Jane Chambers, 1796	196
25	Joseph and Hannah Wright, 1801–1817	200
26	Edward and Mary Toner, 1818	224
27	James and Hannah Crockett, 1822	235

IV ❸

Craftsmen, Laborers, and Servants

28	Benjamin Chandlee, 1705	243
29	John Kennedy, 1753	250
30	Philip McCrory, Ruth McGee, Edward Curry, Rosanna Stewart, Patrick M'Cullen, Ann Dougherty, Thomas Ralph, and Michael Wade, ca. 1735–1774	253
31	John Grimes, John Fagan, John Johnson, 1765	268
32	Francis Burdett Personel, 1773	275
33	James Patton (1), 1783–1789	280
34	Thomas McMahon, William Sotherin, and John Justice, 1789–1793	287
35	James Doyle, 1789	292
36	Stephen Fotterall, 1791	296
37	Charles O'Hagan and Mary Dunn, 1796	300
38	Samuel Brown, 1793–1815	303

V ❹

Merchants, Shopkeepers, and Peddlers

39	Francis Campble, 1737–1742	317
40	Robert Pillson, 1764	323
41	John O'Kelly, 1773	328
42	Thomas Shipboy, Jr., 1774	331
43	James Patton (2), 1789–1839	336
44	Margaret Carey Murphy Burke, 1798	349
45	Mary Cumming, 1814–1815	362

VI ❀

Clergymen and Schoolmasters

- 46 Rev. John Craig, 1734–1769/70 381
- 47 Rev. Samuel Blair, 1744 400
- 48 Bernard M’Kenna, 1811 415

VII ❀

Irish Immigrants in Politics and War

- 49 Rev. James McGregor and John McMurphy, 1720–1730 435
- 50 Dr. Charles Carroll, 1748 452
- 51 Silvester Ferrell, Charles Lewis Reily, Peter Warren Johnson,
and George Croghan, 1745–1764 461
- 52 Samuel Bryan, 1752 476
- 53 Rev. Thomas Barton, 1758 487
- 54 Thomas Burke, ca. 1766–1767 499
- 55 Rev. Francis Alison, 1768 510
- 56 John Morton, 1769 521
- 57 John McDonnell, 1771 530
- 58 James Caldwell, 1774 536
- 59 Matthew Patten, 1774–1776 547
- 60 John Phillips, 1783 559
- 61 Job Johnson, 1784 567
- 62 David Redick and Ædanus Burke, 1787–1788 572
- 63 Daniel McCurtin, 1798 585
- 64 Robert McArthur, 1802 596
- 65 John Nevin, 1804 603
- 66 Thomas Addis Emmet, 1806–1807 608
- 67 William Heazelton, Jr., 1814 619

Epilogue

- 68 John Caldwell, Jr., 1802 631

Appendices

- 1 Text and Language 649
- 2 Irish Migration and Demography, 1659–1831 656
- 3 Additional Documents 678

Sources 687

Index 765

This page intentionally left blank

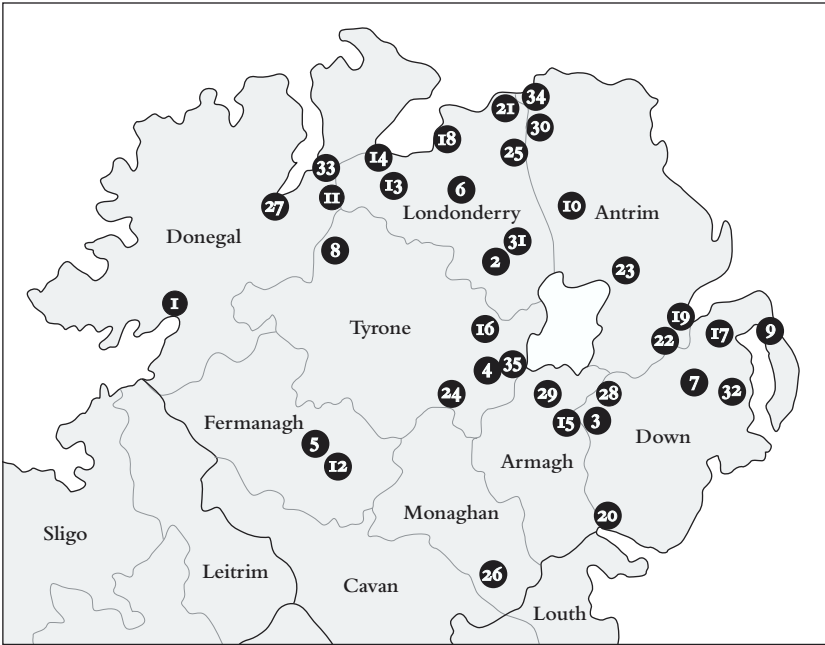
MAPS ❸

Map Key

1. Drummark and Drumgoon, Killymard parish, Co. Donegal (chapter 2, Alexander Crawford).
2. Desertmartin town and parish, Co. Londonderry (chapter 3, David Lindsey).
3. Loughbrickland town, Aghaderg parish, Co. Down (chapter 4, Henry Johnston).
4. Aughintober, Donaghmore parish, Co. Tyrone (chapter 6, Margaret Wright).
5. Lisreagh, Derryvullan parish, Co. Fermanagh (chapter 7, Anon. Poet).
6. Dungiven town and parish, Co. Londonderry (chapter 8, Rev. James MacSparran; chapter 39, Francis Campbell).
7. Ballynahinch town, Magheradrool parish, Co. Down (chapter 10, John Rea).
8. Strabane town, Camus-Morne parish, Co. Tyrone (chapter 11, James Orr; chapter 17, Samuel McCobb).
9. Greyabbey town and parish, Co. Down (chapter 12, John Smilie; chapter 18, Robert Witherspoon).
10. Ballymena town, Kirkinriola and Ballyclug parishes, Co. Antrim (chapter 13, John O'Raw; chapter 60, John Phillips).
11. Drumnashear, Killea parish, Co. Donegal (chapter 15, George Crockett, Jr.; chapter 27, James and Hannah Crockett).
12. Maguires Bridge town, Aghalurcher parish, Co. Fermanagh (chapter 19, James Magraw).
13. Co. Londonderry (chapter 20, Mary Elizabeth McDowell Greenlee; chapter 21, James McCullough; chapter 37, Charles O'Hagan and Mary Dunn).
14. Londonderry city (chapter 22, Elizabeth Guthrie Brownlee Guthrie).
15. Mullaghglass, Ballymore parish, Co. Armagh (chapter 24, John and Jane Chambers).
16. Knockavaddy, Desertcreat parish, Co. Tyrone (chapter 26, Edward and Mary Toner).
17. Comber town and parish, Co. Down (chapter 30, Thomas Ralph).
18. Tamlaght Finlagan parish, Co. Londonderry (chapter 33 and 43, James Patton).
19. Belfast city, Shankill parish, Co. Antrim (chapter 38, Samuel Brown).
20. Newry town and parish, Co. Down (chapter 40, Robert Pillson).
21. Coleraine town, Co. Londonderry (chapter 42, Thomas Shipboy, Jr.).
22. Lisburn town, Blaris parish, Co. Antrim (chapter 45, Mary Cumming).
23. Donegore parish, Co. Antrim (chapter 46, Rev. John Craig).
24. Aughnacloy town, Carneel parish, Co. Tyrone (chapter 48, Bernard M'Kenna).
25. Aghadowey parish, Co. Londonderry (chapter 49, Rev. James McGregor and John McMurphy).
26. Carrickmacross town, Magheross parish, Co. Monaghan (chapter 53, Rev. Thomas Barton).
27. Leck parish, Co. Donegal (chapter 55, Rev. Francis Alison).
28. Moyallon, Tullylish parish, Co. Down (chapter 56, John Morton).
29. Mullahead, Kilmore parish, Co. Armagh (chapter 57, John McDonnell).
30. Ballymoney town and parish, Co. Antrim (chapter 58, James Caldwell; chapter 68, John Caldwell, Jr.).
31. Slaghtybogy, Maghera parish, Co. Londonderry (chapter 61, Job Johnson).
32. Co. Down (chapter 62, David Redick).
33. Carrowreagh, Burt parish, Co. Donegal (chapter 64, Robert McArthur).
34. Kilmoyale, Ballyrashane parish, Co. Antrim (chapter 65, John Nevin).
35. Culnagrew, Killyman parish, Co. Tyrone (chapter 67, William Heazelton, Jr.).

Map Key by Name

- Alison, Rev. Francis (chapter 55): (27) Leck parish, Co. Donegal.
- Anon. poet (chapter 7): (5) Lisreagh, Derryvullan parish, Co. Fermanagh.
- Barton, Rev. Thomas (chapter 53): (26) Carrickmacross town, Magheross parish, Co. Monaghan.
- Brown, Samuel (chapter 38): (19) Belfast city, Shankill parish, Co. Antrim.
- Caldwell, James (chapter 58): (30) Ballymoney town and parish, Co. Antrim.
- Caldwell, John, Jr. (chapter 68): (30) Ballymoney town and parish, Co. Antrim.
- Campble, Francis (chapter 39): (6) Dungiven town and parish, Co. Londonderry.
- Chambers, John and Jane (chapter 24): (15) Mullaghglass, Ballymore parish, Co. Armagh.
- Craig, Rev. John (chapter 46): (46) Donegore parish, Co. Antrim.
- Crawford, Alexander (chapter 2): (1) Drummark and Drumgoon, Killymard parish, Co. Donegal.
- Crockett, George, Jr. (chapter 15): (11) Drumnashear, Killea parish, Co. Donegal.
- Crockett, James and Hannah (chapter 27): (11) Drumnashear, Killea parish, Co. Donegal.
- Cumming, Mary (chapter 45): (22) Lisburn town, Blaris parish, Co. Antrim.
- Dunn, Mary (chapter 37): (13) Co. Londonderry.
- Greenlee, Mary Elizabeth McDowell (chapter 20): (13) Co. Londonderry.
- Guthrie, Elizabeth Guthrie Brownlee (chapter 22): (14) Londonderry city.
- Heazelton, William, Jr. (chapter 67): (35) Culnagrew, Killyman parish, Co. Tyrone.
- Johnson, Job (chapter 61): (31) Slaghtybogy, Maghera parish, Co. Londonderry.
- Johnston, Henry (chapter 4): (3) Loughbrickland town, Aghaderg parish, Co. Down.
- Lindsey, David (chapter 3): (2) Desertmartin town and parish, Co. Londonderry.
- MacSparran, Rev. James (chapter 8): (6) Dungiven town and parish, Co. Londonderry.



Ireland (north)

Magraw, James (chapter 19): (12) Maguires Bridge town, Aghalurcher parish, Co. Fermanagh.

McArthur, Robert (chapter 64): (33) Carrowreagh, Burt parish, Co. Donegal.

McCobb, Samuel (chapter 17): (8) Strabane town, Camus-Morne parish, Co. Tyrone.

McCullough, James (chapter 21): (13) Co. Londonderry.

McDonnell, John (chapter 57): (29) Mullahead, Kilmore parish, Co. Armagh.

McGregor, Rev. James (chapter 49): (25) Aghadowey parish, Co. Londonderry.

McMurphy, John (chapter 49): (25) Aghadowey parish, Co. Londonderry.

M'Kenna, Bernard (chapter 48): (24) Aughnacloy town, Carnteel parish, Co. Tyrone.

Morton, John (chapter 56): (28) Moyallon, Tullylish parish, Co. Down.

Nevin, John (chapter 34): (34) Kilmoyle, Ballyrashane parish, Co. Antrim.

O'Hagan, Charles (chapter 37): (13) Co. Londonderry.

O'Raw, John (chapter 13): (10) Ballymena town, Kirkinriola and Ballyclug parishes, Co. Antrim.

Orr, James (chapter 11): (8) Strabane town, Camus-Morne parish, Co. Tyrone.

Patton, James (chapters 33 and 43): (18) Tamlaght Finlagan parish, Co. Londonderry.

Phillips, John (chapter 60): (10) Ballymena town, Kirkinriola and Ballyclug parishes, Co. Antrim.

Pillson, Robert (chapter 40): (20) Newry town and parish, Co. Down.

Ralph, Thomas (chapter 30): (17) Comber town and parish, Co. Down.

Rea, John (chapter 10): (7) Ballynahinch town, Magheradrool parish, Co. Down.

Redick, David (chapter 62): (32) Co. Down.

Shipboy, Thomas, Jr. (chapter 42): (21) Coleraine town, Co. Londonderry.

Smilie, John (chapter 12): (9) Greyabbey town and parish, Co. Down.

Toner, Edward and Mary (chapter 26): (16) Knockavaddy, Desertcreat parish, Co. Tyrone.

Witherspoon, Robert (chapter 18): (9) Greyabbey town and parish, Co. Down.

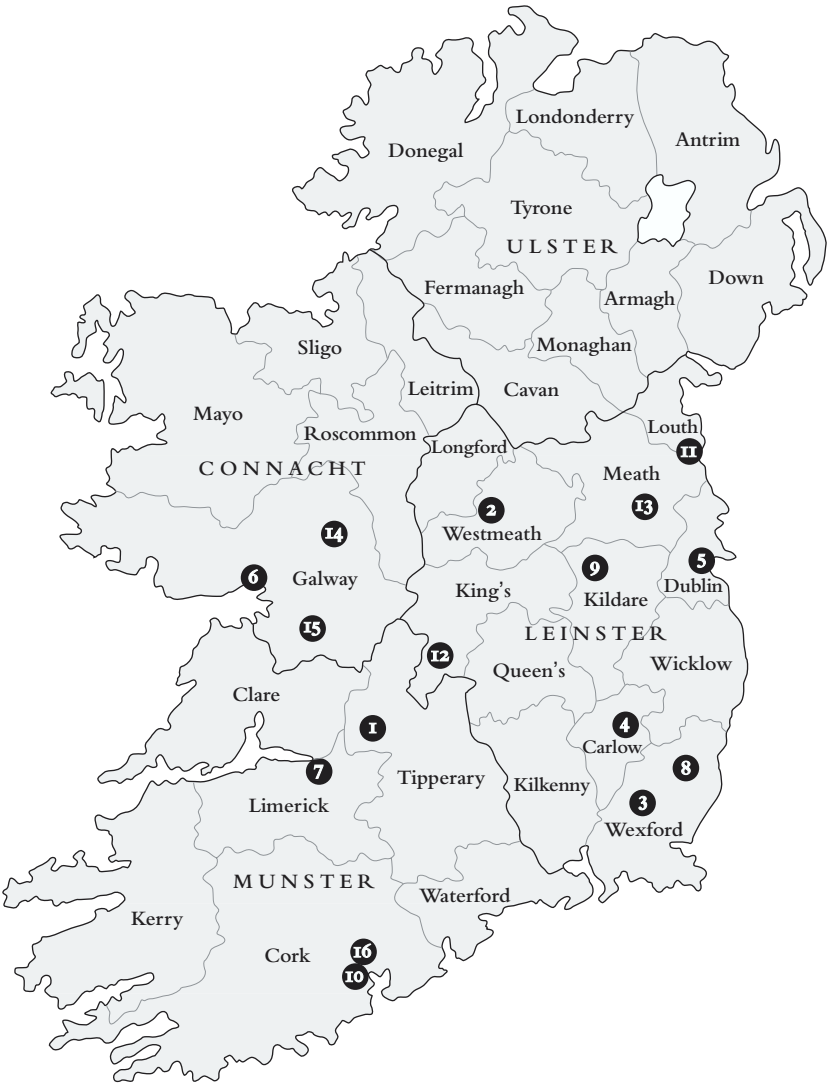
Wright, Margaret (chapter 6): (4) Aughintober, Donaghmore parish, Co. Tyrone.

Map Key

1. Ballycane, Killoscully parish, Co. Tipperary (chapter 1, James Wansbrough).
2. Ballinlugh, Rathconrath parish, Co. Westmeath (chapter 1, James Wansbrough).
3. The Leap, Rosdroit parish, Co. Wexford (chapter 5, Walter Corish Devereux).
4. Ballintrane, Fennagh parish, Co. Carlow (chapter 9, Robert Parke).
5. Dublin city (chapter 14, Thomas Hinds; chapter 30, Michael Wade; chapter 31, John Fagan and John Johnson; chapter 34, Thomas McMahon; chapter 35, James Doyle; chapter 36, Stephen Fotherall; chapter 44, Margaret Carey Murphy Burke; chapter 52, Samuel [and George] Bryan; chapter 66, Thomas Addis Emmet).
6. Galway city (chapter 16, John Blake).
7. Limerick city (chapter 23, Daniel Kent).
8. Ballinclair, Liskinfere parish, Co. Wexford (chapter 25, Joseph and Hannah Wright).
9. Kilmore, Carbury parish, Co. Kildare (chapter 28, Benjamin Chandlee).
10. Cork city (chapter 34, John Justice; chapter 57, John McDonnell).
11. Drogheda city, Co. Louth (chapter 40, Robert Pillson).
12. Clonlisk and Ballybritt baronies, King's Co. (chapter 50, Dr. Charles Carroll).
13. Smithstown, Killeen parish, Co. Meath (chapter 51, Silvester Ferrall et al. [William Johnson]).
14. Tyaquin barony, Co. Galway (chapter 54, Thomas Burke).
15. Co. Galway (chapter 62, Ædanus Burke).
16. Carrignavar, Dunbolloge parish, Co. Cork (chapter 63, Daniel McCurtin).

Map Key by Name

- Blake, John (chapter 16): (6) Galway city.
- Bryan, George (chapter 52): (5) Dublin city.
- Bryan, Samuel (chapter 52): (5) Dublin city.
- Burke, Ædanus (chapter 62): (15) Co. Galway.
- Burke, Margaret Carey Murphy (chapter 44): (5) Dublin city.
- Burke, Thomas (chapter 54): (14) Tyaquin barony, Co. Galway.
- Carroll, Dr. Charles (chapter 50): (12) Clonlisk and Ballybritt baronies, King's Co.
- Chandlee, Benjamin (chapter 28): (9) Kilmore, Carbury parish, Co. Kildare.
- Devereux, Walter Corish (chapter 5): (3) The Leap, Rosdroit parish, Co. Wexford.
- Doyle, James (chapter 36): (5) Dublin city.
- Emmet, Thomas Addis (chapter 66): (5) Dublin city.
- Fagan, John (chapter 31): (5) Dublin city.
- Farrell, Silvester (chapter 51): (13) Smithstown, Killeen parish, Co. Meath.
- Fotherall, Stephen (chapter 36): (5) Dublin city.
- Hinds, Thomas (chapter 14): (5) Dublin city.
- Johnson, John (chapter 31): (5) Dublin city.
- Johnson, Peter Warren (chapter 13): (13) Smithstown, Killeen parish, Co. Meath.
- Johnson, William (chapter 13): (13) Smithstown, Killeen parish, Co. Meath.
- Justice, John (chapter 34): (10) Cork city.
- Kent, Daniel (chapter 23): (7) Limerick city.
- McCurtin, Daniel (chapter 63): (16) Carrignavar, Dunbolloge parish, Co. Cork.
- McDonnell, John (chapter 57): (10) Cork city.
- McMahon, Thomas (chapter 34): (5) Dublin city.
- Parke, Robert (chapter 9): (4) Ballintrane, Fennagh parish, Co. Carlow.
- Pillson, Robert (chapter 40): (11) Drogheda city, Co. Louth.
- Reily, Charles Lewis (chapter 51): (13) Smithstown, Killeen parish, Co. Meath.
- Wade, Michael (chapter 30): (5) Dublin city.
- Wansbrough, James (chapter 1): (1) Ballycane, Killoscully parish, Co. Tipperary; and (2) Ballinlugh, Rathconrath parish, Co. Westmeath.
- Wright, Joseph and Hannah (chapter 25): (8) Ballinclair, Liskinfere parish, Co. Wexford.



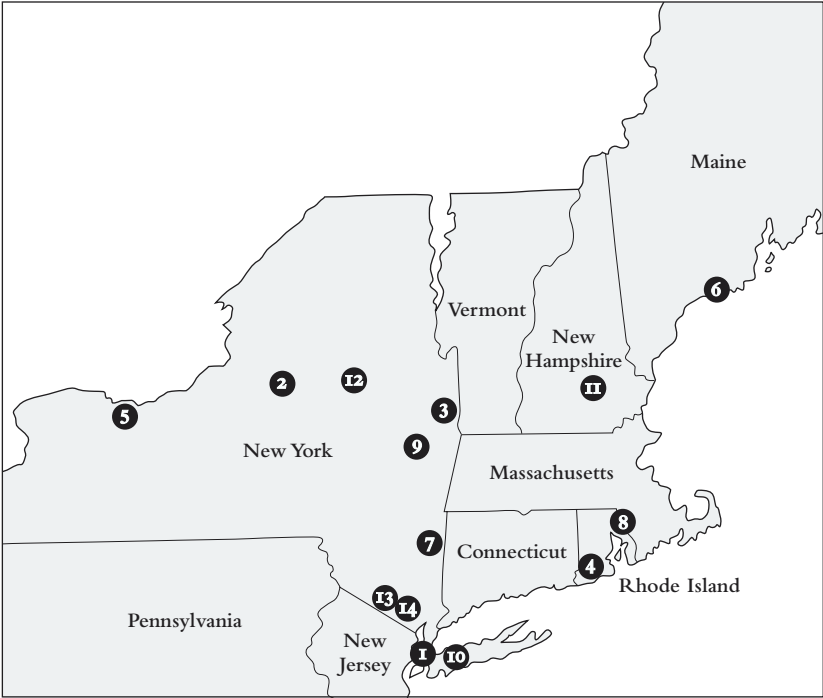
Ireland (south)

Map Key

1. New York City (chapter 5, Walter [John] Corish Devereux [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 32, Francis Burdett Personel [stage 2 of 2]; chapter 40, Robert Pillson; chapter 48, Bernard M'Kenna [stage 2 of 2]; chapter 66, Thomas Addis Emmett; and chapter 68, John Caldwell, Jr. [stage 1 of 2]).
2. Utica, New York (chapter 5, Walter [John] Corish Devereux [stage 2 of 2]).
3. Salem, New York (chapter 6, Margaret Wright [Alexander McNish]).
4. Narragansett, Rhode Island (chapter 8, Rev. James MacSparran).
5. Monroe Co., New York (chapter 4, Henry [Moses] Johnston [stage 2 of 2]).
6. Boothbay, Maine (chapter 17, Samuel McCobb).
7. Fishkill, New York (chapter 29, John Kennedy).
8. Warren, Rhode Island (chapter 41, John O'Kelly).
9. Albany, New York (chapter 42, Thomas Shipboy, Jr.).
10. Nassau Co., New York (chapter 48, Bernard M'Kenna [stage 1 of 2]).
11. Londonderry and Bedford, New Hampshire (chapter 49, Rev. James McGregor and John McMurphy; chapter 59, Matthew Patten).
12. Johnstown, New York (chapter 15, Silvester Ferrall et al. [William Johnson]).
13. Goshen, New York (chapter 15, Silvester Ferrall et al. [Charles Lewis Reily]).
14. Newburgh, New York (chapter 68, John Caldwell, Jr. [stage 2 of 2]).

