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Scottish Emigration to British North America 1770-1783: The First Phase of Scottish Highland Diaspora

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**Scottish Emigration to British
North America 1770-1783: The
First Phase of Scottish
Highland Diaspora**

by

Beth Pryor

**An Abstract of a Thesis
in
History**

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Scottish Emigration to British North America 1770-1783: The First Phase of Scottish Highland Diaspora

As a result of the Hanoverian victory at the Battle of Culloden, the Scottish Highlands changed forever. Parliament passed new legislation outlawing key elements of traditional Highland culture. Highland landlords would implement new economic schemes to convert subsistence farming into commercial agriculture. With the economic changes in leases, land management and rent, the Highland social structure would be reorganized. One particular strata of the class structure, the tacksmen, would find their traditional cultural role as a military leader and economic role as an estate manager stripped from them, resulting in a reduced role in Highland society. This thesis will explain the multiple cultural, social and economic factors that lead to mass emigration from the Highlands. It endeavors to link these massive changes occurring in the Highlands to emigration, specifically the emigration of the tacksmen class.

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EMIGRATION TO BRITISH NORTH AMERICA 1770-1783: THE FIRST PHASE OF SCOTTISH HIGHLAND DIASPORA

Introduction

The study of migration can be divided into two categories: immigration and emigration. Immigration describes the movement of persons *into* one country from another; conversely emigration is the act of *leaving* one's resident country with the intent to settle elsewhere. Both immigration and emigration are acts of migration; the difference is between them is a matter of perspective, depending on whether one is looking through the lens of the receiving country (immigration) or through the lens of the sending country (emigration).

The world's migration is a story so vast, so complicated, so intricate and so overwhelming, that no one person, institution or organization could possibly fully answer all of the questions surrounding it. Thus, as historians, we look at the great tree of migration and study individual branches representing place and time, in the hopes of understanding the world's diaspora. This thesis will look at one twig, of the smallest branch on the metaphorical tree of migration: Scottish Emigration.

Scottish emigration from the Highlands has long been a topic of study, debate and discussion. The origins of Highland attitudes towards emigration are not written down in any official capacity. The attitude can be found in the controversy surrounding emigration which developed between 1763 and 1770. This thesis will examine the cultural and socioeconomic changes occurring in Scotland that effected the Highland Scot, investigate the forces behind emigration and explain the types of emigration to British North America from 1770-1783.¹ As will be seen, its conclusion is that Scottish

¹J. M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America 1770-1815* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), x.

Highland emigration during this period was a voluntary choice made by many Highlanders.

Students of Scottish Emigration to North America have perpetuated two principal arguments regarding the treatment of the Highland tenant by his landlord. Historians seek to answer the extent to which the Highlander was exploited, oppressed and marginalized by the handful of Scottish lairds who came to own the majority of the land in Northern Scotland. One perspective of Highland history is generally very sympathetic to the landlords.² Proponents of this viewpoint insist that the Highlands during the Age of the Clearances needed to be modernized and improved, that the expanding population was outstripping the land's ability to provide sustenance for the backward population. Clearances, according to these and other sources, were both unavoidable and necessary. Much emphasis has been placed on the paternal position that Highland tenants viewed the laird. Emigration was initially a temporary response to dislocation which benevolent landlords fully intended on reconciling by providing alternative livelihoods for the displaced. These alternatives eventually would fail, and after 1820, proprietors began to encourage emigration for the surplus Highland population, either with government assistance or on their own.³

In contrast, the more common approach to the Clearances has been to condemn the landlords and pity their tenants, who were unable to adapt to the transforming social

² Eric Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth: A Sutherland Fortune in the Industrial Revolution*, A. J. Youngerson's *After the '45: The Economic Impact on the Scottish Highlands*, (Edinburgh 1973) and Margaret I. Adam, "The Highland Emigration of 1770," *The Scottish Historical Review* 16, no. 64 (1919): 280-93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25519168>.

³ Eric Richards, *Patrick Sellar and the Highland Clearances: Homicide, Eviction and the Price of Progress*, (Edinburgh University Press, 1999) and T.M., Devine, "Temporary Migration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century." *The Economic History Review* 32, no. 3 (1979): 344-359.

and economic conditions of the Highlands.⁴ For example, according to John Stuart

Blackie:

The people began to be disgusted with their country, and the chieftains to be indifferent to their people; and landlords began a course of conduct—acting on what was called the commercial system— which had a constant tendency to degrade them into land-merchants, and taught them, where native goodness might not prevent, to look upon their people as mere chattels to be sold or removed, with due form of law, at the pleasure of the proprietor.⁵

In this view, the Clearances were brutal, oppressive, without respect for persons, and they were executed by a class that refused to recognize any rights of the persecuted.

This thesis will not argue that the Clearances were not cruel, savage and brutish; however, that brutality, for which the Clearances have become infamous, does not quite fit within this particular time frame (1770-1783). Large scale evictions, especially in those areas of the Highlands which experienced the major exodus of people to North America at the outset of emigration, did not begin in earnest until later in the 1820s. Before 1783, the majority of landlords feared and opposed mass migration, attempting rather to retain the population. The case for landlord barbarism is much stronger after 1820.⁶

While the numbers of Highlanders emigrating to British North America between the end of the Seven Year's War and the start of the American Revolutionary War were probably lower than the contemporary opponents of emigration supposed, the period before 1783 saw substantial resettlement and depopulation of the Highlands: a

⁴ Alexander, Mackenzie, *The History of the Highland Clearances: Containing a Reprint of Donald Macleod's "Gloomy Memories of the Highlands"; Isle of Skye in 1882; and a Verbatim Report of the Trial of the Braes Crofters*. (A. & W. Mackenzie, 1883).

⁵ John Stuart Blackie, *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws: An Historico-Economical Enquiry*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885), 40.

⁶ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, x-xi.

Clearance of some consideration. This Clearance must be distinguished from those which would succeed it, for it was executed from below by the common folk, more than the instigation from above by the landlords. This particular Clearance was based on pride and choice; the Highlander chose to emigrate to British North America in many circumstances to maintain his traditional way of life.⁷ The cultural and socio-economic changes that the Highlands will endure after Culloden altered the state of the social organism, encouraging many Highlanders to emigrate.⁸

In moving forward, I must make two clarifications. First, my principal intent in this research is to deal with emigration from the Highlands rather than immigration. This paper's scope will be limited to explaining the causes for emigration from the Highlands of Scotland. For further study on early Scottish settlements and Scottish impact on North American culture refer to Bernard Bailyn's *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* and Arthur Herman's *How the Scot Invented the Modern World*.⁹

Secondly, my use of the term British North America may need some clarification. In 1763, where I begin my Scottish emigration narrative, "British North America" included the thirteen American Colonies which would rebel against Great Britain. After the American Revolution, the land to which I am referring is all a part of modern day Canada.

⁷ Bumstead, *The People's Clearance*, xvi.

⁸ Blackie, *The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws*, 40.

⁹ Bernard Bailyn, *Voyages to the West, Voyages to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) and Arthur Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created our World & Everything in it*. (Crown, 2001).

This research attempts to establish some general cultural, social and economic factors for leaving the Highlands. There will always be exceptions to the rules and outlying situations that do not quite fit into the overview of my theme; keeping this in mind, I believe it is possible to establish some general guidelines for Scottish Highland emigration more so than hard, fast rules. Historians attempt to make sense of people and their choices, nevertheless people are capricious. The Highlanders' reasons for leaving their homeland will vary, and who can say how truthful emigrants were being when they recorded their reasons for leaving on ships' manifests. Regardless, if one looks at the general trend of emigration, common factors for the majority of Highlanders become apparent.

Emigration from Scotland is not a new phenomena. Scotland itself is an immigrant nation; Scottish history was shaped by immigrants. The original Scots for whom Scotland is named came from Ireland and settled in the Western shire of Argyll in the sixth century. Coming across the North Sea, the Angles, England's namesake, invaded the Southeastern portion of modern-day Scotland; but Central and Eastern Scotland were controlled by the Picts, and South Western Scotland was controlled by a branch of the Britons, who conquered all of central and southern Britannica before the Angles and Saxons invaded. The Normans, also called Scandinavians, settled the North as well as some of the Scottish coastal areas.¹⁰ A variety of races was the consequence of the many immigrations of the centuries. Gradually these races would merge into two groups: the Gaelic speaking Celts in the center and the West, and the English-speaking Teutonic peoples in the South and the East.

¹⁰ Gordon Donaldson, *The Scots Overseas*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1966), 11.

The racial and linguistic division thus began to coincide with the geographical and topographical divisions of the Highlands and the Lowlands. Some clarity must be given to this definition: the Lowlands are not confined to just the south of Scotland nor the Highlands just to the North. The Lowlands are more precisely described as stretching across almost the entire breadth of the East coast and most of the South; whereas, the Highlands occupy most of the North and the West of modern-day Scotland. If one were to look at a map and draw a diagonal line through the country running from the Northeast to the Southwest as opposed to a horizontal line straight across the country, one would see a more accurate division of the Highlands from the Lowlands.

Broadly speaking, the two great divisions of linguistics and geography in Scotland represented two very different ways of life. The Highlands' mainly pastoral economy was based on grazing herds of cattle on barren mountainous plateaus. In contrast, Scots in the Lowlands generally survived by cultivating the arable plains for food. The South and the East are generally dry, with cool weather and harsh winds. Conditions such as these foster a race of men who are dour but enterprising.¹¹ Dr. Samuel Johnson, who documented his extensive travels through the Highlands in 1773, said: "Scotland is a vile country, though God made it, but we must remember that he made it for Scotsmen, and comparisons are odious, but God also made Hell."¹² Understandably Dr. Johnson disdainfully made this statement because of the Highlands' severe winters and very wet climate.

¹¹ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 12-13

¹² Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes Of The Late Samuel Johnson L.L.D. During The Last Twenty Years Of His Life 1824*, 172.

For example, in 1934, on the Isle of Skye the months of August, September and October produced a mere six rainless days. In almost any month, gales of near hurricane force blast vegetation with salt spray that sometimes kills trees. Few activities are more disheartening than farming under these conditions. With a vast number of days being inhospitable to outdoor work for Highlanders, it is understandable to see how Highland inhabitants gained a reputation for lethargy.

The geographical differences between the Highlands and the Lowlands not only implemented different economic strategies, but these distinctions encouraged a difference in outlooks. On the East coast, the Lowlander saw an open horizon beckoning him to explore maritime enterprises with his eastern neighbors of Europe. Contrary to the East coast, the Atlantic Ocean creates fjords and sea lochs on the West Coast. The East coast is more regular, with a series of large estuarine inlets, or firths, with sandy beaches. In western portions of Scotland, the prospect was not one of an open horizon, as it was in the East, but island upon island. Not until hundreds of years later would the Western door of promise open to the Scots.¹³

The Scots have a long history of migratory patterns. One of the principal exports of Scotland through its history has been people.¹⁴ Long before emigration was thought of in the modern sense, most Scots were wanderers. Many left in search of education; until the early fifteenth century, a Scots only choice for advanced education was to travel abroad. Scottish students have been attending Oxford since the thirteenth century.¹⁵ Even when Scottish centers for higher education were established, such as

¹³ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 13.

¹⁴ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 1.

¹⁵ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 23.

St. Andrews (1411), Glasgow University (1451) and Edinburgh University (1583), many Scots continued to travel abroad for their education. The French universities of Orleans, Avignon and Paris were popular, but some Scotsman studied even further afield in Copenhagen, Tubingen and Bologna. Religion was another reason many Scots adventured around the world. As long as medieval religious thought prevailed, pilgrimages to foreign shrines would draw many religious Scots. Other Scots travelled abroad as fighting men in the fifteenth century. They went mainly to help their French allies, against the English in the later phases of the One Hundred Years War. They also fought with much distinction with the French in Italy at the end of the century.¹⁶ Men such as Robert Patillo, lord of Sauveterre, Robert Cunningham, lord of Concessault and Stewart of Darnley, lord of Aubigny and Evreaux neither died in France nor returned to Scotland, but settled in France where some either married French heiresses and acquired estates or were endowed with lands by French kings. In contrast to the warring Scotsmen, the peaceful and enterprising tradesmen and craftsmen crossed the North Sea to foreign ports and often penetrated inland. Commercial ties with Denmark, Sweden and countries across the Baltic Sea opened up a vast area for the adventurous Scots.

Scotland's nearest neighbor, England, was often a destination for the wandering Scot, just as many of the continental countries were. The recent Reformation made England and Scotland two Protestant countries with a friendly alliance against the papalist powers of the continent. Many Scots who studied in England ended up teaching in England. One such man was James White, who was so beneficial to his school in London that there was little hope in attracting him back to Edinburgh.

¹⁶ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 24-25.

Historians estimate that in 1550, there were over three thousand Scotsmen and their families who had settled in England. The multifaceted migration of the Scots to other countries represented emigration, or something very much like it.

However, this migration did not represent colonization. The earliest ventures of Scottish colonization were actually not made abroad at all but within the geographical bounds of Scotland itself. The Lowland Scots were the first to effectively colonize the Northern exterior of Scotland. The archipelagos of Shetland and Orkney, although still under Norwegian sovereignty, were populated by more and more Scots in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries until 1472 when the crown of Scotland annexed them.¹⁷ As mentioned before, countless numbers of Scots, mainly those skilled in the making of war and conducting of trade, journeyed to England or to the continent of Europe throughout the Middle Ages and the Reformation seeking prosperity through employment which could not have been realized at home in Scotland.¹⁸

The most famous of these overseas Scottish colonies was the Ulster plantation in the seventeenth century. These soon to be called Scotch-Irish would eventually migrate from Northern Ireland to the shores of America.¹⁹ J. M. Bumsted argues in his book that “the movement of Scots directly to America during the seventeenth century was perhaps as substantial as that to Ulster.”²⁰ Although not granted complete open access to the American colonies, many Scots in the seventeenth century were allowed to migrate as indentured servants with permission from the English Privy Council. Other

¹⁷ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 26-30.

¹⁸ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 1.

¹⁹ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 29-30.

²⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 1.

Scots were transported to the colonies as minor criminals, or they were homeless paupers sent to relieve the overcrowded prison facilities. Still other Scots were sent to the colonies as military and political prisoners.²¹ At the close of the seventeenth century, Scotland attempted to organize their own overseas venture on the isthmus of Panama: a venture they called Darien.

With the failure of the colony of Darien, the English parliament would dangle compensation in front of the Scots like a carrot. When the governments of Scotland and England were combined in the Act of Union in 1707, one of the articles explicitly said that subscribers to the company would be compensated for their losses in the Darien scheme.²² Although Scotland surrendered control of many of its political institutions, they gained unrestricted access to the American colonies according to article four of the treaty. Merchants, indentured servants and political prisoners began to exit Scotland after the uprisings of 1715 and 1719, but emigration would not become a controversial issue within Scotland until after the Paris Peace Treaty of 1763. The emigration that began in 1763 took on a different form.

This migration, was regarded as new and frightening to the Scots. Conditions had changed in both the colonies as well as in Scotland.²³ There were numerous reasons for emigration from Scotland. In fact, one Shetland farmer came to the colony of Carolina in the spring of 1774 on the ship the *Bachelor*. He gave the customs officials four separate reasons for leaving his homeland: two of his sons were already

²¹ Bumstead, *The People's Clearance*, 2

²² Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, <http://www.rps.ac.uk> and P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III From the Revolution of 1689 to the Disruption 1843* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 39.

²³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 1-2.

settled in the new country and had written begging him to come; he wanted to improve his family's chances of success; he had lost his cattle in the severe winter of 1771; and his land had changed owners often and every time the land changed hands the price of his rent increased. Another Sutherland man who was on the same ship mentioned failed crops, low cattle prices, scarcity of food as well as favorable reports from friends as his reasons for leaving. Still a third farmer from nearby Caithness cited the abuse of power by the factor of an absentee landlord as his reason for emigrating.²⁴ If people leaving from the same country for British North America at the same time had a variety of reasons for emigrating, certainly people leaving at various times from a number of scattered locations would represent exponentially more differences in the variety of reason for emigrating.

In studying the causes emigration, historians commonly divide these factors into two categories. The first group consists of forces *pushing* the people from their homes, while the second group is composed of those forces which *pull*, or attract, the emigrant toward a particular resettlement. The turmoil and hardships of the old country are often contrasted with the attractions of the new. In the case of Scottish migration, a rigid division between the push and pull factors of emigration would likely obscure the simultaneous interdependence of the two categories, which is especially apparent in the period of migration just before the Revolution. Therefore, this thesis will limit the scope of its study to the general cultural, social and economic reasons for Highland emigration to British North America from 1770-1783.²⁵

²⁴ A. R. Newsome "Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued)." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (1934): 137, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23514858>.

²⁵ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783*, (Ithaca: NY Cornell University Press, 1956), 24.

Since the pioneering work of Margaret Adam in beginning of the twentieth century, the subject of transatlantic emigration before 1815 has generated considerable interest among historians. Although Adam's investigations into the causes of Highland emigration were written nearly one hundred years ago, they remain some of the most respected interpretations of the era. Certain historians, such as Ian Charles Cargill Graham and J.M. Bumstead, have agreed with Adams in labelling the late 1700s in the Highlands as the "first phase of clearance" or the "People's Clearance" in an awareness of its scant resemblance to what would happen in the nineteenth century. Graham even questioned whether it can be called "clearance" at all. The term was not used during by contemporaries of the era. Some current historians bandy the term around sloppily and some take it as a synonym for genocide. If "clearance" is defined as the disappearance of a population from its original habitat, then in the decades prior to the nineteenth century in the Highlands there was not a single county, island, parish or estate "cleared." In contrast, the population rapidly increased. With the increase of population came an increased pressure on the Highland's limited economic resources, leaving many Highlanders with no choice but to change their situations. For a majority of this timeframe landlords deployed their ample legal powers to stop emigration, not further it. Some authors took this idea so far as to hypothesize that during this era no Highland clearance took place. However after the second decade in the nineteenth century, this argument can no longer be made; clearances would be brutally and oppressively executed upon the Highlanders.²⁶ J. M. Bumsted provides an evaluation of the exodus as a whole, with special attention given to the post-1783 period of Highland movement to the Canadian provinces. This paper will not take the study of Highland emigration

²⁶ Michael Fry, *A Higher World: Scotland 1707-1815*, (Birlinn, 2014), "Agriculture: To Do Useful Things."

that far (1815), but Professor Bumstead's work pre-1783 readily proves that emigrants of this period were not passive victims of circumstances but people acted according to their own free will. Ian Charles Cargill Graham and J.M. Bumstead are both in agreement in pronouncing that the unique tacksmen class of the Highlands emigrated to protect the traditional Highland roles of the clans.

The story of the Highland evictions is often oversimplified and blamed on the landlord for turning out his tenants from arable land to make way for sheep and his ultimate economic gain. For example, John Prebble's graphic account of "how the Highlanders were deserted and then betrayed" in his book *The Highland Clearances* is still very influential today. This rather puerile approach to the complicated story of Highland information is far too simple. The history of evictions through the enclosure of arable acreage for pasture goes back to the 1720s. The narrative of the sheep is old not distinctive to the Highlands. In 1725 in the Lowland province of Galloway, large bands of men attacked the newly reared enclosures. Brandishing pitchforks and stakes, they set out to destroy the dykes and maim the cattle of the larger tenants who favored the abominable enclosures. Captured miscreants were imprisoned or even transported; while order was restored, the prejudice against enclosure remained obstinate and hostile, and the making of enclosures by hedge or dyke received a check for a generation.²⁷

Opinions differ as to the date that commercial sheep farming began, but most economic authorities agree that sheep were unimportant before 1770.²⁸ In the middle of

²⁷ Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964), 169-170.

²⁸ M. L. Ryder, "Sheep and the Clearances in the Scottish Highlands: A Biologist's View." *The Agricultural History Review* 16, no. 2 (1968): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40273284>, 157.

the eighteenth century the stocking industry of Aberdeenshire almost entirely depended on wool imported from the Lowlands.²⁹ By the 1760s, the first sheep farmers in the Highlands took leases for the hills of the southern fringes of Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Perthshire. By the late eighteenth century the success of these sheep farmers over small cattle growers become common knowledge, and most of the central Highlands was given over to sheep farming.³⁰ Even as late as 1784, Inverness exported a little over a ton of wool. Evictions were scattered at this point. In 1785, there were still no clearance anywhere in the district of Strathspey, but a little earlier in 1770, eighty people of Aberarder in Badenoch were forced from their land.³¹

At first glance, sheep farming does not necessarily seem incompatible with the Highland people, who lived huddled in the glens and straths. Sheep, after all, graze upon the hills. Part of the problem was that large numbers of sheep were a repellant to cattle grazing, the chief income of the small-time farmer. Sheep keep the grass vastly shorter than cattle and required winter forage.³² Even more to the point, the economics of commercial sheep farming were averse to the small farmer. In order to see a profit through sheep farming, economies had to be a large scale operation. One shepherd had the capacity to look after six hundred sheep. The cost of acquiring a sufficiently large stock of sheep (around £375 for 600 animals) was well outside the financial means of most Highlanders. Even if by some means a small tenant acquired a flock, the highly organized wool market proved difficult for him to enter.³³

²⁹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 58.

³⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 44.

³¹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 58.

³² Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 44.

³³ Ryder, "Sheep and the Clearances," 169-178.

