

The Scot and Irish Origins of the Means Family

by
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The Scottish Homelands in the 16th - 18th centuries

Political and social events in both Scotland and Ireland were greatly influenced by the politics of England and by religious and social movements arising in Continental Europe. Both the Scots and the Irish chafed under English rule and thus were always flirting with rebellion against royal authority, but at the same time in each state various domestic factions sought support from and the intervention of allied factions in Britain. The court intrigues and the policies emanating from London often produced dramatic or tragic consequences in the domains of Scotland and Ireland.

When Henry VIII divorced Katherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn, relations with the Papacy were terminated and the Church of England was established directly under Royal authority. Catholic monasteries were closed and their properties taken over by the Crown. Earlier, in Germany during 1517 Martin Luther had protested against the corruptions and abuses of the Catholic Church, as part of a Reformation Movement that by 1530 had won the support of the rulers of Saxony, Denmark and Sweden.

In Scotland, with the established church weakened by Royal defiance and expropriation of properties, the spirit of rebellion was fanned by the new Protestant doctrines from Europe. In Scotland, Patrick Hamilton, a descendant of the Duke of Albany and of James the III of Scotland, had been exposed to the teachings of Martin Luther while studying on the Continent. On his return, he was arrested in 1528 and tried and convicted for heresies. He was burned at the stake at the gate to St. Salvator's College, and his accuser, Cardinal James Beaton watched the six hours of agony of the condemned. Later, Walter Mylne, then in his eighties was also burned at the stake. As the doctrines of Luther and Calvin spread by a number of people, including Master George Wishart who had become popular helping to organize welfare and health programs to check the outbreak of plague in Dundee. He not only was critical of some Catholic practices but he was also opposed to the pro-French alliance cultivated by Cardinal Beaton for Scotland. In response, Cardinal Beaton had Wishart arrested, tried as a heretic and then burned at the stake at St. Andrews in 1546. Shortly,

thereafter Cardinal Beaton was murdered in his castle by a band of Scots and his body was suspended outside by a rope from a window. The murderers, led by Sir William Kirkaldy, fled to St. Andrew's Castle in Edinburgh to defend themselves against the established Catholic church authorities.¹ In a show of support, the rebellious defenders were joined by John Knox, a young radical Scot born in Heddington in 1515, who sympathized with the religious and political views of Wishart. Within a short time, a French fleet arrived to support the challenged Catholic authorities of Scotland, and with French help the radicals were defeated and carried to France for punishment. John Knox was sentenced "to oars" as a galley slave, but after 19 months, was allowed to return to England because Edward VI pleaded with the French king for his release.²

Upon his release, John Knox returned to London where he helped to draft new articles and principles of faith for the newly autonomous Church of England. Within a few years, John Knox went to Switzerland where he met John Calvin and was greatly influenced by his doctrines. Calvin wanted to make the whole world obedient to God and emphasized the duty of the holy community to exercise self-government through presbyteries and synods. Calvin, like the Catholics, rejected the right of the state to govern the Church. For Calvin, the Church was to be subjected only to the commands of God, not of man or monarch. Rather, the Church needed to keep pure as a community of saints, ready to carry out God's divine plan, to produce a Holy Community and to glorify God. Calvinist principles gave great emphasis to both individualism and democracy, but only for those who earn it by their elect status as saints committed to God's purposes. In the context of feudal Europe and England, these were doctrines that were an aggressive and revolutionary challenge to established authority.

¹ Andrew Fisher, *A Traveller's History of Scotland* 3rd ed. (New York: Interlink Books, 1997), pp. 122-125.

² H.B. Murphy, *Three Hundred Years of Presbyterianism in Clogher* (Belfast: The Belfast Newsletter Press, 1958), pp. 7-8.

Thoroughly committed to the new theology, John Knox returned to Scotland in 1559 and became a minister at St. Giles Church in Edinburgh. Preaching his radical doctrines, he helped to foment riots against the "idolatry" of the churches still loyal to Rome. By 1560, the Scottish Parliament officially terminated the Roman Church in Scotland and officially established the Reformed Church in its place. The "Scottish Confession of Faith" was compiled by John Knox, and the properties and endowments of the old Catholic church were taken over by the Reformed Church of Scotland to be used for education with a school established for every parish. Democracy and education were high in the priorities of church organization. The First General Assembly of Scotland was held in 1590, which confirmed the primacy of the Reformed Church of Scotland based on Calvinist Presbyterian principles. The doctrines of John Knox challenged the authority of the Monarchy and the Church of England. His pronouncements included such statements as: "Christ is the only King"; "No Bishop, no King"; "Presbytery agreeth as well with Monarchy as God with the devil."³ With Scots energized with these doctrines, Scottish - English relations remained in a state of conflict and turmoil for many decades.

The termination of the remnants of the Roman Catholic Church in 1560 and the continued hostility toward the established Church of England created tensions which stimulated some emigration to Ireland for dispossessed clergy and those deeply committed to Catholic religious doctrines. A few clergy were able to continue as priests and clerics in North Ireland, and a few Scots of Catholic persuasion also came as settlers to Northern Ireland in this period.

Because the Protestant Reformation in Scotland spread from the cities, there remained strong pockets of Catholic churches and believers loyal to Rome in the Scottish highlands. The ancestral home of the Menzies clan was at Aberfeldy [56 37N 3 50W] and in the highlands of the Grampian Mountains and from Perth north up the Gary and Tay valleys leading up to the Forest of Atholl. Sir Robert Menzies built a castle at Weem (on the shores of Lake Rannoch) but that castle was plundered in 1502. A new castle was built about 1571 - 1577 in Aberfeldy which is now maintained by the Menzies Clan Society. Another branch of the clan held lands at Pitfoddels just west of Aberdeen between the Don and Dee rivers. The branch of the clan that adopted the "Means" or

³ Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 9-11.

"Mains" spelling for the clan name were probably spread through the Highlands to the West Coast of Scotland and into Argyll. It appears that some of them remained Catholic in their religious affiliation. Historical records reveal that some were involved in the Jacobite Rebellions that attempted to restore the Catholic Charles I and his heirs to the throne of England and Scotland.