Map Key by Name

- Caldwell, John, Jr. (chapter 68): (1) New York City and (13) Newburgh, New York.
- Devereux, Walter [John] Corish (chapter 5): (1) New York City and (2) Utica, New York.
- Emmet, Thomas Addis (chapter 66): (1) New York City.
- Johnson, Moses (chapter 4, Henry Johnson): Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania, and (5) Monroe Co., New York.
- Johnson, William (chapter 51, Silvester Farrell et al.): (11) Johnstown, New York.
- Kennedy, John (chapter 29): (6) Fishkill, New York.
- McCobb, Samuel (chapter 17): (5) Boothbay, Maine.
- McGregor, Rev. James (chapter 49): (10) Londonderry, New Hampshire.
- M'Kenna, Bernard (chapter 48): (9) Nassau Co. and (1) New York City, New York.
- McMurphy, John (chapter 49): (10) Londonderry, New Hampshire.
- McNish, Alexander (chapter 6, Margaret Wright): (3) Salem, New York.
- MacSparran, Rev. James (chapter 8): (4) Narragansett, Rhode Island.
- O'Kelly, John (chapter 41): (7) Warren, Rhode Island.
- Patten, Matthew (chapter 59): (10) Bedford, New Hampshire.
- Personel, Francis Burdett (chapter 32): Baltimore Co., Maryland, and (1) New York City.
- Pillson, Robert (chapter 40): (1) New York City.
- Reily, Charles Lewis (chapter 15, Silvester Ferrall et al.): (12) Goshen, New York.
- Shipboy, Thomas, Jr. (chapter 42): (8) Albany, New York.
- Wright, Margaret (chapter 6): (3) Salem, New York.



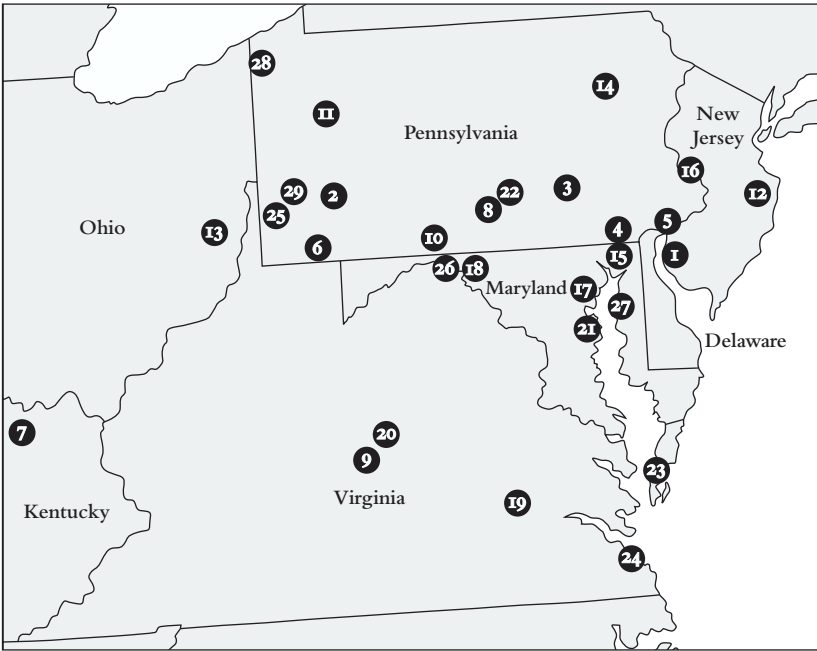
New England and New York

Map Key

1. Cohansey, New Jersey (chapter 1, James Wansbrough [Ann and Thomas Shepherd]).
2. Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 3, David Lindsey; chapter 22, Elizabeth Guthrie Brownlee Guthrie [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 26, Edward and Mary Toner; chapter 30, Thomas Ralph [stage 2 of 2]).
3. Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 4, Henry [Moses] Johnston [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 12, John Smilie [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 53, Rev. Thomas Barton [stage 2 of 2]; chapter 62, David Redick [stage 1 of 2]).
4. Chester Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 9, Robert Parke; chapter 23, Daniel Kent; chapter 30, Philip McRory et al.; chapter 47, Rev. Samuel Blair; chapter 55, Rev. Francis Alison [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 61, Job Johnson [stage 1 of 2]).
5. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (chapter 11, James Orr [John Dunlap]; chapter 14, Thomas Hinds [and son: stage 1 of 2]; chapter 28, Benjamin Chandlee [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 34, Thomas McMahon, William Sotherin, and John Justice; chapter 35, James Doyle; chapter 36, Stephen Fotherall; chapter 37, Charles O'Hagan and Mary Dunn; chapter 38, Samuel Brown; chapter 44, Margaret Carey Murphy Burke [stage 1 of 3]; chapter 52, Samuel [George] Bryan; chapter 55, Rev. Francis Alison [stage 2 of 2]; chapter 56, John Morton; chapter 58, James Caldwell; chapter 61, Job Johnson [stage 2 of 2]).
6. Fayette Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 12, John Smilie [stage 2 of 2]).
7. Paris, Bourbon Co., Kentucky (chapter 14, Thomas Hinds [son: stage 2 of 2]).
8. Shippensburg, Pennsylvania (chapter 19, James Magraw; chapter 39, Francis Campble).
9. Rockbridge Co., Virginia (chapter 20, Mary Elizabeth McDowell Greenlee).
10. Conococheague settlement, Pennsylvania (chapter 21, James McCullough; chapter 33, James Patton (1)).
11. Clarion Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 22, Elizabeth Guthrie Brownlee Guthrie [stage 2 of 2]).
12. Monmouth Co., New Jersey (chapter 24, John and Jane Chambers).
13. Belmont Co., Ohio (chapter 25, Joseph and Hannah Wright [stage 2 of 2]).
14. Luzerne Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 27, James and Hannah Crockett).
15. Cecil Co., Maryland (chapter 28, Benjamin Chandlee [stage 2 of 2]).
16. Burlington, New Jersey (chapter 31, John Grimes, John Fagan, and John Johnson).
17. Baltimore (city and county), Maryland (chapter 25, Joseph and Hannah Wright [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 32, Francis Burdett Personel [stage 1 of 2]; chapter 44, Margaret Carey Murphy Burke [stage 3 of 3]).
18. Emmitsburg, Maryland (chapter 44, Margaret Carey Murphy Burke [stage 2 of 3]).
19. Petersburg, Virginia (chapter 45, Mary Cumming).
20. Staunton, Virginia (chapter 46, Rev. John Craig).
21. Annapolis, Maryland (chapter 50, Dr. Charles Carroll).
22. Carlisle, Pennsylvania (chapter 53, Rev. Thomas Barton [stage 1 of 2]).
23. Northampton Co., Virginia (chapter 54, Thomas Burke [stage 1 of 3]).
24. Norfolk, Virginia (chapter 54, Thomas Burke [stage 2 of 3]).
25. Washington Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 62, David Redick [stage 2 of 2]).
26. Hagerstown, Maryland (chapter 63, Daniel McCurtin [stage 1 of 2]).
27. Chestertown, Maryland (chapter 63, Daniel McCurtin [stage 2 of 2]).
28. Crawford Co., Pennsylvania (chapter 64, Robert McArthur).
29. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (chapter 67, William Heazelton, Jr.).

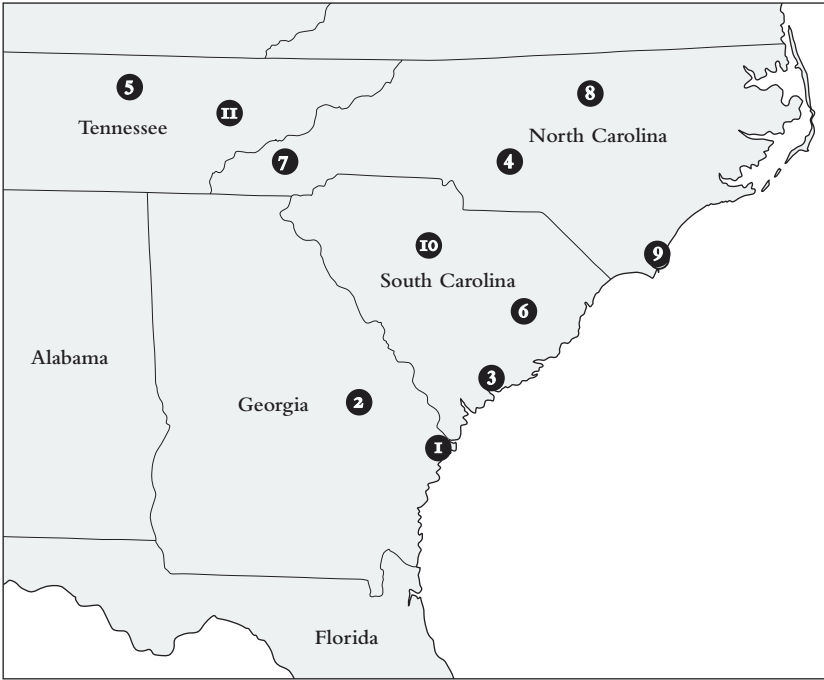
Map Key by Name

- Alison, Rev. Francis (chapter 55): (4) Chester Co. and (5) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Barton, Rev. Thomas (chapter 53): (22) Carlisle and (3) Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- Blair, Rev. Samuel (chapter 47): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Brown, Samuel (chapter 38): (5) Philadelphia.
- Bryan, George (chapter 52, Samuel Bryan): (5) Philadelphia.
- Burke, Margaret Carey Murphy (chapter 44): (5) Philadelphia, (18) Emmitsburg, and (17) Baltimore, Maryland.
- Burke, Thomas (chapter 54): (23) Northampton Co. and (24) Norfolk, Virginia and Hillsborough, North Carolina.
- Caldwell, James (chapter 58): (5) Philadelphia.
- Campble, Francis (chapter 39): (8) Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.
- Carroll, Dr. Charles (chapter 50): (21) Annapolis, Maryland.
- Chambers, John and Jane (chapter 24): (12) Monmouth Co., New Jersey.
- Chandlee, Benjamin (chapter 28): (5) Philadelphia and (15) Cecil Co., Maryland.
- Craig, Rev. John (chapter 46): (20) Staunton, Virginia.
- Crockett, James and Hannah (chapter 27): (14) Luzerne Co., Pennsylvania.
- Cumming, Mary (chapter 45): (19) Petersburg, Virginia.
- Curry, Edward (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Dougherty, Ann (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Doyle, James (chapter 35): (5) Philadelphia.
- Dunlap, John (chapter 11, James Orr): (5) Philadelphia.
- Dunn, Mary (chapter 37): (5) Philadelphia.
- Fagan, John (chapter 31): (16) Burlington, New Jersey.
- Fotherall, Stephen (chapter 36): (5) Philadelphia.
- Greenlee, Mary Elizabeth McDowell (chapter 20): (9) Rockbridge Co., Virginia.
- Grimes, John (chapter 31): (16) Burlington, New Jersey.
- Guthrie, Elizabeth Brownlee Guthrie (chapter 22): (2) Westmoreland Co. and (11) Clarion Co., Pennsylvania.



Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the Upper South

- Heazelton, William, Jr. (chapter 67): (29) Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Hinds, Thomas (chapter 14): (5) Philadelphia and (7) Paris, Bourbon Co., Kentucky.
- Johnson, Job (chapter 61): (4) Chester Co. and (5) Philadelphia.
- Johnson, John (chapter 31): (16) Burlington, New Jersey.
- Johnston, Moses (chapter 4, Henry Johnston): (3) Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania, and Monroe Co., New York.
- Justice, John (chapter 34): (5) Philadelphia.
- Kent, Daniel (chapter 23): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Lindsey, David (chapter 3): (2) Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania.
- McArthur, Robert (chapter 64): (28) Crawford Co., Pennsylvania.
- McCullough, James (chapter 21): (10) Conococheague settlement, Pennsylvania.
- McCurtin, Daniel (chapter 63): (26) Hagerstown and (27) Chestertown, Maryland.
- McGee, Ruth (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- McMahon, Thomas (chapter 34): (5) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- McRory, Philip (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- M'Cullen, Patrick (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Magraw, James (chapter 19): (8) Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.
- Morton, John (chapter 56): (5) Philadelphia.
- O'Hagan, Charles (chapter 37): (6) Philadelphia.
- Orr, James [John Dunlap] (chapter 11): (5) Philadelphia.
- Parke, Robert (chapter 9): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Patton, James (chapter 33): (10) Conococheague settlement, Pennsylvania, and (chapter 43) Asheville, North Carolina.
- Personel, Francis Burdett (chapter 32): (17) Baltimore Co., Maryland, and New York City.
- Ralph, Thomas (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co. and (2) Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania.
- Redick, David (chapter 62): (3) Lancaster Co. and (25) Washington Co., Pennsylvania.
- Shepherd, Ann and Thomas (chapter 1): (1) Cohansey, New Jersey.
- Smilie, John (chapter 12): (3) Lancaster Co. and (6) Fayette Co., Pennsylvania.
- Sotherin, William (chapter 34): (5) Philadelphia.
- Stuart, Rosanna (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Toner, Edward and Mary (chapter 26): (2) Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania.
- Wade, Michael (chapter 30): (4) Chester Co., Pennsylvania.
- Wansbrough, James (chapter 1): (1) Cohansey, New Jersey [Ann and Thomas Shepherd].
- Wright, Joseph and Hannah (chapter 25): (17) Baltimore, Maryland, and (13) Belmont Co., Ohio.



Lower South

Map Key

1. Savannah, Georgia (chapter 10, John Rea).
2. Queensborough, Georgia (chapter 10, John Rea [his colonists]).
3. Charleston, South Carolina (chapter 13, John O’Raw; and 62, Ædanus Burke).
4. Cabarrus Co., North Carolina (chapter 15, George Crockett, Jr. [stage 1 of 2]).
5. Gallatin, Tennessee (chapter 15, George Crockett, Jr. [stage 2 of 2]).
6. Williamsburg, South Carolina (chapter 18, Robert Witherspoon).
7. Asheville, North Carolina (chapter 43, James Patton (2)).
8. Hillsborough, North Carolina (chapter 54, Thomas Burke [stage 3 of 3]).
9. Wilmington, North Carolina (chapter 57, John McDonnell).
10. Winnsboro, South Carolina (chapter 60, John Phillips).
11. Knoxville, Tennessee (chapter 65, John Nevin).

Map Key by Name

Burke, Ædanus (chapter 62): (3) Charleston, South Carolina.
Burke, Thomas (chapter 54): Northampton Co. and Norfolk, Virginia and (8) Hillsborough, North Carolina.
Crockett, George, Jr. (chapter 15): (4) Cabarrus Co., North Carolina, and (5) Gallatin, Tennessee.
McDonnell, John (chapter 57): (9) Wilmington, North Carolina.
Nevin, John (chapter 65): (11) Knoxville, Tennessee.
O’Raw, John (chapter 13): (3) Charleston, South Carolina.
Patton, James (chapter 43): Conococheague settlement, Pennsylvania, and (7) Asheville, North Carolina.
Phillips, John (chapter 60): (10) Winnsboro, South Carolina.
Rea, John (chapter 10): (1) Savannah, Georgia; and (2) Queensborough, Georgia.
Witherspoon, Robert (chapter 18): (6) Williamsburg, South Carolina.



West Indies

Map Key

1. Barbados (chapter 16, John Blake).
2. Montserrat (chapter 16, John Blake).

Map Key by Name

Blake, John (chapter 16): (1)
Barbados and (2) Montserrat.

This page intentionally left blank

Irish Immigrants

IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

The raisons those unhappye people give for their goeing [to America], as are various, as their Circomstances, y^e Richer Sort Say, that if they Stay in Irland, their Children will be Slaves, & that it is better for them to make money of their Leases while they are worth Somthing to inable them to transport them Selves and familys to America, a plecth where they are Sure of better tratement, and although they shold meet with Some hardships, they are very well asured their posterety will be for ever happy. The poorer Sort are deluded by y^e acct^s they have, of y^e great weages is given there, to Labouring men, . . .

[For the emigrants write home that in America] the rents are Soe Small they can hardly be caled Such, noe Tythes nor Tythmongers, noe County cess no parish taxes, noe Serviters money, E[a]ster groats, nor Bailifs corn, these & y^e like expressions, I have red in Several of their letters, at y^e Same time Setting forth that all men are there upon a levell & that it is a good poor mans Country, where there are no opressions of any kind whatsoever. . . .

[Accordingly, here in Ulster t]he Presbiterian Ministers have taken their Shear of pains to Seduce their poor Ignorant heerers, by, Bellowing from their pulpets against y^e Landlords and y^e Clargey, calling them Rackers of Rents, and Servers of Tythes, with other reflections of this nature, which they know is pleasing to their people, at y^e Same time telling them, that God had appoynted a Country for them to Dwell in . . . and desires them to depart thence, where they will be freed from the Bondage of Egipt and goe to y^e land of Cannan.

Rev. Ezekiel Stewart, Portstewart, County Londonderry,
to Michael Ward and the Lords Justices of Ireland

25 March 1729

INTRODUCTION ❀

In 1734 Robert Witherspoon, a child whose Presbyterian grandparents had removed from Scotland to Ulster, Ireland's northern province, scarcely thirty years earlier, migrated with his large extended family to South Carolina, where his parents and uncles prospered as indigo planters and slaveowners. In the same year, John Craig, a Presbyterian clergyman whose ancestors had been settled in Ulster for over one hundred years, crossed the ocean alone and settled initially in Pennsylvania but lived most of his life in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, ministering to frontier settlers such as Mary Greenlee, whose clan had arrived from northern Ireland a few years before. During her own sojourn in Pennsylvania, Greenlee may have encountered in Chester County the unfortunate Edward Curry, an Irish Catholic indentured servant, or Robert Parke, the brother of Curry's abusive master and a Quaker from southern Ireland. Had Craig been disposed to engage in religious controversies, he could have traveled to Rhode Island and debated his fellow Ulsterman, James MacSparran, a portly and pompous Anglican minister. And MacSparran, always eager for his church's advancement, surely was pleased in 1738 to learn that in Maryland the wealthy Dr. Charles Carroll, scion of one of southern Ireland's most "ancient" Gaelic families, had forsworn his Catholicism and conformed to the Protestant faith.

Robert Witherspoon lived through the American Revolution, and Mary Greenlee survived even longer, through the turbulent 1790s and almost to the War of 1812, and died during James Madison's first administration. Both witnessed the later and larger waves of immigrants from Ireland that followed on the heels of their own generations. In the 1760s and 1770s Ulster Presbyterians such as Job Johnson and Elizabeth Guthrie continued to disembark on the banks of the Delaware, while to the south others such as John Phillips landed their families in Charleston or Savannah. Johnson became a country schoolmaster near Philadelphia; Guthrie a farmer's wife on the Pennsylvania frontier; Phillips a small planter in the Carolina backcountry. During the Revolution, Johnson was an officer in the Continental Army and fought at the siege of Yorktown; Guthrie saw her husband and infant son slaughtered in frontier warfare; while Phillips commanded a Tory militia company and fled to Ireland at the war's end.

After the Revolution, immigration from Ireland surged once more, until interrupted from 1793 by maritime wars between Britain, France, and, in 1812, the United States. In the 1780s Job Johnson died of his wartime wounds in Philadelphia, but he lived to witness the landings at the city docks of more Ulster Presbyterians, such as the laborer James Patton, as well as Catholics like the stocking-weaver Thomas McMahon from Dublin, and other Protestants such as the Methodist Daniel Kent, an indentured servant from Limerick. In the 1790s and early 1800s Patton, now a backcountry trader, was joined on the western frontier by newcomers such as the Ulsterman George Crockett, a Presbyterian merchant in Tennessee; Edward Toner, a Catholic tenant farmer near Pittsburgh; and Hannah Wright, a Quaker townbuilder's wife in frontier Ohio. Meanwhile, Thomas McMahon marketed his stockings to recent arrivals who settled in his own Philadelphia and other eastern seaports: to Samuel Brown, an Anglican glazier from Belfast, and Margaret Carey Murphy, a Catholic innkeeper's widow from Dublin. And from the 1780s ordinary immigrants like Patton and Brown were accompanied at first by a trickle, later a small flood, of political exiles who had agitated or even fought for Irish freedom—by Catholics such as the printer Mathew Carey, Margaret Murphy's brother, and by Protestants like John Nevin, a rebel commander now a fugitive from the shambles of 1798. Ironically, the ships in which they fled often carried other immigrants—such as the Methodist William Heazelton from mid-Ulster—who, loyal to the Crown, had been the exiles' bitterest opponents in Ireland and would remain so in the New World.

Witherspoon, Craig, Greenlee, and the other immigrants whose stories are included in this book were unique in that a few of the letters, memoirs, petitions, or other testaments they penned or dictated have survived the centuries since they were written. In other respects, however, these men and women were broadly representative of the approximately four hundred thousand emigrants from Ireland who settled in North America between the late 1600s and the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815. Perhaps two-thirds of these were Presbyterians, with the rest more or less evenly divided between Catholics and other Protestants; most of the latter were members of the Church of Ireland, with smaller numbers of Quakers, Methodists, and Baptists. The overwhelming majority of Presbyterians, along with perhaps half the Catholics and many of the Anglicans and other Protestants, emigrated from Ulster; most of the remainder probably came from the counties bordering Ulster, in north Leinster and north Connacht, or from the hinterlands of the major southern Irish ports, such as Dublin and Cork. Finally, perhaps two-thirds of these early immigrants were males, and before the American Revolution a large number emigrated as indentured servants.