The accounts of evictions for sheep pasture as a cause of emigration began in the 1770s. In 1772, a group of two hundred Highlanders from the province of Sutherland passed through Edinburgh on their way to Greenock to embark for America. They gave their reason for emigrating as “want of means of livelihood at home, through the opulent graziers ignoring the farms, and turning them into pasture.” In September 1775, a band of 136 farmers and laborers emigrating to North Carolina from Alpine and Glenorchy “never would have thought to leave their native country.” The “Farmers were obliged to quit their Lands either on account of the advanced Rent or to make room for Shepherds [sic].” The Highlanders from Alpine seemed to have been particularly affected by enclosures for pasture asserting “that out of one hundred Mark Land that formerly was occupied by Tenants who made their Rents by rearing Cattle and raising grain, Thirty-three Mark Land of it is now turned into Sheep Walks and they seem to think in a few years more, Two-thirds of that County at least will be in the same State.” Of course not all the members of the party cited eviction as their reason for emigrating. Many could not support their families on their low wages or hoped for a better life in the New World. “It is not from any other motive, but the dread of want,” they said, “that they quit a Country which above all others they would wish to live in.”³⁴

Emigrants, even from Sutherland, where the conversion of arable land into sheep walks began and was implemented the farthest, gave no other reason for emigration before the American War. Shiploads of Sutherland Highlanders left for America between 1770-1775, but none of the emigrants seem to have been driven away by eviction. The group mentioned above may well be a unique exception. Of the recorded

³⁴ Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued),” 141.

accounts of the 1, 650 emigrants who left Sutherland, Caithness and other Highland countries between 1773 and 1775, not one emigrant mentioned eviction as even a minor cause for leaving. Stephen Eglin embarked from the port of London in 1774 cited his reason for departure as “going to settle.” Henry Houseman cited “going for pleasure.”³⁵ William Gordon on board the ship the *Bachelor* of Leith bound for Wilmington in North Carolina said he was induced to emigrate “for the greater benefit of his children being himself and Old Man and lame so that it was indifferent to him in what Country he died.”³⁶ All manner of personal and economic reasons are mentioned, but not eviction and not sheep.³⁷

The Highland elite were somewhat divided over the question of large commercial sheep farming. Some objected based on the great difficulty to people a country rather than depopulate it, seemingly overnight.³⁸ Others accepted the economic concept of sheep, maintaining that sheep farming could abide harmoniously with a rising population by shifting the dispossessed into other regions and employments.³⁹

Lord Adam Gordon, Commander-in-chief of the King’s armies in Scotland wrote in a dispatch to Henry Dundas:

...no disloyalty or spirit of rebellion, or dislike to his Majesty’s Person or Government is in the least degree concerned in the tumults, and... they have sole originated in a (too well founded) apprehension that the landed proprietors of Ross-shire and some of the

³⁵ A.R., Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina 1774-1775,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 11, no. 1 (1934): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23515074>, 45.

³⁶ Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued),” 130.

³⁷ Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued),” 129-141.

³⁸ Samuel Johnson and John David Fleeman, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 109-110.

³⁹ Eric Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions, 1746-1886*, (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 211-212; and Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 45.

adjacent Highland counties were about to let their estates to sheep-farmers, by which means all the former tenants would be ousted and turned adrift and of course obliged to emigrate, unless they could be elsewhere received.⁴⁰

At this point in the Scottish emigration story, despite what Lord Adam Gordon had suggested, the outcome of sheep farming according to many Highland elites, should not produce large-scale emigration to America or any other destinations.⁴¹

The question is then, did sheep cause large scale emigration? Based on Alexander Mackenzie's book *Highland Clearances*, clearances for sheep were practically the sole cause of massive depopulation in the Highlands.⁴² Much of the written tradition about clearances and emigration may be credited to the writings of Donald MacLeod, a Strathnaver stonemason who bitterly attacked the Highland lairds from Canadian exile in his two books: *History of the Destitution in Sutherlandshire* (1841) and *Gloomy Memories of the Highlands of Scotland: a Faithful Picture of the Extirpation of the Celtic Race From the Highlands of Scotland (1857)*.⁴³ He wrote in the latter book,

The expulsion of the natives and the substitution of strange adventurers—sheep farmers, generally from England and from the English border—being, as it were, simultaneously agreed upon by the Highland proprietors, instruments were readily found to carry their plans into effect, who soon became so zealous in the service—not, however, forgetting to profit by the plunder in the meantime—that they carried their atrocities to a height which would have appalled their employers themselves, had they been witnesses of them. Every imaginable means, short of the sword or the musket, was put into requisition to drive the natives away, or to force them to exchange their farms and comfortable

⁴⁰ Lord Adam Gordon to Dundas, quoted in Henry William, Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, (Edinburgh, 1912), 83.

⁴¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 45.

⁴² Alexander MacKenzie and Donald MacLeod, *History of the Highland Clearances*, (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1991), 14-17.

⁴³ J.M. Bumsted "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes 1770-1815: A New Look at an Old Theme." *Acadiensis* 10, no. 2 (1981): 65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30303376>.

habitations, erected by themselves or their forefathers, for inhospitable rocks on the sea shore, and to depend for subsistence on the produce of the watery element in its wildest mood, and with whose perils they, in their hitherto pastoral life, were totally unacquainted and unfitted to contend.⁴⁴

As a victim of the clearances, MacLeod's judgement was understandably emotional and clouded; he lacked historical perspective and ran all emigrations, clearances, and sufferings together in a powerful indictment of the ruling classes. His views of the Highlander as passive victim have been perpetuated in Alexander MacKenzie's *A History of the Highland Clearances* and the best-selling book by John Prebble, *The Highland Clearances*.⁴⁵ Another author, Eric Richards, referred to the "Victory of the Sheep" over the "displaced victims of the devastating agrarian transformation."⁴⁶

Margaret I. Adam brought some well constructed arguments together in her support of the theory that sheep farming caused little emigration from the Highlands in the 1700s.⁴⁷ Social historian, Henry Grey Graham, denied that evictions in the Highlands of the eighteenth century exasperated the poverty of the area. These evictions were carried out to improve the productivity of the land. The land which was lastly introduced to sheep walks, was already depopulated, he argued.⁴⁸ Although continuing Graham's argument implies one significant fact; there was no direct correlation in the eighteenth century between enclosures, evictions and the spread of

⁴⁴ Donald MacLeod, *Gloomy Memories in the Highlands of Scotland: versus Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Sunny memories in (England) a Foreign Land, or, A faithful Picture of the Extirpation of the Celtic Race from the Highlands of Scotland*, [archive.org, https://ia802608.us.archive.org/32/items/donaldmcleodsglo00mcleuoft/donaldmcleodsglo00mcleuoft.pdf](https://ia802608.us.archive.org/32/items/donaldmcleodsglo00mcleuoft/donaldmcleodsglo00mcleuoft.pdf), xiv.

⁴⁵ Bumsted, "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes," 65.

⁴⁶ Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions, 1746-1886*, 177-178.

⁴⁷ Margaret I. Adam, "The Causes of Highland Emigration of 1783-1803," *The Scottish Historical Review* 17, no. 66 (1920): 80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25519212>.

⁴⁸ Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland*, 224.

sheep pastures to the volume of emigration.⁴⁹ “Admittedly, then some emigration must have resulted from the introduction of sheep, but the extent of such emigration is an extremely debatable point.” Adam goes on to write, “The majority of the writers who favored sheep farming as the sole, or even main cause of emigration based their case, not on definite examples but on general principles.” The case presented was incomplete. Even contemporary writers (disregarding Donald MacLeod) in the eighteenth century pointed out flaws in this argument. For instance, they claimed that sheep pastures rarely enclosed arable land; new sheep pasture had been wasteland. They denied that the displacement of cattle farming by sheep farming necessarily produced emigration, and suggested alternate causes. The enemies of sheep farming level charges of depopulation which are not substantiated against the Highland elite. To illustrate, between 1755 and 1800, the combined population of Argyll, Inverness and Ross increased considerably. Argyll had taken strongly to sheep farming and had provided comparatively few Highland emigrants for America in the years after 1783. The Hebrides, on the other hand, were far less affected by sheep farming and had provided many emigrants for new lands. Adams claimed that, “Sheep farming did displace population, but was largely the result of the inability or unwillingness of the native farmer to adapt himself to new conditions.”⁵⁰

Historians (Alexander MacKenzie, John Prebble and Donald MacLeod) often make authoritative claims that sheep were the sole cause of emigration. Although sheep farming undoubtedly caused some social upheaval resulting in emigration, during this era, sheep farming was not the primary push factor for emigration. Clearing the

⁴⁹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 61.

⁵⁰ Margaret I. Adams, “The Causes of Highland Emigration of 1783-1803,” 80-83.

land of Highland farmers for the purpose of sheep farming was not the main cause Highland emigration between 1770 and 1783. Before 1775, there can be hardly any doubt that such evictions were minimal as a cause of emigration.

Hunger, famine, disease and poverty prevailed in pre-1770. In the late eighteenth century, Highland elites were optimistic that their investments in surveying, leases and enclosure of land, as well as their resettlement schemes would generate increased revenue, diversify and stabilize the economy and create employment opportunities. There were undoubtedly cases of mistreatment (e.g. the Duke of Argyll⁵¹), but many landlords took considerable care to reduce emigration, for replacing their tenants, especially in the kelping regions, proved more difficult than retaining their current ones.

Most notable historians will acknowledge that the emigration post-1815 took on a different form altogether. The collapse of the annexed estates, clan system and public welfare system resulted in grinding poverty among the landless population. These failed attempts to regain landlord's investments lead to a more repressive phase of forced eviction and emigration. The arbitrary turning out of their tenants (evictions) were made to make room for sheep. One must be careful to assume that the role sheep played in the nineteenth century was the same role played in the eighteenth. Sheep would most definitely play a role later in the 1800s. However, for this time period, the biggest factor that caused Highland emigration was the change in economics that led to the dissolution of the tacksmen class. Facing poverty and

⁵¹ The Duke of Argyll's instructions in 1801 made no effort to counter a potential exodus from his land to America. He abolished run-rig and communal farming in Mull and refused to permit tenants to subdivide further their farms for their children, insisting that he was the only who bequeath land. Moreover, he took firm measures against illegal distilleries of whisky resulting in 157 different fines to people. Far from fearing a massive exodus, Argyll actually embraced it, giving those evicted £2 each in expectation of their journey. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America 1770-1815*, 97.

degradation in the Highlands, they chose to leave, taking with them their under-tenants.⁵²

⁵² For more on the cultural transformation of the Highlands see Charles W.J. Withers, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region*, (New York: Rutledge, 1988), James Hunter, *The Making of the Crofting Community*, (Edinburgh: John MacDonal, 1976) and T.M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofter's War. The Social Transformation of the Highlands*, (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

CHAPTER 1: CHANGE IN THE HIGHLANDS 1746-1770

“On various occasions of mutual cooperation, the Highland clans signified themselves by achievements of a truly remarkable character, considering their small numerical strength; as, for instance, in Montrose’s wars, Dundee’s campaign, and the rebellions of 1715 and 1745.”¹

Change in the Highlands—Culloden

Many cultural, social and economic changes occurred in the second half of the 1700s. In the Highlands, the impetus for these changes was the Battle of Culloden. On 5 July 1745, two ships set sail from France to the shores of Scotland, and as ill-luck would have it, they encountered a British-man-of-war. The French ship *Elisabeth* was badly damaged and forced to return to Brest, taking with it the majority of weapons and military stores, which were to be used by the Jacobite rebels in Scotland. The other French ship, the *Du Teillay*, managed to limp on towards Scotland carrying Bonnie Prince Charlie.² Charles Edward Stuart held onto the hopeful promise of restoration for the Jacobites in Scotland. Twice before the French government had equipped a fleet for the restoration of the Stuart, and in both cases the enterprise ended in disaster. Therefore France continued to aid the Stuarts’ cause, but never again to such a degree as to be of any serious danger to the Hanoverian Regime.³ The Prince’s initial welcome on the Scottish shores was rather subdued. He brought no money, little weaponry, few men and most importantly, none of the promised French support. The overwhelming lesson of failure learned in 1715 and 1719 had been that without foreign aid, the Jacobite plan was doomed. Two Highland chiefs Norman MacLeod of MacLeod and Alexander MacDonald of Sleat refused to join Charles and encouraged him to make a

¹ George Anderson and Peter Anderson, *Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland Including Orkney and Zetland*, (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1842), 26.

² Magnus Magnusson, *Scotland: The Story of a Nation*, (NY: Grove Press, 2000), 586.

³ P. Hume, Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 270-271.

swift departure back to France. The Prince's response— "I am come Home, sir, and I will entertain no notion at all of returning to the place from whence I came; for I am persuaded my faithful Highlanders will stand by me"— became legendary.⁴ Had the Bonnie Prince succeeded in his quest, his story would have been heralded as one of determination and inspiration. Unfortunately, for the Prince and Jacobite-supporting clans of the Highlands, Prince Charles was epically unsuccessful.

On 16 April 1746, Prince Charlie and his Highland clans fought the last battle ever pitched on British soil. In the open moor of Culloden over fifteen hundred Highlanders lost their lives in defeat. Outnumbered, outgunned, out-trained and out-maneuvered, the odds were stacked against them, and they never stood a chance.⁵ The aftermath of Culloden was, if possible, more dismal than the battle itself. The troops of Lord Cumberland brutally, systematically murdered and mutilated Highlanders, which has remained a gross blot on the annals of British arms.

The government's soldiers saw anyone in Highland dress and assumed them to be a rebel, deserving of death.⁶ The atrocities and killing went on for days after the official battle was over. Today these actions would be called genocide. After the Battle of Culloden Scottish culture, society and economy changed; in addition to these three major areas of change, Scotland during the eighteenth century experienced an extensive increase in population. This chapter will explain the cultural, social and economical changes occurring in the Scottish Highlands from 1746-1770.

Change in the Highlands—Culture

⁴ Quoted in Magnusson, *Scotland*, 587, and George Anderson, *Guide to the Highlands*, 470.

⁵ Magnusson, *Scotland*, 620.

⁶ Magnusson, *Scotland*, 620.

As a result of the Hanoverian victory at Culloden, the government passed new legislation to enforce the recent military action. In the past, the Highland region was difficult to tax, and the royal writ was often ignored; the parliament at Westminster struggled to exert jurisdiction over the region.⁷ The Highlands had often been a breeding ground for unrest and rebellion. In the first half of the eighteenth century four major rebellions occurred in the Highlands (1708, 1715, 1719 and 1745), and Hanoverian regime determined to make the '45 the final rebellion.⁸ They attempted to control the area by passing a series of acts bent on disarming, pacifying and dominating the Highland Scots. The three general areas in which the new legislation changed the Highland culture were lifestyle, heritable jurisdictions and military traditions.

The first cultural aspect of the Highland Scots' life that the government attempted to change was the wearing of the tartan. To accomplish this task, parliament passed the Dress Act of 1746. This act (part of the larger Proscription Act of 1746) made it illegal to

...wear or put on the Clothes commonly called Highland Clothes (that is to say) the Plaid, Philabeg, or little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb; and that no Tartan, or party-coloured Plaid or Stuff shall be used for Great Coats, or for Upper Coats; and if any such Person shall presume after the first day of August, to wear or put on the aforesaid Garments, or any part of them, every such Person so offending, being convicted thereof by the Oath of One or more credible Witness or Witnesses before any Court of Justiciary or any one or more Justices of the Peace for the Shire or Stewartry, or Judge Ordinary of the Place where such Offence shall be committed, shall suffer imprisonment, without Bail, during the space of Six Months, and no longer, and that being convicted for a second Offence before a Court of Justiciary, or at the Circuits, shall be liable to be transported to any of His Majesty's Plantations beyond the Seas, there to remain for the space of Seven Years.⁹

⁷ Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry, *The History of Scotland*, (New York: Routledge, 1982), 65.

⁸ Magnussun, Scotland, 558-571.

⁹ Scottish Tartans Authority, "Scottish Dress Act 1746," <http://www.tartansauthority.com/resources/archives/the-archives/scobie/tartan-and-the-dress-act-of-1746/>, (accessed 17 April 2017).

The problem with this act was the broad brush that painted all Highlanders as rebels. There had been several combatant Lowland Jacobites. There had even been a few English Jacobites in arms. But only the Scottish Highlander was singled out for this calculated humiliation. The majority of clansmen had actually either kept out of the conflict, or had remained loyal to Hanoverian cause. (Some clan chiefs even put men on either side of the fray, because they were not sure which way the tide would turn.¹⁰) Regardless, the Mackays, the Grants, the Campbells, the Munros and all the other clans who had fought and died for King George, were to be mortified in the same way.

The second aspect of the Highland Scots' lifestyle that Parliament attacked was music. As another part of the Proscription Act of 1746, bagpipes were outlawed. James Logan, secretary of the Highland Society of London from 1836-1838, stated in his book *The Scottish Gael* that their pipe was used as an instrument of war, and thus illegal.¹¹

A third area of Highland life that the Proscription Act modified was language. Highlanders were no longer permitted to speak their native Gaelic tongue. The continued use of Gaelic acted, in the eyes of the Crown and Lowland authorities, as a barrier to effectively exert control over society in the Highlands.¹² All aspects of Highland life were under attack. The wearing of their traditional dress, playing of their traditional music and speaking their traditional language all became unlawful.

¹⁰ Geoffrey, Plank, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire*, (University of Pennsylvania Press), 2015.

¹¹ John G. Gibson, *Traditional Gaelic Bagpiping, 1745-1945*, (Ithaca, New York: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 30-35. This author argues that bagpipes were not mentioned in the Proscription Act and thus not actually outlawed. For more on the historiography of bagpipes in the Highlands see Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands*, Springer, 1989, and Anna, Jiřincová. "Development in the Culture of the Scottish Highlands since the Rebellion of 1745." PhD diss., Masarykova univerzita, Filozofická fakulta, 2010.

¹² Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 111.

In addition to these three restrictions on Highland life was the limitation put upon religion. Two percent of the Scottish Catholics lived in the Highlands and Islands; more numerous than the Catholics were the Episcopalians, whose liturgy, prayer book and saints' days were almost equally despised by Presbyterian reformers.¹³ Ten clergymen were among the prisoners of the Battle of Culloden and one, a chaplain who had not borne arms, was executed. The government decided to administer the lessons of rebellion by inflicting severe humiliation.¹⁴ As a part of the Proscription Act of 1746, Episcopalian priests were forbidden to minister to more than four listeners, "Unless they qualified, and registered their letters of orders, by a given day; and every offense was punishable by extreme rigor."¹⁵

The position of the clergy worsened in 1748, when a clause depriving clergy who were not ordained by an English or Irish bishop of their ecclesiastical character on the grounds that they were ordained by ministers who denied the Hanoverian succession. The practical effect of this clause denied toleration to Scots Episcopalians, for few clergyman could afford to make the journey to England to obtain a new ordination. After Culloden, the Highlanders' way of life changed remarkably.¹⁶ Their culture and way of life was attacked from all sides; their dress, music, language and religion was assaulted by the Hanoverian government bent on controlling the Highlands.

¹³ Elizabeth Foyster and Christopher A. Whatley, ed., *A History of Everyday Life in Scotland, 1600-1800*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 194.

¹⁴ Fred D. Schneider, "Scottish Episcopalians and English Politicians: The Limits of Toleration," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 45, no. 3 (1976): 281, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42973515>.

¹⁵ A Society of Churchmen, *The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine or, A Treasury of Divine and Useful Knowledge*, Vol. III, (London: Wilson and Co., 1803), 90-91.

¹⁶ Schneider, "Scottish Episcopalians and English Politicians," 182

Their lifestyle was not the only thing under fire. The landlords' heritable jurisdiction over land was assailed by the Heritable Jurisdiction Act of 1746. Traditionally, Scottish lords and clan chiefs inherited regalities and judged in civil and criminal cases among their tenants and dependents.¹⁷ This tradition was rooted (specifically by lords supportive of the of the union of the parliaments of England and Scotland) in Article 20 of the Treaty of Union in 1707.¹⁸ The Act put an end to this by extending universal royal jurisdiction throughout Scotland. The powers previously possessed by the clan chiefs were transferred to sheriffs appointed by the Hanoverian regime.¹⁹ By the abolishment of heritable jurisdiction the power under the clan system exercised by the leaders of the clan was transferred to lawyers from Edinburgh or provincial towns. In 1752, the estates of those chieftains active in the Jacobite cause were forfeited and annexed to the crown; their rents and produce used to bring "civility" to the inhabitants of the Highlands.²⁰ However the clans looked to the chieftain in the same traditional, paternalistic manner as before the new legislation.²¹ Collectively, the new legislation sought to remove the markers of a distinctive culture, eliminate the powers of Highland proprietors, confiscate the lands of rebel landowners, and generally merge the Highlands and Islands into the wider British economic and political realm.²²

¹⁷ Christian Clay Columba Campbell, "Battle of Culloden: Heritable Jurisdictions Act 1746," Wordpress, September, 2012, <http://www.eccentricbliss.com/tag/heritable-jurisdictions-scotland-act-1746/>, (accessed 18 April 2017).

¹⁸ Neil Davidson *Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 61.

¹⁹ Campbell, "Battle of Culloden."

²⁰ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 82.

²¹ F. Clifford-Vaughan, "Disintegration of a Tribal Society: The Decline of the Clans in the Highlands of Scotland," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 43 (1974): 78, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41801573>.

²² John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, "The Graves of the Gallant Highlanders: Memory, Interpretation and Narratives of Culloden," *History and Memory* 19, no. 1 (2007): 12-13, doi:10.2979/his.2007.19.1.5.

The third and most important blow to Highland culture came with the Disarming Act (part of the Proscription Act) in 1746. This act demanded that all weapons (including bagpipes) be surrendered.²³ In an extract of a letter from Lord Justice Clerk Thomas Fletcher to John, Marquis of Tweeddale, Secretary of State for Scotland (1742-1746), Fletcher commented on the political allegiances of the clans: “By an Act of the 1st of the late King, entitled an act for the more effectual security of the peace of the Highlands, the whole Highlanders without distinction are disarmed forever and forbid to use or bear arms under penaltys.”²⁴ The Disarming Act provided a double-edge sword for Highlanders, and while the law banned traditional forms of martial culture central to the Highland life, it permitted a new form to flourish in the service of his Majesty’s military, which will be expanded upon in “Chapter 2: Highland Emigration 1770-1776.”