Because the Menzies clan was derived from Norman origins, being descendent from the Mesnieres near Rouen, there was a natural affinity within the clan for French political alliance as well as fostering the marriage and political links that had earlier developed with the Stuart line of English monarchs. With divided loyalties and divided by religion, the Menzies clan often failed to act in unison. During the English Civil Wars of 1580-1688, the Menzies Chiefs opposed Charles I, while Sir Gilbert Menzies of Pitfoddels supported Charles I and joined the royal army under the Scot, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose. Sir Gilbert was probably present at the great victories of Montrose at Aberdeen and Inverlochy in 1644 and 1645, but it is unclear whether he and his clansmen were also present when Montrose was defeated in September 1645 by the Protestant Covenanters' army at Philiphaugh, near Selkirk [55° 33N 2° 50W]. It was the Covenanters who supported James VII and opposed Charles I for his authoritarianism and his Catholic sympathies and faith.⁴

⁴ Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-152; "A Brief History of Clan Menzies", World Wide Web <http://home.spreynet.com/spreynet/cmsoc/briefhis.htm> (May 1998)

A summary account of the Menzies clan states: "A distinguished branch of the clan was the Menzieses of Pittfoddels. At the Battle of Invercarron in 1650 young Menzies of Pitfoddels carried the Royal Standard. This branch is now extinct. The last Chieftain of the Pitfoddels branch founded the Roman Catholic College of Blairs."⁵ What this terse statement does not explain is the circumstances of the political alignments and the reasons for the extinction of "this branch". After Charles I was executed in England for his authoritarianism and Catholic sympathies, Oliver Cromwell came to power in England and civil war broke out in Scotland as Oliver Cromwell was no more willing to concede authority to a Reformed Presbyterian Church as had Charles I. Under attack, Scottish sympathies turned to the exiled son of Charles I, the 19 year old Charles II, who returned from Holland and was proclaimed King in Edinburgh in 1650. When the Scots refused to renounce their support of Charles II, Cromwell brought his well-trained New Model Army north and in 1650 crushed the larger but undisciplined force of Scots led by David Leslie at the battle near Dunbar. Over 3,000 Scots were killed and 10,000 were captured.⁶ Further battles only added to the carnage and to the enormity of the Scot defeat. Clan Chiefs supporting Charles had their lands confiscated. Of the prisoners taken by Cromwell's army, 1110 were sentenced to transportation to Virginia and 150 to New England. After the battle of Worcester, an additional 1600 were sentenced to transportation to Virginia. Because of limited transport, loss of ships at sea and inadequate records, the number of prisoners reaching the American colonies cannot be known. Records reveal 150 prisoners transported to Massachusetts aboard the *Unity* in 1651 and 227 aboard the *Sarah and John* arriving at Boston on November 4, 1651. John Becx, a shareholder of the Saugus Iron Works near Salem, Massachusetts purchased 62 prisoners as indented laborers to work for his company.⁷ Fragmentary evidence indicates that some Means or Menzies came over to the American colonies as a result of these defeats and punishments at the hands of Oliver Cromwell. It is also little wonder

⁵ Melville, [*Source on Scottish Clan history and icons*] (unknown source from xerox page), p. 238. The College of Blairs was located near Aberdeen.

⁶ Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

⁷ Ian Adams and Meredyth Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to North America, 1603-1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1993), p. 18.

that the Pitfoddels branch of the Menzies became "extinct" after these battle defeats!

After the turmoil of Oliver Cromwell's rule and his death in 1658, the Stuart monarchy was restored in 1660 with Charles II returning from exile. After his restoration, Charles II supported the Church of England, but retained Catholic sympathies. In Scotland there was support for the Stuarts, but also local revolts erupted over harsh government policies and discrimination against "non-conformist" denominations. The Covenanters objected to the religious policies of Charles which severely punished Presbyterianism and non-conformism and they eventually took up arms against royal authority but after many skirmishes were finally defeated at Bothwell Brig in 1679. Of the prisoners taken after that battle, 250 were sent to Barbados, but their transport sank off Orkney.⁸

⁸ Adams and Somerville, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

By the time of James II, coming to power in England during 1685, the Menzies chiefs were united in their opposition to the government's policies, but they were later divided once again in their support of Queen Mary and William of Orange at the time of the Glorious Revolution in 1688. When the English Parliament opposed the pro-Catholic doctrines and policies of James II and initiated the "Glorious Revolution" by inviting the Protestant dual monarchy of William and Mary to the throne in 1688, support for the deposed Stuart monarchy formed once again in Scotland. The deposed and exiled James II named James Graham as Viscount Dundee who then mobilized a force composed primarily of Scots and Covenanters. With this army, he won an important victory at the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689 against William's forces, but was killed by a musket ball fired from his own ranks. Duncan Menzies of Fornock and his clansmen fought in that battle for the cause of James II, while the Perthshire Menzies clansmen were in the ranks of General MacKay's army fighting for the cause of William and Mary. The battle was fought at Killiecrankie Pass [56° 44'N 3° 46'W] on the Tay River in the heart of Menzies clan territory and was strategically important because it controlled the route between the Highlands and the Lowlands. After the battle, the leaderless victors failed to pursue MacKay's retreating army and many of James Graham's Scottish Highland troops returned home. Over time, clan support for the Stuart cause waned with the forces supporting the cause of James II suffering some defeats later that same year. By 1692 the "rebels" were crushed in the Massacre of Glencoe when, with government instigation, some Scots of the Cambell clan secretly switched sides and treacherously attacked and killed 38 of their erstwhile allies the MacDonalds who remained staunch supporters of the Stuart cause.⁹

By 1715, many Scots once again chafed under restored British rule and were critical of the policies and patronage of George I. These grievances provided the basis for the first Jacobite

⁹ Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-164. After James II was driven out of Scotland, he hoped to recover by continuing the contest in Ireland by mobilizing support from both English royalists and from English and Irish Catholics. The struggle involved the control of Ulster and the battle and siege of Londonderry, mentioned later in this account.