Taken together these migrations are admittedly small in comparison with the millions who left Ireland in the nineteenth century, but they were enormous in proportion to the contemporary populations of Ulster, Ireland, and North America. In the 1750s Ulster's Presbyterian community probably numbered less than half a million; all of Ireland had merely about 2.4 million inhabitants; and no more than 1.5 million whites and blacks lived in Britain's colonies on the North American mainland. As late as 1790 Ireland's population was only about four million,¹ and the new United States had merely 3.23 million white

1. Contemporary estimates of Ireland's population ca. 1790 ranged between three and four million; see K. H. Connell, *The Population of Ireland, 1750–1845* (Oxford, 1950), 4–5.

inhabitants. Consequently, early Irish migrations had dramatic social and even political consequences in Ireland and North America alike. In Ireland, for instance, mass departures by Ulster Presbyterians and southern Irish Anglicans both reduced the size and, in northern Ireland, altered the ethnoreligious configuration of the seventeenth-century Protestant plantations, while early Catholic emigration created the first transatlantic linkages that, in the early and mid-1800s, would draw millions of Catholics to the New World. On the other side of the ocean, the early Irish migrants and their offspring dominated frontier settlement, became a significant presence in many seaports and inland towns, and played major—in some areas predominant—roles in the political tumults, economic developments, social conflicts, and religious revivals that created and shaped the new American nation.

Despite their secular ambitions and material accomplishments, many of the early emigrants—or their descendants—claimed they had left Ireland primarily for religious and political reasons. Such explanations for migration were especially common among Ulster Presbyterians, whose clergymen—as the Church of Ireland minister and magistrate Ezekiel Stewart critically observed—“Bellow[ed] from their pulpits” that “God had appoynted a Country for them to Dwell in,” where they would be free from “the Bondage of Egipt and goe to y^e land of Cannan.”² Stewart’s Biblical reference seemed an appropriate title for this book, because it illustrates how religious and political concerns were indeed inseparable from economic motives among many, perhaps most, early Irish emigrants. Moreover, this popular scriptural analogy had more than pious implications. After all, the Old Testament Jews had not settled Canaan peacefully; rather, they had conquered its inhabitants and seized their territory—a fate that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries befell Ireland’s Catholics and North America’s natives alike. It was no wonder, therefore, that in the aftermath of Irish Catholics’ 1641 Rebellion against British expropriation, Daniel Harcourt, a bishop of the Church of Ireland, had lamented “how dearly the Israelites”—that is, Britain’s Protestant colonists in Ireland—had “paid for their cruel mercy in not extirpating the idolatrous Canaanites.”³

Together, Stewart’s scriptural reference and Harcourt’s sanguinary analogy suggest that Ireland and North America shared histories that were similar and linked not only by transatlantic migration. Admittedly, however, it was the differences between the two countries that most impressed contemporary observers. For example, the bloodshed and epidemics that accompanied England’s conquests of Ireland and the New World did not “extirpate” the island’s “natives” as they did nearly all the Indians along America’s eastern seaboard. Rather, Catholics remained a large majority of the inhabitants in most of Ireland and a substantial minority even in those parts of Ulster where the English and Scottish plantations were most successful. As a result, and for reasons of security as well as greed, in Ireland Protestant legislators excluded the great mass of the island’s inhabitants from politics and government, proscribed their church and clergy, and restricted Catholics’ rights to purchase or inherit land and to engage in certain occupations. In British North America,

2. Rev. Ezekiel Stewart, Poststewart, County Londonderry, to Michael Ward and the Lords Justices of Ireland, 25 March 1729 (D.2092/1/3/141, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast). 3. Cited in T. Claydon and I. McBride, “The Trials of the Chosen Peoples: Recent Interpretations of Protestantism and National Identity in Britain and Ireland,” in Claydon and McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850* (Cambridge, England, 1998), 23.

by contrast, Catholics (outside formerly French Quebec) composed only a tiny minority of the population, and although they suffered religious and political disabilities, there were few restrictions on their economic activities.

Most important, although in the 1600s British migrations to Ireland had rivaled in size those to the New World, in the early 1700s the former declined sharply, and during the eighteenth century Ireland itself became a fountain of emigrants to North America. The New World's economic abundance and relative social equality—its cheap, purchasable acres, good wages, and plentiful food—contrasted dramatically with conditions in Ireland, where farmers and rural craftsmen struggled under the burdens of rents and tithes, while the opulence of the wealthiest Protestant landlords, a few hundred of whom owned most of the island, contrasted harshly with the dire poverty endured by the masses of rural peasants and urban slum-dwellers alike. In an era when the overwhelming majority of both countries' inhabitants engaged in agriculture, perhaps the most fundamental difference was in the ratios between population and available land. As late as 1790 the former thirteen colonies had fewer than four million whites and blacks living on 240,000 square miles of territory, with another 580,000 square miles, between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, yet to settle. By contrast, contemporary Ireland had roughly the same number of people jostling for space on an island of merely 32,000 square miles—about the same size as New Jersey.

Yet there *were* clear similarities between the two “Canaans.” Both were colonies the conquests and settlements of which had involved the military and political subjugation of the natives and the expropriation of their lands. In addition, whatever the legal formalities—their varying degrees of self-government, or the fact that after 1707 the empire was technically “British”—Ireland and North America were essentially *English* colonies. Mercantile regulations devised in London structured Irish and North American economic developments alike, and although the Navigation Acts were perhaps less important or injurious than contemporaries believed, their fundamental purpose was to promote English commercial and manufacturing interests. Furthermore, in both Ireland and America political power and the most lucrative economic opportunities were generally reserved to a political and social élite whose members were of English birth or descent; in Ireland these were invariably—and in North America, outside New England and Pennsylvania, they were usually—communicants of the Anglican church “by law established.” In addition, although Ulster Presbyterians' legal disabilities were immeasurably less in North America than they had been in Ireland, often they still felt like second-class citizens overseas—even in colonies, such as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, that were governed by other non-Anglicans. Finally, all the American colonial assemblies, in emulation of the Irish and British parliaments, passed legislation that denied Catholics political rights, and only Pennsylvania allowed them to worship without penalties or restrictions.

Ironically, during the course of the eighteenth century Ireland and North America in many respects grew closer together.⁴ From the late 1600s, and especially after the 1730s,

4. Except, of course, for the increasing prevalence of African slavery in the southern American colonies.

Although Irish (like American) agitators frequently compared their peoples' political status vis-à-vis England to “slavery” or “bondage,” nothing comparable to the plight of American slaves ever afflicted Ireland's (or North America's) white inhabitants, with the notable exception of the Irish political prisoners and “vagabonds” who

the British empire's rapid economic growth created a dynamic, transatlantic market for goods and labor in which both the Irish and the American colonists participated and prospered in varying degrees. Indeed, some historians argue that the expansion of imperial trade and communications during the 1700s resulted in an "Anglicization" of both Irish and North American societies and cultures. To be sure, during the eighteenth century Britain's economic and cultural influence on Ireland, as on North America, increased enormously—as did Irish trade with both the British metropolis and its overseas colonies. However, there were parallel developments, in Ireland and America alike, that might be termed "Hibernicization."

Irish society in the eighteenth century was rigidly stratified, numerically dominated by a mass of impoverished and legally proscribed Catholic peasants, and perhaps therefore unusually vulnerable to economic crises. As a result, Irish economic growth was fragile and uneven, and both the concomitants of growth—such as rising rents and food prices—and its frequent interruptions, as during credit shortages or depressions in Ulster's linen industry, stimulated unprecedented Irish emigration to the New World.

Indeed, between the late 1600s and 1815 the North American mainland witnessed the arrival of many more people from Ireland than from Great Britain itself—at least 150,000 from Ulster and another 50,000 from southern Ireland prior to the American Revolution, and perhaps as many again between the end of that conflict and 1815. In the 1600s the white inhabitants of the North American colonies had been overwhelmingly English, but the eighteenth-century influx from Ireland (as also from Germany and Scotland) altered significantly the ethnoreligious composition of the white population of what became the United States. By 1790 the Irish-born and their descendants constituted between an eighth (New York) and a fourth (Pennsylvania) of the white inhabitants of the Middle Atlantic states, from a sixth (Maryland and Virginia) to more than a fourth (South Carolina and Georgia) of those in the South, between a fourth to a third in Kentucky and Tennessee, and a substantial minority even in northern New England.⁵

Increasingly there were also political parallels and linkages between Ireland and North America. During the 1700s many of Ireland's Protestants increasingly resented what they regarded as the English (after 1707 the British) government's baleful restrictions on Irish economic development and their own pretensions to self-rule. The result was the growth of what some scholars have dubbed "colonial nationalism": an emotional and political association with "Ireland" and at least a tentative willingness to embrace an "Irish" identity that transcended, in varying degrees, the traditional divisions among Anglicans, Dissenters, and even Catholics. Among Protestant liberals these impulses resulted in the constitutional agitation of the late 1770s and early 1780s. Among Protestant and Catholic radicals, inspired by the American and the French revolutions, they culminated in the United Irishmen's Rebellion of 1798. It may not be coincidental that the areas of Ireland most prone to political upheaval were also those that had experienced, and continued to

were forcibly transported in the 1600s to the West Indies and the Chesapeake by the Stuart and Cromwellian régimes. Otherwise, the presence of slavery in America surely elevated the legal and probably the social status of even the poorest Irish immigrants. 5. On scholars' conflicting assessments of the numbers of early Irish emigrants to North America, see appendix 2.

witness, the greatest outflows of Protestant emigrants to the New World. Not only were the people in those regions most exposed to American influences, but they may also have felt—as did Irish Catholics a century later—that only major political changes could alleviate the economic conditions that obliged or encouraged mass migration.

Meanwhile in North America, similar English influences and colonial resentments produced the agitations that led eventually to revolution and independence. It would be an exaggeration to allege—as did some British and tory observers—that the American Revolution, even in the Middle Colonies, was really an “Irish” or “Scotch-Irish” uprising. Nevertheless there was a distinctively and, in many areas, a prominently “Irish” component in the American rebellion—as there was as well in the succeeding political struggles between Federalists and anti-Federalists over ratification of the U.S. Constitution and later between the Federalist and Republican parties over the very meanings of the Revolution and the Constitution. The revolutionary mixture of late seventeenth-century “commonwealth” and eighteenth-century “liberal” and “radical” ideals informed both Irish and American political agitators and provided opportunities whereby Presbyterians and even Catholics could claim full membership in the Irish and American polities. Indeed, given their histories, it is arguable that eighteenth-century Irishmen were especially attracted (or frightened) by liberating ideas: perhaps more likely than other inhabitants of—or emigrants from—the British Isles to perceive with brutal clarity that, as one wrote, without substantial reform or revolution their societies were merely “combination[s] of those who *have* against those who *have not*.”⁶

Thus we contend that from the mid-1700s through the early 1800s there were close affinities between Irish and American economic and political developments, that contemporary Irish migration to the New World both reflected and accelerated those developments, and that out of them emerged modern “Irish” (and “Scotch-Irish”) ethnic and political identities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In the late 1700s, as Irish and American political movements interacted and converged, “Irish” became—both in Ireland and in the United States—a more inclusive and more favorable appellation than ever before or since. Temporarily it was associated, whether accurately or not, with those forces of democracy and of personal as well as national liberation that appeared imminently or actually triumphant over the dead weights of aristocracy, deference, and colonialism. However, that moment soon passed. At least by the 1820s and 1830s religious and political conflicts were rife, in Ireland and America alike, between Protestants and Catholics. Once again “Irish” became virtually synonymous with Irish Catholics alone, and among most Protestants, Irish and otherwise, once more the term designated a group laden with negative stereotypes. By contrast, in America the old but formerly ambiguous term “Scotch-Irish” was revived and reformulated, with exclusively favorable connotations, to describe all Protestants of Irish birth or descent. In the process, memories of the earlier liberating and unifying possibilities of “Irishness” were lost or repressed.

We also suggest, therefore, that the following letters and other testaments written by Irish immigrants (or by their correspondents in Ireland) can be read on several levels.

6. Cited in D. N. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin, 1981), 168.

Certainly, they provide intimate and, we believe, fascinating accounts of the personal experiences of men and women who left Ireland, settled or sojourned in America, and adapted to a wide variety of regional and socioeconomic circumstances. Both the individuality and the ethnic, religious, and social diversity of these early Irish immigrants are remarkable, especially when compared with the apparent homogeneity of the migrants from mid- and late nineteenth-century Ireland. Indeed, for some early immigrants, their Irish origins were of little relevance to their new lives in America—or had only negative implications that might be avoided through strategic conformity to locally dominant cultures. Yet most migrants formed or joined discrete networks and local societies whose members were largely or almost entirely of Irish birth or descent as well as of shared religious beliefs. Moreover, by the last third of the eighteenth century Ireland's immigrants in America—like many of their countrymen at home—were forging more inclusive “ideal” communities and “Irish” identities that were neither entirely confined within the homeland's traditional ethnoreligious boundaries nor completely subsumed in an homogeneous “American” nationalism. Indeed, it is arguable that Irish immigrants' correspondence, memoirs, and other personal testaments not only reflected but even helped create the categories of “Irish” identity that emerged in contemporary political discourse on both sides of the Atlantic.

Of course, when writing letters to Ireland, and especially when authoring their memoirs, Irish immigrants were penning descriptions of their environments and experiences that were inevitably colored by their own expectations, emotions, and prejudices. In the process they were also creating images and constructing “selves” for the edification of their correspondents or their posterity. Many of their “performances” were ritualistic and yet intensely personal: designed to reassure kinsmen at home of the immigrants' continued affection or religious devotion, or to persuade their relatives to join them in America, or to admonish their descendants to emulate the memoirists' alleged virtues and successes. However, these testaments were public as well as private exercises: in the eighteenth century public and private spheres were much less distinct than they would later become, and the “news” in immigrants' letters inevitably circulated beyond their parents' hearths. As early as 1729, Rev. Ezekiel Stewart remarked on the major role the immigrants' letters played in shaping positive, even paradisaical, visions of America—and correspondingly negative opinions of Irish conditions—among their recipients in Ireland, thereby constructing both the cultural and the tangible networks that encouraged and facilitated further emigration. Finally, this era of democratic revolutions (and of counterrevolutions) was an intensely political age. As Stewart's criticism of the immigrants' letters implied, invitations to emigrate, seemingly mundane comparisons between Irish and American circumstances, and even apparently neutral descriptive terms such as “Irish”—could have distinct and even revolutionary political connotations.

Thus, many of these letters and other documents not only reveal the patterns and processes of early migration and immigrant adaptation but also enable an exploration of the dynamics of ethnic identity: of how and why the inclusive and democratic implications of late eighteenth-century “Irishness” emerged, flourished briefly, and then were submerged in America and Ireland alike. In that sense, among many others, these faded manuscripts may be of contemporary as well as historical relevance in a nation and world beset

by new forms of imperialism, by mass migrations, and by religious, ethnic, and racial strife. To be sure, in the United States anti-“Irish” (Catholic) prejudice and intra-“Irish” (Protestant vs. Catholic) conflicts have virtually disappeared. In American society generally, however, as in the world at large and in Northern Ireland particularly, the broad question posed by the United Irishmen still awaits resolution: “Are we forever” condemned, they asked, “to walk like beasts of prey over [the] fields which [our] ancestors stained with blood?”⁷

7. Cited in N. J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791–1798* (Oxford, 1994), 21.

I ✱

The Causes of Irish Emigration

This page intentionally left blank

James Wansbrough, 1700–1728

A singular feature of the history of Irish emigration to North America is that many of the first emigrants' immediate ancestors had only recently moved to Ireland. In 1649–1650 Oliver Cromwell's English armies reconquered Ireland from the Catholics who had controlled most of the island since their rebellion in 1641. During the 1650s the triumph of Cromwellian religious and political radicalism, plus the availability of confiscated Catholic lands, encouraged many English Protestant Dissenters to settle in Ireland rather than in America. This was especially true of Baptists and Quakers, who were unwelcome in Puritan New England and the Anglican-dominated Chesapeake colonies. By the 1680s, however, the Cromwellians' Irish-born children and grandchildren were migrating across the Atlantic. In Irish terms, they were the forerunners of the great movement of Irish Protestants, chiefly Dissenters of Scottish or English descent, who dominated Irish emigration to the New World from the late seventeenth century through the first third of the nineteenth century. In American terms, they could be viewed as a delayed and temporarily diverted stream of the original migration of British Dissenters who had founded New England by 1630 and were settling Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the 1680s.

In the 1650s perhaps as many as 30,000 English and Welsh Protestants migrated across the Irish Sea. Many remained only a generation or two; some returned to England, but others emigrated to the American colonies. Among the latter were Ann and Thomas Shepherd, and several of the earliest surviving emigrants' letters are those addressed to them in New Jersey by Ann's brother in Ireland, James Wansbrough. The Shepherds and Wansbroughs had come to Ireland as officers in Cromwell's army and, in return for their service, had gained estates taken from the defeated Catholics. Several thousand new settlers, including the Wansbroughs and Shepherds, were Baptists, and after 1654 a larger number, especially among the lesser grantees and tradesmen, became members of the Society of Friends, derisively known as Quakers. As in England, the two Irish sects raided each other for converts (largely ignoring the native Irish) and quarreled bitterly over doctrinal issues. However, as dissenters surrounded by hostile Catholics and suspicious Anglicans, Irish Baptist and Quaker families were often closely aligned in marriage, trade, and later remigration to America.

During the early 1650s Baptists were prominent in Ireland's military government, but they lost power in the latter years of Cromwell's rule and, after the Stuart and Anglican Restoration of 1660, most went back to England. Like the Quakers, the few Baptists who remained in southern Ireland congregated principally in major seaports such as Dublin, Waterford, and Cork, where they engaged in commerce and crafts, but a substantial minority were modest landowners and head tenants in the Irish midlands. Despite their general prosperity, after the ascension of Charles II (1660–1685) Irish Baptists, Quakers, and other Dissenters saw their status deteriorate, symbolized by their legal exclusion from politics and

the reimposition of tithes by the reestablished Church of Ireland. Moreover, in the 1680s and early 1690s Irish Catholic resurgence compounded their insecurities and threatened their estates.

However, as the settlers' problems mounted, new opportunities beckoned overseas. In 1667 William Penn (1644–1718), born in Waterford and heir to large Irish estates, converted to Quakerism, and in 1676 he acquired part title to much of West Jersey, as well as to Pennsylvania, and invited British and Irish Friends and other dissenters to settle there. In 1681 a company of Dublin Quakers took lands on the east side of the Delaware River, opposite the site of Philadelphia. This "Irish Tenth" became the nucleus of Gloucester County, and for several generations Irish Quakers would settle on both sides of the Delaware. Also, in 1675 an adventurer named John Fenwick (1618–1683) established a freelance Quaker colony in southern West Jersey, at Salem and at Greenwich on the Cohansey River. Initially this colony stagnated, but after 1683, when Penn purchased Fenwick's disputed claims, the Salem and Cohansey settlements began to fill with Irish Quakers and Baptists, attracted by economic prospects as well as by guarantees of religious freedom and civil equality.

Among these emigrants were James Wansbrough's brothers-in-law, Thomas, David, and John Shepherd. Between the 1680s and 1720s the Wansbroughs, Shepherds, and their Toler cousins extended through the North Riding of County Tipperary, primarily in the baronies of Lower and Upper Ormond and of Owney and Arra, and many of them worshiped at a Baptist church at Cleagh Keating, near the town of Borrisokane.¹ In the 1650s Cromwell's government had confiscated a higher proportion of Catholic lands in Tipperary—77 percent—than in any other county. Owney and Arra and the Ormond baronies, especially, witnessed the plantation of a substantial English minority; for example, by 1659–1660 the population of Killoscully parish, in Owney and Arra, was one-third Protestant. However, these baronies were relatively poor, containing mountains mingled with soils of at best mixed quality. Perhaps this was one reason why by 1700 James Wansbrough had leased his inherited farm at Ballycahane, in Killoscully parish, for £35 per annum and moved 30 miles north to a richer farm at Ballinlug, in the parish and barony of Rathconrath, County Westmeath, where another Baptist community was centered on a church in nearby Rahugh.²

In 1683 Wansbrough's brothers-in-law emigrated to West Jersey. After a brief stay in the Irish Tenth, they moved to Salem (later Cumberland) County and settled among other Tipperary Baptists on both sides of the lower Cohansey River, in Greenwich and Fairfield townships. The Irish circumstances that encouraged their emigration probably

1. Cleagh Keating (or Cloghkeating, Cloughkeating): a townland in Modreeny parish, Lower Ormond barony. The Wansbroughs, Shepherds, and Toler were concentrated primarily in the parishes of Killoscully, Loughkeen, Ballingarry, Modreeny, and Kilruane. 2. Rahugh (or Rahue): a townland and parish in Moycashel barony, Co. Westmeath. For demographic data on Killoscully and Rathconrath parishes, see appendix 2.2c, on chapter 1.

included the relative poorness of their lands, political disabilities and resentment of tithes, and fear of the impending ascension of the Catholic king, James II (1685–1688). Indeed, it is likely that the Shepherds were among those Tipperary Baptists who in 1683 fled to New Jersey and Pennsylvania following their implication in the unsuccessful Rye House Plot against James’s succession to the throne. Only two years later the Ormond baronies were swept by rumors that the coronation of James II would be attended by a Catholic massacre of Irish Protestants, as had occurred in Ulster in 1641; consequently, declared one local dissenter, “All Sober people here are inclined & pr[e]p[ar]ing to go to West Gurse[y].”

However, James Wansbrough remained in Ireland, although in his Westmeath parish Catholics outnumbered Protestants twenty to one. In 1700 he sent his first letter to his sister Ann and her husband since their emigration. In typically providential terms, he recounted the tumultuous events that had taken place in Ireland in the intervening years—the temporary restoration of Catholic power under James II, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the Protestant reconquest by William of Orange in 1689–1691. He also catalogued their dire personal consequences for the Shepherd and Wansbrough families and their relations, many of whom had perished in a conflict that claimed at least 50,000 lives by war and disease and that was especially ferocious in the disputed marchlands of north Tipperary and Westmeath. Yet Wansbrough also related how he had survived these trials and eventually flourished, as the restoration of peace and Protestant power brought renewed English settlement and at least temporary prosperity.

Letter 1.