Change in the Highlands—Social Structure 1763-1770

Post-Culloden, the Lowlands of Scotland experienced a quickening of industrialism.²⁵ Linen manufacturing grew in rapid strides as well as iron works. Due to longer leases, larger farms, improved tillage and the invention of the first threshing machine, agriculture became more economically efficient. With the cultivation of the turnip, Scots could feed their cattle far more efficiently in the winter than previously.²⁶ While this rapid industrialization proceeded in the Lowlands, the Highlands saw the transformation of the clan system as well as an economic revolution.

²³ Magnusson, *Scotland*, 624.

²⁴ The National Archives, “Disarming Act,”<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/jacobite-1745/9128-2/>, (accessed 24 January 2017).

²⁵ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 358.

²⁶ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 360.

After the Battle of Culloden, many dynamic changes occurred to the social structure in the Scottish Highlands. These aggressive changes would pit the traditional hierarchical system of clanship against the forces of modernity. This complicated class system was a product of traditional Scotland, and the social pyramid started to crumble post-Culloden. At the top of the social pyramid sat the landlord, the great landed proprietor of estates. He would sometimes be a clan chieftain and often a Scottish noble. The great landlords would, obviously, be very few in number; most of the land was held by a few dozen major landlords controlling substantial estates. For example, the Duke of Argyll was the nominal superior of the majority of the region of Argyll, drawing rents from about six hundred square miles, a plot of land making up about twenty percent of the entire county. In addition to these responsibilities, he was nominal superior of extensive holdings in Inverness-shire and Ross-shire. Lairds like MacDonald of Clanranald and MacDonnell of Glengarry who held some lands from the Crown, maintained many of their lands from the Duke of Argyll, as well.²⁷ Remarkably in the Western Highlands, there were no small lairds, no class corresponding to the class of yeoman, which was prevalent in England at that time. The whole of the country was divided amongst the very few great nobles. The Earl of Sutherland owned nearly one million acres of land. As mentioned above, the Duke of Argyle, the different branches of the MacKenzies, the MacDonalds of Sleat and Clan Ranald, the MacLeans and the MacLeods all controlled vast tracts of land. The estates of less powerful chiefs such as MacKinnons and MacNeils still covered large areas.²⁸ Few of the great

²⁷ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 30.

²⁸ Roderick C. MacLeod, "The Western Highlands in the Eighteenth Century." *The Scottish Historical Review* 19, no. 73 (1921): 35, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25519385>.

magnates spent more than a few summer months at the Highland estates; a vast majority of the population had probably never seen, much less met their great laird in person.²⁹

Up until 1745, these great lairds still processed their heritable jurisdictions, and practically governed the people who lived on their estates.³⁰ For example, in March 1733, Sir Alexander MacDonald explained in a letter to MacLeod that there had been a small attack from Knoydart and three cows had been stolen. He went on to describe the steps he was taking to punish the guilty parties.³¹ They also dealt with far more severe cases, and even possessed the power of inflicting the death penalty.

In 1747, the Heritable Jurisdiction Act was passed, resulting in the administration of justice being put into the hands of Sheriff substitutes, who were appointed all over Scotland. They made rules about such things as maintenance of March dykes, the impoundment of stray cattle and sheep, certificates of beggars and the use of properly stamped weights and measures. In theory, the changes made by the Act of 1747 were numerous; in practicality, the changes were minute. The same people who had previously acted under the authority of chief, were now Justices of the Peace, acting under the authority of the king, and carrying out their duties as they always had. Up until the end of the seventeenth century these powerful lairds had lived at their highland homes. Each dwelt in his castle, outfitted with a piper, a harper, a bard and a fool. After the passing of the Jurisdictions Act, these all-powerful chiefs became no more than the

²⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 30-31.

³⁰ MacLeod, "The Western Highlands in the Eighteenth Century," 35.

³¹ Quoted in MacLeod, "The Western Highlands in the Eighteenth Century," 35.

owners of large estates, and as a result of their loyalty to the Stuarts, some of them lost their estates all-together.³²

Many Highland properties were confiscated by the Westminster parliament on account of the owner's participation in the '45, but most of them were eventually restored to them, or to their descendants, before very many years had lapsed. Ranald MacDonald, Chief of Clan Ranald, recovered his estate in the 1770s.³³ From 1747 to 1774, the Crown held the Lovat Estates and collected the rent, but in 1774 an Act of Parliament was passed under George III, returning the Estates, (but without the title) to Simon Fraser's (11th Lord Lovat) son, General Simon Fraser.³⁴ Donald Cameron (22nd Chief of Clan Cameron) of Lochiel recovered his land in 1784 under a general act of amnesty.³⁵

After the year 1760, many of the chiefs were absent from the Highlands. Some were in Parliament and forced to go to London every year to attend to legislative duties. Others just preferred to live in the Lowlands of Scotland.³⁶ The great lairds were highly educated and cultivated gentlemen, who were often active in public service and very at ease in London and Parisian society.³⁷

³² MacLeod, "The Western Highlands in the Eighteenth Century," 37.

³³ Alexander MacKenzie, *The MacDonalds of Clan Ranald*, (Inverness: A. and W. MacKenzie: 1881), 70.

³⁴ *The Lovat Peerage and Estates: A Short History of the Case, with Interesting Documentary Evidence in Support of the Claim of John Fraser, Lord Lovat, on the Security of His Right to the Lovat Estates, Inverness-Shire, Scotland, the Annual Rental of which is about 40,000*, (London: Henry Good and Sons), 3, and Revolvly, LLC. "Simon Fraser, 11th Lord Lovat" on Revolvly.com," All Revolvly Quizzes, Accessed May 20, 2017, [https://www.revolvly.com/main/index.php?s=Simon Fraser%2C 11th Lord Lovat&item_type=topic](https://www.revolvly.com/main/index.php?s=Simon%20Fraser%2C%2011th%20Lord%20Lovat&item_type=topic).

³⁵ Darren Lythgoe, "Ancestry Research Services," ANCESTRY Research Services, accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.ancestryresearchservices.com/index.html>.

³⁶ Lythgoe, "Ancestry Research Services."

³⁷ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 31.

Residing in the tier beneath the landlord was the tacksman, more correctly known as the wadsetter. In many cases, wadsets were granted in satisfaction of family provisions to close relatives of the laird, who could not afford to set up his relatives as independent landlords. By the second part of the 1700s, a significant decline in interest rates coupled with an increase in the value of land made the redemption of the wadset by the landlord an increasing possibility. Dr. Samuel Johnson described this class of people while on a tour of the Highlands in 1775. He said,

Next in dignity to the Laird is the Tacksman; a large taker or lease-holder of land, and lets part to under tenants. The Tacksman is necessarily a man capable of securing to the Laird the whole rent, and is commonly a collateral relation...He held a middle station, by which the highest and the lowest orders were connected. He paid rent and reverence to the Laird, and received them from the tenants.³⁸

The tacksman would farm his tack or wadset, usually upon land that had been in his family for generations, and let the remaining land to subtenants who paid rent to him instead of the chief. Acting as a mediator, the tacksman would in turn pay rent to the landlord.³⁹ Johnson's definition applies to the tacksman in his later phase and omitted what was, at one time his most important role. In addition to being a rent-paying tenant, the tacksman and his sons were carefully trained in the art of war.⁴⁰ He acted as the chief's lieutenant for the clan.⁴¹ It was as a soldier, rather than as a rent-paying tenant, that the tacksman was of value to the chief in earlier times, for the more tacksman attached the chief to himself, the greater his prestige and power.

³⁸ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 71.

³⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 34.

⁴⁰ A. McKerral, "The Tacksman and His Holding in the South-West Highlands." *The Scottish Historical Review* 26, no. 101 (1947): 10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25525912> and Robert Allen Houston and Ian D. Whyte, *Scottish Society, 1500-1800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

⁴¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 35.

The tacksmen, because of their loyal service as the chief's lieutenants, received their lands at rents which were much below their economic value, and they made their living mainly through the difference between the amount which they owed to the chief, and that which they could collect from the tenants to whom they sub-let their holdings.⁴² For the most part, the tacksman did not engage in labors of agriculture themselves, but they understood farm management, and were good judges of livestock. Down to the end of the seventeenth century, most of the professional men in the Highlands were recruited from within the tacksman class. Before the middle of the eighteenth century, the members of most tacksmen's families could read and write, and book education became widely diffused. The tacksmen's homes were often modest in comparison to the those of laird.⁴³

In light of the large role the tacksman played in old Highland society, it is important to have information about the average size of his holdings, the rents paid by him to the chiefs and his social and economic relationships to his subtenants to explain the eventual decay of the social system in the Highlands and ultimately the elimination of the tacksmen as a tier in the social structure. The typical tacksman's holdings in the South-West Highlands was a quarterland, a division of land that made up a quarter of the large land division known as the "bally," which had its origin in a pastoral economy.⁴⁴ For example, the holdings of an individual tacksman in Kintyre were composed of one to four farms, which were often located a considerable distance apart. In addition to the

⁴² McKerral, "The Tacksman," 11 and Christopher A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 69.

⁴³ McKerral, "The Tacksman," 12 and Dennis Turner "Peasant Housing and Holdings in a Marginal Area—Medieval Settlement in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland: Some Problems," *RURALIA* (1998): 74-75.

⁴⁴ McKerral, "The Tacksman," 13.

land occupied individually, there was also a large area of common or waste land, in which the tacksman and his subtenants held grazing and fuel rights.⁴⁵

The rents paid by the tacksman to the chiefs were usually three fold: a monetary payment, produce rents and dues. Produce rents included oats, barley meal, malt, cheese, sheep and pigs.⁴⁶ Dr. Johnson recorded that the tacksmen of Skye had land rented to them at sixpence an acre, and they sub-let that land to their under-tenants at ten pence.⁴⁷

As early as the middle of the sixteenth century, the laird raised the tacksmen's rent. These inflated rents were a serious burden, not necessarily on the tacksmen, but on their sub-tenants who were called upon to make up the difference. The result of this action impaired the financial and economic standing of the tacksmen and undermined their position in the Highlands.⁴⁸ Dr. Johnson called the tacksman a “useless burden on the ground, as a drone who lives upon the product of an estate, without the right of property, or the merit of labor, and who impoverishes at once the landlord and the tenant.”⁴⁹ As early as 1730, the Duke of Argyll, organized an attempt to abolish the tacksman, as an intermediary. Argyll's mission was ultimately successful; the fee for the

⁴⁵ Margaret C. Storrie "Landholdings and Settlement Evolution in West Highland Scotland." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 47, no. 2 (1965): 142. doi:10.2307/490611.

⁴⁶ McKerral, "The Tacksman," 14.

⁴⁷ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 71.

⁴⁸ McKerral, "The Tacksman," 23 and Thomas W. Heyck, *A History of the People of the British Isles: From 1688 to 1914*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 108.

⁴⁹ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 71. Dr. Johnson was biased against the Scots and Scotland. In raising the Argyll example, I will note that other Scottish magnates had already reached the same conclusion about the tacksmen class that Dr. Johnson did. Dr. Eric Richards cited in his book *Debating on the Highland Clearances*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 130 a letter written from General Mackay of Reay Estate to a Tacksman [Source: *Reay Papers*, in Angus MacKay, *The Book of MacKay*, (Edinburgh, 1906) pp. 219-20] explaining his disgust with the oppressive tacksmen class.

leasing of the tacksmen's holdings was adjusted to the sub-tenant's rent rate, or was later divided up into the small holdings known as crofts. The result was an immediate increase in the value of the land. Land in Tiree had been rented at £234 to tacksmen and was now leased for £570. The tacksmen soon found themselves to be continually faced with the prospect of heightened rents and lowered social position.⁵⁰ This increase in rent would have devastating effects on the Highland social structure in the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁵¹

Beneath the tacksmen in the social structure of the Highlands were the tenants. A tenant is defined as one who held either a complete farm or a share in one. Joint tenantry was a very common practice at this time. For example, on the Earl of Breadalbane's Lochtayside estate, only ten of one hundred and nine farms surveyed in 1769 were held by a single tenant.⁵² The terminology describing the social structure of the Highlands can be confusing, but in attempting to sort out the social origins of migrating Highlanders, the wording is important.

The tenant's farm might be small in relation to American standards, but the tenant farmer was far from the bottom of the Highland social scale. In the realm of his own society, the tenant was a substantial farmer, often having less-than-fortunate neighbors depending on him for their livelihood.

At the very bottom of the Highland social pyramid were the subtenants: the crofters, pendiclers, cotters and scallags.⁵³ The subtenant grazed or cultivated his

⁵⁰ Margaret I. Adam, "The Highland Emigration of 1770." Although written some years ago, Margaret Adam's works are noteworthy and relevant for historians today.

⁵¹ McKerral, "The Tacksman," 23.

⁵² Margaret M. McArthur ed. *Survey of Lochtayside 1769* (Edinburgh, 1936), 36.

⁵³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 35-36.

livestock with the tenant's stock. The pendicler held a small parcel of land which he managed on his own account.⁵⁴ For services rendered to the tacksman, the cotter was granted a stance for a house, an acre or two of arable land, and the right to graze a cow on the hill pastures. The members of this class lived with the threat of their removal. Some cotters had neither land for growing corn or for grazing livestock, only for a house.⁵⁵ In the Hebrides, the scallag owned a hut and worked five days a week for his master, and on the sixth day he cultivated a small parcel of ground for himself.⁵⁶ Seldom would this class appear in formal land records of any estate, for its members did not hold land from the laird or even from the tacksman, but rather they rented their land from the tenants of small farms.⁵⁷

The acreage of the subtenant's land that suitable for agricultural purposes was by no means extensive. The number of farms was limited, and these were parceled out into too many holdings to be economically viable. By 1755, the lands of the estates had become so densely populated that the sub-tenants and the lesser peasantry were unable to wrest a living from the soil.⁵⁸ Agricultural reformer James Robertson wrote: "It was quite common to see four families and some cottagers, occupying one plough-gate of land. Half a plough was considered a distinguished holding, and a whole plough a

⁵⁴ James Edmund Handley, *Scottish Farming in the Eighteenth Century*, (Faber and Faber: 1953) 97.

⁵⁵ John Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands after the 'Forty-Five,'" *The Scottish Historical Review* 26, no. 102 (1947): 139, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25525928>.

⁵⁶ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 36.

⁵⁷ *The British Critic*, Volumes 1 and 2, "Buchanan's Travels in the Western Hebrides," (London: F. and C. Rivington: 1793), 180.

⁵⁸ Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands," 139.

very rare thing.”⁵⁹ The subtenants cultivated some land, but did not have the right or capacity to raise livestock. This peasant class was composed of landless laborers, whose small portion of farmable land helped support them but offered little opportunity for them to accumulate wealth in the form of livestock.⁶⁰

After the new legislation was passed by parliament, the clan system (social structure) which had supported the Highlands for centuries was under attack. The Highlands lacked many formal mechanisms for the relief of the poor, aged and infirm. Some relief came through the religious benevolence, but organized charity accounted for little, especially in the Western Highlands. Thus the majority of the less fortunate were reliant upon their friends and relatives (their clan), and all were dependent upon on the paternalism of their laird. Therefore the post-Culloden changes threatened the power of the chief and his tacksmen and subsequently endangered the well-fare system of the Highlands. Some lairds would lose their lands for their participation in the '45; making the care of those reliant upon them, impossible. The Highland class structure was under significant stress, and one of the outcomes of this strain was emigration.

Change in the Highlands—Economic 1763-1770

In addition to cultural and social changes occurring during the latter half of the eighteenth century, significant alterations came to the economic structure of the Highlands. Tied very closely together with the social system, change in one aspect of society or economy would undoubtedly affect the other. The driving factor for social change was the economic overhaul the Highlands endured post-Culloden. The

⁵⁹ James, Robertson, *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Perth: with Observations on the Means of Its Improvement*. By James Robertson, DD Drawn Up for the Consideration of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement. No. 3. (Order of the Board of Agriculture, 1799), 66.

⁶⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 35.

economy of the Highlands changed in three major areas: land, industry and transportation.

There were different types of farming in Scotland, but the infield and outfield method was the common system in many areas of Scotland. The infield was made up of the most fertile lands and those nearest to the farm.⁶¹ The outfield was pasture land, a small parcel of it might be occasionally plowed and planted one year and another strip cultivated the following year. Arable ground, the heart of the system, was scarce in relation to the number of sharing tenants; but the principles by which this land was shared and worked were similar to those which then prevailed all over Scotland. The strips comprising the individual (arable) holdings were scattered among patches of infield and outfield land. The Highlanders cultivated the infield constantly and the outfield intermittently. Sometimes tenants occupied the same strips of land in perpetuity; but more often, the whole arable ground would be periodically rotated among different tenants.⁶²

The land was divided into run-rig (intermixed strips where barley and oats or peas and beans were grown together in the same portion of land).⁶³ The universal practice of run-rig and the common method of fallowing for three or four years in succession, whereby the land was free to produce successive crops of weeds, contributed to the sparse yields.⁶⁴ James Robertson seemed frustrated when he wrote that nothing:

⁶¹ Wallace Notestein, *The Scot in History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1946), 59.

⁶² Malcolm Gray. "The Abolition of Run-rig in the Highlands of Scotland." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 5, no. 1 (1952): 47. doi:10.2307/2591307.

⁶³ Nostein, *The Scot in History*, 59.

⁶⁴ Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands," 141.

...was more absurd than to see two or three, or perhaps four men, yoking horses together in one plough, and having their ridges alternately in the same field, with a bank of unplowed land between them by way of boundary. These diminutive possessions were carried to such length, that in some parts of Scotland, beyond this country, the term a horse's foot of land is not wholly laid aside. The land is like a piece of striped cloth, with banks full of weeds and ridges of corn, in constant succession, from one end of the field to the other.⁶⁵

The system was inefficient and wasteful at best.⁶⁶ Men renting forty areas often had to buy grain for their dependents. Whole districts depended on one crop, usually gray oats, so that one failed season inescapably brought destitution. Years of famine came frequently, and general disasters occurred in the late 1690s, 1709, 1740 and 1760, which aversely affected the Scottish economy.⁶⁷ Scotland had fallen behind the other countries of northern Europe. John Law a contemporary Scottish economist in 1760, said, "The land is not improv'd, the product is not manufactur'd; the fishing and other advantages for foreign trade are neglected." He went on to say that if the Scots had taken the same economic measures that were taken in Holland, Scotland would have been the more powerful and richer nation by far.⁶⁸

By the 1760s, Scotland had undergone some economic development.

Throughout the eighteenth century Scottish landlords and entrepreneurs made a directed effort to "catch-up" with their neighbor to the South, England. Starting near the English border, landed property began to be economically improved. These modifications gradually made their way north into the Highlands. It is possible that

⁶⁵ Robertson, *General View of Agriculture*, 393.

⁶⁶ Nostein, *The Scot in History*, 59.

⁶⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 1.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 5. For more on the colony of Darien see John Prebble's *The Darien Disaster: A Scots Colony in the New World, 1698-1700*, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1969.

these economic improvements would have spread naturally even if the British government, after the rebellion of 1745, had not chosen to deliberately encourage land reform with the intention of taming the clan armies to the North. With the land reform also came improved cultivation techniques with modernized implements. James Small of Berwickshire designed a light “swing plough” in the 1760s, and father and son farmers James and Andrew Meikle invented the fanner and threshing mill.⁶⁹

Scotland also began to improve its commercial trade. In the South the importation of tobacco from Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina was the most important factor in the dramatic rise in colonial trades. Scottish imports of tobacco exceeded those of both London and the English outports combined. In comparison to Britain as a whole, the achievement of the Scottish traders was quite remarkable.⁷⁰ However, the success of the “tobacco lords” in the South did little for the economic development of the North. Economic development was occurring all throughout Great Britain during this era; however, the impact of the changes in the Highlands are distinguished more for the concentration of time in which they took place, than the radicalness of the improvements.⁷¹

Many farmers in the Lowlands had already been displaced and had migrated to the cities to find work in non-agricultural occupations, which generally were very susceptible to fluctuating markets. Thus when a general discontent was added to a

⁶⁹ W. H. Marwick, *Scotland in Modern Times: An Outline of Economic and Social Development since the Union of 1707*, (Psychology Press, 1964), 28.

⁷⁰ T. M. Devine, "The Colonial Trades and Industrial Investment in Scotland, C. 1700-1815." *The Economic History Review* 29, no. 1 (1976): 1. doi:10.2307/2594504.

⁷¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 4.

sharp retreat in economic growth in the early 1770s, both urban and rural Scots found emigration to America an option.⁷²

As previously explained, very few farmers owned their own land; most were tenants of larger estates. Although not uncommon for this era, this pattern of landholding had important political ramifications, for only landowners were allowed to vote. From the standpoint of agricultural improvement, the relatively small number of landowners who would be most interested in new changes would dictate reform for the majority of people. Many of the alterations in traditional agricultural practice and landholding that arrived in the Highlands were already well established in the Lowlands. While the reaction to them was more united in the South of Scotland, new methods were highly unpopular in the North.⁷³

It is very difficult to generalize about agricultural improvements. Many differences in traditional practice were possible even within the smallest of areas, and exceptions abound in any general statement. Moreover, as recent research has demonstrated, the commonly accepted view that improvement came fairly suddenly in the 1700s must be revisited. No sudden break from tradition occurred, and most change can be traced back to the seventeenth century or possibly earlier. By allowing for significant local variation, some patterns of improvement can be uncovered.⁷⁴

The first pattern of improvement brought to the Highlands of Scotland from the Lowlands was the process of surveying the land. The Hanoverian regime used

⁷² Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 4. See also T. M. Devine, "Highland Migration to Lowland Scotland, 1760-1860," *The Scottish Historical Review* 62, no. 174 (1983): 137-49, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25529535>.

⁷³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 4-5.