Rebellion which once again espoused the cause of James II (James VIII of Scotland), "the Old Pretender" as rightful King. An army of 6,000 Scots was formed to restore James II to the throne. Under the Jacobite banner were Scots, comprising mainly Macintoshes and MacDonalds, but also included Menzies of Culdres and his clan sept kinsmen. The Jacobite rebellion died out after an inconclusive battle at Sheriffmuir (near Stirling) in 1715, with the Argyll clan under the Duke of Argyll being a major component in support of the government forces. After the battle, Menzies of Culdres was captured at Dunblane and transported to Maryland in the American colonies. Some years later, perhaps around 1740, he returned to Scotland to live at Glen Lyon about 25 km west of Aberfeldy. After the 1715 battles 700 Jacobite prisoners were taken and sold as slaves to West India merchants, while Jacobite areas of Scotland were annexed to the Crown. Among the prisoners there were a considerable number who were from the Menzies clan.

In 1745, undeterred by their previous defeat, a second Jacobite rebellion broke out, this time in support of Charles Edward, the son of "the Old Pretender" James II of England (James VIII of Scotland). Charles landed in North Scotland near Ft. William. He capitalized on the legacy of the Stuart lineage and was able to gain the support of a number of Scot clans, including substantial contingents from the Menzies clan, led by Menzies of Shian. The Menzies' clan forces played major role at the Battle of Prestonpans in September 1745 which enabled Charles' Jacobite army to capture Edinburgh, where he was proclaimed King.¹⁰ Later, the Jacobites invaded England by the western route with their army passing through Lancashire to Manchester. Eventually, Charles faced a far superior government army led by the Duke of Cumberland, who reversed the invasion and relentlessly pursued the retreating Jacobites to the northern parts of Scotland. Of the total force in the Highlands, there were 30,000 clansmen on both sides, of which about 5,000 fought for the Jacobite cause, while about 25,000 fought with the government forces. The powerful Campbell clan was among the ranks of the government supporters,¹¹ while a large contingent of the Menzies clan

¹⁰ Dugald Mitchell, *History of Highland and Gaelic Scotland* (Paisley: Alexander Gardiner, 1900), pp. 611-615.

¹¹ "The Clans of Scotland" World Wide Web, http://www.holiday.scotland.net/guide/p_info/faq_clan.htm (May 1998), p. 4.

were committed to the Jacobite cause. At the final decisive Battle of Culloden (east of Inverness) in 1746 the Jacobites suffered a devastating defeat. The government forces lost 50 dead, while 1,200 Jacobites were killed in the battle. Menzies of Shian and his son were among the dead. Cumberland ordered the Jacobite wounded to be put to death and after the battle 120 prisoners were executed. Of the 3,500 prisoners who were captured, 700 died in prison and over 1,000 were sentenced to transportation. Following trials in England, 600 were transported to South Carolina, Maryland and Virginia. Of the remaining prisoners 33 were banished from His Majesty's dominions, and 866 were sentenced to transportation with indenture. From among that number, 135 were sent to Maryland and 88 arrived at other American locations where they were immediately freed. Those transported on the ship *Veteran* went to Martinique after the French captured the vessel on the high seas and then refused to return the 150 men, women and children who had been sentenced to transportation to the American colonies. Eventually, 1195 prisoners still held in England were pardoned, but had to find their own way home with many starving and suffering extreme deprivation and death in their journey home.¹²

A not so Bonnie Prince Charlie fled from the Culloden battle field with his entourage making their way to Castle Menzies at Aberfeldy. From there he proceeded to the Menzies lands at Glen Lyon where he hid out for five months until concealed transportation could be arranged for his flight to France. A reward of £30,000 was offered by the government for his capture, but with the aid of Flora MacDonald of South Uist and others committed to his cause, he was able to escape the dragnet and return to exile in France.¹³ Because of the substantial forces of the Menzies clan militia committed to the Jacobites, we can only surmise that a substantial number of those captured at Culloden and transported to the American colonies in the years from 1748 - 1754 bore the Means/Menzies name.

¹² Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-173; Adams and Somerville, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-121.

¹³ "A Brief History of Clan Menzies", *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2; Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

The various battle defeats and confiscation of some clan lands may have scattered members of the defeated clans across the Highlands and may also have stimulated some emigration to Ireland. Because of the strong Catholic connection among some of the Means/Menzies clan, it appears likely that some of the early Scot settlers to Ireland may have been members of the Means clan, since in later years, the Tyrole County Census of 1766 records some persons named Means who were listed as "Papist". Whether their ancestors had come during mid-17th or 18th century waves of immigration from Scotland and melded into the Irish Catholic community is unclear from the scanty records of that census.¹⁴

Emigration of Scots to Ireland

¹⁴ "Religious Census of Tyrone County, Ireland. 1766", LDS microfilm, British Film Area, 1279330, item 1.

The endemic violence and conflicts of Irish politics provided opportunities and new inducements for various waves of Scottish immigration in the 17th century. For centuries there had been trade and links between the Scots and the north Irish clans. By the 15th century, there were established settlements of Scots along the northeast coast of Ulster and English settlements along the southeast coast of Ulster. Also various English monarchs attempted a nominal authority through a vassalage system with various Irish chiefs and lords, but English authority was largely symbolic and focussed on the area around Dublin known as "The Pale."¹⁵ By the 16th century, the Irish were governed by a series of local chiefs, the most important chief in the north was Conn Bacach O'Neill, who held the chief's title as "The O'Neill". Because Henry VIII had engaged in a protracted war with the Geraldines, who had sworn to expel the English from Ireland, both sides were weary of the struggle by 1540. Some of the Irish chiefs offered to submit to the English King provided honorable terms were arranged. Conn Bacach O'Neill renounced his chief's title and was named Earl of Tyrone by Henry. However, later during the reign of Elizabeth, his son, Shane O'Neill murdered his half brother and had himself crowned "The O'Neill" and proceeded once again to attack neighboring clans and English settlements, controlling the entire area from Lake Erne to Drogheda. To resolve the situation Queen Elizabeth invited O'Neill to London, where he flattered Elizabeth and promised to keep the peace and acknowledged the nominal authority of the English Crown. But, on his return to Northern Ireland, he renounced his promises, he attacked the MacDonnells at Antrim defeating them with great slaughter, and then captured all of Fermanagh. The Earl of Sussex was sent by Elizabeth to subdue O'Neill, but was unable to do so, and instead concluded a treaty of peace with him at his castle at Benburb [54° 25'N 6° 42'W] in 1563. Four years later O'Neill was beaten in a battle with other clans, and in a weakened state, he and his entourage were invited to a welcome feast by the MacDonnells of the Glens. During the feast, the MacDonnells suddenly attacked and killed all their guests, thus extracting revenge for the O'Neill atrocities some two decades earlier.