James Wansbrough, Ballinlug, Rathconrath Parish, County Westmeath,
to Ann and Thomas Shepherd, Cohansey, New Jersey, 4 May 1700

Balenloge³ County west meath may y^e 4th 1700

Well beloved brother and Cister these are to let you under stand that I received aliter from you with my nevies⁴ leter allsoe to our greate satisfaction y^t it hath pleased allmighty God in his marcy and goodness to preserve you in your far Jorny and to setle you in agood and peaceable land and allsoe ithath⁶ pleased god of Infinite mercy to deliver us and to bring us through many perels and dangers sence your departure oute of⁷ this kingdom for after Kingcharles⁸ dyed his brother⁹ asumed y^e Crowne and then popery over swayd this kingdoms and our goods was madee¹⁰ apray¹¹ our

3. **Balenloge**: Ballinlug townland (Rathconrath parish and barony, Co. Westmeath). 4. **Nevies**: i.e., nephew's. For a discussion of Wansbrough's origins and speech, see appendix 1. 5. **y^t**: that (as elsewhere in this letter). 6. **ithath**: i.e., it hath; for analytic and (in this instance) synthetic spellings, see appendix 1. 7. **oute of**: from (especially when indicating origin). 8. **Kingcharles**: Charles II (1660–1685). 9. **his brother**: James II (1685–1688). 10. **madee**: made; silent e in a final syllable is occasionally written ee; see brokee “broke,” Balmacoohee “Ballymacue,” pleaseed “pleased,” whomee “whom,” scarcee “scarce” hereafter. 11. **apray**: a prey.

cytes¹² Charters brokee our peniall laws¹³ teaken away y^e ould propriaters of Ireland¹⁴ entering in opon all our posesions our armes¹⁵ Ceased¹⁶ and popish armeys raised throughout these kingdomes till it pleased god of his bounty ful marcy and good ness to raies¹⁷ us up a deliverer oute of y^e same famyly¹⁸ for our deliverance who was at y^t time prince of Orange and was married to princes mary King James eldest daughte[r] who through zeale for y^e gospell of our lord Jesus Christ and Honour of god forth with then when all was at steake Came with asmall army of 14 thousand and in vaded or landed in England and god Almighty prospering him hath through greate wars and danger with y^e lose¹⁹ of many thousands of men and great Churge²⁰ obtained peace and tranquility for himselfe and his subjects as allsoe he hath been y^e Instroment of makeing peace throughoute all Cristendome and now y^e lands is derer²¹ by y^e third part then they ware when you ware heere for the lands y^t would agiven y^u four shilings p^r acor²² will give you six or six and sixpence and wehave more English heere now then we had before y^e ware and now I will give you some short account of our owne famyly my father dyed at birr²³ after y^e first sige of limbrick²⁴ in y^e hith²⁵ of y^e troubles brother Gyles dyed of [y]^e small pox and John whirborn married Cister bety and he dyed about y^e same time my fa[ther] dyed and now cister bety is married to simon Ronsall and is but in anendefarant [wa]y²⁶ and Cosen tho<mas> shephard is larning y^e Joyne[rs] tra[de] of²⁷ his fatherinlaw and nicolas Conat C[iste]r praxey es²⁸ husband dyed aboute 7 or 8

12. cytes: i.e., 'cities'; **our cytes Charters brokee:** in 1686–1687, James II's Irish Lord Deputy, Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel, revoked and redrew the charters of most Irish towns and boroughs; the old charters had ensured a Protestant monopoly of urban government, but two-thirds of the newly appointed aldermen and burgesses were Catholics, as was Talbot. **13. peniall laws:** penal laws, restricting Irish Catholic civil, economic, and religious activities; repealed by the Catholic-dominated Irish Parliament under James II but reinstated and expanded under his successors. **14. y^e ould propriaters of Ireland:** Catholics whose lands had formerly been confiscated and granted to Protestants; in fact, the "oldest" proprietors, of Gaelic descent, recovered scarcely any of their former estates, and the major beneficiaries of the Protestant conquest's temporary reversal under James II were Catholics of Norman origin, i.e., the "Old English." **15. armes:** i.e., armies. **16. Ceased:** abolished, disbanded; see OED s.v. cease, 5. "put a stop to" (obsolete). **17. raies:** i.e., raise. **18. a deliverer oute of y^e same famyly:** William of Orange, i.e., William III (1688–1702), who ruled jointly with his wife, Mary, James II's eldest daughter, until her death in 1694. **19. lose:** i.e., loss; see losses "losses" hereafter. **20. Churge:** i.e., courage. **21. derer:** i.e., dearer "more expensive." **22. would agiven . . . :** i.e., would have given ("yielded") . . . ; shows the reduction of **have** to **a** between a modal auxiliary (could, should, would, may, etc.) and a past participle and also in the past infinitive (e.g. **to have gone** → **to a gone**). The form **a** may be further reduced to zero: **would a given** → **would given**; see Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 4.6.36–37: "we should by this . . . found it so" (i.e., **a** found it). See also Robert Burns, *Tam o' Shanter*: The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last (i.e., 'twad **a** blawn). Other instances of this development; n. 84 below; chapter 2, n. 10; chapter 15, n. 42; chapter 26, n. 50; chapter 38, n. 10; chapter 46, n. 40; chapter 51, n. 69. **23. birr:** Birr town (and parish, Ballybrit barony, King's Co. [now Co. Offaly]); later Parsonstown, now again Birr. **24. limbrick:** Limerick city, Co. Limerick; William III's first, unsuccessful siege of Limerick occurred in August 1690; the second siege began in August 1691 and ended with the Catholic surrender of the city on 3 October. **25. hith:** i.e., height; see n. 4. **26. in anendefarant [wa]y:** in an indifferent way, i.e., only moderately prosperous. For the use of square brackets and other editorial conventions, see appendix 1. **27. larning . . . of:** learning . . . from. **28. C[iste]r praxey es:** i.e., sister Praxeys's.

weeks after my father and left 3 children t<w>o bo[y]s and one daughter and shee is married againe to Daniell dason y^e sadler y^t lived at Enagh²⁹ Cister lucy married her masters stuard and Clark³⁰ aft[er] Cornel buckworth³¹ and they was [v]ery rich our brotherinlaws name is richard lockwod shee dyed in Childbed t<w>o years sense³² brother robart wansbrough was a seaman and was prestat at bristo<l>³³ to sarve as seaman and was kild in abatle at sea as we under stand brother william wansbrough was Insigne for brudnells regiment and was aboard y^e fleete he dyed neere aligant³⁴ in spaine my Cister mary is married to Pall webster and lives at balen gary³⁵ Cister rachell lives with cosen thomas towler at balen toty³⁶ and is not married Cister Jain³⁷ liveth at balmacooghee³⁸ with capten baly y^t married m^r prilyes eldes^t daughter my mother is married to m^r tho<mas> balme y^t liveth at killloughnane³⁹ be twixt raplagh⁴⁰ and grange⁴¹ neere Enagh I was married before y^e wars broke oute ayeere⁴² to one Tho<mas> Rol<s> Younge[s]t daughter Johnathan wala[n] knowes her cister y^t is married to Joh[n]athan Short of gortin⁴³ and after y^e wars by sick[ness and] loses and y^e dept⁴⁴ y^t my father owed I was forst to sell my father<s> lands⁴⁵ for three hundred pound to Cosen nicolas towler soe after he posed it four yeer<r>s It pleaseed⁴⁶ god y^t Igot y^t favour with my fatherinlaw y^t he advanced 3 hondred pound towards y^e purchas and about ahondred pound I had my selfe soe y^t it was sould but bought againe I have one daughter and ason his name is thomas my daughter is 12 yeere ould & son is five my wife is with Child I had another son Called John but he dyed this allsoe may carty fie⁴⁷ you y^t I received

29. Enagh: now Nenagh town (and parish, Upper and Lower Ormond baronies, Co. Tipperary, North Riding [N.R.]). **30. stuard and Clark:** i.e., steward and clerk. **31. aft[er] Cornel buckworth:** after Col. Buckworth's death. **32. t<w>o years sense** (i.e., since): two years ago. For the use of angled brackets and other editorial conventions, see appendix 1. **33. prestat at bristo<l>:** impressed, i.e., forcibly conscripted, into the English navy at the port of Bristol, England. **34. aligant:** Alicante, Spain; Wansbrough's form is closer to the Catalan original (Alacant). **35. balen gary:** Ballingarry townland (and parish, Lower Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **36. balen toty:** Ballintotty townland (Lisbunny parish, Upper Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **37. Jain:** i.e., Jane; Jaim ms. **38. balmacooghee:** Ballymacue (Kilruane parish, Upper Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.); the form has "silent ee" (see n. 10) and silent gh as in *Raplagh* "Rapla" (see n. 40); Wansbrough has dotted the first minim of m, making the name appear to be *balinacooghee*. **39. killloughnane:** Killylaughnane townland (Kilruane parish, Upper Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **40. raplagh:** Rapla townland (Kilruane parish, Upper Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **41. Grange:** probably Grange Upper townland (Knigh parish, Lower Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **42. before y^e wars broke oute ayeere:** "a year before the wars broke out." **43. Gortin:** Gorteen townland (Finnoe parish, Lower Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **44. dept:** an interesting case of a "learned" spelling pronunciation. The standard spelling *debt* is itself a purely learned creation based on the antiquarial knowledge that *dette*, the original shape of the French borrowing into English, ultimately reflects Latin *debitum*. The same phenomenon occurs in chapter 26, n. 33, where we find *Doupt* "doubt" (originally *dout(e)*, from Latin *dubitum*). **45. my father<s> lands:** at Ballycahane (Killoscully parish, Owney and Arra barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). The form *father* in this phrase may be an archaism: the word belongs to an inflectional class in Old and Middle English which does not formally distinguish the nominative (*father*) and the genitive (*father's*), and this peculiarity may have been preserved here (the same phenomenon is seen in *Lady Day* (i.e., Lady's Day)). **46. pleaseed:** see n. 10. **47. carty fie:** i.e., certify "inform officially."

apeare⁴⁸ of butens of silver from Cosen James shephards wife y^t was⁴⁹ and my mother and Cisters received twelve pence apeece and Cister rachel aquaife⁵⁰ or pin<n>er⁵¹ a toaken⁵² from my Cister my Cister Rachell and Jane hath either of them aboute twenty pound apeece of their owne and they say y^t if they Could get opertunity or good Company either one or both would goe and seee you in that Contry although we have scene abondance of troble and received greate Loses yet Ithank god we have peace and quiatness now and through god allmightys providence and mercy we have both y^e law and gospell Reestablished amongst us and Every one EnJoying y^e freute of their labours this being all at present with my kind love to you and my dear Cister and Cosen Tho<mas> sheper<d> and y^e rest of your Liteleones⁵³ not for geting⁵⁴ Cosen John and his Children and cosen david and his Cosen Jonathan walen and his good wife and Children and all y^e rest of our relations and frinds there y^t went alonge with you my father gyles shepard John whiteho<r>ne⁵⁵ is buried⁵⁶ by your Uncle Thomas sheperd in birr thomas shepard your uncle thomas es⁵⁷ son dyed last yeere at birr he lived where mr wetherlock lived his brother james was kild at teaking of artlone⁵⁸ Joseph is in England daniell is at home your ant liveth at teni kelie⁵⁹ & is married to Joseph Ingrom liveth & very rich your father dyed after y^e wars your uncle simon dyed in his exile or banishment your brother Jonathan and Jonadab is both ded they dyed in y^e wars Jonathens wife is married to Gerd⁶⁰ nokes y^t was prentice to brother gyles sheperd and lives in ormond⁶¹ they live prety well⁶² Robart shepard and James shepard your uncle simons sons are both married and [is] in an endefrint way of living⁶³ mistris Elisibeth wade⁶⁴ is married to alderman heds sone of water ford⁶⁵ m^s mary michell is married and live[s] aboute lim[er]ick Capten brigges is [de]d Cornell finch is ded y^e bishop of kilalow⁶⁶ is ded Maior⁶⁷ Canbe is [d]ed Capten alen is ded Roger ho[l]den bee is ded samuill wade ded henery prithy ded Leftanant⁶⁸ waler ded parson godfrey ded

48. apeare: i.e., a pair. 49. wife y^t was: former/deceased wife. 50. quaife: variant of coif “headdress.”

51. pin<n>er: a coif provided with flaps. 52. toaken: i.e., token “keepsake” (OED s.v., 9). 53. Liteleones: i.e., little ones. 54. not for geting: i.e., not forgetting, “including.” 55. my father . . . whiteho<r>ne: read “my father, Gyles Shepherd, and John Whitehorne.” 56. burier ms. 57. thomas es: i.e., Thomas’s.

58. Artlone: Athlone town (Co. Westmeath); the Williamite army took Athlone, on the river Shannon, from its Irish and French defenders on 30 June 1691. 59. teni kelie: Tinnakilly townland (Loughkeen parish, Lower Ormond barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). 60. Gerd: Gerard (spelled as pronounced). 61. ormond: the official name of the Baptist church and settlement at Cleagh Keating; see n. 1. 62. they live prety well: they are pretty well-off, fairly affluent or comfortable. 63. in an endefrint way of living: see n. 26. 64. mistris Elisibeth wade: Elizabeth Wade is probably the daughter of Capt. Samuel Wade, a Cromwellian officer who helped found Waterford city’s Baptist church in the early 1650s; the Cleagh Keating church in north Tipperary was apparently an offshoot of Waterford’s congregation; hed is the English surname Head, mostly associated with Co. Tipperary (see Edward Mac Lysaght, *More Irish Families* (Galway, 1960), 119–20. 65. water ford: Waterford city (Co. Waterford). 66. kilalow: Killaloe diocese (Church of Ireland), the area of which included the North Riding of Co. Tipperary. 67. Maior: i.e., Major. 68. Leftanant: Lieutenant (as pronounced).

Leftanant sheldon ded Capten parker ded Capten roulstown y^e ould man
 ded frank Roulstown y^t maried debrow wade ded Thomas Casill ded Capten
 powell and his famly living in y^e ould pleace Capten owataway ded ould wiliam
 freeman ded⁶⁹ ould sargant hardy is living and his ould wife and is weel to live⁷⁰
 they live under young Capten harasson⁷¹ Leftanant foxall ded Robart alen y^t went
 along with you⁷² liveth at garan more⁷³ and is maried if i should give youe an
 account of all y^e tra[ns] actions⁷⁴ y^t hath hapened amongst⁷⁵ us sence your leving this
 Contr[ey a q]uire⁷⁶ of peapor would scercely Containe it but if I could by asa[f]e⁷⁷
 hand send you abook of y^e trans actions and cations⁷⁸ of this late Revolution⁷⁹ sence
 I Canot teake y^e the will for y^e deed⁸⁰ Irest your Ever loving brother till deth I
 thank god Iam in a good way of living for Ihave my owne Estate againe it is set⁸¹ to
 three English men we have 35 pound ayere rent Cleere oute of it besides quitrent
 and all other taxes⁸² of y^e which my mother hath 9 pound ayeere Joynter⁸³ I was to
 apaid⁸⁴ 12 if my father and mother had both lived Ihave avery good wife Ithank god
 and shee is and will be a veery good fortune to me for what I have allredy had and
 shall have if shee and I doe oute live her father and mother will be as good Ithink as six
 or seven hundred pound⁸⁵ Soe comending you all to y^e Providence of all Mighty
 god our hevenly father by whomee⁸⁶ we live move and have our being desiering y^t he
 may in his Infinit marcy in crese Everyone of us in greace⁸⁷ wisdom and understanding
 y^t we may be truly thankfull for all y^e benefits y^t we doe receive at his hands y^t after
 this sinfull painfull and mortall life ended we may Every one be partekers of Eternell

69. Maior Canbe . . . Capten alen . . . Roger ho[l]den bee . . . samuill wade . . . henery prithy . . . Capten owataway . . . wiliam freeman: Solomon Cambry (or Cambri), Capt. Stephen Allen, Samuel Wade (see n. 64), Roger Holdenby (or Haldenby), Henry Prittie, Capt. John Otway, and William Freeman: all prominent Cromwellian settlers in north Tipperary's Ormond baronies. **70. weell to live:** well-to-do, affluent, or comfortable. **71. they live under young Capten harrasson:** they are tenants (probably head tenants) of the young proprietor, Captain Harrison. **72. Robart alen y^t went along with you liveth at garan more:** ref. to an emigrant, brother of Capt. Stephen Alen (see n. 69), who accompanied the Shepherds to New Jersey but returned to Ireland. **73. garan more:** Garranmore (Youghalarra parish, Ownney and Arra barony, Co. Tipperary, N.R.). **74. tra[ns] actions:** i.e., transactions. **75. armongst ms.** **76. [q]uire:** (1) four sheets of paper folded to make eight leaves, or (2) 24 to 25 sheets of paper. **77. asa[f]e:** i.e., a safe. **78. cations:** aphetic form of *occasions*; cf. Shakespeare's '*casion*, *cagion*'. **79. this late Revolution:** the Glorious Revolution (1688–1691) of William III. **80. sence . . . deed:** "since I cannot, [you are to] take the will for the deed." **81. set:** leased. **82. besides quitrent and all other taxes:** "after quitrent and all other taxes have been paid"; *quitrent*: annual rent paid by proprietors to the crown. **83. Joynter:** i.e., jointure, a legal settlement or contractual obligation conferring an annuity. The form *joynter* shows the loss of [y] before an unstressed vowel, a sound change which had taken place by the 16th century and is seen in such forms, for example, as *nater* "nature," *futer* "future," *critter* "creature," *ed(d)ication* "education" and in reverse spellings like *ardure* "ardor." These "y-less" forms penetrated the literary language and are found, for example, in Shakespeare, but they were later censured. By the nineteenth century the older pronunciation had been restored in the standard language, but in non-standard speech and in the dialects the y-less forms have persisted. **84. to apaid:** i.e., to have paid; see n. 22. **85. for what I have allredy had . . . six or seven hundred pound:** "because what I have had already and will have . . . will be as good . . . as £600 or £700." **86. whomee:** whom; see n. 10. **87. greace:** i.e., grace. For spellings with *ea*, see appendix 1.

rest and felicity is y^e harty prayers⁸⁸ of your Ever loving brother fere well till y^e next opertunity

James Wansbrough

if you can get opertunity pray faile not to send and let us heere from you wee have had t<w>o leters from you sence your departure for I think Ishall not Come to you and sence you are setled Idoe not ad vise you to Come here againe for lands is very scarcee⁸⁹ and deere I think rat<e>s of goods will fall and rents will behard to bemade so y^t tenants will <be> slaves to their landlords though sence y^e settlement⁹⁰ we have had agood time and mony plenty⁹¹ a Ould guiny⁹² here goes f[or] 26 shilings 4^s an<d> 9^d for 5^s and 4^d an English Crown⁹³ for six shilings which is all at [present] f[rom]

J: W

In 1700 James Wansbrough seemed content to remain in Ireland. However, between 1716 and 1728, the date of his last surviving letter, many of his Irish neighbors and relatives, including one cousin, had emigrated, and in the latter year Wansbrough himself deliberated whether to take the drastic step for a man of late middle age to join his Shepherd relations in the New World. Economic considerations were probably paramount. The 1720s were years of severe distress for Irish landlords and tenants alike. Stagnation in trade, currency shortages, and repeated harvest failures resulted in economic depression and famine, while the pressure for lands and the expiration of old leases sent rents rocketing. Modest landholders were caught between falling incomes and mounting expenses, and Wansbrough himself could not renew the lease on his Westmeath farm at a profitable rent. He also had personal reasons for disenchantment with Ireland: by 1728 Wansbrough's first wife and all their sons had died, and his second wife, whom he married in 1725, had relations in America. Moreover, although new English settlers had increased the proportion of Protestants in Westmeath to an all-time peak of nearly 14 percent, Ireland's Baptist congregations were shrinking through intermarriage and conversions to the established church, producing among the remainder a crisis of confidence in the future of their increasingly fragile community.⁹⁴ And although official persecution of Irish Dissenters was no longer as intense as in Queen Anne's reign (1702–1714), the political climate yet remained

88. harty prayers and flicity ms. (dittography). 89. scarcee: scarce; see n. 10. 90. sence y^e settlement: since the end of the Williamite wars (1688–1691). 91. we have had agood time and mony plenty: "we have had prosperous times and money has been plentiful." 92. guiny: i.e., guinea (21 shillings). 93. an English Crown: coin normally worth five shillings. 94. In the 1650s there were at least 13 Baptist churches in Ireland, but by 1725 there were only five with settled ministers—Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Cleagh Keating, and Legacory in County Armagh—plus the "remains" of four others, including Rahugh, that depended on visiting pastors. In 1725 only the Dublin meeting contained as many as two hundred families, the remainder having between 60 and 30, and Irish Baptists altogether numbered merely 1,500–2,000. Among the conformists to the Church of Ireland were Wansbrough's Toler relations, who by the late eighteenth century were among Co. Tipperary's most powerful families. By 1800 only five hundred Irish Baptists remained, but a surge of

uncertain. However, such troubles did not exist in West Jersey, where Wansbrough, perhaps encouraged by his young wife, thought he might begin the world anew.

Letter 2.