⁷⁴ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 33.

surveying as a means of controlling the Highlands. The mapping of Scotland heralded the systemization of imperial policy that proved vital to the construction of Britain's control over the Highlands. Surveying, road building and the construction of camps and forts were used by the Hanoverians to subdue and control the Highlanders. Their purpose was to provide detailed information as part of the program of road building and fort construction that had been initiated in 1710, but the surveying would be expanded after 1746.⁷⁵

In addition to exerting control over the Highlands, surveying played an important role in creating the new landscape. As new ideas spread, men of skill were required to bring these changes to fruition. The ability to measure land, use instruments, present accurate results, draw maps, and determine the value of land, required skill of the highest level. Men of this calibre were not casually abiding in the Highlands, and for many years land surveyors were drawn from a variety of professions which included architects, schoolmasters, farmers and nurserymen. Agricultural change would inevitably involve landscape change. Even at its simplest level, the surveyor recorded the existing landscape in order to allow the proprietor and his factor (estate manager) to evaluate and plan for future developments. Often the land surveyor evaluated the quality of the ground, and in certain cases he made recommendations as to the course of improvements that should occur.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Richard Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906: A Colony so Fertile*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141.

⁷⁶ Ian H. Adams, "The Land Surveyor and his Influence of Scottish Rural Landscape." <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00369226808736101?journalCode=rsgj19>.

The second avenue for agricultural change in the Highlands came in the area of longer leases. In 1685 under the auspices of Sir George Mackenzie⁷⁷, an Act of Entail had been passed which bound the heir of the estate to conditions detrimental to the improvement of his state. By that Act the heir could not grant leases beyond the term of his own life, and in some cases for more than two or three years; he could neither sell or perpetually lease at a fixed rate, nor borrow for the object of agricultural reform. Short leases had for centuries been a bane of agricultural industry in Scotland; and the MacKenzie Act, solely in the interest of the landed gentry, was a law out of its place and time. Montgomery's Entail Act of 1770 was expressly directed to remedy the existing law and the complications it caused. This Entail Act empowered proprietors to grant leases, "for any number of years not exceeding fourteen years... and for the life of one person to be named in such tacks or leases, and in being at the time thereof; or for the lives of two persons to be named therein... and the life of the survivor of them; or for any number of years not exceeding thirty-one years."⁷⁸

Although the seventeenth century had seen the beginning of longer leases, many crofters still held their land for very short periods of time. In the Highlands, any type of lease tenure was a recent development. Highland landholding was as complicated as it was in the Lowlands. The average Highlander received his land not directly from his clan chieftain, but from contracted middle landholders; and in this relationship, longer leases were far from the norm. One of the key developments in both the Highlands and the Lowlands was the expansion of the practice of longer leases to include the small

⁷⁷ Sir George MacKenzie, 1st Earl of Cromartie, of Tarbart (1630-1714) was a key politician and statesmen in Scotland.

⁷⁸ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 345-346.

tenant farmer.⁷⁹ Most crofters had been tenants-at-will, holding their land without any written contract; and they were liable to be evicted with little warning at the whim of the proprietor.⁸⁰

The Agency of the Commissioners managed the Forfeited Estates and influenced the development of the Highlands. Improvements in farming practices were determined by the nature of leases.⁸¹ The average small farmer either held a short lease of under seven years, or more commonly, was simply a tenant. The absence or brevity of leases was criticized by practically every writer who sincerely desired the improvement of the Highlands or a higher standard of living for its inhabitants.⁸² With few exceptions, leases were far too short, and renewal was doubtful. Therefore the tenants had no encouragement to better their holdings, resulting in farm land becoming increasingly poor.⁸³ Small tenant farmers often shuffled from one estate to another, a practice which did not encourage self-initiative.⁸⁴

Granted for a period of seven, eight, or nine years,⁸⁵ the most common being nineteen year leases,⁸⁶ with the promise of renewal up to twenty-one years the new leases removed the evil of sub-letting. Tenants were thus debarred from holding more

⁷⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 5.

⁸⁰ Ian D. Whyte, "Written Leases and Their Impact on Scottish Agriculture in the Seventeenth Century." *The Agricultural History Review* 27, no. 1 (1979): 1. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40274001>.

⁸¹ Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands," 141.

⁸² Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem." *The Scottish Historical Review* 19, no. 73 (1921): 14, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25519383>.

⁸³ Carlton Jackson, *A Social History of the Scotch-Irish*, (London: Madison Books, 1993), 3.

⁸⁴ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 5.

⁸⁵ Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands," 141.

⁸⁶ A.R. Newsome "Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued)," 141.

than one farm and were obliged to occupy and cultivate those lands. The new procedures removed the practice of wad-setting by prohibiting tenants from paying fines for the purpose of obtaining perpetual possession.⁸⁷ Longer leases would enable a crofter to hold a farm long enough to permit better cultivation of his property, while still giving the land owner the ultimate opportunity to replace him with a more innovative tenant if changes were not enacted.⁸⁸ For example in 1769, a major surveying project took place under the guidance of the Earl of Breadalbane at Lochtayside. As a result, one quarter of the farms surveyed had improved leases by the Earl's death in 1782. These leases at Lochtayside were for twenty-one years, with provision to review the lease every seven years. The improvements were very carefully spelled out for the tenant, including proper fertilization, rotation of crops and cultivation of legumes. If the tenant failed to meet these requirements of reform, he risked losing his land.⁸⁹ However long the duration of the lease, from the tenant's point of view, much depended on the landlord's interpretation of the lease in terms of the long-term relationship with and obligation to his tenant.⁹⁰ Where leases did exist, they were far from perfect. The leases were generally too complex, and the provisions in them should have been made simpler, fewer and more adapted to Highland farming conditions.⁹¹

The third step in agricultural reform was the elimination of run-rig. Henry Grey Graham wrote that run-rig was "perhaps the most serious obstacle to progress in agriculture." As already mentioned, the fields were portioned into separate "rigs" or

⁸⁷ Mason, "Conditions in the Highlands," 141-142.

⁸⁸ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 5-6.

⁸⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 33.

⁹⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 6.

⁹¹ Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 14.

ridges, which were cultivated by different tenants. One small field had the capacity to be divided among four to eight people. A farm with a combined rent of £50 might have had as many as eighteen tenants, and amongst some tenants, the land was divided further by lot each year or put up for auction.⁹²

Run-rig was the principle target of improvers despite Scotland's long tradition in communal farming. Agricultural reformers also pressed hard for fencing and an end to the separation of small fields by "earth banks" which often piled topsoil at the edge of a field, making the good soil inaccessible for use. Although the abolition of run-rig, the end of communal farming, and the consolidation of fields had begun much earlier than the eighteenth century, improvement remained the goal of many progressive landowners.⁹³

The first men to start the elimination of run-rig agriculture on their estates were the two great landlords of the southern Highlands—the Duke of Argyll and the Earl of Breadalbane. The former, in 1776, gave instructions that the farms of Tiree were to be re-let and each tenant given a separate lot. From this point to the end of the century, the run-rig farms across his estate were broken up. The Earl of Breadalbane followed suit, and by 1785 the Netherlorn section of his estates had been rearranged. By 1797, the Lochtayside, which had been previously surveyed, was broken into large number of small compact holdings. By 1800 compact holdings replaced irregular, inefficient cultivation of run-rig fields, not only on these large estates, but also on many smaller

⁹² Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland*, 157.

⁹³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 8.

properties. Several landlords in Argyllshire followed the example of the Duke. In the Islands of Coll, Oransay, Tiree and Mull, proprietors rearranged their estates.⁹⁴

The next half century would see the virtual disappearance of run-rig. Although initially Sutherland saw little change, eventually run-rig farming would give way to the cultivation of small independent plots. Reorganization of Lord MacDonald's Skye estate began in 1811, and by 1819 there was little run-rig left on the Isle of Skye, Benbecula and Lewis.

The primary objective in eliminating run-rig was to stimulate an improvement in agricultural methods, giving the individual farmer the space, incentive and the freedom to adopt more elastic forms of cultivation. This would not necessarily affect either the number of tenants nor the relative wealth in land of one man's land to another. In fact, it was usually believed to be neither desirable nor possible to preserve the existing social structure.

Broadly speaking, there were three possible ways in which the landlord might treat his tenants. He might attempt to compensate each one exactly according to his old relative share in the farm; or he could increase the size of their body of holdings; lastly, he could divide the land into lots of proper size for the small tenant. Each of these approaches were typical in parts of the Highlands; and the growing differences in agrarian life and social structure can be traced back to this distribution of land.⁹⁵

Besides the agricultural reform of surveyed land, improved leases and eliminated run-rig, a second major change in the Highland economy occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. This period was marked by an increased variety of industries,

⁹⁴ Gray, "Abolition of Run-rig in the Highlands," 49.

⁹⁵ Gray, "Abolition of Run-rig in the Highlands," 50-51.

an extension in trade and the construction of public works. The manufacturing of linen had been one of the most productive industries prior to 1745, but in the second half of the century, that industry grew with rapid strides. Between the years of 1727 and 1728, the total value of the linen produced in Scotland was £103,312, but between the years of 1770 and 1771 it was £632,389, a value more than six times what it had been fifty years previously.⁹⁶

Another industry that was rapidly expanding during this period was the kelping industry (i.e. the manufacturing of alkali from the burning of seaweed). The industry had been growing even before the middle of the century and would flourish for a few years before and after 1800, for there was a heavy duty on imported alkalis and war with France restricted imports.⁹⁷

The manufacture of kelp extracted an alkaline ash from seaweed that was then used to produce glass and soap. The weed, either cut during growth or cast up on the shore as debris, was dried by the sun and burned in a rough kiln till it reached the consistency of a paste. Upon cooling, the kelp hardened into the required material: a brittle, multi-colored substance, less than one-twentieth the weight of the original piece of seaweed.⁹⁸

Kelp-making was a “cottage industry,” one which could be conducted on a part-time basis usually from one’s home. The process required neither great skill nor investment, and the ultimate product could be stored easily without fear of spoilage.

⁹⁶ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 358.

⁹⁷ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 53.

⁹⁸ Malcolm Gray "The Kelp Industry in the High-Lands and Islands." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 4, no. 2 (1951): 197. doi:10.2307/2599122.

Thus kelp manufacturing was a seemingly ideal enterprise for the Highlander since the raw material was readily available.

The kelp trade was very well organized in a commercial sense. There were only a few great merchants, and they preferred dealing with larger proprietors, thereby streamlining the process by sending only one ship to collect cargo.⁹⁹ There were two main groups sharing in the production process, the large middleman, who became a quasi employer to the laborers, and a small group of middlemen who profited from distributing the majority of the product.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the closed-commercial aspect of the kelp industry, the landlord controlled the raw material, for the seaweed washed up on the shores of his land. He would either reserve the kelping rights for himself or fix a price when leasing land to his tenants. Many landlords preferred the latter strategy, thus guaranteeing themselves a workforce.¹⁰¹ At one point, MacDonald of Clanranald was selling over 1,000 tons of kelp per year; Lord MacDonald sold around 1,200 and the Earl of Seaforth 900. Naturally, all of these men were landlords. The lords' only competitors were a few tacksmen, for by the ownership of the land, a few magnates were able to rivet their hold on the industry to include not only the manufacture of kelp but also to determine the details of production.¹⁰²

Simple tools, rough equipment and animals already owned by peasants made it possible for families to subsist on smaller parcels of land. The work was menial, back-

⁹⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 41-43.

¹⁰⁰ Gray, "Kelp Industry in the High-Lands and Islands," 199.

¹⁰¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 43.

¹⁰² Gray, "Kelp Industry in the High-Lands and Islands," 199.

breaking and time-consuming, and the inability to own the raw material (via their inability to own the land) left the peasant class ripe for extortion.¹⁰³

The trend of kelping ran against the larger tenant, particularly the tacksmen, who were the first to benefit from the industry. By 1776, the tacksmen were prohibited to “cut away any seaward fit for making kelp.”¹⁰⁴ Such prohibitions, combined with the tendency to lease to smaller tenants put enormous pressure on the natural leadership class of the region, a class which was much closer to the common stock of the Highlands than were the great lairds.¹⁰⁵

Along with the development of both the fine linen industry near Glasgow and the kelping industry along the coast, came the establishment of a large modern iron works was established at Carron.¹⁰⁶ The iron industry would eventually follow linen into general and steady growth, becoming one of the largest iron works in Europe in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Carron Iron Works was founded near Falkirk in 1760 by John Roebuck and Samuel Garbett. The company expanded rapidly in the 1760s and grew into a great many subsidiary enterprises, Unfortunately, Carron Iron Works nearly collapsed in the financial panic of 1772-1773.¹⁰⁸

Another industry that was making gains in the Highlands was husbandry. Highland grazing stocks consisted of cattle, horses, goats and sheep, but originally,

¹⁰³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 43.

¹⁰⁴ Malcolm Gray, *The Highland Economy 1750-1850*, (CT: Greenwood Press, 1957), 57.

¹⁰⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 43.

¹⁰⁶ Rosalind Mitchison, *A History of Scotland*, (NY: Rutledge, 2002), 345.

¹⁰⁷ Mitchinson, *A History of Scotland*, 358.

¹⁰⁸ John M. Norris, "The Struggle for Carron: Samuel Garbett and Charles Gascoigne." *The Scottish Historical Review* 37, no. 124 (1958): 136. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25526479>.

cattle were economically the most important.¹⁰⁹ The cattle industry had been established in the Highlands for hundreds of years. By 1723 as many as thirty thousand cattle a year were driven south to market. Thus by 1730, cattle occupied a very central role in the Highland economy, and much of life hinged upon this industry. By the middle decades of the century, cattle prices doubled. Cattle also provided the cash element in the rent payments which supported the elevated lifestyle of the lairds and their tacksmen.¹¹⁰ The export of beef cattle also provided a means for paying for meal and other imports, while dairy produce formed a substantial part of the Highland diet.¹¹¹ In hard times, cattle were often bled so that their blood could be mixed into oatmeal pudding, a practice which added much needed nutrients to peasants' diets.¹¹² Cattle were also a good source of fertilizer for infield agriculture, and they were considered beasts of burden and providers of milk, butter, cheese and leather.¹¹³ The development of the turnip and other root vegetables solved the great problem of providing fodder for cattle during the long winter. When the cattle were in good condition and prices were favorable, the margin of well-fare for the common folk widened.¹¹⁴

Another area of Highland husbandry was the small horse (garron) which were used for a number of functions. In some districts they were semi-feral and broken for

¹⁰⁹J. M Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture in the Scottish Highlands 1700–1850: A Problem in Estate Management." *The Agricultural History Review* 25, no. 1 (1977): 24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40273836>.

¹¹⁰ Eric Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions, 1746-1886*, 49.

¹¹¹ Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture," 24.

¹¹² Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886*, 49.

¹¹³ Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886*, 80.

¹¹⁴ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 360.

work only when necessary. Goats too were semi-feral, and important to an extent which has only recently been appreciated; they provided both milk and meat for domestic use and were also very efficient grazers, capable of thriving on vegetation unpalatable or inaccessible to other more domestic animals.¹¹⁵ In his *Journey in the Western Isles*, Dr. Johnson records the stock of many tacksmen of the Highlands: “one hundred sheep, as many goats, twelve milk cows and twenty-eight beeves ready for the drovers.”¹¹⁶ These historical records suggest that the goat was as common as the sheep before 1770, and that they outnumbered cattle.¹¹⁷

Perhaps the most important or most consequential development in animal husbandry in the later half of the eighteenth century in the Highland economy was the development of sheep raising.¹¹⁸ An author in the 1870s published these words describing the utility of the sheep:

There are few animals, if any, more serviceable to man than the sheep, which our climate in particular renders especial value in our domestic economy. Its wool affords clothing the most suitable for protection against the cold of our northern winter, and from its adaption to receive with put and permanence the finest dyes, is susceptible likewise of the fullest variety and the most delicate tints of coloring; thus affording, as no other article of clothing of equal abundance does to the same extent, the power of combining with the amplest protection, the highest gait and brilliancy of appearance. Moreover, the flesh of this animal affords, after the staff of life, our most useful, wholesome and popular article of diet.¹¹⁹

The first flocks arrived via sheep farmers from the South shortly before 1760. Some were established north of the Great Glen by 1790, and very few parts of the

¹¹⁵ Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture," 24.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 29.

¹¹⁷ Ryder, "Sheep and the Clearances," 156.

¹¹⁸ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 52.

¹¹⁹ Duncan George Forbes MacDonald, *Cattle Sheep and Deer*, (London: Steele and Jones, Spring Gardens: 1872), 329.

Highlands remained unaffected by 1820. The new breeds of sheep spread to Inverness-shire, Ross and Sutherland for one simple reason—profit.¹²⁰ The traditional small Highland sheep were not regarded as particularly hardy; they were kept in relatively low numbers, and the meat and wool were used for domestic purposes not in a commercial economy.¹²¹ In Lowland Scotland and in England, the industrial revolution was leading to vast concentrations of population in new cities and towns, and there was a steadily rising demand for mutton, coupled with and equally important demand for wool to be manufactured into clothing.¹²²

The main element of Highland sheep husbandry was the wedder stock, pastured on the upland in the summer and in the lower land in the winter. Breeding stocks of ewes were generally much smaller, and remained on the lower pastures throughout the year. Wintering capacity continued to limit the size of stocks and summer pastures were still neglected. Regardless of the establishment of sheep farming, small tenants grazed smaller stocks on more limited pastures. Wintering continued to be vital, both for the introduced stock and the remaining traditional Highland husbandry.¹²³ The effects of sheep farming on a society and economy will be further discussed in this paper.

The construction of public works was another example of the advancing prosperity of the country. Between 1768 and 1790, Highlanders built the Forth and Clyde Canal. At a cost of £300,000, the canal provided a route for seagoing vessels

¹²⁰ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 52; Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture," 26.

¹²¹ Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture," 24.

¹²² Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 52.

¹²³ Lindsay, "Forestry and Agriculture," 27.

crossing through central Scotland. The deepening of the Clyde at Glasgow, the construction of the Tay Bridge at Perth, and the North and the South bridges in Edinburgh are all proofs of the enterprise of the eighteenth century.¹²⁴ In addition to improved waterways and bridges, General George Wade built a major Highland road in the 1720s. Originally built to facilitate the movement of troops across the Highlands to quell any Jacobite unrest, this road (the old A9) would eventually provide the first route by which wheeled vehicles could travel from central Perth to the Highland town of Inverness.¹²⁵

After Culloden, changes in the Highland economic structure greatly impacted the social structure. The agricultural changes in surveying, improved leases and eliminated run-rig, the industrial increases in linen, kelp and iron manufacturing, the improvements in animal husbandry and the expansion of Highland public works all played a large role in the improvement of the Highland economy. These changes in the economy effected the social structure which was so closely tied to the land and industry.

Change in the Highlands—Population 1763-1770

Besides experiencing vast changes in the culture, social structure and the economy, the Scottish Highlands underwent a burst in the population. The subtenant class constituted much of the population in the Highlands; although it is difficult to be precise about their numbers because population data cannot be broken down by class.¹²⁶ Theoretically this marginalized strata of the population would be easily drawn into emigration to America. However, in most cases they were far too poor to afford the

¹²⁴ P. Hume Brown, *History of Scotland Volume III*, 360.

¹²⁵ Magnusson, *Scotland*, 510.

¹²⁶ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 36.

cost of passage during this period of unassisted emigration, and they were often too oppressed to have any motivations or ambitions to improve their lot in life. Not until 1815 and the time thereafter would subtenants leave the Highlands in great numbers. An increased population in the subtenant class was probably fundamental to one of the outstanding characteristics of Highland development during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The increase was significant in all the major Highland counties, although the population did not exceed twenty percent between 1755 and 1800. As a whole, the Northwest coast was gaining the most in population compared to the South and the East. In the Southeast Highland regions of Argyll, Perthshire, Inverness-shire and Sutherland, the population increased only moderately; while on the West coast it increased by thirty-four percent between 1755 and 1800. In the Eastern Highlands, forty-one of sixty-eight parishes reported no growth in their numbers; while in the West, thirty-two of forty-three parishes increased by twenty-five percent.¹²⁷ According to more recent demographic studies of the area (the Western Islands and coastal areas of Sutherland, Ross-shire, Inverness-shire and Argyll), the total percentage of population increased from 1755-1800 was forty-four percent. The islands experienced an even greater growth than the mainland. Tiree, for example, doubled in population from 1750-1808.¹²⁸

Despite the majority of Highland emigrants coming from the North and the West regions, the population in those areas was still increasing. The reason appears to have been the product of multiple factors working in unison. Of these factors, the most important were possibly the introduction of the potato, widespread use of the smallpox

¹²⁷ Gray, *The Highland Economy 1750-1850*, 58-59.

¹²⁸ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 37.

inoculation and vaccination, an improved standard of living based on new sources of income like fishing and kelping, and the return of Scottish Highland soldiers from the Seven Years' War. Many demographers have insisted that one key to Highland population growth was found in the potato. Brought from the New World to the Old by the English in the late sixteenth century,¹²⁹ the potato, famously, became a staple in the diet of the Irish, but it became equally important to the Scottish diet as well. In 1743, the potato was introduced in Uist, spreading in use to Skye and the Hebrides by 1770 and throughout the Hebrides by 1780. The potato's influence should not be underestimated, for it helped balance out diets, prevent scurvy, provided an alternative to traditional oatmeal and grew resiliently during years of bad weather which utterly devastated grain crops. The potato was supreme in fighting against malnutrition and starvation in times of famine. The Highland population was already growing before the general acceptance of the potato as a crop; the potato just sustained the population growth.¹³⁰

Besides the cultivation of the potato, the inoculation against smallpox facilitated an increase in Highland population. For several hundred years, smallpox had been the most fatal epidemic in Scotland.¹³¹ Medical statistics from the Lowlands demonstrate how devastating smallpox could be. One in ten deaths in Edinburgh and one in five deaths in Glasgow were caused by smallpox from 1744 to 1763.¹³² Specific data for the

¹²⁹ Berthold Laufer, and C. Martin Wilbur, "The American Plant Migration: Part 1: The Potato," *Publications of the Field Museum of Natural History. Anthropological Series* 28, no. 1 (1938): 48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29782232>.