Hugh O'Neill was selected as the next "The O'Neill". He was recognized as Earl of Tyrone in 1587, and received payments from the British on the assumption that he would keep the peace and

¹⁵ R.F. Foster, (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), article by Katherine Simms, "The Norman Invasion and the Gaelic Recovery", Chapt. 2, pp. 53-103.

remain loyal to the Crown. However, he began to build up an army of 8,000 well armed men and in 1595 captured the fort of Portmore on the Blackwater river. After three years of defiance and turmoil, Elizabeth determined to defeat O'Neill. First Sir Henry Bagenal was sent, but his army was defeated, losing 2,000 men. Then the Earl of Essex was sent with a larger army, but instead of fighting, he signed a truce. On his return to London, the Earl of Essex was executed in the Tower of London for failing to pursue the Queen's orders. Finally, in 1602 the Queen sent Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy. He determined that the O'Neill could be defeated only with a war of attrition. First forts were constructed at Charlemont and Mountjoy (named after himself). Then systematically the fields of grain and flax were destroyed in areas under O'Neill's control, thus creating starvation among his Irish supporters and clansmen. After defeat in a battle at Kinsale, O'Neill fled to the forests near Lough Neagh. In March, the following year, he surrendered, renounced the title of "The O'Neill" and resigned all his lands to the English Crown. Although pardoned by King James, he feared for his life. Rather than face defeat and humiliation, O'Neill sailed to France on September 14, 1607, along with the clan chiefs of the Maquire and O'Donnell clans, in what is known as "The Flight of the Earls". This departure of the Ulster clan chiefs and their families provided the justification for the counties of northern Ireland to be expropriated by the English Crown and thus it also paved the way for the sustained immigration of English and Scottish settlers into Ulster.¹⁶

¹⁶ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-23.

After claiming the lands of the "departed" Irish Earls, 600,000 acres were made available by the Crown to landlords who would agree to abide by the terms offered. English and Scots could acquire estates of 2,000 acres, to be farmed only by English or Scottish tenants. The annual rent was set at £5 6s 8d per 1,000 acres and the leasing landlord was required to take the Oath of Supremacy acknowledging the Crown as head of the Church of England and in all matters temporal and spiritual. Irish landlords could also acquire estates of 1,000 acres, but their rent was double the English or Scottish rate, but the Oath of Supremacy was not required of them. As a political matter, estates were issued to staunch government supporters, so virtually no Irish were able to acquire title to the new estates. Those loyal "notables" who did acquire estates were called "undertakers" since they undertook to recruit tenant settlers for their lands. Those who attained title to the 2,000 acre estates (English and Scots) were required within three years to build a fortified castle protected by a bawn (a stone wall or fortified outwork). These measures were designed to protect against hostile Irish marauders and to repopulate the devastated counties of Ulster with Scottish and English tenant immigrants, who would be under the control and authority of landlords, the majority of whom would be English or Scots loyal to the Church of England. Very few leases were issued to Irish landlords, so the structure of religious and class relations was effectively determined by this new land and property legislation. The new system was called Plantation, referring to the "planting" of new colonists, and the towns serving the new immigrant population were called Plantation towns which dealt primarily in trade in agricultural products, the sale of farm equipment and services for the Plantations.¹⁷

In the early years of the 17th century it was difficult for the new "undertakers" to obtain enough Scottish and English tenants to work their estates. Some English and Scot settlers, mostly from the western counties of England and Scotland, were persuaded to come to Ulster but not in sufficient numbers to work all the new lands. As an inducement, the rents to tenants were considerably less than similar rents for agricultural land in Scotland or England. Because of the continued shortage of settlers, some landlords rented directly to Irish tenants who desperately needed the land that they had formerly cultivated under the Irish clan system. Some tenants in turn rented to

¹⁷ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-31.

Irish sub-tenants to obtain additional income or a supply of farm labor. Landlords acquiring the small 1,500 acre estates were permitted to rent to Irish tenants, but those with the larger 2,000 acre estates were prohibited from renting to Irish tenants, but many landlords or their tenants did so secretly and illegally despite the prohibition.

During this early period of recruitment of settlers for the Plantations of Ulster, it is important to note that the new clergy were primarily Scots. The first Protestant Bishop was George Montgomery, who encouraged fellow Scots to settle on the extensive Church lands established by Crown deed. Some clergy who had been expelled by the Church of Scotland were nonetheless given appointments in Ulster. Although supported as part of the Established Church (of England), many of the Scottish clergy were sympathetic to Presbyterianism, and in later years became Presbyterian when that option became available in Ulster. In the new settlements very few were eager to challenge the orthodoxy of any clergy who was willing to brave the hardships of the frontier.¹⁸

One of the prominent early Plantation landlords was Sir William Stewart. He came from Wigtonshire in southwest Scotland and, with his brother, served as mercenary soldiers for both Denmark and Sweden. He returned just as the Ulster Plantations became available. In North Tyrone, about 1613 he established a 2,000 acre manor called New Stewarton, which was later renamed Newtownstewart. Later, in 1617 he acquired a settlement near Clogher and in 1629 a third manor named Mount Stewart was established, not far from present day Stewartown in eastern Tyrone County. For family history, the Clogher estate is the most interesting since the tenants were almost entirely Scots, and they included William Meens, John Meene and Roger Meen -- all three names that are derivative from the Means/Menzies clan connection. For larger plots the acreage was recorded, but for smaller plots the size is not given. The largest tenant plot was 180 acres, but it appears that the average plots were about 30 acres per tenant, but it could have been less. The

¹⁸ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39.