James Wansbrough, Ballinlug, Rathconrath Parish, County Westmeath,
to Ann Shepherd, Cohansey, New Jersey, 18 April 1728

Balenlug April y^e 18 1728

Loving Cister I have Been long Disopointed of sending unto you⁹⁵ I thank god I and my famely is well in helth soe is two of my Daughters the youngest I had by my former wife I have been marid next agust will be⁹⁶ three yeers I have adaughter by my wife I got onely ahondred pounds with her she is a very good husef⁹⁷ and of a very good famely for thomas Packenham was her mothers brother and his son was night of the Cheere⁹⁸ for our County of west meath she hath aCosen In new york married unto one Capten Congrave all my Cisters heere is well onely⁹⁹ Jane who is married to Thomas Barton she hath been sickly at last¹⁰⁰ her sickness went to an ague¹⁰¹ Cister Praxey lives at balengary¹⁰² Cister mary and Pall webster is in y^e county of Dublen Cister Rachell and her hosband David Shephard lives at balycahane¹⁰³ she hath four sons Cister Elisabeth dyed Lucys son Richard Lockwood is arich man and Justice of y^e peace he is worth five or six hondred pound ayeere I desier you Dere Cister to write by the first opertunity and let me heere how you and your two sons mores and David <is> and your Daughter and all their famelyes this hath been avery hard yeere amongst the poore people for Corn failed very much and now wheat is at twenty shillings abarell and other Corne proporsionable¹⁰⁴ lands is got to an Extrame Rate heere so y^t they y^t teakes land is likely to be teaken by their lands¹⁰⁵ I lighted of¹⁰⁶ ahistory of america which gave me avery <h>onest account of all your Contrey it sayes y^t he y^t is worth five hondred Pounds heere laid out and retorned there y^t if he have any Induster¹⁰⁷ may live as well

pan-Protestant revivalism soon sparked a remarkable resurgence: in 1800–1841 30 new Baptist churches were founded, and between 1818 and the 1890s membership rose from two thousand to five thousand. However, nearly all this new growth occurred in Ulster; southern Irish Baptist churches continued to atrophy; and by the early twentieth century both the Cleagh Keating and the Rahugh congregations had disappeared. **95. sending unto you:** sending you a letter by a bearer. **96. next agust will be:** this coming August. **97. husef:** housewife (variants in OED: hussive, hussif, huzzif). **98. night of the Cheere:** i.e., knight of the shire. **99. onely:** except. **100. at last:** in the end. **101. went to an ague:** turned into an acute fever. **102. balengary:** see n. 35. **103. balycahane:** see n. 45. **104. proporsionable:** in proportion, proportionately (see OED s.v. proportionably). **105. they y^t teakes land is likely to be teaken by their lands:** “any person who rents land [at these high rates] will likely be ruined financially.” **106. lighted of:** came across. **107. Induster:** industry, diligence; the *English Dialect Dictionary* lists *industher* as a verb attested only in Ireland, “to work hard, be industrious,” but has no instances of the form as a noun.

as he y^t is worth six or seven¹⁰⁸ hundred pound ayeere in England if you or your sons Doe write unto me and give me good Encoragment I will trans port my self and famely and soninlaw I Can teake threehondred pound heere but pray tell me what is y^e best Comodyty to teake into y^t Contrey what meakes me think of goeing is my wife is ayounge woman and would be willing to goe into y^t Contrey besides agood farm I had y^e lease <of> is Ronoute¹⁰⁹ and <I> Canot get it worth teaking¹¹⁰ I have in baly Cahane¹¹¹ and this Contrey¹¹² twenty pounds a yeere I send this by Cosen frances Parvin whose aunt was maried to my first wives brother they are honest People and Lives well your sons may Doe him aCind ness in folloing¹¹³ Pray <ask> if thomas Green y^t lived with Isarall Comborton in Philadelpha beliving¹¹⁴ for his father and mother is very Desierous to know wher¹¹⁵ he be alive or ded there was a man left this naibor hood about forty yeer agoe one Owen Daly out of y^e County of west meath I was Entreated to Enquier for him if he lives nee[r] you if by chance you or y^e young men might nnow him I doe Expect to heere from you by next Crismas the Creator of us [. . . and]d give my love and servis¹¹⁶ to my Cosens in generall but Espesially to your own two sons and your Daughter and her hosband not for geting your self my wife gives her servis to you and your Children I am and Remain your afectinate broth<er> whilst I am

James Wansbrough

if cervants¹¹⁷ be a good profit Idesier <you> to let me know it or what goods will turn to best acount out of this Contry I canteake three hondred pounds with me if I doe trans port my self into y^t Contrey¹¹⁸ and leave five pound ayeer heere to send me every yeere aservant or nesesityes Duering three lives or thirty yeers to Com¹¹⁹ severall of my Cisters sons will Certen be along with me if I doe Com into y^t Contry nomore but as a far<e> wel Dan Towler is worth six hondred ayeere lives at grange¹²⁰ where maiar¹²¹ fox lived formerly and Elisabeth weade Daughter to Esquier wad<e> lives at waterford and her hosbond <is> alderman hed of waterford¹²²

J. W.

108. six or seven: conjectural, written above *canc. five*. **109. Ronoute:** i.e., run out “expired.” **110. <I> Canot get it worth teaking:** “I cannot get the farm at a rent that would make it economical to take up (renew) the lease.” **<I>:** an expected subject pronoun is often dropped in Ulster English in a non-initial clause, especially, as here, when it is identical with the subject pronoun of the preceding clause. This usage occurs frequently in Shakespeare: *King Lear*, 1.4.201: “as you are old and reverend, should be wise.” **111. baly Cahane:** see n. 45. **112. this Contrey:** the area around Ballinlugh (Co. Westmeath); see n. 3. **113. Doe him aCind ness in folloing:** do him a kindness in the following way. **114. beliving:** i.e., be living. **115. wher:** whether; see n. 4. **116. give my love:** conjectural; *servis*: respect, duty (OED s.v. *service*, 9; “[i]n epistolary use, *give my service to* = remember me respectfully to [a third person]).” **117. cervants:** i.e., servants; here = indentured servants. **118. Contrey in ms.** **119. Duering three lives or thirty years to Com:** Wansbrough proposes to lease out the remainder of his Irish property at £5 per year for a period of thirty years or the duration of three lives (named in the lease), whichever expires first. **120. grange:** see n. 41. **121. maiar:** i.e., Major. **122. Elisabeth weade . . . alderman hed of waterford:** i.e., Elizabeth Wade . . . alderman Head of Waterford [city]; see ns. 64–65.

Cosen Thomas Toler is ded Cosen Nicolas toler is awidower all his Children
which is Eleven lives¹²³

James Wansbrough was still in Ireland in mid-1732, when his nephew wrote that “uncle James [was] alive and well” in Ballinlugh.¹²⁴ After that date, he does not appear in New Jersey records, although he may have gone to Pennsylvania, like most Irish Dissenters who emigrated in this period, or joined his wife’s cousin in New York. Yet if Wansbrough had joined his Shepherd relations in West Jersey, as planned, he would have found a flourishing settlement. In 1726 Salem County (including the future Cumberland County) contained nearly four thousand white inhabitants, plus 150 slaves. Most whites were “yeomen” farmers who marketed cattle, hogs, wheat, rice, cedar wood, and other produce in Philadelphia. According to one observer, they were “laborious, honest, and industrious” if also “unaccountable obstinate and tenacious.”¹²⁵ By 1745 Quakers comprised less than a fifth of the area’s population, but they were still dominant economically and politically. Although Baptists, the Shepherds (Sheppards in colonial usage) appear to have been equally successful, partly because they were among the first settlers at Shrewsbury Neck, on the banks of the lower Cohansey, which contained some of West Jersey’s richest soils. In 1690 the Shepherd brothers founded the first Baptist church in the district, and by his death in 1695 David Shepherd owned a large quantity of land along the river, plus personal property worth £172, while his brother John’s family possessed at least three thousand acres. The American-born Shepherds also fared well. One of the sons of Wansbrough’s sister Ann, also named David Shepherd, farmed a minimum of 150 acres and in 1702 was nominated by Lord Nottingham for membership in the Governor’s Council; likewise, his brother Moses died in 1752 worth over £400 in personal property. Later generations were locally prominent in the American Revolution, perhaps in part because the Anglo-American conflict reignited radical religious and political sentiments inherited from their Cromwellian forefathers. Thus, for over two hundred years the Shepherds multiplied and prospered along the Cohansey.¹²⁶ In the late nineteenth century most remained Baptists, although some had become Presbyterians and others had joined the Quakers with whom their ancestors had been contentiously allied during their brief sojourns in Ireland.

123. Cosen Thomas . . . which is Eleven lives and initials J.W. inserted between ms. lines beginning *severall of my Cisters and well* Dan Towler. **124.** Robert Dawson, Bristol, England, to Moses Shepherd, Cohansey, N.J., 23 July 1732. Dawson was the son of James Wansbrough’s sister, Praxeys, and her second husband, Daniel Dawson, “y^e sadler y^t lived at Enagh” (letter 1); a physician, Dawson emigrated to Philadelphia between 1732 and 1741. **125.** Wacker, *Land and People*, 184; see Sources. **126.** By 1876 there were at least 25 Shepherd/Sheppard property-owners in Fairfield and Greenwich townships, north and south of the Cohansey River.

Alexander Crawford, 1736

From the late 1600s through the early 1800s, most emigrants from Ireland to America came from the northern province of Ulster. Although Ulster emigration included sizable minorities of Catholics and Anglicans, plus small numbers of Quakers and other Dissenters, by far the largest group was composed of those most commonly known in the United States today as the Scots-Irish: Presbyterians whose ancestors had migrated from Lowland Scotland to Ulster—in numbers ranging perhaps from 80,000 to 130,000—from the beginning of the Ulster Plantation in 1607 through the Scottish famines of the 1690s and in smaller numbers thereafter. Initially, the Scots settled where James I's Scottish "undertakers" or grantees encouraged their plantation on estates confiscated (or, in counties Antrim and Down, purchased) from the province's defeated (or financially distressed) Gaelic lords: primarily in the fertile regions of north Down and south Antrim, in the Lower Bann Valley of north Antrim and east Londonderry,¹ and in the Foyle Valley between east Donegal and west Tyrone, all areas easily accessible from Scottish ports. By the end of the seventeenth century, Scottish and other Protestant settlers had expanded throughout most of Ulster, transforming the province into a religious patchwork of discrete districts dominated by Presbyterians, Anglicans (chiefly of north English origin), or native Catholics. Between 1670 and 1720 the number of Presbyterian congregations in northern Ireland increased from 70 to 148, and by 1732–1733, according to the hearthmoney returns, three-fifths of Ulster's inhabitants were Protestants, of whom a large majority were Presbyterians.

In the 1680s and 1690s, however, even as the last great Scottish migrations to Ulster occurred, some of the Scots-Irish began to move to North America. Between 1680 and 1716 perhaps as many as three thousand passengers left Ulster for the New World, and in 1717–1719 between 4,500 and 7,000 may have emigrated. During the 1720s about 15,000 people, again mostly Presbyterians, sailed from Ulster to America, and perhaps another 50,000 or more emigrated between 1730 and the outbreak in America of the French and Indian War in 1754–1755. Prior to the 1710s the Scots-Irish went primarily to the Chesapeake, next to New England, and from the late 1720s overwhelmingly to Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley, with lesser numbers landing at New York, Charleston, Savannah, and Baltimore.

1. In accordance with popular usage, in this book we employ alternatively "Londonderry" and "Derry" to designate both county and city, without reference to the terms' contemporary political implications; prior to the Ulster Plantation, most of Co. Londonderry was known as Coleraine, renamed when James I granted the area to a consortium of London Companies of merchants and manufacturers (Clothworkers, Drapers, Haberdashers, etc.). We will employ "Coleraine" only in reference to the town of that name in northeast Co. Londonderry.

In 1736 one Ulster Presbyterian considering emigration was Alexander Crawford, a tenant in Drumgun and Drumgun townlands in Killymard parish, in the barony of Banagh, County Donegal, where he and his brother Hugh rented 240 acres for just under £24 per year (increased from £20 in 1732), as well as additional dues of farm produce and labor, from their absentee landlord, Alexander Murray of Broughton in Kircudbrightshire, Scotland. Most of the Murray estate, some sixty-five thousand acres in all, was inhospitable mountain and bog, suitable only for rough grazing, but the Crawfords' farm was part of a thin belt of Scottish settlers spread for 30 miles along the fertile seacoast of southwest Donegal. According to Murray's agent, Thomas Addi, the Crawfords' and their neighbors' farms were "good for grain and pasture and commodious for fishing herrings, by which in some years they make their whole rent."

The Crawfords' holding should have placed them in at least the middling ranks of west Ulster society, but Alexander's letter to his landlord evinces no sense of well-being but instead catalogues many of the travails that impelled the early eighteenth-century emigration of Scots-Irish and others from Ulster. Crawford's letter complains of the burden of tithes and of the other legal and religious disabilities that Presbyterians and other Irish Dissenters experienced. However, economic adversity was Crawford's paramount concern and the primary factor stimulating Ulster emigration. When old leases expired, competition for new or renewed leases, coupled with landlords' desires for increased revenues, drove rent levels steadily upward; thus, in the early 1730s Addi had boasted of raising the rents of Murray's tenants "by fair or forceable means," despite their attempts to combine against him. Moreover, even in good years the remoteness of southwest Donegal from major markets depressed prices for farm produce and hindered economic development, but throughout Ulster in the 1720s crop failures, cattle diseases, and falling prices reduced tenants' incomes, forced many into linen manufacturing, and caused periodic famines. In 1729 many of Murray's tenants were so poor they abandoned their leases, signed contracts of indenture, and emigrated as servants to New England; and now again in the mid-1730s bad harvests obliged Crawford and many of his neighbors to threaten emigration if their landlord refused to reduce rents and provide assistance.

Alexander Crawford, Drumgun, Killymard Parish, County Donegal,
to Alexander Murray, Broughton, Cally, near Gatehouse of Fleet, Kircudbrightshire,
Scotland, 21 July 1736

Honred Landlord

Drumgun July 21th: 1736

I finding this oPortunaty have med this my
Mesenger to Acquint you of y^e misrabl Condision that I have Brout myself and my
famely to In Steying In your oners² Land thes yers Past Depending one³ your Honers

2. your oners: i.e., your honor's. 3. one: i.e., on.

Promises that you med to me when you were in this Contrey Last and After that Impost⁴ Rents And Burdings⁵ that Iame⁶ oblig<d> to grone yunder⁷ y^e Burding therof when I Can not Provid for my Children But ame⁸ obligt to Transport my Self and my famly to y^e Deserts of America and Had it not Ben for depending Upon your Honers Promise I and my famley might be Living in that Land wher we might be freed from thos Burdings that we ar Labring yunder Iame taking thes as Stroks from y^e Hand of god upon y^e account of⁹ my not Going with my frends when th<e>y would Ahad me to Agon¹⁰ wher we might A:livd¹¹ Hapley But know¹² Ame obligt to venter¹³ my grey hears to y^e mersey of god which we must do and y^e Dengers of y^e seas If not Prevent¹⁴ by you And ther has Ben Shuch¹⁵ faymins¹⁶ for Brad¹⁷ in thes Contrys¹⁸ And grat Daths of Catel and A Cind¹⁹ of deses or morin²⁰ that y^e Contrey Is I<m>povrist by it which is y^e ocesion with rents and tyths to Ca<u>s y^e most Part of y^e Cuntry to go to America we Are As Bound Slevs to Bishop <and> minestor²¹ By thire hurying²² yus into Bis<h>ops Corts if we doe not met ther time and Leseur²³ th<e>y may do What th<e>y Pleas for the<re> is not wan ither²⁴ to tak Part with yus or to stand ower Caues²⁵ or to Plead our Intrest we Are obligt to your Honers spering yus But at y^e

4. Impost: i.e., imposed. **5. Burdings:** i.e., burdens (reverse spelling; see appendix 1). **6. Iame:** i.e., I am. **7. yunder:** i.e., under; for the spelling see yus “us” hereafter. The writing of an initial “silent y” is still characteristic of letters written in the mid-nineteenth century by Ulster authors of Scottish origin, such as the Sproules of west Co. Tyrone; e.g., yous “us,” yout “out,” yeakers “acres.” **8. I Can not Provid for my Children But ame obligt to Transport my Self:** Crawford would normally have said “but is obliged to transport myself” (Northern Concord Rule; see appendix 1). The form **ame** (i.e., am) may represent an unconscious slide into the standard language, or it may have been imported from the standard language to lend the formal tone desirable in a petitionary letter addressed to a social superior (see chapter 6, n. 25). Crawford’s natural usage can be seen hereafter: y^e Havey Burding Contunes (“continues”) y^e seme and Is not Eabel to Stand it (i.e., and am not able). **9. upon y^e account of:** because of. **10. They would Ahad me to Agon:** i.e., would have had me to have gone (i.e., would have had me go). When functioning as a complement to a finite verb in a past tense, the present infinitive can be replaced by its past counterpart (as here: **go** is replaced by **to have gone**); such usage is particularly popular in the written language of the Early Modern period but is later largely abandoned. For **would Ahad** . . . see chapter 1, n. 22. **11. might A:livd:** i.e., might have lived. **12. know:** i.e., now. **13. venter:** i.e., venture; see chapter 1, n. 83. **14. Prevent:** i.e., prevented; **If not Prevent by you:** if you don’t intervene. When the root of a verb ends in **d** or **t**, the ending of the past tense and the past participle may optionally be dropped in Scots; although the process is obsolescent by Crawford’s time, surviving only in a few forms, among which is the frequently occurring **acquaint** (dialect variant: **acquent**) “acquainted, informed.” **15. Shuch:** i.e., such (pronounced [sich]). Because Scots **s** frequently corresponds to English **sh** (e.g. Scots **sud**, **sall**, **Inglis** = English **should**, **shall**, **English**), the graphic symbols **s** and **sh** can be interchanged in spelling; e.g. hereafter: **Bisops** “bishop’s.” **16. faymins:** famines (Scots pronunciation; see **faimily** “family,” **faimish** “famish”). **17. Brad:** i.e., bread. Crawford’s Scots pronunciation was probably [brayd]; see the spelling **grat** “great” hereafter. An alternate pronunciation, depending on dialect, is [breed]. **18. in thes Contrys:** in these regions, in this area. **19. Cind:** i.e., kind. **20. morin:** murrain (disease of cattle). **21. Bishop <and> minestor:** i.e., Church of Ireland clergy. **22. hurying:** harrying, harassing (probably for failure to pay tithes). **23. Leseur:** i.e., leisure (here = convenience); transposed spelling (-eur for -ure). **24. not wan ither:** not one other; i.e., no one else (Scots forms). **25. to tak Part with yus or to stand ower Caues:** “to take our side or defend our cause” (for yus see n. 7; Caues: transposed spelling, with -ues for use).

sem time y^e Havey²⁶ Burding Contunes²⁷ y^e seme and Is not Eabel²⁸ to Stand it nor
 would not be Ebel to hold my Land so Long as I did Had it not been for Ason that
 Ihave²⁹ whenhee³⁰ Saw that I was not Ebel to Provid for him hee med to b<u>y
 yeren³¹ and Cep³² his Credit very well If It Ley In your Honers Pouer to Put him In
 Som Beter way of his Busness I would Be yunder singler obligesions to your Honer:
 I hop you will Pardon thes Prusimtous³³ fevers³⁴ and my un<con>cidret³⁵ Lines whish
 Justly merits Rebuk from your genres good netuer and the kiness of your Honer Let
 Humbel Rquests and motivs tak Im Presion upon³⁶ you And As gods grat Progtive Is
 to be mersiful so Have mersy at y^e sencer³⁷ Request and Answer to this I ame your
 Honrs well wis<h>ing frend

And mos^t Hum^l Sr^t Allx^{dr} Crawford

Despite his apparent desperation in 1736, as of 1744 Crawford still had not emigrated, as demonstrated by his signature on a petition in that year. Perhaps he had been successful in a ploy, common among tenants, of exaggerating his hardships and threatening to emigrate to wring concessions from his landlord. However, his growing dependence on his son's earnings from weaving or jobbing linen yarn probably indicated real distress, as throughout Ulster tenants and cottagers were turning to linen manufacturing to supplement or supplant agricultural incomes. Although Crawford postponed or even abandoned his plan to emigrate, many others in similar or worse situations went to America at this time, especially from County Donegal and adjacent districts of west Ulster. Indeed, it is likely that Crawford regretted his decision to stay, for in the early and mid-1740s arctic weather and wretched harvests brought severe distress, and in April 1745 Murray's agent reported that many formerly "good tenants" were forced to beg or to emigrate. In the latter half of the century, economic conditions improved significantly, but the earlier crises had "greatly weakened the Dissenting Interest" in southwest Ulster—as a resident of Donegal town, only three miles from Crawford's farm, had warned in 1744—and by 1766 only a handful of the Protestants in Killymard parish were Presbyterians. Even subsequent economic expansion did not stem local Protestants' emigration, as between 1766 and 1831 their proportion of Killymard's population fell from 55 to 36 percent.³⁸

26. Havey: i.e., heavy; the spelling suggests the variant pronunciation [hayvee], now confined to Scotland. The more common Scots pronunciation is [hevvee] or [hivvee]. **27. Contunes:** i.e., continues; may represent a transposed spelling for "contenus," which is a fairly close approximation of the normal Scots pronunciation [kunteenuz]. **28. and Is not Eabel:** i.e., and I am not able; see n. 8. **29. Ason that Ihave:** i.e., a son that I have "one of my sons." **30. whenhee:** i.e., when he. **31. yeren:** i.e., yern "yarn" (Scots pronunciation; see Scots *pairt* = English *part*; Scots *lairge* = English *large*, etc.). **32. Cep:** i.e., kept; also see [slep] "slept," [uttemp] "attempt," [kunek] "connect," [faak] "fact," etc. **33. Prusimtous:** i.e., presumptuous; probably a transposed spelling for *prisumtous*. **34. fevers:** i.e., favors (here = requests for favors/consideration); see appendix 1. **35. un<con>cidret:** i.e., inconsiderate. **36. tak Im Presion upon:** make an impression upon, not leave indifferent. **37. sencer:** i.e., sincere. **38.** For demographic data on Killymard parish and its environs, see appendix 2.1a, on chapter 2. Alexander Crawford, 1736.

David Lindsey, 1758

By the mid-1750s emigration from Ulster may have exceeded one thousand per year. Although commerce and industry in northern Ireland expanded after midcentury, so also did population pressures, costs, and expectations. Scots-Irish farmers were increasingly subject to “improving” landlords who granted shorter leases, geared rent levels to anticipated price increases, and demanded that tenants modernize their holdings to increase production. More tenants became dependent on linen manufacturing, and its attendant market fluctuations and social dislocations further stimulated emigration.

Such pressures are obvious in this letter by David Lindsey, a small farmer in the mountainous borderlands between counties Tyrone and Londonderry, near the village and parish of Desertmartin.¹ In the mid-eighteenth century, this was an area in rapid transition. The region’s Catholic inhabitants, who in 1766 comprised a slight majority in Desertmartin parish, were still largely Irish-speaking, subsistence farmers. However, among Presbyterians, who dominated the region’s Protestant population, the linen trade had grown rapidly, with markets in a network of small towns such as Maghera, Cookstown, and Dungannon, where flax, yarn, and coarse linen cloth were sold and resold for spinning, weaving, bleaching, and eventual export to England and overseas. Economically, the region was oriented to the port of Newry, County Down, whose shippers employed emigration agents around Desertmartin and who sent paying passengers and indentured servants to Philadelphia as well as to New York and elsewhere in the North American colonies. By 1758 the Delaware River had been Ulster emigrants’ primary destination for three decades: thus, emigration to “Pennsillvena” was a natural strategy for David Lindsey, and previous settlement there by his Fleming cousins² meant he could rely on American kin for encouragement, directions, and perhaps also financial assistance, as his hope that an American relative would purchase or “redeem” his nephew’s bonded indenture suggests that at least some branches of Lindsey’s family lacked the capital to finance their own emigrations.