¹³⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 38 and Michael W. Flinn, "Malthus Emigration and Potatoes in the Scottish North-west 1770-1870." (1977): 47-64 Accessed January 18, 2017. <http://www.popline.org/node/453947>.

¹³¹ S. R. Duncan, Susan Scott, and C. J. Duncan. "Smallpox Epidemics in Cities in Britain." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no. 2 (1994): 255. doi:10.2307/206345.

¹³² Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 38.

rest of the Highland simply does not exist, but the death-rate there was assuredly heavy. The attempt to defeat smallpox began around the mid 1700s with inoculation through a mild dose of the disease and continued with the development of harmless cowpox at the close of the eighteenth century.¹³³ By the 1790s, inoculation became a fairly common practice in the Highlands and may have caused the mortality rate to decrease by twenty percent.¹³⁴ However, the upturn in population was already well underway; the prevention of small pox sustained the population.

While the influence of the potato and the prevention of smallpox reduced the death rate, new economic opportunities undoubtedly influenced the increasing population. Shifts in economic patterns began before smallpox inoculations, and the potato accelerated the demographic increases. To a great extent, the introduction of new wealth into the Highland economy was a product of the increasing economic amalgamation of the Highland region into Scotland and the rest of Britain. The sale of cattle and the expanding fishing and kelping industries were among the new sources of money. The new conditions for “prosperity” must not be defined in the modern sense of the word. Highlanders responded to new wealth in the traditional manner of a rural peasant. Family sizes were not reduced but expanded. Little amounts of extra capital could be accumulated, but there was very little actual change. The reason for this general lack of change was that the Highlanders distributed their new income among their extended family, enabling more people to live at a subsistence level.¹³⁵

¹³³ T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People: 1560-1830* (Edinburgh: Fontana/Collins, 1975), 253-254.

¹³⁴ Smout, *A History of the Scottish People*, 254.

¹³⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 38-39.

Unfortunately, the barren and rocky soil of the Highlands could never support the people who sought to eek out a living from it.¹³⁶

Lastly, the returning soldiers from North America increased the Highland population. Highland soldiers who served in the Canadian operations or in the Hudson campaigns of 1757 were given the option of settling in America or returning home. Some returned to the Highlands and familiarized their own people with the possibilities of land beyond the sea.¹³⁷ Migratory attitudes had changed in the years following the Paris Peace Treaty of 1763. More than half of Fraser's Seventy-eighth Regiment returned home to Scotland at the end of the Seven Years' War, adding to an already increasing population. Soldiers returning to the province of Argyll soon contributed to the rising population. Argyll, like so many other areas in the Highlands with high enlistment in the Seventy-eighth Regiment, would have high emigration rates after the War.¹³⁸

The Scottish Highlands changed tremendously after the Battle of Culloden. Westminster passed new legislation that made several aspects of traditional Highland culture illegal. Highland dress, music language and religion was assailed from these newly passed laws. The Highland lairds heritable jurisdictions were abolished, and the Highlands were disarmed. The Disarming Act forbade traditional military culture, which was an integral part of the clan system. In addition to reshaping the Highlands culturally, changes to the Highland social structure occurred after Culloden. These social changes transpired because of the transformation of the economic structure. The

¹³⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 33.

¹³⁷ Margaret I. Adam, "The Causes of the Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," 75.

¹³⁸ Sam Allison, *Driv'n by Fortune: The Scots March to Modernity in America, 1745-1812*, (Dundurn, 2015), 131.

Highland economic system was overhauled in four areas: land (surveying, improved leases and eliminated run-rig), industry, husbandry and public works. Seemingly every aspect of Highland life was revolutionized after Culloden. The metamorphosis of Highland life was further stressed by a dramatic increase in population due to the potato, inoculation against smallpox, increased income from new industries and returning soldiers from the Seven Years War. In a strong economy an increase in population might be welcome, but poor harvests in the following years after Culloden coupled with a multiplying population would showcase the Highlands' inability to sustain the growing population. Enduring the cultural, social and economic changes of the post-Culloden Highlands would have been difficult enough, but the increased in population left vulnerable Highlanders with few options for survival. One of these options was emigration to British North America.

CHAPTER 2: HIGHLAND EMIGRATION 1770-1775

“These islands contain a numerous race of hardy and robust people, whose labor if properly directed, might prove of great utility to the State. From the information the Reporter received, on the truth of which he has reason entirely to rely, there cannot be at present, in the islands of the Hebrides alone, less than eight-thousand souls: and these, notwithstanding the drains from thence for recruits to the navy and army, as well as by emigration, are increasing in a rapid progression.”¹

The previous chapter discussed the different cultural, social and economic changes occurring in Scotland post-Culloden. The following chapter will explain how the cultural, economic and social changes encouraged many Highlanders to emigrate. At this point in Scottish Highland History (1770-1776), mass clearances by landlords for sheep were the exception and not the rule. Although some arbitrary clearances occurred during this era, most Highlanders emigrated by choice.

Highland Emigration—Cultural Forces at Work

As discussed in the previous chapter, after Culloden the Highlanders experienced a direct assault on their culture from newly passed British legislation that outlawed integral parts of Highland culture: dress, music, language, religion, heritable jurisdictions and military armament. While the attack on the Scots lifestyle and heritable jurisdictions affronted the Highlanders, the greatest indignity to Highland culture was the British attack on their ability to defend themselves and raise a military. Residing deep within the culture of the Highlands was the capacity of the clans to wage war. This capacity was pitted against the forces of modernity in the post-Culloden Highland world.

¹ James Anderson, *An Account of the Present State of the Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland: in which an Attempt is Made to Explain the Circumstances that have Hitherto Repressed the Industry of the Natives ; and Some Hints are Suggested for Encouraging the Fisheries and Promoting Other Improvements in Those Countries: being the Substance of a Report to the Lords of Treasury, of Facts Collected in a Tour to the Hebrides, with Large Additions; Together with the Evidence Given Before the Committee of Fisheries*, (Edinburgh: G. Robinson, London, 1785), 16-17.

The traditional hierarchical system of clanship was seen as a conservative force holding Scotland from economic growth. Westminster saw this system as retarding economic growth which must be brought to heel if Scotland was to become commercially viable in the modern world. The Hanoverian supporters feared clanship, for this system took part-time/seasonal soldiers and transformed them into effective, formidable armies. The clan's ability to produce tactically proficient, adaptable and destructive men (as shown in four Uprisings of the eighteenth century) was remarkable and distressing to Westminster. In order to exert control over the Highlands, British officials passed the Disarming Act of 1746, outlawing the use of weaponry in the Highlands.

Accordingly, after Culloden, the government understood that allowing this warlike, disaffected and oppressed population to continue in its traditional ways would be a repetition of the past, and so they resolved to open an outlet for the surplus population by forming Highland Regiments. These regiments were composed of men of the same clan, commanded by their hereditary chief and paid for by the State.² William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, receives the credit for being the first to conceive the idea of utilizing the military instincts of the disaffected Highland clans by enrolling their members as soldiers of the British military.³ Pitt realized destroying the Highland men who were already trained in conventional and guerrilla style warfare would be non-sensical. He proposed instead to use these Highland warriors to fight Britain's war with France. Pitt celebrated the use of Highland Regiments in his speech in 1766.

² *The Journal of Agriculture*, Volume VI, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1855), 511.

³ Frank Adam, *The Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, (Clearfield Publishing, 1970), 439.

I sought for merit wherever it was to be found; it is my boast that I was the first minister who looked for it and found it in the mountains of the north. I called it forth and drew into your service a hardy and intrepid race of men, who when left by your jealousy became a prey to the artifice of your enemies, and had gone high to have overturned the State in the war before last [the '45]. These men in the last war [Seven Years War] were brought to combat your side; they served with fidelity as they fought with valour and conquered for you in every part of the world.⁴

The pioneer of the Highland regiments was the Black Watch (1739), followed by Loudoun's Highlanders (1745) and Montgomery's and Fraser's Highland Regiments (1757). The officers and soldiers of the Black Watch were the only British subjects who could wear the Highland garb without incurring risk of punishment. The government saw the Highland regiments as a means of draining the best fighting men away from the Highland districts, and they used these warriors for the expansion of the British empire.

For example, Colonel Simon Fraser of Lovat who raised the 78th Regiment (Fraser's Highlanders, disbanded in 1763) became a major-general in 1771. As a reward for his distinguished military service General Fraser was rewarded the forfeited Lovat Estates, which his family had lost after the '45, in 1774. With the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in 1776, the Clan Fraser raised forces in the Highlands for the British army, and the 78th Regiment became the 71st Regiment. The 71st Regiment distinguished itself in the American Revolutionary War, and many were promised lands in British North America.⁵

The days of the clan system were numbered after Culloden; the Highland regiments became convenient substitutes for a sentimental entity based on chiefdoms,

⁴ Quoted in Tim Newark, *Highlander: The History of the Legendary Highland Soldier*, (London: Constable and Robinson: 2009) and Basil Williams, *The Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, Volume 2*, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914), 190.

⁵ Frank Adam, *The Clans, Septs, and Regiments*, 453.

tartan and a nostalgic yearning for the past. In fact, landowners gathered regiments to exaggerate the continuation of the clan system in order to reinforce their positions as regimental leaders.⁶ The system had benefits for landowners, especially those who supported the Jacobite cause, for they were able to demonstrate their loyalty and usefulness to the Hanoverian regime by raising a Highland regiment.⁷

The clan system was further broken down by the policy of the British government to form regiments of broken clansmen under the Crown. The government successfully altered the military capacity of the clan. Highlanders who remained in Scotland, were forbidden to wear Highland dress, listen to Highland music, practice Highland religion and most importantly engage in any form of unsanctioned (non-State) Highland militias. In order to participate in the military culture of the Highlands (wear Highland dress and use weaponry) Scots were compelled to join Highland Regiments, and these Regiments were sent overseas to be used to further the interests of the British Empire. The Highlands were thus deprived of men, and the process of the depopulation of the Highlands would be magnified with added economic pressures.⁸

Highland Emigration—Economic Forces at Work

The post-Culloden changes in land, industry and husbandry in the Highlands were explained in the previous chapter. The Highland economy was changing from a traditional, conservative agrarian economy into a modern, commercial economy. These changes greatly affected the social system that had been in place for hundreds of years.

⁶ For example, according to Adam Frank, General Fraser used the recovery of the Lovat Estates to influence to Highlanders in order to raise a The 71st Regiment.

⁷ Ian Brown, ed., *From Tartan to Tartary: Scottish Culture, History and Myth*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 2010), 54.

⁸ Clifford-Vaughan, "Disintegration of a Tribal Society," 79.

After Culloden changes in land, industry, husbandry and population were just a few of the socio-economic shifts occurring in the Highlands in the mid 1700s. The social and economic structures were so intertwined with land ownership that change in one area would invariably change the other. With the social pyramid in upheaval, tenants and subtenants began to move to other areas within Scotland looking for ways to supplement their income. Altogether, change was sweeping through the Highlands and those social, economic and population changes directly contributed to large scale emigration of Scottish Highlanders in 1770. In each of the following examples, one will clearly be able to see the elimination of an entire class of people, the tacksmen, leaving this class with little option but to migrate. Some of the economic forces that either directly or indirectly caused emigration were longer leases, enclosed land and higher rent.

As previously stated, the obligation to a tenant was dependent upon the landlord. The landlord's interpretation of the lease determined the length of the term, and the relationship with his tenant. When the Highland landlord could expel tenants from both their particular lands, and off the estate completely at the expiration of a lease, the interpretation of the lease according to the landlord obviously had acquired a different or more malicious meaning. This point was of particular importance in the Highlands. In theory, leases improved tenure, but if landlords saw leases as contractual agreements which expired at the conclusion of the specified term, they might attempt to remove a tenant from property leased to him for generations.⁹ This action by the landlord would leave the tenant with no alternative but to migrate.

⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 6.

The general advantages of a system of long leases seemed indisputable. Eighteenth century scholars had before them the example of Lowland Scotland, where a succession of agricultural reforms, encouraged by favorable leases, had in the course of two generations brought the land from extreme penury into a high state of production. Some landlords in the Highlands began to implement a system of longer leases with varied results; while others deemed longer leases unnecessary.

Several kinds of Highland lairds were reluctant to grant longer leases. The traditional paternal laird, beloved by the romantic writers, opposed both improvements and evictions. Their slowness was a symptom of their conventional conservatism. Some avaricious lairds simply chose not to give up the possibility of rent racking; while others approved of the general policy of leases, but were retarded by a variety of practical obstacles. More pensive landlords were dubious of longer leases improving matters. They were particularly doubtful of the value of leases to small tenants without capital, and they thought that the Lowland analogy had no practical application in an area which was so vastly different.¹⁰ Many changes were evident in the re-organization of estates in Mull, Morvern and Tiree, as well as on the Duke of Argyll's lands. Leases granted for nineteen years as well as those leased directly to tenants (not through the tacksmen) were all a part of the tenorial changes by which the tacksmen lost control in patronage of lands.¹¹

In traditional estates where practically all the land was held on lease by the tacksmen, the landlord had little direct power of granting leases to the crofters. As for the middlemen themselves, their attitude towards granting leases was much more

¹⁰ Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 14.

¹¹ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 210.

conservative than that of the landlords. To introduce a system of leases generally meant that proprietors must start by dismissing the superfluous tacksmen; that is, they must start by destroying the whole social structure with which they were familiar.¹² The introduction of longer leases, was rooted in increased commercialism of many Highland landlords. Accumulation of capital was replacing loyalty to kin and long established traditions. The means by which money income was being augmented-longer leases-demanded a new social structure.¹³

In truth the landlord stood to gain from the abolition of the middleman system, and most of the landlords were willing to proceed. However a change of such significance could not happen overnight. It was difficult, if not legally impossible, for proprietors to terminate the middleman system without getting rid of the middleman himself, and the lairds could only do that gradually as the tacks expired.¹⁴ By eliminating the lease to the tacksman, the laird removed the need for the tacksman's position.

Besides longer leases, the practice of enclosure has long been blamed for emigration. Enclosure was the elimination of run-rig, and the consolation of land for commercial farming or sheep rearing. As already described, the run-rig system was grossly inefficient. The destruction of the run-rig system stem from what Gray called, "the singularly unanimous abhorrence held for anything but individual and permanent tenure of land."¹⁵ Agricultural reformers would rid the landscape of small plots and

¹² Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 16.

¹³ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 210.

¹⁴ Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 17.

¹⁵ Gray, *The Highland Economy: 1750-1850*, 66.

create one large portion of land to essentially farm commercially. The land was consolidated and the renters displaced. Many historians attributed the emigration movement to the practice of enclosure. Eric Richards asserts, "The new agriculture, larger farms, absentee tenants and some conversion to grazing all generally encouraged emigration."¹⁶ Henry Grey Graham, in his book *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, denies that the Highland evictions caused by enclosure of land aggravated the poverty of the Highlands: "But as a matter of fact, the localities where poverty-hopeless, continual poverty-most prevailed were the very places where fewest changes in the farming system were made." These evictions were implemented in order to increase productivity of the land.¹⁷ The poorest areas were the very districts where no improvements were made.¹⁸ According to Henry Grey Graham, the districts where population decreased or emigrated were the very ones where sheep walks and consolidated farms were last implemented. The sheep pastures of Caithness, a Highland district, increased six times their former value. The greatest penury existed where traditional cultivation remained unchanged.¹⁹ Graham's explanation may not be entirely compelling, but his argument significantly points out that in the eighteenth century there was no direct relationship between the practice of enclosure and eviction on one side and the volume of emigration on the other.²⁰

¹⁶ Richards, *History of the Highland Clearances: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886*, 68.

¹⁷ Henry Grey Graham, *Social Life in Scotland*, 224.

¹⁸ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 61.

¹⁹ Henry Grey Graham, *The Social Life in Scotland*, 224.

²⁰ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 61.

Margaret Adam concludes in her article "Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803" that sheep farming did displace people; hence it did cause a certain amount of emigration, but the extent of that emigration has been exaggerated. She also states that emigration was inevitable where it occurred, but emigration was largely the result of the native farmer's unwillingness or inability to adapt to new cultivation techniques.²¹ The majority of historians who blame the lack of innovation of the Scots for their emigration base their position on probability and on an argument rather than on definite historical examples that establish an immediate relationship between enclosure and emigration. The case presented to lay the blame for emigration at the feet of stubborn Highlanders is incomplete. Even in the eighteenth century some writers pointed out several flaws in the argument.²² For instance, contemporary historians proposed that sheep farms seldom enclosed arable land since much of the new sheep pasture was former wasteland. They denied that the displacement of one type of agriculture necessarily produced emigration; many suggested other causes.²³ The population statistics do not substantiate the charges of depopulation by sheep farming. As previously mentioned, the population of Argyll, Inverness and Ross increased considerably. Post 1783, Argyll, which was one of the districts that took strongly to sheep farming, provided comparatively few Highland emigrants. However, the Hebrides, which was much less affected by sheep farming provided many emigrants. Enclosure of run-rig and the consolidation of farms were a few of the changes that came to the Highlands in the later 1700s; however, they were social disturbances and were not necessarily directly

²¹ Margaret I. Adam, "Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," 83.

²² Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 62.

²³ Margaret I. Adam, "Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," 80-83.

responsible for emigration. The increase in sheep farming resulted in evictions, but only where the arable land of the glens was enclosed to provide winter pasture for the sheep.²⁴ Although these evictions encouraged emigration, they did not necessarily cause it. These enclosures fell into a general pattern of agrarian improvements which increased the yield of the land, which precipitated the landlords' demanding more for their property. The indirect results of enclosure were more important, in light of emigration, than the direct results.

In addition to the introduction of longer leases and the elimination of run-rig (through enclosure) the landlord desired to receive more compensation for his property. Simply stated, many Highland landlords had broader political and cultural interests which required more money; in order to fund these interests, they increased the rent. The tenant or tacksman, with longer leases, was now supposed to have time and motivation to improve his farming techniques, and by doing so he ought to be in a position to pay more for the use of the landlord's property.²⁵ For example, on the estates of Laird Alexander Gordon the main surveying activity occurred between 1769 and 1781; the Duke of Gordon would not have encumbered his estate with a bill of £1, 265 13s 2 1/2d from the surveyors had he not expected a large return on his investment in the form of the higher rents that he could pursue after enclosure.²⁶ Rising rents were bound up inextricably with the social structure as it emerged from the generation after Culloden. The rent question made the tacksmen the most disaffected class in the Highlands during this period.

²⁴ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 62.

²⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 6.

²⁶ Ian H. Adams and I. D. Whyte, "The Agricultural Revolution in Scotland: Contributions to the Debate." *Area* 10, no. 3 (1978): 199. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20001347>.

The people immediately affected by the rise of rents were the superior tenants, or the tacksmen, who in Highland estate economy occupied a position not dissimilar to that of tenants-in-chief. In 1772 an anonymous letter well explained the tacksman's position in the changing world:

Such of these wad setters and tacksmen as rather wish to be distinguished as leaders, than industry, have not taken leases again, alleging that the rents are risen above what the land will bear; but, say they, in order to be revenged of our master for doing so, and hat is worse, depriving us of our subordinate chieftainship, by absolving our former privilege of sub-setting, we will not only have his lands, but by spiriting the lower class of people to emigrate, we shall carry a clan to America, and when they are there, they must work for us, or starve.²⁷

The most common complaint of the emigrants of the 1770s was the increase in rent. After 1763, rents rose in the Highlands as well as in the Lowlands. The increase varied from 33.5% to 300% in the North and 200% to 400% in the South. The Lowlands suffered from a higher percentage of increase, but they were also more affected by agricultural and other general improvements. Examples of rent increases can be found in Perthshire, Berwickshire and Ayrshire. Yet the people of those Southern areas did not suffer from rack-renting (the extraction of excessive or extortionate rent from a tenant or for a property); they were capable of paying the higher rent out of the increase in yield of the improved land. Some farmers in the Lowlands were able to save enough money to buy the land that they were leasing.

Rising rents were widely blamed by contemporary writers for the cause of extreme poverty in the North: Ian Charles Graham argues in *Colonist from Scotland* that high rents did not necessarily produce poverty nor low rents, prosperity. The districts where the rents had risen comparatively little, were not those which demonstrated the

²⁷ Quoted by Withers in *Gaelic Scotland*, 214 from "Veritas" to the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 31 December 1772.

greatest signs of prosperity.²⁸ William Marshall proposed in his *General View of the Agriculture of the Central Highlands of Scotland* that “were their holdings free, they could not, through their means, enjoy the common comforts of life equally with the day laborers of other districts.”²⁹ As the small tenants farmed in the Central Highlands, they would still be wretchedly poor even if they paid no rents whatever³⁰

Most of the misinterpretations surrounding the subject of increased rents came from not distinguishing clearly among the people who were asked to pay the rents. There were three varieties of “high rents” in the Highlands. First of all there were rents so high that they could hardly be paid under any system of farm management known at the time. Real distress for the Highlanders came when the rents were raised suddenly, unexpectedly and arbitrarily. The hardship of the increased rents (a byproduct of the short leases or complete absence of a lease) would encourage emigration.³¹ Rents such as these might be the result of pure greed on the part of the owner or tacksman, which this paper will discuss further. Secondly, high rents might also be due to a foolish miscalculation of the value of the land.³² The rents on unimproved lands were sometimes set unattainably high. Tenants of well managed farms could afford to pay higher rents than those who continued to cultivate the land using traditional methods.³³ Lastly, high rents might be due to an idea that the best value for the land could best be

²⁸ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 64.

²⁹ William Marshall, *General View of the Agriculture of the Central Highlands of Scotland with Observations on the Means of their Improvement*, (London: T. Wright, 1799), 24.

³⁰ Margaret I. Adam, “Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and Poverty Problem,” 11.

³¹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 65.

³² Margaret I. Adam, “Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem,” 11.