Clogher tenants acquired their lands from Sir William between 1617 and 1627.¹⁹

The Rebellion of 1641

With the beginning of the Plantation system, the indigenous Irish residents were expelled from the best agricultural lands in Ulster. During the period of Mountjoy's policy of "reduction" when many Irish peasants starved, the remainder moved into the highland forests or the bogs where they tried to eke out a living by minor cultivation, hunting and making occasional cattle raids on the new immigrant settlements. The native Irish had practised pastoral agriculture, with much of their sustenance derived from dairy products or meat based on large herds of cattle, sheep and some goats. In times of crisis, they could move to the hills or bogs to escape attack. Therefore, during the British campaign against O'Neill many Irish peasants had left their lands to attempt survival in the more remote hills and marginal forest lands. As the British settlers came to claim the better lands, the Irish peasants developed skills as cattle thieves and raiders on the new settlements. Over time, as peace was restored under British authority, many of the Irish peasants were able to acquire some agricultural land as renters on the new Plantations, but they were discriminated against and treated with considerable suspicion, especially since some of their kin in the remote areas of Ulster continued with their cattle raiding and harassment of the new Plantation settlements.

¹⁹ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-39.

Eventually, the antagonisms and resentments of the Irish natives became mobilized by Sir Phelim O'Neill, who claimed the discarded mantle as "The O'Neill" and called upon his countrymen to expel the settler population. The Plantation town of Augher was besieged, with the defenders led by Archibald Erskine. Three of the main fortresses built by Plantation Lords fell to the rebels: Charlemount, Mountjoy and Dungannon. Thousands of settlers were slaughtered, including in some settlements all women and children, and many of the Plantation towns were burned. Sir William Stewart and his brother Robert mobilized a local militia of settlers which moved to relieve the siege of Augher, but not before the town was destroyed by the Irish rebels. Sir William was unable to hold Aughntaine which was burned by the rebels. The rebellion spread to all the English settlements in Ireland and many atrocities were committed by the Irish forces when they overwhelmed scattered and isolated English settlements and towns. In all of Ireland, about 2,000 English settlers were murdered and perhaps 10,000 died from the privations of the rebellion. Over time the atrocities were exaggerated even further by Protestant settler communities to justify counter measures that were even more brutal.²⁰

²⁰ Robert Kee, *Ireland, A History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1982), pp. 41-44; R.F. Foster, *Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 144-147.

As soon as the Irish revolt began, an urgent request was sent to London for a British relief force, but because of the dispute between Parliament and Charles I, Parliament did not authorize the formation of a relief army. Instead, Parliament allowed Charles to negotiate for a Scottish militia under Maj. General Munro to relieve the besieged settlers in Ulster. The army under Munro was a citizen army mostly recruited from the Scottish Highlands organized on the basis of Presbyterian principles as an army of Christian soldiers. Munro landed with his army at Carrickfergus on the Belfast Lough in 1642, and as the army advanced it established Presbyterian settlements organized with "Meetings" of the believers. The first Presbytery assembly was held in County Antrim later the same year. Meanwhile, the leadership of the Irish insurgents had passed to Owen Roe O'Neill, who had concentrated his forces near Benburb. Munro's army eventually met the Irish rebels at the battle of Benburb and suffered a resounding defeat. The Scots lost 3,000 men killed in the battle while the Irish casualties were only 70 killed. Despite this victory, the Irish were unable to expel the settlers who had retreated to their well fortified "castles" and some of the fortified Plantation towns that had not been destroyed. Even in defeat, Munro's army had helped the Plantation settlers survive the revolt at the same time that it had planted Presbyterian churches and parish "Meetings" as the basis for the organization of the settler communities.²¹

²¹ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-43.

By 1649, Cromwell had come to power in England and was determined to rescue the Protestants of Ireland from Irish Catholic insurgents. He personally led units of his New Model Army to subdue the Irish uprising in Ulster. Cromwell brought 20,000 fighting men, equipped with heavy siege cannon to crush the insurrection. Claiming that "God alone should have all the glory"²² he ordered thousands of surrendered enemy to be put to death. The ruthless tactics and atrocities committed by Cromwell's troops as they pursued the Irish rebels has become part of the lore of Irish grievances that have been passed from generation to generation. The Irish rebellion did not end until 1652 when the Irish forces were totally defeated and 30,000 Irish surrendered. The rebellion had lasted eleven years and in Ulster had totally destroyed most of the towns and settlements in the Counties of Tyrone, Monaghan and Fermanagh. Under the Cromwellian Act of Settlement, Irish gentry who had supported the rebellion had their properties confiscated and they were moved to the remote regions of Clare and Connaught. The confiscated lands were distributed to Cromwell's soldiers and those who had financed his campaigns. By contrast, the Irish landlords had gradually lost their lands first by the Plantation system (from 1583 to 1641) by which time they owned fifty-nine percent of the land in Ireland, and after Cromwell's Settlement Act, they owned twenty-two percent, and by 1695 their share had shrunk to fourteen percent and by 1714 to seven percent of the land of Ireland.²³ The common Irish were not transported to the remote western areas of Ireland, but those who had been peasant tenants on the Plantations were expelled from their leaseholds and they had to move to the less desirable grazing lands or the unoccupied hill areas in their region. The potato was introduced to Ireland from America about 1652, which was a food crop that could grow quite well in rocky and sandy soil. As a result, the potato became a staple food for the Irish peasant who had to survive in the marginal highlands or forest and peat bog areas.

The period from 1652 to 1685 was devoted to rebuilding the towns and plantations that had been destroyed during the hostilities. After the rebellion, most landlords expelled their Irish tenants who were forced to move to more marginal lands. English and Scottish tenants were also prohibited

²² Kee, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

from leasing to Irish sub-tenants who had been a cheap farm labor source. Consequently, these restrictions put the Plantation tenants into a financial squeeze between surley and hostile Irish farm laborers and the escalating demands of Plantation landlords. In addition, the expulsion of Irish tenants and the deaths of Scottish and English tenants during the Irish hostilities greatly increased the demand for new immigrant settler tenants on the Plantations at the same time that Scotland was still suffering from the after effects of Cromwell's occupation and the defeat of those Scots supporting James II's claim to the throne of England. For destitute Scots on the losing side of political wars, Ulster held the promise of escape from political retribution and a new beginning.