David Lindsey, near Desertmartin, County Londonderry,
to Thomas or Andrew Fleming, “Pennsillvena,” 19 March 1758

1. Family tradition locates David Lindsey in Co. Tyrone, probably in the barony of Dungannon Upper. His letter refers only to Desertmartin, a town and parish in Loughinsholin barony in Co. Londonderry, adjacent to Dungannon Upper. For demographic data on Desertmartin parish and its environs, see appendix 2.2b, on chapter 3. 2. Pennsylvania land-warrant and tax records indicate that the Flemings may have been in Chester Co., in eastern Pennsylvania, as early as 1734 and as late as 1771. However, in 1762 Thomas Fleming appears further west in Cumberland (present-day Huntingdon) Co., where he held 50 acres. By 1775 Thomas had been joined by William Fleming, probably the “Cusen W^m” mentioned in David Lindsey’s letter, and by 1781 the former had increased his holdings to 330 acres. After the Revolution it appears that the Flemings again moved westward, to the newly created Westmoreland Co., near Pittsburgh, where in 1791 William Fleming warranted four hundred acres.

D^r Cusen:

I had upertunity of reading your letter that was sent to your fatherinlaw, which gave me³ great satisfaction to here you were all in good health and fortunèd so well as to be posessed in so good a bargain of lands.⁴ We are all in good health at present I bless God for all his mercies and y^r uncle David is helthy and harty and do all join⁵ in our love and Compliments to you and your families and enquiring friends. I expected an account oftener from you, only times being troublesome in that country with wars that we were assured⁶ that you were all ded or killed The good Bargains of your lands in that Country Doe greatly encourage me to pluck up my spirits and make Redie for the Journey, for we are now oppressed with our lands set⁷ at 8s per acre and other improvements, Cutting our land in two acre parts and Quicking⁸ and only two years time for doing it all—ye<a> we Cannot stand more. I expected a letter from you more oftener, or that Cusen W^m Fleming would come over before this time, but these things does not Discourage me to goe only⁹ we Depend on y^e for Derrections in the goods fitting to take to that place. I had disappointment¹⁰ of 20s worth of Lining¹¹ Cloth y^t I sold, and had James Hoskins bond for the money. The merchant ran away, and I had great truble in getting my money, so that <it> was deleavered.¹² Brother John Fleming is dead and brother James Lindsey is married again to one Hoskins and his son Robert has service to¹³ his uncle James Martin and desires to know if he will redeem him if he goes over there. He is a good favour¹⁴ and is willing to work for his passage till its paid.

Your Cusen<s> in Desert martin is all in health. Cusen Mary <desires> to let you know all my father's family is in helth and joins in y^r¹⁵ love to y^e. My father is very far spent¹⁶ and I expect to see him buried before I leave the place. Your father and my uncle Andrew is but tender in helth. Sarah Rickets desires to be remembered in her

3. which gave me: i.e., and it gave me; the use of **which** as a loose sentence connective with roughly the meaning “and” is frequent before the nineteenth century and persists in dialect speech. Cf. Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, 5.2.28–33 “They confess towards thee forgetfulness . . . **which** (i.e., and) now the public body . . . hath sense withal of it (i.e., its) own fail (i.e., failures). **4. bargain of lands:** lands acquired at an advantageous price; see hereafter: **The good Bargains of your lands.** **5. and do all join:** and we do all join; see chapter 1, n. 110. **6. only times being troublesome in that country with wars that we were assured:** read **only (times being troublesome in that country with wars) that we were assured; only (. . .) that:** except that; **assured:** certain. **wars:** in spring 1754 there commenced in western Pennsylvania the hostilities that soon escalated (especially after General Edward Braddock's defeat near Fort Pitt on 9 July 1755) into what the colonists called the French and Indian War (1754–1763). The war's devastating effects on the Scots-Irish and other settlers on the Pennsylvania frontier are recorded in James McCullough's journal (see chapter 21). **7. set:** leased (from Lindsey's landlord). **8. Quicking:** planting a quickset (esp. whitethorn) hedge. **9. only:** but. **10. had disappointment of:** lost money on. **11. Lining:** i.e., linen (reverse spelling; see appendix 1). **12. deleavered:** delivered, i.e., submitted to the judgment of a court (Scots usage). **13. has service to:** has a situation as servant to. **14. favour:** here used in the archaic sense of “object of favor”; therefore **good favour** “a good object of favor, worthy of favor/support.” **15. y^r:** their. **16. far spent:** far gone, i.e., in health or age.

love to her sister Nelly and other friends. Our living is dear in this place. I conclude with my love to you and all friends there. I am yours till death.

—David Lindsey

As Lindsey noted, in the late 1750s the Pennsylvania frontier was aflame with war between the British and the French and Indians, thereby jeopardizing his connections with his American cousins. However, sometime after 1758 Lindsey did emigrate, and family records indicate that he settled, lived, and died on a “large farm” near Pittsburgh.¹⁷ Two of his four sons¹⁸ fought in the American Revolution: William was killed in North Carolina at the battle of Guilford Courthouse (15 March 1781); and David Jr. served with his Fleming and Martin cousins as a frontier ranger in western Pennsylvania. Sometime prior to 1786 David, Jr., moved to Kentucky, where he later settled in Harrison County, among his Fleming kinsmen, and in 1792 was appointed the county’s first coroner. He died in 1814, leaving 12 children, most of whom married the offspring of other Ulster immigrants and subsequently moved to Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois. Not untypically, by the century’s end David Lindsey Sr.’s descendants were claiming both noble lineage and that their emigrant ancestor had come directly from Scotland to Pennsylvania, thus ignoring the 50 to 100 years that the Lindseys and their kin had lived in Ireland.

4 ✱

Henry Johnston, 1773–1800

Scots-Irish and other Ulster emigration prior to the American Revolution peaked in 1770–1775, when perhaps 30,000 departed for the colonies, primarily from the east and mid-Ulster counties of Antrim, Down, and Armagh. Among the emigrants was the brother of Henry Johnston, a small farmer, linen weaver, and perhaps once a schoolmaster, in the market town of Loughbrickland, in the parish of Aghaderg and the barony of Upper Iveagh, in west County Down.¹ To the south and west of his parish, in south Down and in Armagh, Catholics comprised half or more of the population, but in Aghaderg Presbyte-

17. David Lindsey first appears in the Pennsylvania land and tax records in 1771, as the owner or renter of two hundred acres in Chester Co. Like his Fleming cousins, however, by the time of the Revolution Lindsey had moved westward into Cumberland Co.—where by 1779–1781 he and his son, David Jr., farmed one hundred acres—and after the Revolution he resettled once more in Westmoreland Co., “near Pittsburgh,” where in 1783 he again held one hundred acres, plus three horses, four cattle, and nine sheep. Lindsey may have died between 1783 and 1785, for in the latter year “David Lindsey’s heirs” were taxed for 250 acres. 18. Lindsey’s other two sons were Hezekiah (b. 1747 in Ulster) and Edward, who settled in North Carolina. 1. In the 1820s, the Tithe Composition Books recorded only one Johnston or Johnson in Aghaderg parish: John Johnson, holding seven acres in Drumnahaire townland.

rians constituted nearly 60 percent of the households in 1766, with Anglicans another 10 percent.² Aghaderg's soil was extremely fertile, lying along the Bann River, but linen dominated the local economy; as late as 1821 nearly 70 percent of the parish's inhabitants were engaged in manufacturing, trade, or other nonfarming pursuits.

In 1772 Henry Johnston's brother, Moses, emigrated with his wife and children to Philadelphia and settled in Leacock township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In 1773 Henry wrote to Moses, congratulated him on his escape to a "Land of Liberty," and recounted the reasons why thousands more were following his example. By the early 1770s extreme specialization in the linen industry, minute subdivision of holdings, and Ireland's highest population densities had reduced most of east Ulster's inhabitants to the ranks of subtenants, tiny farmers and cottier-weavers,³ often working on the putting-out system, who were totally dependent on the linen trade and highly vulnerable to fluctuating prices and wages and to inflating rents, food costs, and taxes. For several decades, local rents had been rising and evictions becoming more common, and in the early 1770s Lord Donegall, one of the area's largest absentee landlords, imposed substantial fines for lease renewals, allegedly totaling £100,000, on his head tenants, who in turn passed the costs onto a succession of undertenants. This outraged and united farmers and cottier-weavers alike and inaugurated an outburst of violent protests against rents, tithes, and taxes by bands of armed Presbyterians, commonly known as the Hearts of Steel or the Steelboys. In the same years a severe depression in the linen industry put a third of east Ulster's weavers out of employment and caused a succession of failures among major banking houses and traders. Given the general distress, coupled with government repression of the Steelboys (many of whom fled to America), it was little wonder Henry Johnston characterized Ireland as a "Land of Slavery."

2. For demographic data on Aghaderg parish and its environs, see appendix 2.1c, on chapter 4. 3. Cottiers (or cottagers) were laborers who rented small amounts of land, two acres or less, usually from tenant farmers, in return for their agricultural labor on the latter's farms or, in much of Ulster, for weaving linen yarn which was usually supplied by petty "manufacturers," often the tenant farmers themselves; Ulster cottiers' wives and children also helped pay the rent by spinning prepared flax into linen yarn. In parts of southern Ireland many cottiers were dairymen, but their wives and children also engaged in cottage manufacturing, especially spinning woolen yarn. Cottiers are distinguished from "landless" agricultural laborers (who received monetary wages from farmer-employers and either purchased food in the market or paid cash to rent scraps of land for their families' subsistence) and from farm servants, who lived and boarded with their employers. The socioeconomic and cultural demarcations between cottiers and the smallest tenant or subtenant farmers were indistinct and fluid, and in the late eighteenth century demographic growth and the fragmentation of holdings, especially in Ulster, "pushed" many smallholders' families into the cottier and laboring ranks. Indeed, the desire to escape such a decline, from "independent" to "dependent" status, was a principal motive for emigration among small farmers and their offspring. Likewise, distinctions between cottiers and laborers were often vague, especially in late eighteenth-century Ulster where all the land set for subsistence cultivation in oats and potatoes could not feed its inhabitants and so foodstuffs for sale to the "laboring poor" had to be imported from other parts of the island.

Letter 1.

Henry Johnston, Loughbrickland, County Down, to Moses Johnston,
Leacock Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 28 April 1773

LBland 28th April 1773 three—

Dear Brother}

I see⁴ your Letter to my Brother John wrote Immediately after your landing; as also I received yours to my self dated in Novemb^r and myself my Family and in A word all your Acquaintance in this place are very happy to hear of your safe Arrival with your Family out of A Land of Slavery into A Land of Liberty and freedom; and the more so as this Kingdom is much worse than it was even when you left it; Trading of all sorts and in all Branches⁵ Growing worse; and every day opens a new prospect of woe & misery; I need not tell <you> that Lands is out of measure in high Rents & Tyths; Wool and Woollen Goods Excessive high on Account of the Wooll being transported from hence to France; in Butter Casks⁶ and other such ways as can be projected; which practice laves⁷ numbers of our Industrious poor without work in the West part of Ireland—and in that part where Thousands ware⁸ formerly employed Manufacturing our Wool; they are now without work—And as for our North they are still worse; one unlucky accident after another, has set very sore on Us;⁹ in the first place, the Flourishing State of our Linnen Manufacture for many years past Raised the price of Lands in the North of this Island to A monstrous pitch;¹⁰ which while Trade flourish^d the poor would Easily pay; these Rents are yet Expected by our Landlords tho' Trade is now Sunk to A Very low Ebb; the first heavy stroak we got was; by Lord Donegall; who its thought Carried away one Hundred Thousand pounds of our ready Specie, then the Failure of Fordice & Company Bankers of London; Just before our June Market last, Spoiled it Entirely the September Market no better, & the December one still worse. I was in the Hall¹¹ for 15 Days & Could scarcely see any man to look on A Piece of Linnen; in Consequence of which Very Few Men was able to buy A Brown Webb; which makes many of our Bleach Yards Idle not one sing<|>e peice in them; what it will Turn to God only knows; but at present looks very Ill; Failures alway¹² hapning. the other day S^r George Colebrook & Company

4. see: saw; the past tense form *see* is characteristic of the Ulster Scots and mid-Ulster dialects, while mainland Scots has mostly *saw*, *seed*, or *sauch*. 5. Branch: subdivision, “department.” 6. transported . . . to France; in Butter Casks: ref. to the smuggling of Irish woollen goods, disguised as butter, to France. Henry Johnston employs semicolons instead of commas. 7. laves: i.e., leaves [layvz] (Ulster Scots pronunciation); the predominant mainland Scots variant is [leevz]. 8. ware: i.e., were (rhymes with “car”; for the spelling see *whare* “where” hereafter, which also rhymes with “car” and is frequently spelled *whaur*). 9. has set very sore on Us: “has hit us very hard.” 10. pitch: level (OED, s.v., 22.a). 11. Hall: the local linen hall, where weavers sold their webs of woven *brown* (unbleached, see hereafter) linen to bleachers. 12. alway: always “still, continually” (Scots usage); *alway* is either the archaic variant of *always* or is imported from the Bible. The form *alway* occurs again hereafter for *always* in the standard meaning “at all times”: to him [= God] *alway* be thankfull.

Bankers of London stopt payment Davis & Gennings March^s of Dublin Will^m
Wallace of Belfast and numbers more—12 Hundred¹³ webbs now [. . .]¹⁴ 15^d to 18^d &
so on [. . .]¹⁵ One thing indeed is very happy for us Victualing is Low Petatoes
from 6½ to 10:^d [⌘] Bushel & very plenty;¹⁶ Oat meal from 9 to 10 Shillings [⌘]
Hundred Butter at 5½^d [⌘] Lb—Flesh is naturally high this season of the
Year Beef & Mutton 4^d to 4½^d [⌘] LB Flour is highest; our County of Louth Flour
sells at 17 to 18^s/6^d [⌘] Hundred in Newry Market; Best Slain¹⁷ or Haylands at 19^s [⌘]
H^d¹⁸ and 13 Casks of America Flour which was all that I hear of coming into Newry
this season; sold to the Baker I deal with at 19^s:6 [⌘] C^t.¹⁹ Flax seed selling at 7^s:6^d to 8^s
the Bushel—The Hearts of Oak Steel Gold²⁰ or what ever you please to Call them
are all Quiet; some few was tried in Carickfergus²¹ and Down<patrick>;²² and all
acquit²³ Except four or five whose Crimes was Felony & suffered; but all that was
taken for the Roiet²⁴ at Gilford was transmitted to Dublin, and took their tryal²⁵ there
which was well for them; the citizens was very kind to them when in Goal;²⁶ and on
tryal Every Soul was acquit²⁷—It's now time to turn to Family affairs; thank God
Weare²⁸ in Tolarable Good health Dav:^d married about the time you sail^d to Ja^s
Robisons Daughter Bob & Jn^o Young are well; as is Hugh Cupples & Family; His
Son James is the Person by whom I send these, in the Ship Needham Captⁿ
Chevers, I shall send you another Letter by the Ship Minerva Captⁿ M^cCullough lest
one should miscarry, there is Eleven Ships Intended to sail from Newry & Belfast for
Philadelphia & newcastle²⁹ this Spring; I hear Brother John wrote to you by Captⁿ
M^cCullough from Belfast who sail^d 15 days since I hope you will not forget to write
when opportunity serves; if to Belfast Direct to me to the Care of M^r Thomas
Sinclaire; if to Newry to the care of M^r Geo: Anderson I hope Dear Moses (tho' you

13. Hundred: measure of the fineness of the weave. **14.** Ms. torn (six to eight words missing). **15.** Ms. torn (six to eight words missing). **16. plenty:** plentiful, abundant. **17. Slain:** Slane town (and parish, Upper Slane barony, Co. Meath); site of the largest flour mills in Ireland (built 1763–1767). **18. H^d:** hundred (see the foregoing: County of Louth Flour sells at 17 to 18^s/6^d [⌘] Hundred). A shortening of “hundredweight” (112 lbs., or in the case of the long hundred, 120 lbs.); also abbrev. as Hun^d, e.g. 1st Flour 40^s [⌘] Hun^d (letter 3 hereafter). Not to be confused with hogshead (abbrev. hhd.), which is a measure of volume, only rarely used of flour but common with liquids, granular substances, and meat. **19. C^t:** hundredweight (see n. 18). **20. Hearts of Oak Steel Gold:** in parts of counties Down and Armagh, the Hearts of Steel were sometimes known as the Hearts of Oak (the name of another secret agrarian society that had operated in east and mid-Ulster in the 1760s) or as the Hearts of Gold. **21. Carickfergus:** Carrickfergus town, parish, and (then) county (now part of Co. Antrim), on Belfast Lough. **22. Down<patrick>:** Downpatrick town (Down parish, Lecale Upper barony, Co. Down). **23. acquit:** i.e., acquitted; see chapter 2, n. 14. **24. Roiet:** i.e., riot; reverse spelling (most instances of Standard [oy] correspond to [ey] in Scots; e.g. Standard boil [boyl] = Scots [beyl], Standard join [joyn] = Scots [jeyn], etc.). **25. took their tryal:** stood trial. **26. Goal:** i.e., gaol “jail.” **27. the Roiet at Gilford . . . Every Soul was acquit:** the “riot” was an attack by Steelboys on the house of Richard Johnston, a zealous magistrate in Gilford town, Co. Down, in early March 1772. Although Johnston escaped, one of his supporters, a Presbyterian minister, and several Steelboys were killed. The authorities transferred the accused to Dublin for trial, assuming convictions would be more easily forthcoming there than in east Ulster, but were disappointed when the Dublin jurors refused to convict. **28. Weare:** i.e., we are. **29. newcastle:** New Castle, Delaware.

have Changed your nativity for a strange Land) You will be very carefull to remember that Kind & mercifull God who has Created & preserved you; whose Goodness you have seen displayed in a Clear manner; in your preservation in your late Voyage; be carefull to repent of your Sins & with all your Heart and Soul turn unto the Lord; set a Good and Religious Example to your wife & Children knowing that there is no [re]pentance in the Grave; I am Dear Br[other] yours till Death

H Johnston

When normal commerce recommenced after the American Revolution, Moses and Henry Johnston quickly reestablished communications. However, although Ulster emigration rapidly resumed at the war's end, with over 10,000 departures in 1784 alone, Henry Johnston was reluctant to consider leaving Ireland: "my son Jack is sometimes Talking of going to america," he wrote, "but I would be glad to know how things go on [there] before he w^d do it."³⁰ Johnston's hesitation stemmed from several causes. First, he was disappointed in the paucity and vagueness of information received from Moses, in regard both to general American economic conditions and to the latter's own situation. Apparently, in fact, Moses had not done very well. In the early mid-eighteenth century, large numbers of Scots-Irish farmers had emigrated to the Lancaster County frontier, mostly settling the upland districts where forests were easier to clear than in the more fertile bottomlands. However, by the time Moses arrived in 1772 Lancaster County was thickly inhabited, increasingly by German immigrants whose superior capital and farming skills had pushed the Scots-Irish south and west in search of cheaper lands. In 1782 only 13 percent of the county's population was of Irish birth or descent, and in that year local assessors recorded Moses Johnston as among the county's lowest category of taxpayers, owning no land, two horses, and two cattle. At best, he was a small tenant farmer, perhaps also a schoolmaster, in a highly commercialized, wheat-producing district where rising land prices precluded his chances of becoming a substantial land-owner. Nor had Moses established himself politically: his only other appearance in local records was as a member of the county militia in 1782, but his name does not appear on the earlier muster rolls of companies that actually fought in the Revolution. Henry Johnston's suspicion of his brother's lack of success was obvious: "if you have made money as fast as numbers Say they do in America you might now be able to Send over some F[lax] Seed and Get any of this Country's Goods you might Stand in need of in Return."³¹

Another reason for Henry's reluctance to emigrate was his belief that recent political changes in Ireland augured well for economic improvement at home. In 1778–1783 a Volunteer movement, led by "Patriots" among disgruntled members of the Protestant gentry and merchant classes, successfully pressured the British government to repeal restric-

30. Henry Johnston, Loughbrickland, Co. Down, to Moses Johnston, Leacock township, Lancaster Co., Pa., 5 March 1784. 31. Henry Johnston, Loughbrickland, Co. Down, to Moses Johnston, Leacock township, Lancaster Co., Pa., 3 June 1784.

tions on Irish trade and grant legislative autonomy to the Irish Parliament. Thus, in his 5 March 1784 letter Johnston enthused over “the wonders our Volunteer army has wrought in this Country, to obtain our Freedom & to get the making our own Laws.” However, the so-called Revolution of 1782 proved disillusioning: the Irish Parliament itself remained unreformed, corrupt, and unrepresentative of Dissenters and of middle- and lower-class Protestants, generally (as well as Catholics), and still subordinate to the British government. Moreover, rising rents, food costs, and taxes, despite overall economic expansion, continued to press hard on Ulster tenants, stimulating more emigration. By 1790 several of Henry and Moses Johnston’s relatives were eager to join Moses in America. For example, the brothers-in-law James and Thomas Young, weavers who rented merely seven acres of “verey in[different] Land” for 18s. per acre, begged Moses to inform them “if ther would Be aney incoridgment for Wavers in a Merrica for we he[a]re in this Contrey that one Man Cane Make as Much as fore Men Can Make here At Waving.”³² Also, in his own letters of that year, Henry Johnston referred to the increasing sectarian polarization in Ulster, particularly in neighboring County Armagh, which gave additional stimulus to emigration. In the mid- and late 1780s, political tensions and intense competition for land and employment caused the volatile mixture of Protestants and Catholics in mid-Armagh to explode into violence, as armed bands of poor Protestants—primarily Anglicans—called Peep o’ Day (or Break o’ Day) Boys fought pitched battles with Catholics, who in turn formed an organization known as the Catholic Defenders. The consequent “Armagh Outrages,” when thousands of Catholics were driven from their homes, were a nasty prelude to the “very troublesome times” that Johnston predicted lay ahead.³³

Letter 2.