³³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 65.

ascertained by putting it up to open auction, a method which would force the increase rents to a level unattainable for most tenants.³⁴

While viewing some rents as exorbitant, critics of Highland estate management, did not stress the increased rents. Although they did observe that the general rise in rents in the Highlands was more than the corresponding increase in the Lowlands (where the increases were more often spent on solid improvements that were beneficial to the tenants). Still, with this reservation, the critics seemed to agree that if the owners managed their estates astutely, there was nothing to prevent them from acquiring higher rents without oppressing their tenants with unreasonable rents. Critics found the real grievance, not in the amount the tenant had to pay, but in the uncertainty regarding it. The unpredictability might arise either from the tenant being liable to irregular demands for personal services (such as the manufacture of kelp) or from the possibility of a fresh rise in rent.

Contemporary opinions on whether higher rents caused emigration were mixed. Thomas Miller, Lord Justice Clerk, who was much concerned with the growing trend of emigration in the 1770s, believed the chief cause of emigration to be these rising rents.³⁵ Another contemporary, Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate, blamed the increased rents in a letter to Bishop Gordon.

Two thousand emigrants are preparing for their departure from the Isle of Skye to some on part of our foreign settlements, perhaps the Island of St. John. They are all of the estate of Sir Alexander MacDonald, who may chance to be a proprietor of land without tenants...All, all this is owing to the exorbitant rents for land.³⁶

³⁴ Margaret I. Adam "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 11.

³⁵ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 65, citing the *Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury*, March 12, 1774, and Thomas Miller to Earl of Suffolk, April 25, 1774.

³⁶ MacDonald, *Cattle, Sheep and Deer*, 259.

Dundas saw this injustice as merely one symptom of the socioeconomic revolution that occurred post-Culloden in the Highlands.³⁷

In 1773, 176 tenants of the Forfeited Estate of Lovat petitioned for a diminution of their rent “to put a stop to the Emigrations, which are daily taking place, and so much seem to threaten a total depopulation.” The tenants, in the best way they knew how, were threatening to migrate unless their grievances were redressed.³⁸ Dr. Samuel Johnson recorded a man named McQueen, landlord of the inn of Glenmoriston, who was going to join seventy of his fellows in America because his rent had gone from £5 a year to £20. In reality, MaQueen could not have been in dire straits, for there is no record of his emigration to America.³⁹ In August of 1774, ninety Highlanders left Glenorchy and Kintyre for Wilmington, North Carolina for the repeated reason of “high rents and oppression.”⁴⁰ Still others left because of “high rents and better encouragement.”⁴¹

Discontent over rent was much greater in the Highlands, in comparison to the Lowlands, especially in the early 1770s because the concept of an annual fee due to the landlord was new to much of the region. Many lairds moved swiftly to establish maximum gains. Not all landlords were avaricious and oppressive. For example in 1772, the Duke of Athol wrote: ‘I believe I could squeeze six or 700 a year more out of

³⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 65.

³⁸ A. H. Miller, *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estate Papers, 1715; 1745*, (F.b. and C Limited, 2016), 120.

³⁹ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 104.

⁴⁰ A. R. Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina 1774-1775,” 52-53.

⁴¹ A. R. Newsome, “Records of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina, 1774-1775: II Records of Emigrants from Scotland—(continued),” 142.

them than I have at present but neither the Blessing of Providence nor the Approbation of my own heart would attend it so I am better as I am.⁴²

Highland lairds began to import professional surveyors from the South to assess the land. Their assessment bore little resemblance to the traditional values of land.⁴³ One of the worst grievances against renters was the idea offered by one pamphleteer who wrote, “the more rent is laid upon any farm, the better shall the tenant be able to improve the land, pay his rent, and live well, then when he paid a small rent.”⁴⁴ While there is clearly a line between legitimate pressure and extortion of tenants, many landlords regarded an increase in rent as the only avenue to force inefficient farmers to adopt more modern agricultural practices.⁴⁵ If the tenant found his rent to be extortionate under the traditional farming techniques, perhaps he would consider moving to new land. Lairds (and their factors and surveyors) began to calculate a tenant’s capacity to pay rent in terms of current market prices for the best crop possible after the modernization process. Not surprisingly, most tenants regarded these new rent prices astronomically high. However, even where a post-modernization price was fair, the price was usually based upon the assumption that market prices would rise or remain stable. Market fluctuations had the capacity to demolish a tenant hopes of paying his rent.⁴⁶

⁴² Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 7.

⁴³ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 213.

⁴⁴ James Knox and Charles Elliot, *Scotus Americanus: Informations Concerning the Province of North Carolina Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, (1773), 9.

⁴⁵ Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 7-8.

⁴⁶ Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 8.

The reforming landlords, whether responsible noblemen of the old order or grasping profiteers of the new one, made immediate gains from the new agricultural practices by raising rents. The increments of rent were not always, nor could they always be, exactly proportionate to the additional profits produced by these same agricultural improvements. More importantly, from the viewpoint of emigration, the rises in rent tended to extend beyond the limited areas of improved land. It would probably be safe to say that most emigrants between 1770-1775 were motivated by rent increases, at least in some small way. Yet the majority of these emigrants came from districts that were untouched by agricultural reform. Thus the indirect results of longer leases, enclosure and higher rents were more important for the history of Highland migration than the direct ones.⁴⁷

After Culloden, the Highlands were in cultural, social and economic upheaval. These three aspects of Highland life interact and intertwine so regularly that change in one aspect often would bring change in the others. The economy changed in the Highlands with longer leases, elimination of run-rig and higher rents. These three economic changes reorganized the social structure of the Highlands, eliminating the need for the tacksmen class. It was these tacksmen who gave the emigration of the years 1763-1775 from the Highlands of Scotland its very unique and special character. To understand the phenomenon that separated Highland emigration from that of other countries, one must study closely the tacksmen class and its connection to communal migration.⁴⁸

Highland Emigration 1770-1776—Tacksman's Role in Emigration

⁴⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 62-63.

⁴⁸ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 63.

The tacksman class was unique to Scotland. His social position, relationship with the landlord and his under-tenants, as well as his function in the economy all changed during the eighteenth century. He would play an important role in emigration between 1770 and 1776.⁴⁹ The position of the tacksmen was distinctive. He has been described as one who holds a lease from another person as higher class tenant. A contemporary of this era described the tacksmen class as follows:

The class of tacksmen occupy nearly the same rank in the Hebrides, as belongs to that of landed property in other part of Britain. They are called Gentlemen, and appear as such; and obtain a title from the farm they hold, nearly in the same manner as gentlemen in other parts of the country obtain their estates. Most of the tacksmen are in fact descended from a line of ancestors as ancient and honorable as the proprietors themselves, and therefore reckon themselves equally entitled with them to the appellation of gentlemen.⁵⁰

Generally speaking the original holders of the tacks were the younger sons of chiefs, these men understood that granting farms on long leases with extremely moderate rents was the most efficient method of providing for their large families. As might be expected, social prestige came as a bonus to their rank.

The tacksman's relationship with his laird was strongly colored by the social and kinship ties which bound them together. Margaret Adam asserts that the evidence (from contemporary writers of those districts where the tacksmen still survived) confirmed the belief that the leases were originally granted on terms abnormally favorable to the holder.⁵¹ Anderson wrote, "The tacksmen were treated with a mildness that made them

⁴⁹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 68.

⁵⁰ James Anderson, *An Account of the Present State of the Hebrides and Western Coasts of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: G. Robinson, Pater-Noster-Row, 1785), 164.

⁵¹ Margaret I. Adam, "The Highland Emigration of 1770," 286.

consider their leases rather as a sort of property, subjected to a moderate quitrent to their superior, than as a fair and full rent for land in Scotland.”⁵²

To understand the traditional role of the tacksmen, one must grasp the complicated social structure of the Highlands explained in the previous pages. The sweeping social changes that the Highlands endured in the eighteenth century revolutionized the social pyramid. Based on the clan, the chief usually owned the land in which the clan lived and therefore the chief was landlord of his clansmen, making them his tenants. However, there were intermediaries between the Highland chief and his tenants—the tacksmen. Usually, the tacksmen were the ones letting the land in smaller holdings to the rank and file tenants, not the chiefs. The tacksman would live on the surplus rents paid to him by the crofters which exceeded the rent he owed to the chief. A farm was usually rented to several families by the tacksmen, and they cooperated and occupied the land. Each family’s holdings were scattered in strips intermingled with those of others. The tacksman was usually a relation of the chief, bearing his surname, often holding the position for several generations. They would often consider themselves to have hereditary rights to their tacks. They acted as lieutenants to the chief not only in the agricultural structure of the Highlands but also in the military hierarchy of the clans. In the days when a clan had to be prepared to defend its territory, cattle and possessions from neighboring clans, the most valued function of the tacksmen, from the chief’s viewpoint was his ability to maintain a large body of fighting men on the estate.⁵³

⁵² James Anderson, *An Account of the Present State*, 164-165.

⁵³ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 47-48.

After the Battle of Culloden, significant changes in the social structure changed the traditional role of the tacksmen. With the passage of the Disarming Act of 1746, the tacksmen's role as organizer of armed retainers became obsolete. Therefore, not only was the tacksman unnecessary in maintaining a large body of fighting men, but he was also superfluous to the Highlands' changing economy. The tacksmen began to be regarded as an unnecessary middleman between the lord and his tenants. The estate's value could be enhanced if the rents that the tenants had formerly paid to the tacksmen could be collected directly by the lairds, avoiding inflation by the middleman. No doubt the complicated and minute holdings of many tenants usually made some kind of organizer indispensable. The laird would have preferred to collect the rent from one man as opposed to collecting from forty.⁵⁴ Since the tacksmen had little military role after the '45, they began to make themselves useful collecting rent.⁵⁵ While the traditional role of military protector for the tacksmen was eradicated, lairds were eliminating run-rig and enclosing their lands-forcing many crofters to migrate to manufacturing jobs in the South or fishing coasts of the North. Ultimately the number of crofters renting the land was eliminated. The tacksmen were then left to collect rents from a decreasing number of tenants making their roll increasingly superfluous. The lairds of the Highlands added to the already precarious position of the tacksmen by increasing the rent for their newly reformed lands. Understandably after surveying the land and eliminating much of the run-rig, the laird expected to turn a better profit, so he increased the rent. The increased rent left the tacksmen a few choices: he could pay

⁵⁴ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 51.

⁵⁵ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 69.

the increased price at the cost of his standard of living; he could squeeze more out of his limited tenants; or he could leave.

Among the other causes of Highland emigration, rising rents were tied very closely with the social strata as it emerged from the post-1745 rebellion generation. The tacksman is often accused of arbitrarily and cruelly raising the rents on the crofting class. During the 1770s, landowners were accused by their contemporaries of being despotic in leasing farms at excessive rates. Still others felt the rent had been raised too swiftly and mass emigration could have been avoided had the rent increases occurred more gradually.

The areas mentioned previously, and in some more remote Highland and Island parts, the crofter and cotter suffered from arbitrary rents and unreasonable services, the oppressor was more than likely the tacksmen. Agriculture was the most backward, the tacksmen or middleman survived the longest and the oppression of the crofter or under-tenants was the worst in the most primitive and remote areas (Outer Hebrides, Sutherland, Orkney and Shetland).⁵⁶

As with every social tier, there were both good and bad tacksmen. Various reasons for oppressive actions of the bad ones exist. Reverend John Lane Buchanan travelled through the Western Hebrides, and he observed that, "The mild treatment which is shown to the subtenants...by the old lessees, descended of ancient and honorable families, and the outrageous rapacity shown by those necessitous strangers who have obtained leases from absent proprietors, who treat the natives as if they were

⁵⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 68.

a conquered and inferior race.”⁵⁷ Evidence abounds to prove that the tacksmen were not good masters. Exorbitant rents, heavy services, and insecurity of tenure are the characteristic marks of their dealings with their under-tenants. Setting the ethics aside, the proprietor could have possibly objected to these dealings on purely moral grounds; he more than likely regarded them as an economic grievance. By lavish sub-letting, a tacksmen might live rent free, while the proprietor could only look on and see his estate reduced to impoverishment by the practices already mentioned. A good landlord would resent a system so hostile to the bulk of his tenants; a bad proprietor would chafe at a practice so entirely unprofitable to himself.⁵⁸

One of the earliest pieces of evidence of rapacious behavior of a tacksmen was reported in 1737, a missive sent by Duncan Forbes of Culloden to the Duke of Argyll. The report concerned certain estates of the latter which Forbes had been sent to inspect with a view to the possibility of reform. Forbes said,

The unmerciful exaction of the late tacksmen is the cause of those lands {i.e. of the Island of Coll} being waste, which had it continued but for a very few years longer would have entirely unpeopled the island. They speak of above one hundred families that have been reduced to beggary and driven out of the island within these last seven years...But through Grace's expectations or mine may not be answered as to the improvements of rent, yet in this, I have satisfaction, and it may be some to you, that the method taken has prevented the total ruin of these islands, and the absolute loss of the whole rent in time coming to your Grace, had the tacksmen been suffered to continue their extortions a few years longer these islands would have been dispeopled, and you must have been contented with no rent, or with such as these harpies should be graciously pleased to allow you.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Reverend John Lane Buchanan, *Travels in the Western Hebrides: from 1782-1790*, (London: G. G. J. and J. Robinson: 1793), 50.

⁵⁸ Margaret I. Adam, "Highland Emigration of 1770," 287.

⁵⁹ Margaret I. Adam, "Highland Emigration of 1770," 288.

The oppressive practices detailed by Forbes and other writers were not simply the lingering relics of the traditional past. An English traveller writing from his personal observation in 1785, made this statement:

The chieftain lets out his land in large lots to the inferior branches of the family, all of whom must support the dignity of lairds. The renters let the land out in small parcels from year to year to the lower class of people, and to support their dignity, squeeze everything out of them they can possibly get, leaving them only a bare subsistence. Until this evil is obviated Scotland can never improve.⁶⁰

Where the tacksmen continued in existence, the abuses appear to have remained even to the end of the eighteenth century and unfortunately later.

The heaviest indicator of all was that which appeared in Reverend Buchanan's *Travels*. Buchanan was a Church of Scotland missionary, and his *Travels* are the result of his personal survey of Hebridean conditions between 1782 and 1790. The landlords were referred to in terms of lauded admiration, but the tacksmen incurred Buchanan's rancor and condemnation.

The land is parcelled out in small portions by the tacksmen among the immediate cultivators of the soil, who pay their rent in kind and in personal services. Though the tacksmen for the most part enjoy their leases of whole districts on liberal terms, their exactions from the subtenants are in general most severe. They grant them their possessions only from year to year, and lest they should forget their dependent condition, they are every year at a certain term, with the most regular formality, ordered to quit their tenements and to go out of the bounds of the leasehold estate . . . there is not perhaps any part of the world where the good things of this life are more unequally distributed. While the scallag and the subtenant are wholly at the mercy of the tacksmen, the tacksmen from a large and advantageous farm, the cheapness of every necessary, and by means of smuggling every luxury, rolls in ease and affluence.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Quoted in Margaret I. Adams, "Highland Emigration of 1770," 288.

⁶¹ Buchanan, *Travels in the Western Hebrides*, 39.

Although there are many examples of rapacious tacksmen, in Badenoch between 1769 and 1773, MacKintosh of Balnesprick (the tacksmen for the Chief of MacKintosh) consistently spent more in payment to the chief than he received from his crofters.⁶² In the bad year of 1771, he received only £8 in rent but paid out £48 to the laird. While the MacDonalds of Skye were emigrating in droves, MacLeod of Dunvegan Island relieved his tenants from oppressive rent. The laird of the neighboring isle of Raasey treated his tenants so well that nary a man had chosen to emigrate.⁶³ By 1773, some landlords reduced the rent to prevent emigration.⁶⁴ There were tacksmen who then treated their crofters well and others who treated them abominably.

By 1770 many sub-tenants dealt only with tacksmen or factors. The factor cared only for pleasing his absentee landlord. After Culloden, the restraints of the old society broke down and the exploitation of the crofter became more severe. The tacksmen were often replaced by factors or agents, who without blood-ties with the landowner or tenantry, were often more direct and forceful in the operation of the estates.⁶⁵ In the 1760s, it was unlikely that in most areas the crofter could have afforded to pay a higher rent. As has been shown, when rents rose suddenly towards the close of this period, the crofter was all but forced to migrate.⁶⁶ The process of complete elimination of the tacksmen class from the estates managerial structure seemed to have begun in the 1730s on the Argyll Estates; the tacksmen's dismissal would spread to various areas

⁶² I.F. Grant, *Everyday Life on an Old Highland Farm, 1769-1782*, (Badenoch, Scotland: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), 149.

⁶³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 69-79.

⁶⁴ Miller, *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estate Papers*, 122.

⁶⁵ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 215.

⁶⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 70.

throughout the rest of the century. The chief, instead of brusquely eliminating the incumbent tacksman, could ignore the hereditary rights and put the tack up for auction. The existing tacksman could possibly be displaced by a higher bidder. When this would happen, the new tacksman might find it easier to pay the landlord his rent by turning out the current tenants and raising cattle on the land himself.⁶⁷ The tacksman was faced with two choices. With the decline of military ways and the direct leasing of land, the tacksman either became an intermediate entrepreneurial figure within an agricultural economy increasingly adopting commercial attitudes and new methods, or he departed the Highlands altogether, encouraging some of his crofters to follow him.⁶⁸ Whichever of the two alternatives he chose, someone was dispossessed: either the tacksman or his tenants.⁶⁹

Longer leases, eliminated run-rig and higher rents all played a role in dissolving the tacksman class. These economic changes effected the social structure of the Highlands, specifically the tacksman class. In addition to these socio-economic changes occurring post-Culloden, the tacksman no longer were needed in a military capacity. The cultural, economic and social metamorphosis of the Highlands drove the tacksman class to redundancy and superfluity. Emigration took place both before and for other reasons than the gradual elimination of the tacksman, but there is no doubt it did increase with the departure of tacksman and numbers of sub-tenants that went with their tacksman. Eric Richards remarked that, "The willingness of the people to follow

⁶⁷ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 51.

⁶⁸ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 72-73 and Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 216.

⁶⁹ Donaldson, *The Scot Overseas*, 51.

their natural leaders reflected their poverty, the recurrence of famine, the goad of rising rents and the solidarity of social relations.”⁷⁰

In John Walker’s *An Economical History of the Hebrides and Highland of Scotland, Volume II*, the author comments on the tacksmen’s loss of status: “The tacksmen refused to comply with the offered terms, upon which the lands were let to the inferior people, who had been their subtenants...they found themselves uneasy at home, by alteration in the state of property to which they had not been accustomed, and to which their minds and views could not correspond.”⁷¹ Having their culture dispelled, their occupation diminished and their status denigrated, many tacksmen would emigrate to British North America in the attempt to regain their lost culture.

Highland Emigration 1770-1776—Factors of American Allure

There were two main factors of American allure for Highlanders: incentives offered by the American colonies and encouragement from Highlanders. First of all, several of the colonies, especially those in the American South, offered various inducements to prospective immigrants from Great Britain. New England colonies enacted a few laws of this nature, and the middle colonies offered land and naturalization on easy terms. However, the Southern colonies were the most active in liberal legislation to enable the immigrant to establish himself in the new land.

Among the earliest forms of legislative aid enacted for the benefit of the immigrant were laws providing suspension on debts and exemptions from taxes. Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia were among the colonies that

⁷⁰ Richards, *The Highland Clearances*, 184.

⁷¹ John Walker, *An Economical History of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland, Volume II*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1808), 152-153.

enacted laws prohibiting suit being levied against an immigrant debtor for a specific time period. Such protection enabled the immigrant to establish himself in the New World. Moreover, the colonies benefited from this legislation by encouraging immigrants to settle within their borders.⁷²

The policy of tax exemption for a certain number of years was in accord with the idea of protection for the immigrant until he passed through the “seasoning” or the adjustment and settlement period. Relief from past debts and immunity from taxes for a period of time were great attractions to immigrants and enabled them more easily to meet the many problems of settlement in British North America. The colony profited by the immigrant’s success, for other of the Highlander’s countrymen would be inclined to try their fortunes in that province.⁷³

In the case of Highland immigrants, an act passed by the North Carolina legislature benefited 1, 600 recent Scottish immigrants in Cumberland County. The law declared that persons coming directly from Europe to settle the province would be tax exempt for four years after their arrival.⁷⁴ North Carolina’s liberal policy of remitting the taxes for Scottish immigrants for a number of years, brought many Highlanders to their borders.

A great attraction for Highlanders in the New World was land. From the perspective of Scottish culture, the emigrant and land were inextricably entangled.

⁷² Erna Risch, “Encouragement of Immigration: As Revealed in Colonial Legislation.” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 45, no. 1 (1937): 2, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4244764>.

⁷³ Risch, “Encouragement of Immigration,” 3-4.

⁷⁴ Documenting the American South: Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, “Memorandum from the Board of Trade to Great Britain to George III, King of Great Britain Concerning Acts of the North Carolina Assembly,” Volume 9 www.docsouth.unc.edu, <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr09-0089>, 251-252.

Wealth, social position and political privilege depended on land ownership. Whatever their motivation, colonial proprietors and colonial governments were not bashful in using land to entice emigrants from their homes. The greatest need of America was men to develop the resources of the country. The Scots were more than happy to fulfill that need.

Characteristically, the preambles in most colonial naturalization acts stated that they were encouraging of immigration. South Carolina specifically enacted naturalization laws which would reward and encourage immigrants. Naturalization was rightly looked upon as an inducement to immigrants. The naturalization laws added the right of the established subject to purchase land. In South Carolina and Georgia, the political rights of naturalized subjects are directly mentioned, but by allowing aliens to obtain land, the naturalization acts present an opportunity for acquiring the necessary voting qualifications. In America there was not only the opportunity to own land, there was also the possibility of political empowerment as well.⁷⁵

Not only did North Carolina provide emigrants with tax breaks and beneficial naturalization laws, but in 1769, Governor Tyron advanced the amount of £15 to a party of one hundred Scottish immigrants who intended on settling amongst the Highlanders of Cumberland County. The money would supply the settlers with immediate necessities, and by accepting liability for the expense, the Carolina Assembly supported the governor's offer.⁷⁶ A few years later, again in North Carolina, Governor Josiah Martin, who was already in possession of instructions to discourage emigrants from Britain by withholding the Crown lands for settlement, allowed a group of recent

⁷⁵ Risch, "Encouragement of Immigration," 9.