Fragmentary evidence suggests that much of the Means immigration to Ulster came in the period after the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion in 1641. It is quite likely than Monro's army included some contingent from the Means clan, who, with their families, very likely remained in Ulster as part of Monro's settlement policy. The contacts between the Scots in Ulster with their kin in Scotland probably helped to pave the way for continuing Scottish immigration. The derivative Means names at Clogher found in 1617 were replicated in the records of Clogher a century later. While there may not have been direct descendancy between the two sets of names, existing clan members may have facilitated later immigration by their distant kith and kin in Scotland. After the battle of Killiecrankie and the defeat in Scotland of the forces supporting James II in 1688 many Scots on the losing side decided to emigrate to Ireland, either to escape retribution or because of punitive land confiscations. Thus, following the "Glorious Revolution" there was another wave of new Scottish immigrants into the Ulster plantation settlements. The closest district of Scotland to Ulster is the county of Argyll. Because of geographic proximity many of the new Scottish immigrants arriving in Ulster either came through Argyll or had settled there prior to their emigration to Ireland. The strong probability of a Means immigration link through Argyll deserves further research exploration. Another port of departure for Ulster is Wigtown where Means and Menzies names were recorded in various census enumerations from the 18th to the 20th century.

Ulster before and after the Glorious Revolution

With the defeat of the Irish insurgents in 1652, Protestant control of the best agricultural land in Ulster was both reaffirmed and expanded. The return of the Monarchy under Charles II in 1660 created no anxiety among the Ulster Established elite until Charles II expressed the intention of

restoring favorable relations with Rome. When James II (James VII of Scotland) came to the throne in 1685, he made no attempt to conceal his Catholic faith. In Ireland, Lords and officers favorable to the Catholic cause were placed in command of army units. These moves spawned rumors of an imminent Romanist uprising in Ireland. Catholic priests reportedly warned their parishioners to be ready and arm themselves in case of troubles. In Ulster, the issue of military control centered on Londonderry. That city had been founded by the craft guilds of London who maintained branch guild houses at Londonderry to serve Plantation settlements and towns. With close ties to London, the city was populated by traders, craft and professional people who were closely linked to the economy and politics of London.

Londonderry was guarded by the Lord Mountjoy Regiment, noted for its Protestant composition. In 1688, James II gave orders for the regiment to be replaced by a Romanist regiment under Lord Antrim. As the replacement regiment approached the city, citizens assembled to discuss their response. The Presbyterian Rev. James Gordon advised closing the city gates, while Bishop Hopkins of the Established Church (Church of England) warned against defying royal orders. As the debate continued, thirteen Presbyterian apprentice boys seized the keys to the city gates and locked the gates just as Lord Antrim's regiment appeared in view. The citizen assembly ordered Capt. James Hamilton to defend the city and appointed Lt. Col. Lundy as Governor. Both were officers in the Mountjoy Regiment. When James II appeared with his troops before the city, Lundy proposed surrender, but was overruled by the citizen assembly. Instead of retaining his command of the Mountjoy Regiment in the city, Lundy disguised himself as a woodsman, fled the city and later reported to an anti-royalist relief force that was being sent from London that defense of the city was hopeless. As the former commander of Lord Mountjoy Regiment he persuaded the relief force to sail back to London in April 1689. Undeterred, the Londonderry citizens, joined by recruits from County Tyrone, formed their own militia under Capts. James and John Gledstones to defend their city against the seige mounted by Lord Antrim and James II.²⁴

²⁴ The Gledstones were derived from a Menzies clan sept, known as Menzies of Gledstane. See: David Prentice Menzies, "The Red and White Book of Menzies", Glasgow, Scotland, 1894, available from <http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/cmsoc/redwhite.htm>

In other parts of Ireland, Protestants formed citizen militias to resist what they assumed was likely to become a repeat of the Irish Rebellion. At Inniskillen, in Ulster, a Protestant militia was formed which resisted an occupying force from Lord Antrim's troops engaged in the siege of Londonderry. This Protestant militia was able to defend Fermanagh and later able to give aid to the besieged Protestant forces in Londonderry.²⁵ To further his claims in Ireland, James II landed at Kinsale in March 1689 with 7,000 Frenchmen to bolster the ranks of the ill-equipped Irish levies under Lord Antrim's command.

²⁵ Andrew Hamilton, *The Actions of the Eniskillen men, from their first taking up of arms in 1688, in defense of their Protestant religion, their lives and liberties, to the landing of the Duke of Schomberg in Ireland* reprint of 1690 edition, LDS, British Film Area, 1440955, item 12, 86 pp.

Eventually, the political situation changed with the victory in England of "The Glorious Revolution" and the accession to the English throne of William and Mary. When the newly installed King William received word of the plight of Londonderry he sent a second relief force under Maj. Gen. Kirke. The fleet under Kirke's command reached Lough Foyle but was unable to approach the city because of a floating boom across the ness and guns manned by Lord Antrim's regiment, controlling access to the narrow entrance of the harbor. After a delay of six weeks, Kirke's ship *Mountjoy* was finally able to break the restraining boom, and, after 105 days, the siege of Londonderry was lifted on July 30, 1689.²⁶ Shortly thereafter, in July 1690, the Duke de Schomberg, a French émigré, landed with an army of 20,000, many of whom were French Huguenots eager to avenge their expulsion from France and to fight for Protestantism and William's cause. A month later, William of Orange arrived in Ireland with mercenaries, many of them German, bringing his total fighting force to 36,000. With overwhelming superiority William's troops defeated those of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and James fled to exile in France.²⁷

For the Scottish and English settler communities trying to recover from the devastation of the war, full toleration was promised for all Protestants (but not Unitarians), and the Crown agreed to provide £100 per annum to Protestant ministers serving active churches.²⁸ However, affiliation with the Established Church (of England) was required for all those holding public office under the Crown including election to the Irish Parliament in Dublin. "Sectarians" (Protestants not part of the "Established" Church) could vote but not be eligible for election to Parliament. Catholics could not be elected, and after 1727 could not vote even when they could pass the very restrictive property holding requirements. Thus, the Irish Parliament was composed of the rich Anglican landowners and business men who had received their lands and estates after Crown confiscations of Irish lands following rebellions or civil strife. The Irish Parliament was elected by less than ten percent of the

²⁶ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

²⁷ Roger Chauviré, trans. by Earl of Wicklow, *A Short History of Ireland* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), pp. 71-75.