Henry Johnston, Loughbrickland, County Down, to Moses Johnston,
Leacock Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 16 April 1790

Dear Brother

LBLand 16th April 1790

Your Very pleasing Letter dated in Nov^r 1789 and also one to Bro^r John I rec^d by M^r Tho^s Hawthorn he returns by the same Ship & by him I send this he is taking a Son of Dav^d Tullys an Aprentice with him my self and Family (thank God) enjoy a Tolarabl good state of health as does Brother John and Family. We have had a good deal of Disturbance here in this Neighbourhood of Late; for two Years past a set

32. James and Thomas Young, “Lesnow” [or “Lesmore,” “Lesnord”?], probably Clonduff parish, Co. Down, to Moses Johnston, Leacock township, Lancaster Co., Pa., 4 April 1790. 33. Demographic data spanning the 1766–1831 period suggests that a combination of loyalist violence, selective leasing by Anglican landlords, and economic circumstances may have combined to drive very large numbers of disaffected Presbyterians, as well as Catholics, out of the mid-Ulster region of west Down, Armagh, and east Tyrone in the 1780s, 1790s, and early 1800s. If so, such intra-Protestant conflicts remain unknown or unexplored by historians, despite their obviously important implications for the development of Ulster unionism. See appendix 2.1c.

of Idle Ill disposed young Fellows assembled in the Night and went under the Name of B<r>akaday Boys³⁴ they said their design was to take the Arms from the Roman Catholicks³⁵ some of which they did take and <did> some mistchief both to the People and their property the Catholick<s> endeavour^d to defend them selves and goes under the Name of Defenders these two parties have been snarling at Each other some months but on the 1st of July last aparty of the Protistants or Brakaday Boys assembled to Celebrate the Memory³⁶ of the Battle of the Boyne³⁷ and with arms in their hands and Coulours Flying march^d tho'³⁸ this Town and took the road to Gilford but about a mile from hence at aplace call^d Lisnagade where is a forth³⁹ there was a Great Number of the Defenders assembled and as the others pass^d by they fir^d on them the Protestants return^d the fire and a brisk Ingagement began which lasted about 5 hours there was many wounded & some few Catholicks Kill^d, and ever since they are snarling at Each other and I doubt if things does not take aspeedy turn that there will be very troublsome times in Ireland before long — We have had Very uncommon weather these twelve months, the Summer was Exceeding wet, from Nov^r till Jan^y some Wet moderate no Frost, Jan^y moderate, Feb^y, March, and what is pas^d of April Very dry, no rain these 2 Months smart⁴⁰ frosts now in the morn^g⁴¹ and what Spring we had is fail^d, and Very sore Labour to get the Potatoes Cover^d as to the Books you mention Ihave two English Dicksonarys⁴² and am making search for them and <the> Confesion of Faith⁴³ will be bought in Belfast & M^r Tho^s promis^d to for ward it toyou I am Your Loving Brother

Hen Johnston

From 1789 the example of the French Revolution—and the high costs of the subsequent Anglo-French wars—galvanized middle- and lower-class Irish discontent against the governing establishment, especially among many Presbyterian merchants, farmers, weavers, and other artisans in County Down and elsewhere in east Ulster. In October

34. B<r>akaday Boys: Break o' Day Boys, i.e., Peep o' Day Boys. 35. to take the Arms from the Roman Catholicks: during the Volunteer movement of 1778–1783, and particularly in its later stages, the liberal Presbyterians who controlled many of east and mid-Ulster's Volunteer companies had allowed local Catholics to join their ranks and parade with arms, in violation of the Penal Laws, which (until 1793) restricted firearms to Protestants; in 1784–1785 disarming such Catholics was one of the Peep o' Day Boys' immediate objects—or at least a plausible excuse for raiding Catholics' homes and driving them out of mid-Ulster.

36. Memory: commemoration. 37. Battle of the Boyne: William of Orange's celebrated victory, on the banks of the Boyne River, Co. Meath, over the Irish and French armies of James II on 12 July 1690 (1 July old style). 38. tho': i.e., through; initial cluster *thr* shows a tendency in Ulster Scots to lose the *r*, creating doublets *through* : *thoo*, *throat* : *thoat*, etc. 39. forth: (ancient) earthworks, rath (Ulster Scots form). The fort or rath of Lisnagade is near Tanderagee town (Lisnadill parish, Few's Lower barony, Co. Armagh); the confrontation described by Johnston occurred in July 1789. 40. smart: intense, sharp. 41. morn^g: morning. 42. Dicksonarys: the spelling represents a common Ulster (Ulster Scots and mid-Ulster) pronunciation ("dixonaries"). 43. Confesion of Faith: the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), to which most Presbyterian clergy and laity in Ulster, Scotland, and America still subscribed in the eighteenth century.

1791 Belfast and Dublin radicals formed the Society of United Irishmen to agitate for parliamentary reform. Driven underground by official repression, the United Irishmen prepared for revolution with French assistance and strove to unite disaffected Ulster Dissenters with Catholic Defenders in a rebellion to create a democratic, nonsectarian Irish republic. For several years their chances appeared promising, as high wartime taxes and food prices increased popular distress and disaffection, while the war itself closed the safety valve of overseas emigration. By 1797 County Down contained some twenty-eight thousand United Irishmen, over a fourth of Ulster's total. However, among poor Anglicans and other Protestants in mid-Ulster, where Catholics comprised large minorities or majorities of local populations, fears of armed "papists" and of the United Irishmen's democratic vision outweighed resentments against a landlord ascendancy and a government that, however exploitive, guaranteed their physical safety and "ancient privileges." Thus, in 1795 the Peep o' Day Boys and other Protestant bands coalesced into the Loyal Orange Order and launched a pogrom against local Catholics and their radical allies. And in 1797, after the failure of a French invasion at Bantry Bay in west Cork (December 1796), the government unleashed the army and mobilized the Orangemen and other loyalists into Yeomanry Corps to purge Ulster of suspected United Irishmen. Their "dragooning of Ulster" was so effective that when the remnants of the United Irishmen finally rose in May–June 1798, in Antrim and Down as well as further south, the result was disastrous, as Henry Johnston related in his last surviving letter to brother Moses.

Letter 3.

Henry Johnston, Loughbrickland, County Down, to Moses Johnston,
Northumberland, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, 11 May 1800



Dear Brother

[11]th May 1800—


As I have not heard from you for Some Years, I concluded you ware Either dead or left the Country whar you was formarly Settled But having by chance seen M^r Alexander Greer, who call^d here on his Way to Newry to take passage for himself and the Family he Left her<e> when he Left this 16 years agoe He tells me he was some time in you<r> House, when he went first to America<, > that he understood you had purchas^d 400 acres <of> Land many Miles from whare you liv^d and that you took a Journy to See your New purchase, & took Sick, & return^d, that your wife, & a Daughter died about <the> Same time, that he does not know whither⁴⁴ You are gone to your New purchase or Not—My dear Wife departed this Life in Dec^r 1795 Since that time there is nothing here but disturbance, confusion, & in many Places Rebelion; in the Counties of Wexford Wicklow &c many Thousand have been Kill^d some in Battle and many by the Sword of the Law, and yet there are many

44. whither: whether (Scots).

atrying⁴⁵ which are mostly Transported,⁴⁶ The Low part of County of Antrim was greatly involv^d in the Troubles, Some Kill^d in Skrimiges with the Millitary, Some tryed & Shot, Some hang^d and not ended yet this day about 30 was march^d Thoug47 this Town to Dublin from that Quarter,⁴⁸ And in this Coun[ty at] Ballinghinch⁴⁹ they had a Battle in which many lost thier Lives, and many [innocent] People lost thier all, by plundering House burning & desolations such as are the Natural consequences of Civil War

Thank God the Troubles did not come Just to our door, but much too near, one Man out of this Town was hang^d to <a> Sign-post in Belfast⁵⁰ The dreadfull consequence arising from So much disturbance was a great Check to Agriculture, togather with a Very Wet & cold Spring, in 1799, the summer Wet and unaturill & a Very Wet & scanty Harvest; Provisions of all sorts a monstrous price 1st Flour 40^s  Hun^d Oat meal 36 to 37 Shilling & not good Potatoes from 2^s.2^d to 2^s.8^d  Bushel & I hear that some time ago the<y> sold in Dublin at Eliven Shilling a Hundrd I enjoy a tolerable good health considering my age Jack is well, but Es^t has been Some time past Very Ill but now some what better I wish to know whether you have gone to your New place, wher it is Situate, how much of it, what it is fit to produce, and what the Rent is, & what Tenure—I have reason to hope from What I heare from America, & what I see here that you Left this in Good time may God enable you & Family to work tho^{'s}⁵¹ the Fatigues which no doubt is great, and to him alway be thankfull May The Great Director of all Event<s> bless & prosper you in Your Journey Though⁵² Life is Sincere prayer of Your Loving Brother—

Hen^y Johnston

 favour of Alex^r Greer who says he will forward it safe to you

45. atrying: i.e., a trying “being tried;” an instance of the use of the present participle with the prefix *a* to convey a passive sense. Such usage is attested in Shakespeare (e.g., *Macbeth*, 3.4.33: “while ‘tis a making” (= while it is being made), and continues in Ulster well into the nineteenth century, although it is clearly obsolete. Another instance of the pattern will be found in chapter 55, n. 18. The present participle with this sense also occurs without the prefix *a*; see chapter 24, n. 13; chapter 40, n. 26; chapter 55, n. 37; and chapter 67, n. 14. **46. which are mostly Transported:** i.e., most of those convicted of treason were sentenced to transportation and penal servitude overseas, primarily in the new British penal colony at Botany Bay, New South Wales; others were transported to the West Indies, to serve in the British army’s “condemned regiments.” **47. thoug through; see also *tho’* and *Though* hereafter and n. 38. **48. Quarter:** area (here the aforementioned *The low part of County of Antrim*). **49. Ballinghinch:** Ballynahinch town (Magheradrool parish, Kinelarty barony, Co. Down); the battle of Ballynahinch occurred on 11 June 1798. The reverse spelling here (*ng* for *n*) probably represents a pronunciation “Ballinhinch” (see appendix 1). **50. one Man out of this Town was hang^d to <a> Sign-post in Belfast:** William Magill of Loughbrickland, court-martialed in Belfast on 2 June 1798, on the charge of swearing British soldiers into the United Irishmen, was found guilty and hanged on a lamppost opposite the market house. **51. tho’:** see n. 38. **52. Though:** see n. 38.**

Moses Johnston indeed had “Left [Ulster] in Good time.” Not only had he escaped the political strife and rampant food price inflation of late eighteenth-century Ireland, but sometime in the 1790s he improved his economic position dramatically. After a brief sojourn in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, by 1800 Moses had moved north to the Genessee country of western New York, a rich and thinly settled frontier region on the verge of rapid development. Perhaps, as Henry had heard, the death of Moses’s first wife and an advantageous second marriage had brought him the capital and confidence necessary to recommence pioneering in late middle age. Whether he indeed owned four hundred acres is uncertain, but the 1800 New York state tax lists recorded his ownership of \$800 in real and personal property, which placed him among the top twenty property holders (apart from speculators worth \$3,000 or more) in Northampton township. In 1810 he was living in Riga township in the future Monroe County, scarcely 15 miles from the growing town of Rochester. Either Moses or his children formed marriage alliances with prosperous west New York families such as the Parishes and Trumbulls, and the coming of the Erie Canal and the region’s booming prosperity lay just ahead. After disappointments both in Ireland and in Pennsylvania, Moses Johnston had finally found his “best poor man’s country.”

5 ✱

Walter Corish Devereux, 1798

In the seventeenth century, southern Irish Catholics probably constituted a large majority of the relatively few emigrants from Ireland, perhaps 30,000–50,000 in all, who crossed the Atlantic and settled primarily in the West Indies and the Chesapeake region. In the eighteenth century Catholics still comprised between one-fifth and one-fourth of the permanent Irish migrants to the New World; increasingly they came from Ulster, embarking with their Protestant neighbors from towns such as Newry and Derry, as well as from the hinterlands of southern Irish ports like Dublin and Cork. Also in the 1700s, thousands of Catholics from Ireland’s southeastern counties left Waterford to work as seasonal migrants in the Newfoundland fisheries, and at least a few remained on the Grand Banks or re-migrated to New England. Before the American Revolution, the great majority of Catholic emigrants were poor indentured servants, and a significant flow of more affluent or skilled Catholics did not commence until the 1780s and 1790s. In the latter decade and in the early 1800s, such emigration was often stimulated or at least politicized by the United Irishmen’s Rebellion of 1798, the failure of which forced at least three thousand Irish to take immediate flight to America and encouraged thousands more to follow in succeeding years. Prominent among these were Henry Johnston’s radicalized Presbyterian and Catholic

neighbors in east Ulster, but they also included large numbers of Catholics from south Leinster counties such as Wexford, Wicklow, and Carlow.¹

Walter Corish Devereux of County Wexford, in southeastern Ireland, was one Catholic whose emigration overseas was clearly related to the tumultuous events of the late 1790s. Devereux was born in 1772 or 1773 at the Leap, a modest estate straddling three townlands² in Rossdroit parish, in Bantry barony, which his father, Thomas Devereux, leased from Abraham Fitzpatrick of Waterford.³ Formerly among Wexford's most prominent Old English families, the Devereuxs were descended from Anglo-Norman settlers who had followed Strongbow's invasion in 1169–1170 and gained estates at the expense of the displaced Gaelic Irish. In the seventeenth century, however, Protestant conquests and confiscations fractured the family's fortunes: some branches converted and retained their estates, but Walter Devereux's ancestors remained Catholic and lost their property. By the late eighteenth century, they had reemerged as "gentlemen farmers," leasing portions of their former estates from Protestant landlords and forming part of Wexford's large subgentry class of fairly prosperous but often embittered and politically active Catholic middlemen and merchants.

Perhaps the emigration of Thomas Devereux's sons should not be viewed exclusively in political terms. After all, Walter's younger brother and his correspondent in 1798, John Corish Devereux (b. 1774), emigrated in 1796, two years before the rebellion. However, Walter's departure from Ireland was certainly precipitated by political developments, although the precise depth of his involvement in the United Irish conspiracy is uncertain. The epicenter of the 1798 rebellion lay along the north Wexford–south Wicklow border, and in mid-Wexford Old English Catholics such as the Devereuxs of the Leap, who had partly recouped their fortunes, tended to be conservative. However, the younger generations of such families were more politically aggressive than their parents, more receptive to revolutionary ideals, and more likely to join the Society of United Irishmen. The Devereuxs' own blacksmith reportedly made arms for the insurgents, and the high probability that Walter wrote his letter from Dublin suggests he may have visited the capital to coordinate local strategy with the Society's leaders.

The Wexford rebellion—and the Devereuxs' involvement—can be attributed to several causes: radical idealism (as Walter's letter suggests), inspired by the French Revolution and spread locally by the United Irishmen; brutal repression of suspected radicals by the government and its local Protestant allies, organized into the Orange Order and the Yeomanry; competition for lease-renewals between Protestant and Catholic farmers; the general economic context of rising rents, high wartime taxes, and economic depression; and, in the case of the Devereuxs and similar families, devotion to Catholicism, resentment

1. See chapter 4, Henry Johnston, 1773–1800. Other clear examples of Ulster Protestant and Catholic fugitives from the "troubles" surrounding 1798 are documented in chapters 48, 65, and 68; on the Leinster exile Thomas Addis Emmet, see chapter 66. 2. Davidstown, Coolamurry, and Moneyhore. 3. For demographic data on Rossdroit parish and its environs, see appendix 2.2a, on chapter 5.

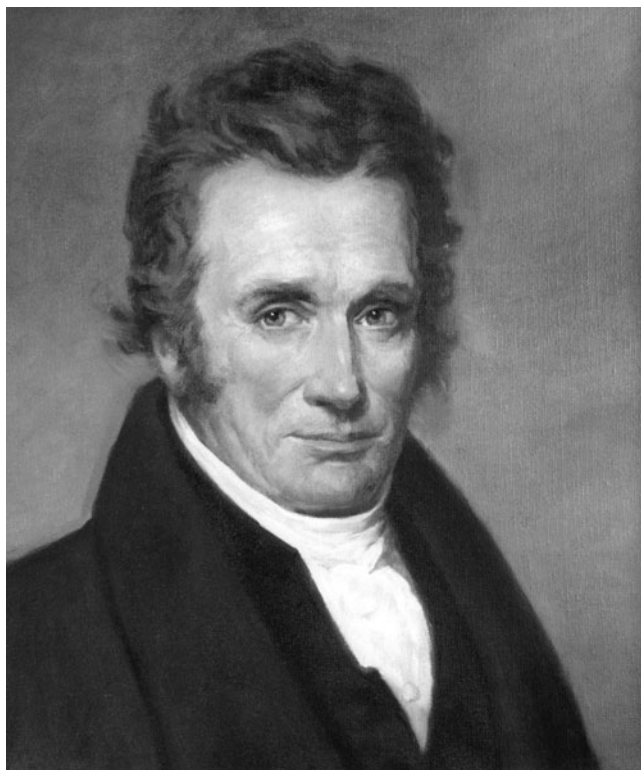


FIGURE 1
Portrait of John Corish
Devereux (1774–1848) of
Utica, New York, brother of
Walter Corish Devereux.
Photograph courtesy of
Matthew Garrett and John
Devereux Kernan, Hamden,
Connecticut.

against the Protestant Ascendancy, and dreams of regaining their former estates. However, when Walter wrote his brother on 1 April 1798, the prospects for a successful revolution were already slim. Most of the Society's Dublin leaders had recently been arrested, and the government had declared the island in a state of rebellion. Three weeks later, on 27 April, martial law was proclaimed in Wexford, and on 26 May the insurrection commenced at Boolavogue, only fifteen miles from the Devereux farm. Without the promised French assistance and despite remarkable early successes, in less than a month the Wexford rising was thoroughly crushed, with great loss of life, confirming Walter's premonition that emigration—or death—was his likely future.

Walter Corish Devereux, [Dublin?],
to John Corish Devereux, New York City, 1 April 1798

Dear Brother

April 1 1798

It is with much Pleasure I Embrace this Opirtunity of Sending my love to
you on last Christmas I Was in the Cuntry When your letter Arrivd it would be
impossible to tell the Joy it Created in the Whole familye Particuley my Mother Who
Cryd with Joy Dear John it is the Greatest Happyness to you that you left this

Unfortunate Cuntry now the pray of Orange and Castle⁴ Bloodhouns almost Every County in Poor Old Ireland under Martial Law and the Poor Cuntry Pesants Shot or hanged or Basteled⁵ without Law or form of Tryal all our Respectable and honest Cuntry men in the Goales⁶ of the Kingdom such as A. O. Conner,⁷ Oliver Bond⁸ & Charles Fitzgerald<,>⁹ Sweetman <the> Brewer¹⁰ and Severall Others but thank god that Irish men have Resolution and can Suffer more and Will Be free I Would send you a more full Ac^t of <it> Onely that I hope it will not Be long un till it will be none¹¹ and Praised throw the Whole World Dear John Send no Remittance to Ireland Untill you heare of her freedom and then When you Do Your Honest Friends¹² Shall Onely Receive the Benefit Your Old frend D. Murphey is also out of the way of his Enemees If the times are not Settled Before Next August I Certainley will then leave this Land of tiriney and Seek a land of Liberty but for a man hear to Promise himselfe a Single Day to live would be Presumption<,> for nothing but god and the Majestey of the People can Save us from What Every Irish man Abhors and

4. Castle: ref. to Dublin Castle, seat of the British-controlled executive branch of the Irish government, headed by the lord lieutenant (**Lord Leftenant** hereafter) or viceroy. **5. Basteled:** i.e., bastilled “imprisoned” (after the Bastille, the French royal prison in Paris, the fall of which on 14 July 1789 signaled the beginning of the French Revolution). **6. Goales:** i.e., gaols “jails.” **7. A. O. Conner:** Arthur O’Connor (1763–1852); born into an affluent Protestant family at Mitchelstown, Co. Cork; graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, 1782; member of the Irish Parliament, 1791–1795; joined the United Irishmen in 1796 and became a leading member of the Society’s provincial and national executives; on 28 February 1798 he was arrested while on a mission to English radicals; imprisoned at Fort George, Scotland, 1799–1802; after his release he went to France, where he lived in exile the rest of his life. Significantly, the United Irishmen whom Devereux names in his letter—O’Connor, Bond, Fitzgerald, and Sweetman—were among the most radical of the Society’s Dublin leadership; in 1798 they favored immediate revolution, even before the arrival of French military assistance, unlike more cautious leaders such as Thomas Addis Emmet, with whom O’Connor quarreled bitterly both before and after the rebellion (on Emmet, see chapter 66). **8. Oliver Bond** (1760?–1798): son of an Ulster dissenting clergyman, Bond settled in Dublin, where he became a wealthy woolen merchant; he joined the United Irishmen at the Society’s inception and became a leader of the Leinster and national directorates; arrested in his own house on 12 March 1798, with over a dozen other prominent United Irishmen, Bond was tried for treason, found guilty, and sentenced to death but died in prison of unknown causes before his execution. **9. Charles Fitzgerald:** Devereux erred in writing *Charles* Fitzgerald (1765–1810), instead of the name of Edward Fitzgerald (1763–1798), Charles’s younger brother. Seventh and twelfth sons, respectively, of James Fitzgerald (1756–1810), Earl of Kildare and first Duke of Leinster, Charles and Edward Fitzgerald both served in the British forces during the American Revolution, but afterward their careers were strikingly different: Charles was an outspoken loyalist in the 1790s and later became Baron LeCale, whereas Edward was radicalized by the French Revolution and became a leading United Irishman and the Society’s military commander; on 19 May 1798 he was arrested in Dublin and died on 4 June 1798 of wounds suffered during his arrest. **10. Sweetman <the> Brewer:** John Sweetman (1752–1826): born into a wealthy Dublin Catholic family, Sweetman inherited a prosperous brewery on Francis Street, where many of the United Irishmen’s secret meetings were held; with O’Connor, Bond, and Fitzgerald, Sweetman was a member of the Society’s Leinster Directory; arrested on 12 March 1798 at Oliver Bond’s house, Sweetman spent 1799–1802 in prison at Fort George, after which he was exiled to the continent; in 1820 he was allowed to return to Ireland, where he died at Swords, Co. Dublin. **11. none:** i.e., known. **12. Your Honest Friends:** i.e., your relatives who are United Irishmen rather than loyalists.