⁷⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 95.

Highland immigrants to take up vacant lands, after receiving their solemn assurances of loyalty towards Great Britain.⁷⁷ As Governor Martin wrote to Lord Dartmouth, another party of 130 Highlanders arrived at North Carolina's shore. Martin wrote, "I shall think it proper to give permission to settle on the vacant lands of the Crown."⁷⁸ Although not all Highlanders received their own land upon arrival in America, enough did to encourage their fellow countrymen to make the journey.

The second factor of American appeal was not only the enticements of colonial governors and legislative bodies, but also the encouragement of soldiers returning from the Seven Years' War. In the Outer Hebrides, the chieftain of Clan MacNeil wrote in the *Caledonian*: "Roderick the Gentle went to America in 1776, leading a number of his clansmen, and fought in several battles in the Revolution, the imagination of the clansmen aroused by reports of most wonderful conditions in America."⁷⁹ Welsh author J.D.V. Loder, in his book *Colonsay and Oransay in the Isles of Argyll*, writes: "Emigration first stimulated by soldiers returned from Canada at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War in 1763, soon assumed large proportions."⁸⁰ Argyll, like other Highland provinces, had high emigration rates for this reason, as well as others after the war. Janet Schaw, a Scottish emigrant woman coming to America in the 1770s, recorded the presence of veterans in her diary: "Should levy be again necessary, the recruiting drum may long be at loss to procure such soldiers as are now abroad this

⁷⁷ Colonial State Records of North Carolina: Documenting the American South, "Letter from Josiah Martin to William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth November 12, 1775," Volume 10, www.docsouth.unc.edu, <http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr09-0155>, 325.

⁷⁸ Colonial State Records of North Carolina: Documenting the American South, "Letter from Josiah Martin to William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth November 12, 1775," 328.

⁷⁹ *The Caledonian Magazine*, Volume 18, (New York, 1919), 287.

⁸⁰ Quoted by Allison, *Driv'n by Fortune*, 131.

Vessel, lost to their country forever, brave fellows who tho' now flying from their friends, would never have fled from their foes."⁸¹ Former military warriors were flocking to the shores of British North America.

The Fraser Highlanders established communities in British North America that acted as bridgeheads along the eastern coast, attracting many Highlanders. One half of the Fraser Seventy-eighth Regiment stayed in the New World and became land owners; the other half returned to Scotland after their tour of duty was over in 1763. Many would eventually re-migrate back to the New World before the American Revolution in 1776. Many from the Seventy-eighth joined the Seventy-first and returned to America to fight the American Revolution; in some circumstances, the soldiers received land in the New World as compensation for their efforts in the war.⁸²

Three regiments (which will be discussed again) contributed to the pioneers—the Black Watch, Fraser's and Montgomery Highlanders. Disbanded in 1763, men of the last two regiments chose Murray Bay in Prince Edward Island as the site for their new homes. Two officers, Captain Malcolm Fraser and Major Nairn, secured large land grants from the British government. Once the Highland veterans settled, kinship and friendship became powerful factors in drawing thousands of Scots to British North America. The military settlers invited emigrants via letter; some like those in the Seventy-eighth even returned to persuade their relatives and friends to return with them to the new frontier.⁸³

⁸¹ Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal in the Years 1774 to 1776*, (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1921), 38.

⁸² Allison, *Driv'n by Fortune*, 131.

⁸³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 49-50.

Included in that New World enticement was the impact of letters written from emigrants already settled in British North America back to their families and clansmen. In 1772, John Campbell composed a detailed and thoughtful letter describing his life in Maryland and the conditions of emigration and resettlement. He assessed a poor man's chances in America to be successful. Provided the migrant was young, emigration was certainly for the betterment of the Highlander.⁸⁴

The correspondence of the Argyllshire MacAllisters was particularly detailed in their description of the North Carolina. The first of the family to settle in North Carolina was Alexander, who brought with him a wife, three sisters and his brother, Hector. Alexander prospered as a mill proprietor and landowner; Hector, however, returned back to Scotland. For the next thirty-five years, Alexander and Hector would pen lengthy letters discussing the Carolina climate, countryside, crops, wages, prices, labor force and settlement. Repeatedly, the emigration decision of Alexander was praised. For example, one could leave land to his children in equal proportions. No matter how poor initially, all had opportunity to provide for their family's. Alexander urged his kinsmen repeatedly to act soon. Like the Carolina MacAllisters, hundreds of other transplanted families remained in contact with their kinsmen in their homeland.⁸⁵ In the county of Pictou in Nova Scotia, the Reverend James MacGregor recorded,

This summer many of the Highlanders wrote, or rather caused to be written, letters to their relatives in Scotland, informing them that now they had the gospel here in purity, inviting them to come over, and telling them that a few years would free them from their difficulties. Accordingly, next summer a number of them

⁸⁴ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 173.

⁸⁵ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 504-506.

found their way hither. Next year letters were sent home with the same information, and brought more.⁸⁶

Those families who had previously gambled with their lives and their livelihoods in British North America were established and flourishing; their letters home provided additional inducement to a population already disposed to take drastic measures.⁸⁷

Parish ministers who contributed to the *Statistical Account of Scotland* repeatedly mentioned letters from America as one of the strongest inducements furthering emigration.⁸⁸

Perhaps one of the best indicators of the impact of emigration on the Highlanders during the 1770s was Dr. Samuel Johnson's description of a contemporary folk dance the Scots called "America." He wrote: "Each of the couples successively whirls around a circle until all are in motion, and the dance seems intended to show how emigration catches, until a while neighborhood is set afloat."⁸⁹ The liberal policies of the American colonies, the abundance of land, the enticement of soldiers returning home and the letters of encouragement from emigrants all played a role in attracting Highlanders to British North America.

Essentially the first two chapters of this thesis have explained the reasons for emigration from the Scottish Highlands. After Culloden, cultural, economic and social changes were occurring. The changes eliminated the necessity of the upper-tenantry, the tacksmen. Although, as will be shown in the following chapter, the tacksmen were

⁸⁶ George Patterson, *Memoir of the Reverend James MacGregor: Missionary of the General Associate Synod of Scotland to Pictou, Nova Scotia*, (Edinburgh: William Elephant & Co., 1859), 137.

⁸⁷ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 84.

⁸⁸ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 50.

⁸⁹ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 242-243.

not the only Scots emigrating, they did provide a vast amount of emigrants. Their dissatisfaction of the post-Culloden Highland world encouraged them to make a new place for themselves.

CHAPTER 3: TYPES OF ORGANIZED MIGRATION 1770-1776

“At Killin we heard the little story of a Highland migration... The word was given, as it was phrased, in the beginning of March 1775; and a rendezvous was appointed at Killin, on the first of the ensuing May. Here convened about thirty families, making in all above three hundred people... Early the next morning the whole company was called together by the sound of bagpipes, and the order of their march was settled. Men, women and children, had all their proper stations assigned. They were all dressed their best attire; and the men armed in the Highland fashion... Many of them possessed of two or three hundred pounds, and few of less than thirty or forty; which at least shewed, they had not starved on their farms. They were a jocund crew; and set out, not like people flying from the face of poverty: but like men, who were about to carry their health, their strength, and little property, to a better market.”¹

In the previous two chapters the cultural, social and economic changes of a post-Culloden world have been explained. Ultimately these changes became push factors (reasons for emigrating) for many Highlanders. This chapter will explain the different types of emigration from 1770-1776. Scottish Highland emigration to British North America was quintessentially different as compared to other countries such as Ireland or England at this time. The Highlanders who emigrated or organized emigrations can be partitioned into four groups: indentured servants, retired soldiers, tacksmen and land speculators. Scottish Highland emigration was unique not in the way they emigrated, for all emigrants from Europe transversed the sea on a ship. Highland emigration differentiates itself by who was migrating. Entire clans would leave their Highland home for British North America.²

Types of Organized Migration—Indentured Servants

Of course there are many characteristics that distinguish Scottish emigration from that of other countries during this era; just like there are many characteristics that separate Scottish Highland emigration from Lowland, and even more attributes that

¹ William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain; Particularly the Highlands of Scotland 1724-1804*, Internet Archive. (Accessed 29 April 2017), <https://archive.org/details/observationsrela01gilpiala>, 169-171.

² For an extensive analysis of emigration numbers from Great Britain see Bernard Bailyn, *Voyages to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*.

represent particular regions within the Highlands. The Highlanders who were migrating at this time were mostly farmers, laborers, household servitors and few artisans of any kind (although outliers were common). The rural proletariat of helpless, rootless poor afforded the expensive voyage and provisions to start a new in British North America by indentured servitude.³

Unable or unwilling to pay the cost of emigration themselves, Highlanders entered into contracts with entrepreneurs such as ship captains, merchants or other intermediaries; these entrepreneurs paid the cost of passage to America in exchange for full-time servitude for a set period of years, which was most commonly four years. The indentees' labor was sold upon their arrival in America for whatever their owners could get for them. Upon expiration of their contract, indentees were released from service, and in some cases they owed "freedom dues,"⁴ or a small sum of money or tools and one or two suits of clothing. During his term of indenture, the servant was totally committed to his master; relief was granted at the master's discretion. Anyone—man, woman or child—was capable of entering into a contract such as this.

Commonly these contracts were agreed upon out of sheer necessity, but absolute poverty was not always the driving factor for these near-penal arrangements. Some indentures were a form of insurance for the shipper: if upon arrival in America the emigrants was unable to pay for his transportation the contract for indentured servitude would come effective. For the most part however, contracts were not contingent.⁵ Very

³ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 165.

⁴ Abbot Emerson Smith, *Colonist in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776*, (New York: Clearfield Publishing, 2014), 238-241.

⁵ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 166-167.

few family heads left Britain as indentured servants.⁶ In one rare instance, Janet Schaw recorded a man named John Lawson, who “bound himself double, to save his wife and daughter.”⁷ In the migration as a whole, indentures were contracted overwhelmingly by individuals emigrating alone.

Generally speaking, entire Scottish families tended to migrate (as opposed to Scottish individuals). Almost half (48%) of Scottish emigrants traveled as members of family groups as opposed to only a fifth of English migrants.⁸ Not only did the Scots travel as family units, but traveling in clans is the most distinguishing factor of Scottish Highland emigration. If the Highlanders typically migrated in family units, and typically entire families did not become indentured, how then did Highlanders afford the substantial cost of emigrating? The answer is that someone organized their transport. Although in the minority (18%), some Highlanders travelled through indentured servitude. They may have been mostly single men or women, but they did not travel alone. An example of someone who organized indentured servants into an emigrant group is Lord James Montgomery, who financed a group of indentured servants to emigrate in 1770 from Perthshire.

In 1767, the British government experimented in the North American colonization scheme by allocating land to private proprietors by lottery on the Island of St. John, which was recently acquired from France. The parcels were divided into sixty-seven surveyed townships of about 20,000 acres each. The proprietors paid an annual quitrent, thus defraying the cost of the administration of the new colony. To finance the

⁶ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 184-185.

⁷ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 55.

⁸ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 137.

quitrents, the proprietors were forced to promote settlement. The British government's well-laid plans for the colonization of St. Johns were all for naught. The proprietors did not successfully populate their allocated lands; thus the quitrents were not paid, and eventually Parliament took over the financial support to the administration in 1777.⁹

James Montgomery was the most active and considerable of the Island's absentee proprietors in the 1770s. Born the second son of an advocate to Lord Maron, the chief land holder in the county, Montgomery studied law in Edinburgh and became a rising political figure after the '45. In 1776, he became a member of Parliament and served as Lord Advocate of Scotland until 1775. After acquiring lands on the Island, Montgomery's plans for the land were two fold: he planned to establish a fishing/trading settlement on the East coast and to organize a large flax farm to supply Scottish looms with flax and farmers with seed. He hired David Lawson, an experienced flax farmer, to recruit fifty indentured servants, who would contract their labor for four years in return for passage to the new colony, their farms at a low rent and their livestock upon the expiration of their contracted indentures.

The party departed from Greenock aboard the *Falmouth* in 1770 arriving at the Island in early June. They thought the land was cheap until they saw it. The settlers found a total wilderness with no source of food except for the oatmeal that had made the journey with them. They managed to get some land cleared and planted before cold weather settled in.¹⁰ Some of the emigrants were "like to perish from hunger" and fled to Pictou settlement.¹¹ Like parties before and after them, the Montgomery expedition

⁹ J. M. Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803." *Acadiensis* 7, no. 2 (1978): 76, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30302587>.

¹⁰ Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island," 77, 80, 82.

¹¹ Patterson, *Memoir of the Reverend James MacGregor*, 212.

would struggle with clearing and planting enough to make themselves self-sufficient.¹² There are some that say Sir James Montgomery did not do enough for his settlers. One critic says, "He simply directed them to his own land and leased them unbroken soil at a shilling per acre."¹³ A shipment of provisions finally arrived from Three Rivers, but Lawson did not receive the farm animals or the cultivating implements; out of necessity, Lawson made his own. He did not receive any seed grain for the first two years of settlement. Right around the time when the colony was becoming self-sufficient, the indentures expired and the emigrants moved to Lovehead.¹⁴ Those who remained grumbled against their benefactor, Montgomery. However, without Montgomery's financial backing, the emigrants would neither have gotten to the New World nor have been somewhat provided for in the crucial early years that followed. Loss of life was relatively low among this party. Neither deaths on the trans-Atlantic voyage nor deaths due to food shortage were reported.¹⁵ The majority of Highland emigrants were not indentured servants, and Montgomery's expedition is an example of the minority of emigrants during this time.

The majority of Scots of this time were not the starving masses. The sheer cost of emigration excluded the very impoverished, and Bernard Bailyn writes: "They appear to have ambitiously enterprising people attempting to exploit opportunities they knew about and which they thought they could plan for."¹⁶ Highlanders were pulled to a new land they were unfamiliar with, and they were pushed from a land that they knew well

¹² Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803," 82.

¹³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 77.

¹⁴ Bumsted, "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803," 82.

¹⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 57.

¹⁶ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 199.

but was unable to support their increasing numbers. Bailyn destroyed the myth that the Scots were indentured servants in the eighteenth century. His studies show that only 18% of Scots were indentured servants compared to 68% of the English migrants. Regardless of their occupation, Highlanders were far less likely to be indentured than the English. Part of this was due to the re-migrating soldiers using their saved capital from their military service to finance their families' emigration. In part, the lack of indentured Highlanders was also due to the Scots migrating in larger groups. It was cheaper per head to travel in large groups.¹⁷ Most Highlanders emigrated not as indentured servants, but they were (or organized by) either former military, tacksmen or land speculators.

Types of Organized Migration—Former Military

The second type of organized emigration was either groups of former military men and their families or groups of Highlanders organized by an experienced military man. Officers and men from the Black Watch (Seventy-seventh and Seventy-eighth Regiments), as well as Highlanders who had served in other regiments, petitioned for grants of land¹⁸ on both sides of the Hudson River, between Lake George and Lake Champlain, and east of Vermont's Green Mountains. Captains were entitled to three thousand acres, lieutenants to two thousand, sergeants to two hundred, corporals to

¹⁷ Allison, *Driv'n by Fortune*, 131.

¹⁸Colin G. Calloway, "Sir William Johnson, Highland Scots, and American Indians." *New York History* 89, no. 2 (2008): 163. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23183448>.

one hundred, and to privates fifty acres. Most petitioned as individuals, but comrades-in-arms often sought large portions of land together.¹⁹

For example, on February 28, 1764, Allen Cameron and three others, "late serjeants and seven privates in the 77th regiment," filed a petition "praying their quota of the lands to be granted to non-commissioned officers and privates who served during the late war, pursuant to his majesty's proclamation."²⁰ On May 31, 1766, Neal McLean, formerly a lieutenant in the 77th Regiment, Donald McLean, a surgeon in the regiment, and Malachy Treat, a surgeon's mate, petitioned "for a grant of 2,000 acres to each, within a certain tract of land, purchased of the Catts Kill Indians in the county of Albany, on the west side of Hudson's River."²¹ Men from Montgomery's Highlanders took land grants close to Fort Edward, and many soldiers from the Black Watch settled near Otter Creek east of Lake Champlain, which was then part of New York. Long after the initial deluge of postwar petitions, Highland names figured repeatedly in New York land grants.²²

The famous Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, leased large tracts of lands to Highland soldiers. Johnson established himself as a key player in British-Indian relations. He had a shrewd eye for developing his investment. Soldiers from Fraser's Highlanders (78th Regiment) benefited from Johnson's patronage. About twenty veterans and their families settled on his estate, and Johnson helped others

¹⁹*Calendar of N. Y. Colonial Manuscripts-Indorsed Land Papers; in the Office of the Secretary of State of New York, 1643-1803, 317-22, 325-23, 344-54, 357-76, 379-89, 395-98, 404-06, 411, 419-22, 426-32, archive.org, <https://ia600205.us.archive.org/22/items/calendarofnycolo00alba/calendarofnycolo00alba.pdf>.*

²⁰ *Calendar of N. Y. Colonial Manuscripts, 333.*

²¹ *Calendar of N. Y. Colonial Manuscripts, 397-398.*

²² *Calendar of N. Y. Colonial Manuscripts, 387-389.*

secure lands in northern New York. Hugh Fraser, who had been a lieutenant in the regiment, went to the Mohawk Valley in 1764, then returned to Scotland and brought back his wife and a number of Highland tenants. Successive parties of Highland migrants followed. Such as Norman MacLeod, a captain in the British army, who became friends with Johnson; MacLeod settled on land provided by Johnson after the Seven Years' war and brought relations from Scotland in 1772 to become tenants on Johnson's lands.²³

Several officers and enlisted men decided to emigrate; many even brought their families or extended families. Many officers of several Highland regiments were promised land in British North America, and although not all received their own land in British North America, many decided to emigrate. As Highland warriors their military culture had been destroyed and diminished. If they emigrated, they could maintain their traditional military culture in British North America. Men from Fraser's Highlanders, Montgomery's Highlanders, the Black Watch as well as other regiments decided to take advantage of Britain's land policies in North America.²⁴

Types of Organized Emigration—Tacksman

The third type of organized emigration was of that great disaffected class—the tacksmen. The more conservative, less industrious of the tacksmen were unwilling to adapt to the changing socio-economic structure emerging post Culloden. They resented the demand for higher rent from their land, and in most cases, these tacksmen found it difficult to transfer the burden of increase to the crofters, who were already

²³ Calloway, "Sir William Johnson," 165.

²⁴ It could be argued that Britain took advantage of the Highland Regiments: using them for their military service and then disbanding them after the conflicts with the French and Americans were over. Left with no military outlet in the Highlands, many regiments decided to emigrate.

crushed beneath a heavy load of financial burden. Under these circumstances, there were ready listeners for those with tempting tales from other lands. The tacksmen believed that the possibility of reconstituting the old clan system with themselves as chiefs existed in America. They believed that they could restore their former prestige and increase their income by carving new estates out of the American wilderness. To put this plan into action, they would need a docile and dependent peasantry to do the pioneering work of establishing estates in America. The obvious choice to fill this position was their own subtenants.²⁵ Especially in the 1770s, the tacksmen were seen as the principal proponent behind Highland emigration, either by oppressing their crofters or by leading them to a new life in America. Possibly and more appropriately stated, by leading them to British North America to maintain the old Highland socio-economic structure.²⁶ Why would crofters agreed to go to a new land with the very tacksmen who oppressed them in the old one? Ian Charles Graham argues that possibly the subtenants were not always sophisticated enough to see what course of action was in their best interest. Through an ingrained trait of obedience, the crofter could not imagine life without a tacksman.²⁷

According to Dr. Johnson, in the Highlands, "Next in dignity to the Laird is the Tacksman."²⁸ Dr. Johnson observed of the Highlands that, "Their chiefs being now deprived of their jurisdiction have already lost much of their influence and as they gradually degenerate from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords, they will divest

²⁵ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 73.

²⁶ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 34.

²⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 74.

²⁸ R.W. Chapman, ed., *Johnson's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson LLD* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 78.

themselves of the little that remains."²⁹ If the tacksman was to emigrate, the crofters could scarcely imagine life in his absence. Not only was the tacksman their landlord and employer, but the crofters' whole life was intertwined with his tacksman's. The crofters' animals grazed together in the common ground; they bought and sold goods mostly through the tacksman, and they tilled the run-rig fields jointly with their tacksman.

Although the influence of the lairds over their tenantry was significant³⁰, the tacksmen's prestige and influence differed from that of their lairds only slightly. The lairds did not discourage emigrating tacksmen, and the tacksmen allowed the landlord to take the whole of the rent by migrating. The tacksman carried off the surplus population making it easier for his laird to consolidate and improve the agricultural production of his land. Evidence is available for the tacksmen organizing Scots to emigrate, this type of emigration was the most typical form of migration to America in the 1770s.³¹

The first example of tacksmen leading men to emigrate was the venture to what is now Canada at the Island of St. John. Recruited from the occupants of the estates of the MacDonald's (Lord MacDonald and Clanranald) in South Uist and the outlying coasts, the settlement in St. John originated from religious persecution of Roman Catholics and economic pressures upon the tacksmen class. In 1769, Colin MacDonald of Boisdale began forcing his Roman Catholic tenants to convert to Presbyterianism, sparking the beginning of religious troubles for South Uist. The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, despite being reduced to only 13, 000 adherents in the

²⁹ Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 74.

³⁰ For example, earlier in the century the majority of the Duke of Gordon's tenants were Catholic, but they followed their lord to the Episcopal Church.

³¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 55.