²⁸ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-44, 56-58.

population, nearly all of whom were from the English or Scot settler communities.²⁹

²⁹ Chauviré, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

The Irish Parliament passed laws that were much more restrictive for Irish Catholics. While they could practice their religion, every Catholic priest had to be registered and were required to take the oath of allegiance to support the Protestant succession of the Crown. Most Catholic priests refused to do so and were therefore illegal if they performed any priestly duties. No Catholic prelate was allowed to reside in Ireland and were condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered if found within the borders of Ireland. No Catholics could be school masters. Any Catholic priest who became a Protestant was granted an annuity of £30 per annum, which would be collected from the residents of the area where he lived. A Catholic could not carry a sword or ride a horse worth more than £5. Catholics could not possess arms or vote or live within the boundaries of Limerick or Galway. They could not lease land for more than 31 years and could not buy more than two acres in sales, or acquire land from a Protestant neighbor. They could not practice law and they were not allowed to attend Trinity College, the only post-secondary institution in Ireland. They could go to "Charter Schools" operated by Protestants, but they could not send their children abroad for education. Some wandering Catholic masters operated "hedge schools" in secrecy with students being instructed in the open "behind hedges", but they were illegal and subject to severe penalties when discovered by the authorities. Handsome rewards were offered to informers for violations of these laws. These penal laws generated deep resentments among the Irish Catholic citizenry against the settler communities and also kept the common Irish both poor and uneducated. In the 1790s there were reportedly 30,000 beggars on the roads of Ireland.³⁰

Meanwhile, laws passed in England restricted the economic development of Ireland as a whole. One of the largest exports from Ireland was cattle and wool. The export of "fat cattle" to England was prohibited and the export of cattle to the colonies could only be done through English ports after paying English duties. All wool could be exported only to England and both wool and cattle were subject to heavy import duties. These laws helped to generate smuggling activities in Ireland engaging both Catholics and Protestants. These tariff and trade restrictions also generated unemployment and depressed farm incomes among Scot Presbyterian settlers who had been producing cattle, mutton and wool for the English market and who had also begun to sell their

³⁰ Chauviré, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.

products directly to the American colonies.³¹

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

With peace restored in England, Ulster in the 1790s returned to the patterns of nominal peace enforced by overwhelming British power. The Act of Toleration continued to allow for the practice and propagation of Protestant doctrines. Among the settler tenant communities in the period from 1650's to 1689 there had been a great increase in the formation of Baptist churches. By 1655, the number of clergy supported with Crown allowances of £100 per annum had risen to 150 in Ulster, 12 Episcopalian, 6 Presbyterian and 132 Baptist. Perhaps the charismatic aspects of Baptist doctrine, teaching and preaching appealed to the peasants in a harsh frontier environment. For whatever reason, the government became less tolerant of "Sectarian" Protestants. All annuities and grants for "Sectarian" clergy and churches were terminated and in 1704, with the enactment of the Test Act, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Protestant "sectarians" were banned from holding civil office and all positions of profit under the Crown. Only the "Established" Church received government grants and endowments and confessional membership was rewarded by great legal privileges and high social status.³²

³² Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

Without Crown support the "Sectarian" Protestant churches suffered financial crises. Consulted records do not reveal the impact on the Baptist congregations. Presbyterians kept excellent records of their "Meetings", thus providing evidence of their plight. In 1702, some Presbyterian congregations were three to three and a half years in arrears in their dues and tithes for the support of the church. Church minutes of that period record threats of disciplinary action against members by Presbytery orders and the threats of Presbyterian clergy to leave for other congregations. Poverty and bad crops for several years made the collection of tithes and dues very difficult. The Clogher Congregation had the support and leadership of two landlords, William Cairnes and Mr. Gledstones, but still could not generate sufficient funds to cover congregational obligations. Active in the deliberations of Clogher was an elder, Roger Mains. Of the 15 Presbyterian churches in Fermanagh and Armagh, about one third were without regular clergy in the period after 1704. Church minutes record endless disputes over combining parishes to reduce costs and disciplinary action against "deficient" members. Active in the deliberations at Clogher and at other churches was Rev. William Cornwall, whose salary at Clogher was £60 in arrears in 1706.³³

The new trade restrictions on cattle and wool put an added burdens on Presbyterian tenant farmers. Landlords were given increased powers to raise rents, and although farm labor was in plentiful supply from dispossessed Irish peasants, they were often hostile toward their Protestant employers. Some Irish secretly joined terrorist bands, such as the Whiteboys, that raided or injured cattle and damaged property at night. These factors made life much more difficult for the Scottish tenant farmer who found his economic prospects diminished at the same time that the "English by blood" Established Church authorities were reducing the previous privileges offered to "Sectarians" and imposing new restrictions on Presbyterians and other Dissenters.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-79.