Will shortly Endevere¹³ to Crush to the Earth as they Do us in your next Let me
 <k>now what things would be Best for Me to Bring to America for let what will
 happen¹⁴ I Certainley will go to you if life Permits Me to Do and also <let me know>
 the Bisness you follow¹⁵ and how you git your helth¹⁶ <and> the trade of that Part of
 the Cuntry Prase the hapey ness of the Goverment and Wish that I Should go to you
 and Rite my Mother to let me go your Poor Old feble Father has not long to
 live he is Realey turned childish god help¹⁷ him Miss. E. Nowla[n]d¹⁸ is
 D<e>ad all your Friends hear Never forget You and Send you there love So
 Concludes wishing to See all we Expect happiley Compleated and Dear John Also To
 See you is the onley t<w>o wishes of your Ever loving Brother¹⁹

Also we have a great Deale of Short haired People hear which Our Blessed Government
 Calls Cropps²⁰ which the<y> are Very much Afeard of and Yesterday our Lord
 Leftenant Passed a Bill Proclaiming the hole Kingdom in a State of Rebellion
 9 O. Clock is the Ower²¹ all must be in Bed and no lights to be Seen throu out the
 Cuntrey Parts and in Some Cityes Aney Person Suspected to be Disafected to be
 takend Up and Cramed into Goale and tryed by a Coart Martial and Aney Person that
 concealed Arms is found with²² to Be Shot So Conclude Ever Wishing a good
 Under Standing to the World and a live Eagress [. . .] I Reman your etc.²³

Walter C. Devoreux

N[. . .] McNabb is not in town

In February 1800 John Devereux in America heard from his mother, Catherine, for the first time in a year and eight months. Clearly she did not approve of “the Wicket Rebellion” in which three of her sons had fought. Walter, her eldest son and the author of the preceding letter, had fled via Liverpool to Martinique, disguised as a sailor, and was never heard of again. Another son had been killed in battle, and her husband had died, perhaps in prison, leaving her a widow with two daughters and three young sons.²⁴ In her

13. Endeveres ms. 14. let what will happen: “let happen what will” (= whatever happens). 15. follow: pursue (a profession) (*English Dialect Dictionary*, s.v., 2); the Bisness you follow: “the line of work you pursue.” 16. how you git your helth: how your health is; see chapter 9, n. 12; also chapter 5, n. 16, and chapter 9, n. 12. 17. held ms. 18. Nowla[n]d: conjectural (ms. torn). 19. So Concludes . . . : mixture of two constructions: So Concludes (= I conclude), (1) wishing to See all we Expect happiley Compleated, and (2) wishing to See all we Expect happiley Compleated and Dear John Also To See you is the onley t<w>o wishes of your Ever loving Brother. 20. Cropps: i.e., Croppies, so called because the United Irishmen and their sympathizers wore their hair short in emulation of the French revolutionaries. 21. Ower: i.e., hour. 22. Aney Person that concealed arms is found with: “any person who is found to have secreted arms” (that . . . with: with whom). 23. live: conjectural (ms. blurred); [. . .]: perhaps three words illegible; your etc.: conjectural (ms. blurred); the complimentary close appears to be abbreviated, as is often the case. 24. No essay on the 1798 Rebellion in Wexford would be complete without mentioning the massacres, at Scullabogue Barn and Wexford Bridge, of several hundred loyalist (primarily Protestant) prisoners by vengeful rebels near the end of the rising. However, there is no evidence that Walter Devereux or his immediate kinsmen participated in the killings—although at least one member (also named Walter) of another branch of the

letter she described the continuing postwar repression in County Wexford—including a spate of Catholic chapel-burnings by vengeful loyalists—and declared her intention to emigrate, for “if We Dont get Some Relife the Cathlicks Cant live here.”²⁵ In fact, Walter’s mother never emigrated, dying in Ireland in 1813, but her three youngest sons joined their brother John in New York.

After six years’ labor as a dancing instructor in New England and New York City, during which he reportedly saved \$1,000, in November 1802 John Devereux moved to Utica, New York, then a village of only 90 houses and two hundred inhabitants, and established a dry goods and grocery business. In 1806 he began to bring over his three brothers: Thomas, who returned to Ireland after two years; Luke, who died a wastrel in Natchez, Mississippi; and Nicholas (b. 1791) who, although John’s junior by 17 years, became his business partner and proved his equal in enterprise. The withdrawal from trade of their main competitor; the coming of the Erie Canal built from 1817, with largely Irish crews by 1820; and the consequent quickening of commerce and settlement, which increased Utica’s population to 3,000 by 1820 and to 8,300 by 1830, all brought prosperity to John and Nicholas Devereux as they expanded from local merchandising into commodity exporting to Europe, banking, manufacturing, land speculation, large-scale farming, and canal and railroad promotion. Both brothers married into wealthy native families and became pillars of Utica society, but they also comprised part of the first leadership of the Irish-American Catholic community that emerged in the early nineteenth century. They contributed heavily to the Catholic Church’s expansion in upstate New York, and Nicholas established St. Bonaventure College on his estate near Buffalo. Likewise, the brothers’ Utica Savings Bank originated in the safekeeping of Irish canal workers’ wages, and unknown numbers of later emigrants found encouragement and employment from Devereux & Company. When John and Nicholas Devereux died, in 1848 and 1855, they were worth at least \$450,000 and \$300,000, respectively.

Wexford Devereuxs apparently did so. Moreover, the scale of these atrocities, although featured prominently in loyalist propaganda at the time and in most historical accounts ever since, pales in comparison with the thousands of rebels and noncombatants, among Catholics and Ulster Presbyterians alike, who were slaughtered in cold blood by British troops, by the Irish militia and yeomanry corps, and by Orangemen and other loyalist vigilantes shortly before, during, and immediately after the United Irish Rebellion. Contemporaries estimated that as many as one hundred thousand died in the Rebellion, and historians generally agree that between at least 20,000 and 30,000 people died, that a large majority of the dead (perhaps 90 percent) were killed because of their real or alleged involvement with the United Irishmen or their Catholic Defender allies, and that most of them did not perish in actual combat but had surrendered or were defenseless when murdered or executed.

25. Catherine Devereux, The Leap, Co. Wexford, to John C. Devereux, New York City, 14 February 1800.

Margaret Wright, 1808

The 1798 Rebellion convinced Ireland's Anglican gentry to abolish the Irish Parliament and consign their interests and legislative representation to Westminster, depending henceforth on the British government and the United Kingdom's Protestant majority to defend their property and privileges against Irish Catholics' and Dissenters' demands for substantive reform. However, despite official predictions that the consequent Act of Union (1800) would also bring Ireland prosperity, pressures for emigration continued to mount, particularly among Presbyterian small farmers and artisans in densely populated mid-Ulster. In 1806 John Kerr, a smallholder and weaver in southwest County Tyrone, described local conditions to his uncle, Alexander McNish, who had emigrated over thirty years earlier. Food was cheap, Kerr reported, but taxation and rents were soaring: "for as . . . population encreaseeth every necessary of life encreaseeth in proportion, for land at present is become remarkably high and still seems to encrease in price and in demand, so that very few are capable of entering on farms which occasions numbers of our Inhabitants to transport themselves to America." However, escape to what Kerr called "the land of freedom, of privilege and of right and equity," was now difficult.¹ The Napoleonic and Anglo-American wars of 1803–1815 and 1812–1815, respectively, disrupted the emigrant trade, as did the U.S. Embargo Acts of 1807–1810 and British laws, such as the 1803 Passenger Act, that were designed to curtail departures, especially by skilled workmen. Consequently, in 1800–1814 emigrants from Ulster probably averaged only a few thousand per year, as compared with the 20,000 who crossed the ocean in 1815–1816, as soon as the wars ended.

However, Margaret Wright, John Kerr's cousin, hoped to circumvent the costs and difficulties of wartime emigration through successful dependence on her American uncle, Alexander McNish. Born about 1754, McNish had emigrated in the early 1770s, about the same time and probably for much the same reasons as Moses Johnston of west County Down.² Unlike Johnston, McNish quickly found a permanent home—among relatives and former neighbors at New Perth in Washington County, New York, a frontier colony of Seceding Presbyterians from mid-Ulster, established in 1764 by Rev. Thomas Clark of Ballybay, County Monaghan, on land purchased from the De Lancey family along the present New York–Vermont border.³ Each family received 88 acres, and although the soil

1. John Kerr, Aughintober, Co. Tyrone, to Alexander McNish, Salem, N.Y., 22 March 1806. 2. On Moses Johnston, see chapter 4. 3. Rev. Thomas Clark (1720–1794): born at Paisley, Scotland; studied at the University of Glasgow and in 1748 was licensed to preach by the Glasgow Associate (Seceder and Burgher) Presbytery; minister of the Burgher Presbyterians in Cahans and Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, 1749–1764; imprisoned for two months in 1752 for his refusal to kiss the Bible when swearing oaths, as required by law but which Seceders regarded as idolatrous; emigrated in 1764 to New York with ca. three hundred Presbyterians, primarily members of his congregation; ministered to part of his flock at New Perth, N.Y., from 1764 to 1782, when he removed to Long Cane, S.C., where he died among the rest of his former parishioners

was not rich, which persuaded some colonists to remigrate to South Carolina, those who remained achieved moderate prosperity.

Alexander McNish arrived at New Perth by 1773, accompanied by his aged father. Behind in County Tyrone McNish left his mother and at least five sisters, who later married small farmer-weavers like John Kerr's father or day laborers such as Margaret's father, Jimmy Wright. The related families lived in Donaghmore parish in the barony of Dungannon Middle, about two miles from Dungannon town, the largest linen market in mid-Ulster. The soils in this rolling drumlin country were fairly rich, but the farms had been fragmented by repeated subdivision to accommodate the burgeoning population. For example, John Kerr's holding in Aughintober townland, rented from Lord Ranfurly,⁴ contained merely 11 acres of mediocre land, and most of the parish's inhabitants were employed primarily in linen manufacturing and illegal whiskey distillation rather than agriculture. In 1764 the parish's population was about 8,900, only a third of them Protestants, divided roughly between Anglicans and Presbyterians.⁵ Most of the latter, including the Kerrs, Wrights, and their kin, were Seceders: rigid Calvinists who were torn between their deep dislike of the Anglican establishment and what John Kerr called the "despotic government"⁶ on one side and their traditional animus against the "popery" of the local majority on the other. For such families, the success of the American Revolution and the Irish troubles of the 1790s only heightened the New World's attractions, as emigration to a "promised land" fortuitously linked economic opportunities, escape from an untenable political position, and millenarian hopes of earthly deliverance from Anglican-landlord oppression ("Egyptian bondage") and "papist" foes alike.⁷

from Ulster. Clark strongly supported the American Revolution as well as union between the Seceder and Reformed (Covenanting) Presbyterian churches in America—an alliance that was partly consummated in 1782.

4. The Earl of Ranfurly's estate totaled about 9,500 acres and in 1771 yielded a rent of £6,660. 5. For demographic data on Donaghmore parish and its environs, see appendix 2.1c, on chapter 6. 6. John Kerr, Aughintober, Co. Tyrone, to Alexander McNish, Salem, N.Y., 10 May 1810. 7. In 1731 the Seceding or, more formally, the Associate Presbyterians broke away from the Church of Scotland. By 1736 the Seceders had planted or recruited several congregations in Ulster (they had nearly forty by 1770), but in 1747 they split into Burghers and Anti-Burghers over whether to take a loyalty oath imposed by the government. In general, Ulster's Seceding Presbyterians were humble folk—smallholders, artisans, laborers, and poorer tradesmen—with a much smaller proportion of educated and middling-income members than the dominant Synod of Ulster could boast. According to some early sources, Seceder families had migrated to northern Ireland quite recently, in the late seventeenth or even the early eighteenth centuries, and were thus more attuned to Scottish popular religion and doctrinal disputes than were members of the Ulster Synod. Although Anti-Burghers were more dogmatic than Burghers, Seceding Presbyterians generally adhered rigidly to the Westminster Confession of Faith, regarded the Ulster Synod's doctrinal flexibility as rank heresy, and favored evangelical exhortations over "paper preaching" by college-trained clergy. Despite their hostility to the Church of Ireland and their formal adherence to the early seventeenth-century Scottish Covenants (which claimed the primacy of God's true church over civil authorities), in the 1780s and 1790s the Seceding clergy's fear of "popery," rivalry with the Synod of Ulster, and desire for a share of the *Regium Donum* (the official stipend paid to Ulster Synod ministers since the reign of Charles II) led them to conspicuous displays of loyalism to court favor with the government and the landlord class. However, some Seceders (and even a few of their ministers) supported

McNish's success in America provided the ties and encouragement for his relatives' and former neighbors' emigrations. One sister, Isabella Hunter, arrived with her family in 1789, and in the early 1790s Charles Beatty,⁸ McNish's uncle and a lay preacher, reported a "Great Emergration from this Country," as "Multitudes" in Donaghmore and adjacent parishes were "Seling their freehold leases to go" to America.⁹ Between 1806 and 1810 John Kerr debated emigration, ultimately deciding to remain, although at least one of his sons departed later. However, Margaret Wright had no land and few alternatives. The daughter of a day laborer, her family's downward mobility was so great that she was forced to seek service with another kinsman when poverty caused even her brothers to distance themselves from her. Her situation may also reflect the increasing difficulty which young women, especially those without dowries, had in finding suitable husbands in districts where high rents and the fragmentation of holdings made it almost impossible for most young men to secure viable farms and marry. Given her social status and the fact that as late as 1841 over half the women in County Tyrone were illiterate, it may be that her letter—distinguished by its grace, economy, and scriptural references—was penned by a male relative such as John Kerr or perhaps by a local minister or teacher. Yet the sentiments and tone of desperation were surely Margaret Wright's own, although perhaps to offset popular prejudice against emigration by young, single women, she (or her amanuensis) adopted a submissive posture that reflected traditional gender roles as well as her own dependent position.

Margaret Wright, Aughintober, Donaghmore Parish, County Tyrone,
to Alexander McNish, Salem, New York, 27 May 1808

Aughintober May 27th 1808

Dear Uncle, Imprest with a deep sense of your love and Kindness to your Relations and of your readiness to impart anything that would seemingly conduce to their welfare & happiness I have embraced this oppertunity of soliciting your hitherto¹⁰ proposed favour hoping that the same goodness the same disinterested freinship will influence you in your behaviour to me as I never more Stood in need of the kindly

the United Irishmen, and John Kerr's and Margaret Wright's remarks suggest that ordinary parishioners—perhaps more alienated than their clergy from the political and religious establishment—projected hopes for liberation onto the new American republic. **8.** In 1771 Beatty rented 22 acres in the townland of Gortlenaghan and Derrykeel, on Lord Ranfurly's estate, for £14 11s. per year. However, the 1826 tithe assessment recorded him as holding merely four acres, suggesting the consequences of partible inheritance in mid-Ulster. **9.** Charles Beatty, Gortlenaghan, Co. Tyrone, to Alexander McNish, Salem, N.Y., 4 April 1793. **10.** *hitherto*: here not "until now" but "previously" (not given as a possible meaning by the OED). Apparently, Wright had successfully solicited McNish's aid to emigrate earlier but had delayed accepting his offer of help for reasons explained in her letter.

fostering hand of freinship in what ever charactar it might appear than at present being now deprived of any one that would superintend my conduct or regard¹¹ my undirected footsteps. my Brothers I may say being¹² now involved in family concerns I alone¹³ am left to act according to my unexperienced discretion on the vast Stage of this troublesome world & believe me my dear Uncle there is nought but trouble and vexation attending our lives in this countrey and more especially at this time as provisions are remarkably high, and they who have nought to Support themselves but their daily labour are hardly enough dealt withal¹⁴ America with us bears the character of ¹⁵ the land of freedom and of liberty and is accounted like the land of promise flowing with milk and honey thus how desirable would such a place be to those labouring under Egyptian bondage encreasing and seemingly to encrease every day without the smallest gleam of hope Such is the state of this Countrey and such are our sentiments with respect to america Now my desire is that you would Substantiate¹⁶ your former proposal & by some means or other procure me an entrance into that land of happiness where I might by industry obtain a competence in life without being dependent on the mercenary and covetous for a miserable and wretched support;¹⁷ And think not that it is any temporary conviction for the non-acceptance of your kind proposal, arising from the disagreeableness of present circumstances but I assure you it is not,¹⁸ for from the first moment that I heard your sentiments concerning our distressed family & that you wished to assist us in getting to you desire hath still encreased¹⁹ and often hath my heart throbbd with pleasure and Joyfulness in anticipating the happiness of that land of freedom & of visiting your peaceful habitation and of becoming an inmate of your family where I might participate of that freindship in a more abundant measure which extended even across the Atlantic but till now I was under the influence of my brothers who as I mentioned before are all become regardless²⁰ of me being mindful of their own interest²¹ alone If you could procure a passage for me I would faithfully serve untill I should redeem myself either with yourself or any one you would recommend me to²² I live at present with old Daniel M^cNees of Mullyrodden²³ & never was better than now but there is nothing here but the appearance²⁴ of trouble and calamity. William & John Kerr & familys are well

11. regard: pay attention to. **12. bein being ms.** **13. & I alone ms.** **14. are hardly enough dealt withal:** “have quite a hard time of it.” **15. bears the character of:** has the reputation of being. **16. Substantiate:** make good, put into effect. **17. where I might by industry obtain a competence in life without being dependent:** “where I might by my diligence get a sufficient livelihood to escape being dependent.” **18. And think not . . . I assure you it is not:** “do not think that it is any passing feeling of regret for not accepting your kind proposal, arising from the disagreeableness of present circumstances; I assure you it is not.” **19. hath still encreased:** has continually increased. **20. regardless:** heedless. **21. interest:** good, profit. **22. I would faithfully serve . . . recommend me to:** “I will faithfully serve you, or anyone else to whom you would recommend me (as a servant), in order to repay you (redeem myself) for the cost of my passage.” **23. Mullyrodden:** Mullyroddan townland (Killeeshil parish, Dungannon Lower barony, Co. Tyrone), adjacent to Donaghmore. **24. appearance:** likelihood (OED, s.v., 9; obsolete).

and desires²⁵ to be remembered John wrote last year and has got no answer the year²⁶ at which he greatly wonders All your relatives are well my Brothers included and all hope this to find you in the Same which that it may is the ardent wish and sincere prayer of Margaret Wright

PS If you write direct to John Kerr for the rest²⁷ you know yourself

McNish's response was positive, as John Kerr's subsequent letters to his uncle reveal: "We got your letter in which you gave Peggy Right such encouragement to go & promised so fair"; however, he added,

the nonintercourse act²⁸ was so strict and so few going to America that there was no opportunity of <her> getting there last year & this year we have tried several but there was none willing to take her upon the mere force of your letter She would be willing to go her self I believe and I doubt not but she would fit America very well as she is very quiet & is very industrious.²⁹

Unfortunately, it is not certain whether Margaret Wright reached America: the 1820 census shows no fewer than five unnaturalized foreigners in Alexander McNish's household, two of them young women, yet her name does not appear in Washington County's marriage or death notices as recorded in 1799–1880 by the local newspapers.

Between the American Revolution and the time of Margaret Wright's possible arrival, Washington County had grown rapidly, from 4,456 inhabitants in 1786 to 42,269 in 1810. By the latter year New Perth (renamed Salem in 1787) had risen from a cluster of log cabins to a small market town with five hundred to six hundred people, a courthouse, academy, and two Presbyterian churches (one for the Scots-Irish, the other for settlers from Connecticut). McNish himself served in the Revolution with distinction,³⁰ married Sarah McCoy in 1778, and in the early nineteenth century pioneered in the breeding of Merino sheep and became a prominent local Jeffersonian Republican politician, holding most of Salem's town offices and serving in 1816 as a presidential elector for James Monroe. By his death in 1827 McNish and his sons owned farms of at least 130 acres, valued in

25. desires: instead of Standard English *desire* (Northern Concord Rule; see appendix 1). The writer has slipped out of the very elevated and literary style of her petition into colloquial Ulster speech in the more personal concluding portion of the letter. **26. the year:** this past year. **27. for the rest:** for the remainder of my address. **28. the nonintercourse act:** the Non-Intercourse Act, passed by Congress on 1 May 1809, banned all trade between the United States and Great Britain. **29.** John Kerr, Auchintober, Co. Tyrone, to Alexander McNish, Salem, N.Y., 25 August 1810. **30.** In late 1776 McNish, then aged 22, participated in the ill-fated American expedition, led by the Irish-born General Richard Montgomery (1738–1775), against Montreal and Québec; later he helped build a fort at New Perth to counter British General John Burgoyne's invasion (June–October 1777) and was seriously wounded in the campaign that led to Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, N.Y., on 17 October. On Montgomery, see chapter 59, n. 91.

1823 at \$5,000. Eschewing the partible inheritance that had dissipated family fortunes in mid-Ulster, McNish willed his holding to one son; two others, one a physician trained in the local academy, migrated to Ohio. Thus, although much less affluent than the Devereux brothers in nearby Utica, Alexander McNish was sufficiently prosperous to aid Margaret Wright and other relations to emigrate for better opportunities in an expanding economic yet familiar religious environment.

II ✧

The Processes of Irish Emigration

This page intentionally left blank

Anonymous Poet, Mid- to Late 1700s

Sources that reveal how ordinary Irish Catholic countryfolk regarded the prospect of emigration to America in the eighteenth century are rare. One of these is the following poem, framed in the Irish language—which makes it doubly rare. The poem has become part of the Ulster folksong tradition and cannot be dated precisely, but its style and substance suggest the mid- or late 1700s. The poet himself may not have traveled to America but clearly had one or more informants who had emigrated and returned to Ireland, perhaps after demobilization from the British army or completion of a term of indentured servitude.

The poem suggests why, as contemporaries noted, relatively few Catholics went to the New World before the American Revolution. The traits of the American scene that the author describes—loneliness, absence of community, vast distances, uncultivated land and people—contrast profoundly with the social and physical landscape left behind in Ireland and also with the dense socioeconomic and familial networks that Irish Protestant emigrants, such as the Shepherds, Lindseys, and McNishes, were creating in the colonies to attract and absorb their brethren. Although by the time the poem was composed such descriptions may have become literary commonplaces, the exotic portrait of America could not have appealed to the singer's audience. Few who heard it sung or recited at *céilithe* (evening gatherings) would have responded enthusiastically to the pitch of emigration agents canvassing the Ulster market towns.

An tOileán Úr

Rinne mé smaointiughadh in mo intinn is lean me dó go cinnte
Go n-éalóchainn ó mo mhuintir anonn un Oileáin Úir;
D'iarr mise in mo impidhe ar an Árd Rígh bhí ós mo chionn-sa
Le mo shábháil as gach chontabhairt go gcríochnóchainn mo shiubhal.

Shiubhail mé fiche míle, is ní chasadh orm Críostaidhe,
Capall, bó, no caora a dhéanfadh ingheilt ar an fhéar;
Acht coillte dlútha is gleanntan, is búirtheach bheithidhigh alltan,
Fir is mná gan snáithe ortha a chasfá fá do mhéar.

Tharlaidh isteach i dtoigh mé is casadh orm daoine
D'fhiostraig siad cár b'as mé nó an tír 'nár tógadh mé;
Labhair mé leobhtha i mBéarla gur tógadh mé i n-Éirinn
Ar láimh le Loch Éirne i gcoillidh Lios na Raoch.