By 1712, some voluntary emigration from Ulster had begun and the issue of moving to North America was discussed more openly because of the growing poverty and poor economic conditions prevailing in Ulster. When the parish of Clogher was joined into the Presbytery of Augher in 1717, Rev. William Cornwall used the occasion to preach on the topic of the claims being made in support of the new colonies in America. The next year four young theology graduates came to the Presbytery on their "Second Trials" (as interns) in preparation for their assignment to America. The four men were James How, William Brown, Nathaniel Glasgow and John Carlisle. The enthusiasm of the new clergy for emigration to America must have been contagious, for Rev. Cornwall was persuaded to resign his charge at Clogher, claiming "bodily indisposition" and made arrangements to travel to America. Earlier, probably in 1716 a Rev. William Boyd of Aghadowey had been deputed to visit America and enquire about opportunities for settlement. A petition had been prepared with signatures of 319 men, including 9 clergy, for presentation to Governor Shute of Massachusetts, requesting assistance for obtaining a site for settlement. The Governor had encouraged the project, and based upon the report of Rev. Boyd, a person by the name of Holmes reported to the Clogher congregation on the favorable prospects for settlement in America. Attending the meeting (probably at Augher), were Rev. Holmes of Strabane (father of the person making the report), Rev. William Boyd, Rev. William Cornwall and Rev. James McGregor. Some portions of their respective congregations were also present, when the meeting "determined on removal to America."³⁴

Most of the immigrants who traveled with Rev. Cornwall in 1718 to America were not from Clogher or Augher, but rather from the Bann Valley north of Lough Neagh. Although an early organizer of the emigration party, Rev. James McGregor did not go with the group that traveled in five vessels from Ulster. There is no record of which port they sailed from, but it is probable that it was from Londonderry. Prominent among the lay leaders of the group were John Armstrong and his three brothers, James, Simeon and Thomas, and a sister Jane, who travelled with their families. They were probably direct descendants of Thomas Armstrong who was an Elder of the Presbyterian Synod in 1704. Robert Means also joined the emigration group as an individual without family. Circumstantial evidence from the census suggests that he came from Fermanagh county and that his

³⁴ Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

father was probably Joseph Means who lived in Fermanagh, probably in or near Inniskillen. Whether Robert had moved to Clogher and was also related to the Rodger Mains who lived on the boundary between the Clogher and Aghalurcher is also unclear. In later years there was a cluster of Means at Desertmartin [54° 47'N 6° 40'W] as recorded in the Census of 1766. The emigrant Robert Means could also have been related in some way to another Robert Means who lived at Desertmartin.

The Ulster immigrants in their five sail ships arrived in Boston on August 4, 1718. It appears that many families disembarked in Boston, and some may have proceeded to the site in New Hampshire where they founded New Londonderry. Whether they stayed in Boston for the winter and proceeded to New Hampshire in the spring is uncertain. One ship, the brigantine *Robert*, with 20 families aboard proceeded north to Portland harbor, where they spent the winter aboard ship before proceeding ashore to construct homesteads at Falmouth, Spurwink and Perpooduck. Among the families going to Maine in the Casco Bay area were Armstrong, Means, McKean and Gregg. Some in the party that went to Maine later decided to join the new settlement at Londonderry, New Hampshire (about 50 miles NNE of Boston).³⁵ After one winter in New England, Rev. William Cornwall, who had been so enthusiastic about emigration to the North American colonies, became disillusioned with the hardships of colonial life and decided to return to Ireland where he settled at Taboyne, eventually dying there in March 1735.³⁶

Robert Means and his descendants spread from the Portland area to the coastal towns of Maine where many became active in building and operating sailing ships. A significant number of New England sea captains who sailed square rigged schooners and clipper ships around the world in the 19th century could trace their direct lineage to Robert Means. Other descendants of Robert Means eventually moved on across the United States to become part of the vast fabric of American society.

Irish Immigration to North America in the Eighteenth Century

³⁵ Barbara Hill, "Means Family in Maine", typescript ms, 1995, citing *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol. XII, 1858 (Boston: Samuel Drake Publisher, 1858), p. 234.

³⁶ Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

The group emigrating to New England from Ulster in 1718 was probably the first fairly numerous voluntary immigrants from Ireland to North America. Those bearing the Menzies / Means name who were already in North America by 1718 had most probably arrived as prisoners or indentured laborers during the previous century. Beginning about 1725 a fairly steady outflow of Irish immigrants came to North America, totalling almost one half million by the end of the century. A similar trickle of immigrants from Scotland developed into a steady stream by the middle of the 18th century. Most of the early 18th century immigrants from Ireland went to either Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Newcastle, Delaware; or Wilmington, North Carolina.

In 1759-60 the British defeated the French in maritime Canada and acquired Nova Scotia. Eager to acquire a loyal population for the new territories, the British promised Alexander McNutt a large tract of land in Nova Scotia provided he obtain settlers. McNutt was probably from County Donegal, in northwest Ulster. In May 1761 he placed a large advertisement in the *Belfast Newsletter* promising 200 acres of choice land in Nova Scotia per family plus 50 acres for each child and servant, and, for indentured servants, an additional 50 acres at the end of servitude, with all lands without rent or tithes for 10 years. To facilitate emigration he established Emigration Agents scattered across the Protestant sections of Ulster. About 300 people, almost entirely Presbyterians, were sent in 1761, and 70 more arrived in 1762. Some of the earlier residents of Londonderry, New Hampshire are reported to have later moved to the new Nova Scotia settlements, perhaps joining kin arriving from Ulster. Fearful of losing the loyal population of Ulster, the Governor of Nova Scotia was ordered by the British Government not to permit any further settlers from Ireland unless they had first been resident of His Majesty's Colonies in America for a period of at least five years. While this decision slowed Irish immigration, an Irish link with Nova Scotia continued since seasonal laborers were recruited in Ireland for the Nova Scotia fishing industry and the timber trade. Irish immigration to North America continued to grow gradually during the eighteenth century. After 1855, Irish immigration became a steady flow, reaching a peak in 1847 during the disaster of the Irish famine of 1845-1850.³⁷

³⁷ Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smith, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 13-30.

Scots were involved in the same immigration patterns to the British colonies in America and Canada. After 1763 large numbers of Scots emigrated to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, later continuing on to other parts of Canada and to the American colonies. The patterns of that emigration are meticulously recorded and analysed in the Adams and Somerville book on Scottish Emigration to North America.³⁸

The Menzies clan remains active in Canada, where it maintains an office with historical records of the clan. In Scotland a clan office is maintained as well as a web site. Those who are interested may contact:

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The Menzies Clan web site can be found at:
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³⁸ Adams and Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope, op. cit.*, chapter 4 and following.