Highland region, responded by moving the religiously oppressed Catholics to America. This response of the Catholic church simultaneously prevented the spread of the Protestant faith to other lairds by threatening a general depopulation of their estates. Unwilling to appear as public sponsors of emigration, the leadership of the Church (Bishop of the Highland District, John MacDonald and the Bishop of Edinburgh, George Hay) turned to laymen to be the public face of the operation. John MacDonald of Glenaladale, a senior Clanranald tacksman who was himself discontented with his economic opportunities, became the front man for the emigration operation. He would later write: "The situation I saw many of many friends whom I loved, like to fall into, & which their children could not avoid, unless some other Path was struck out for them made me wish for a feasible Part of the World, which has fallen to our share, along with them." Although publicly responsible for this venture to the New World, MacDonald had great assistance from the church.³²

MacDonald sent his brother Donald to America in the summer of 1770 to report on the land, while Bishop Hay, working for MacDonald, started negotiations with Lord Advocate Montgomery for a parcel of land on the Island of St. John. Montgomery refused to sponsor the emigration, but he sold one of the finest tracts of land to MacDonald for very fair price. After acquiring his land MacDonald became involved in his own plan which transcended the poor people of Uist. He sent Donald back to St. John Island in 1771 with a small group of settlers on board to prepare the land, and he began the recruitment of emigrants who had a greater economic advantage from the coast and tried to disassociate himself from the Church's project for the poor.

³² Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 57.

Undeterred by MacDonald's lack of care for the poor, Bishop Hay pressed on, and with help from the Catholic bishop of London, he raised enough money by the end of 1771, to meet the preliminary cost of transporting thirty-six Catholic families from South Uist. By March 1772, MacDonald was in Greenock arranging the final details of the venture, which included chartering a vessel and gathering provisions for both the journey and the first year of settlement. The party of 210, including a priest and physician, both MacDonalds and eleven families from South Uist financed by the Catholic Church-left the Highlands aboard the *Alexander*, leaving MacDonald behind to sort out his business affairs.

Once this group emigrated, both Boisdale and Clanranald lowered their rents, extended their leases and granted full religious freedom to their renters. Although this action by the lairds must have pleased the Church whose strategy had undoubtedly worked, a legacy of distrust was bred by their actions and would surface again at the start of the nineteenth century.³³ MacDonald journeyed to Philadelphia in 1773. Amongst rumors of conditions of starvation in his settlement, he arrived in Scotchfort to find that the rumors were grossly exaggerated. His brother Donald had planted seven acres of wheat and had successfully raised potatoes and garden produce. In a letter from Helen MacDonald to her brother John MacDonald, Helen wrote, "Our Cropt is exceeding good, we have not a great deal of it, but I hope it will be sufficient for our own family."³⁴ MacDonald nevertheless commissioned a small ship of Indian corn, rye and

³³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 58.

³⁴ Helen MacDonald to John MacDonald, 2 September 1779, *Tracadie*, "MacDonald Family Letters, 1779-1801," Atlantic Canada Virtual Archives, diplomatic rendition, document no. 2664_31. A photocopy of the privately held original document, accession number 2664, item 31, is available at the Prince Edward Island Public Archives and Records Office, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. http://preserve.lib.unb.ca/wayback/20141205155510/http://atlanticportal.hil.unb.ca/acva/macdonald/en/letters/browse/view.php?id=2664_31&mode=dpl.

molasses to see his people through the winter, sending the bill to the Catholic bishops of Scotland. The Scotchfort experience had its ups and downs. Mice destroyed the crops of the entire island in 1775; and of course, the American Revolution brought upheaval to the area, but by the start of the war, they were well prepared, which was a tribute to MacDonald's supervision and forethought. Prosperity came to the Island a generation later with the establishment of the timber trade.³⁵

Another example of tacksman encouraging emigration occurred in Skye in 1769; this time the emigration came with the encouragement and leadership of the tacksmen, alone. In the 1760s, MacDonald tacksmen were required to pay exorbitant rents. In 1769, Sir Alexander MacDonald's tenants formed a company of sorts and purchased 100,000 acres of land in South Carolina. The tacksmen proposed the emigration as a whole, hoping to take their farm servants with them. The tacksmen of MacLeod's estates in Skye, Harris and Glenelg threatened to do likewise. In the end, only some of MacLeod's tenants emigrated, but all of MacDonald's left; and he was required to bring tenants from other parts of Scotland to take the place of the migrating Highlanders. In 1773, the population of the Isle of Skye was drastically low (around fifteen thousand). The whole number of emigrants from Skye is roughly four thousand. Tacksmen encouraged the emigration of over one-fifth of the population. The destination of the MacDonalds of Skye was Cape Fear Valley of North Carolina, a region already well populated with Highlanders. So numerous were the MacDonalds in Cumberland, North Carolina that the Highlander's involvement in the American Revolutionary battle at the

³⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 61.

Battle of Moore's Creek ended so disastrously for the Scots that the battle became known for generations afterwards as the "Insurrection of Clan MacDonald."³⁶

Another fascinating example of communal migration spurred by the tacksmen, occurred in 1773. Sir William Johnson, the great liaison for the Native Americans in the Mohawk Valley, imported some three hundred Roman Catholics from Glengarry, Glenmoriston, Glenurquhart and Strathglass all in Inverness-shire.³⁷ Johnson was perhaps the regions most successful recruiter of settlers. His reach was vast; his fame was extensive, having contacts in both America and Britain. His skillful entrepreneurship brought settlers to his land for several years. Sometimes he did not have to actively recruit settlers for his land, they simply showed up.³⁸ In May 1773, Johnson recorded a group of Highlanders who "of their own choice, & without any endeavor of mine," came to his land. They had already received "sundry proposals from different gentlemen" and Johnson was careful to not appear too eager for them to settle on his lands. He very clearly informed them that Major Skene's terms for land sales or land rentals at Skenesborough in the North, near Lake Champlain, were better than any of his lands in the surrounding area. Johnson, a man of scruples and caution, "Could not think of engaging with persons who had entered into terms with others." Johnson was a successful business man, and after taking reasonable precaution with the Highland settlers, he pointed out the "neighborhood, market, & quality" of the land, which was at his disposal. The Highlanders quickly hired surveyors to inspect the land

³⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 76.

³⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 81.

³⁸ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 582.

and began the initial clearings for their farms.³⁹ Within a few short months, the Highlanders had happily settled in and were pleased with their new lands.⁴⁰

Johnson had built a private kingdom, where he was the quasi ruler, compelling his tenants, very much as the tacksmen did in the Highlands of Scotland, to have the grain grown on rented land to be ground at Johnson's mill. Johnson's most unique and important link to the Scottish Highlanders in the pre-Revolutionary years emerged in the fall of 1773. In October, he welcomed four Scotsmen named MacDonnell to New York along with their three hundred clansmen.⁴¹ They had first come together in September and boarded the *Pearl* for the New World at Fort William in the southern Scottish Highlands. Their group was composed of Highlanders from all over the eastern and southeastern provinces. The three MacDonnell brothers and their MacDonnell cousin were Roman Catholic from the town of Glengarry. Suffering hardships and oppression from landlords, the MacDonnells decided to abandon their old home and search for a new one. It was probably through Archibald MacDonnell, who was already a merchant in New York City, that contact was established between Johnson and the MacDonnells. With this encouragement the brothers and their followers boarded the *Pearl*, and made the transatlantic trip suffering for six weeks and six days while smallpox swept through the passengers killing twenty-five.⁴²

Once they landed, Allan MacDonnell wrote to Johnson saying that he and his clansmen had "a great desire of settling under your wing." MacDonnell went on to say,

³⁹ William Johnson to John Reid, Johnson Hall, (June 6, 1773), *Johnson Papers, VIII*, 816, [archive.org, https://ia802304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf](https://ia802304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf)

⁴⁰ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 582.

⁴¹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 81.

⁴² Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 582-583.

“You [Johnson] have large estates to make and we some influence over people tho’ at a distance that may be of consequence in subsequent years.”⁴³ The MacDonnell tacksmen were interested in continuing the same relationship with Johnson acting as laird, as he would have in his old home of the Highlands. In a subsequent letter to Johnson, MacDonnell inquired about “the thirteen thousand acres adjoining to Lord Adams Gordon’s.”⁴⁴ They hoped that several of their countrymen would come to the new settlement. Their final request was “that of us calling ourselves gentlemen” should be free, after a few years spent improving their rented land, to move to other areas, and that and when this should happen, Sir Johnson would purchase their plantations “at the Appreseason or estimation of honest men mutually chosen.”⁴⁵ MacDonnell simply wrote: “We should be glad to know of what its Sett in fee Simple or if any advantages of Saw or Griss Mills fish or fowl attend it.”⁴⁶ There were other questions about land asked by MacDonnell. Specifically, about “18,000 acres adjoining to Schoherry” the land appeared to be the cheapest, but MacDonnell was leery knowing “nothing of the soil.”⁴⁷ Hugh Fraser, John Cameron and Alex MacDonnell later wrote that “the people here [Albany]” were most likely Highland immigrants, and quite possibly from The *Pearl* though still in a “fluctuating situation... will adhere to us if Sir William gives the

⁴³ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, (November 14, 1773), *Johnson Papers, VIII*, 915, [archive.org,https://ia902304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf](https://ia902304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf).

⁴⁴ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 916.

⁴⁵ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 917.

⁴⁶ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 916.

⁴⁷ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 916, 82.

encouragement their sobriety & Industry will merit.-The principle [sic] of which is a years Maintenance to each family that will settle upon his estate.”⁴⁸

To a modern reader, the request put forth by MacDonnell might be somewhat backward or medieval, but Johnson understood MacDonnell’s inquiry. Both had no doubt profited from mills on their land; MacDonnell came from a land where the inheritor of land paid the tax on the land, while Johnson was essentially building an empire and settling it with the intention of collecting a fee for its use. The letters and their implications of a dependent tenantry are all somewhat indirect. The relationship MacDonnell attempted to foster between himself and the settlers from the Highlands is difficult to discern.⁴⁹

Two arguments could be made. The first being that there is a strong suggestion to his words-especially where he wrote about people “adhering” to him and his associates if properly encouraged by Johnson. This adherence relays MacDonnell’s desire of being a paternalistic leader in the new land (mimicking his old life in the Highlands). The second is that he was endeavoring to maintain his status as tacksman in a new world where the small farmers could possibly own their own farm.⁵⁰ In either argument MacDonnell is attempting to transfer elements of traditional Highland life to the new socio-economic structure in British North America.

In the course of the next two years British custom officials recorded the departure of four more vessels for New York from Scottish ports, carrying 607 total passengers. How many joined the voyagers of 1773 on properties sold by Johnson is not fully

⁴⁸ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 917.

⁴⁹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 81.

⁵⁰ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 83.

known. Certainly some of them made their way towards their kinsmen from the *Pearl*. The fate of these Highland settlers changed with the onset of the American Revolution in 1776. The Scots, almost all of whom were loyal to the Crown, fell into difficulties when efforts to recruit them to the American cause led to resistance and subsequent imprisonments, reprisals, loss of property and physical flight.⁵¹ Many eventually found new homes again in Glengarry County, Ontario.⁵²

One of the more interesting examples of a tacksman who organized migration and recruited emigrants during the 1770s was led Lord Adam Gordon. The fourth son of the second Duke of Gordon, Lord Adam travelled extensively in the New World through his enlistment in the British Army. During his travels, he visited Sir William Johnson twice and chose a tract of land for himself in the Mohawk Valley. As the younger son of a great Highland landlord, Gordon seemed to be struggling financially, similar to many of his tacksman equals in Scotland.⁵³ Although he enjoyed possession of 750 acres in the Highlands, he clearly needed to make up any deficiency in his financial income from his American speculation endeavors.⁵⁴ It is clear that Gordon never had any intention of emigrating himself, for he regarded the American frontier with aversion. He wrote in his journal, "I passed some Days at Sir William Johnson's, but no consideration should tempt me to lead his life... I know no other man equal to so disagreeable a Duty."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 587.

⁵² Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 81.

⁵³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 83.

⁵⁴ For more on Gordon's financials see *Johnson Papers, VIII*, 194-96, 536 and 706, [archive.org,https://ia902304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf](https://ia902304.us.archive.org/16/items/papersofsirwilli82john/papersofsirwilli82john.pdf).

⁵⁵ Newton D. Mereness ed., *Travels in the American Colonies*, 418, [archive.org, https://archive.org/details/travelsinameric01goog](https://archive.org/details/travelsinameric01goog).

It is uncertain how many emigrants Gordon sent or upon what terms they acquired farms by him. Possibly, they received their lands as Johnson's son did—rent free for five years and afterwards at £6 per hundred acres per year, "or a lesser rent if for lives, he will as opportunity offers do all he can for your advantage."⁵⁶ Gordon was far from a typical Scottish tacksman. His career showed the methods that some younger sons of the Scottish nobility and gentry endeavored to amass a fortune through the promotion of emigration.⁵⁷

The tacksmen emigration parties were unique to Scotland. The four examples of the MacDonalds on the Island of St. John, the MacDonalds in North Carolina, the MacDonnells in New York and Adam Gordon in the Mohawk Valley showed the recurrent migration of tacksmen. As explained in Chapters One and Two the tacksmen were the most disaffected class, having their military culture dissolved, their economic capacity circumvented and their social status demeaned. In the case of MacDonnell in New York an argument can be made that the tacksmen who emigrated were attempting to transfer elements of traditional Highland life to the new socio-economic structure in British North America. During this era, the tacksmen organized emigration parties were the most prevalent.

Types of Emigration 1770-1776— Land Speculators

The fourth type of organizer of emigration was the land speculator. Land speculation in America was not new occupation, but speculation arrived on a new scale in the 1760s and 1770s. Men from all over the Anglo-American world were involved. In

⁵⁶ Allen MacDonnell to William Johnson, 345.

⁵⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 85.

fact, Bernard Bailyn wrote that, "Everyone, it seems, was involved."⁵⁸ Highland gentlemen were no different, and they were regularly showing up in America to inspect frontier lands. In 1773, the ship *Brunswick* arrived in Virginia, bringing Godfrey MacNeil, who intended to find a suitable place to settle a large number of families from the Highland county of Argyll. These Scots would emigrate almost immediately upon the return of MacNeil's return to Scotland.⁵⁹

Daniel MacLeod of Kilmore in 1772 or 1773 attempted to organize a group of emigrants on the Outer Hebridean Island of Lewis. When it came time to leave, MacLeod failed to produce the necessary shipping, and the emigrants turned towards other sponsors. Macleod, familiar with recruitment process from his earlier failed attempt, made contact with the Beekmans near Lake Champlain in New York. The Beekmans were looking for settlers for their carefully planned farming communities; MacLeod felt certain he could produce the desired number of emigrants from Scotland in order to profit grandly. Although MacLeod was not officially of the tacksmen class, he assumed that role by renting the land from the Beekmans and in turn wished to rent it to his emigrants.⁶⁰ After an elaborate deal with the Beekmans and a terrible voyage back, MacLeod returned to Scotland and promptly began working on bringing over a number of emigrant families.⁶¹ After feverish solicitation, he was disappointed to only have twenty-four families committed to emigrating on the *Charming Sally*.

⁵⁸ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 21-23.

⁵⁹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 85.

⁶⁰ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 594.

⁶¹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 85

Unfortunately another MacLeod (Colin) had scoured the countryside for emigrants a few months prior to Daniel MacLeod's return. The *Friendship*, Colin MacLeod's ship, weighed anchor on 2 May and carried one hundred and six passengers, many of which were indentured servants bound for Philadelphia. Another Hebridean, John Wyllie, made off with a party of over four hundred passengers drawn from precisely the two areas that Daniel MacLeod had targeted. Whether it was the superior marketing of the recruitment teams that defeated MacLeod, the relative attractiveness of the terms they offered or the bleakness of Beekmans' remote lands, the *Charming Sally* sailed off to the New World with a scant twenty-four emigrants. None of the twenty-four emigrants made it to Beekmanstown for one reason or another, and Daniel MacLeod would end up in the poor house, never to be heard from again.⁶²

Scotsmen were not the only ones organizing migration to turn a profit in the 1770s. The legendary, John Witherspoon was president of the College of New Jersey, and he instructed President James Madison, Vice President Aaron Burr, forty-nine US Representatives, twenty-eight US Senators, three Supreme Court Justices, one Secretary of State, three Attorney Generals, and two foreign ministers. More than eleven percent of his graduates became college presidents, in eight different American states.⁶³ Witherspoon was himself a Scottish emigrant and imported hundreds of Highlanders into Pictou, Nova Scotia strictly as a business enterprise. Land speculation and British settlement began in Nova Scotia after the expulsion of the Arcadians during the French and Indian War. In the 1760s, New Englanders poured into the province and

⁶² Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 595-596

⁶³ Mailer Gideon. "Anglo-Scottish Union and John Witherspoon's American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2010): 710, doi:10.5309/willmaryquar.67.4.0709.

by July 1765, sixteen townships sprang up. One of these composed of roughly 200,000 acres was known as Pictou or the Philadelphia Plantation on the North coast of present day Prince Edward Island.

Pictou struggled to entice settlers to its shores. In 1767, Richard Stockton, eventual signer of the Declaration of Independence, went to Scotland at the bidding the trustees of the College of New Jersey to urge John Witherspoon to take over the leadership position of the institution. Thus Witherspoon's first American connection brought him into close contact with the Pictou project.

Soon after settling in America, Witherspoon brought three shares in the Philadelphia Company.⁶⁴ John Pagan a Glasgow merchant and customs official, along with his brother William Pagan, corroborated a land deal in Nova Scotia.⁶⁵ Together Witherspoon and the Pagans took over approximately 40,000 acres of the Philadelphia Company's former holdings along the northern shore.⁶⁶ In 1770, they brought a party of Highlanders to New England aboard the *Hector*. Three years later they wanted more.⁶⁷ They appointed recruiting agents in five strategic ports and towns in Scotland: Inveraray, Greenock, Portree, Fort William, Fort Augustus and Inverness. In September 1772, they inserted advertisements in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* and Glasgow newspapers which were reprinted in the Scots Magazine.

The advertisements praised Pictou's fertile land, rich fishing grounds and vast forests. Witherspoon also gave special enticements to any family who would emigrate.

⁶⁴ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 86-87.

⁶⁵ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 610.

⁶⁶ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 391.

⁶⁷ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 87.

Families who agreed to emigrate would receive outright one hundred and fifty acres of land with fifty more available to rent for a very achievable price for each family member. No rent would be due for the first two years, and Witherspoon promised to provide excellent transportation conditions at a low price. Witherspoon specified further how much food they would need to provide for each passenger, promising provisions for twelve weeks, when the journey typically took four. He added that the land was not uninhabited, claiming that twenty families were already settled on Pictou, and a school had been started.⁶⁸ The simplicity of the journey and undertaking was grossly understated. The principal agent of Witherspoon and Pagan was John Ross, whom they sent to Scotland to recruit as many Highland emigrants as possible offering a free passage, a farm and one year's free provisions.⁶⁹

Witherspoon's subcontractor, John Ross, a Highlander from Lochbroom in the Northwest, was contracted to gather emigrants, supervise their settlement and pay the emigrant's quit rent due on the grant of land; in return, Ross would receive half of his associate's forty thousand acres.⁷⁰ In July of 1773, the Pagans resurrected their old transport the *Hector*, which they had used in their first expedition in emigration.⁷¹ Only ten emigrants signed on at Greenock, the rest of the 189 emigrants⁷² came from Ross's Highland province of Ross-shire⁷³ Recent studies of the *Hector* showed that most of the

⁶⁸ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 391-392.

⁶⁹ *The Celtic Magazine, Volume VIII*, "First Highland Emigration to Nova Scotia: Arrival of the Ship Hector," (Inverness: A. & W. MacKenzie, 1883), 141.

⁷⁰ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 393.

⁷¹ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 87.

⁷² George Patterson, *A History of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia*, (Toronto: James Campbell & Son, 1877), 80.

⁷³ Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 393.

passengers came from land managed by the Board of Forfeited Estates, one of the most progressive landlords of the Highlands.⁷⁴

Like the majority of Highland Estates, those administrated by the Board faced major problems in the early 1770s from a series of bad harvests, resulting in reduced cattle herds and requiring the importation of grain to feed both animals and owners. Naturally, the tenants felt that their rents were too high, and several groups requested the Board for a reduction in rent, threatening emigration to North America if their petitions were not met.⁷⁵ As one petition to the “Possessors of that part of the Annexed Estate of Lovat” from 176 tenants said, “that unless we are relieved, we are apprehensive we must follow the same steps which our unhappy neighbors have pointed out to us; of quitting our farms, transporting ourselves and our family’s to new and distant lands to find that Bread which our native country denies us.”⁷⁶ The Board provided meal to prevent starvation, but refused to lower the rent. As a result, many tenants decided to sell their possessions, surrender their leases and sign on with John Ross to pioneer the lands of Nova Scotia. Despite their economic woes, the passengers of the *Hector* were able to raise considerable capital to pay for their voyage to America.⁷⁷

John Ross had done little to curtail his exaggeration of the opportunities in the New World to the passengers of the *Hector*. The Highlanders knew little of the difficulties awaiting them in a wild, untamed frontier. Ross enticed thirty-six families and

⁷⁴ Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 61; For more on the Forfeited Estates see V. Willis ed. Reports on the Annexed Estates.

⁷⁵ Miller, *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estate Papers*, 120-122,

⁷⁶ Miller, *A Selection of Scottish Forfeited Estate Papers*, 121.

⁷⁷ Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 62.

thirty single young men to board the *Hector* to make their way to the Pictou colony. The ship was old,"so rotten that passengers could pick wood out of her side with their fingers," and ran into bad storms off the coast of Newfoundland. Smallpox and dysentery abounded and eighteen children were buried at sea.⁷⁸ Provisions ran low, the oatcakes supplied by the passenger themselves had become moldy and inedible. It was with great relief that Pictou was finally sighted on 15 September 1773. Not surprisingly, the people were not encouraged by the dense primeval wilderness awaiting their unprepared and inexperienced hands upon disembarking.⁷⁹

Hostility rose against John Ross, their recruiter, when the emigrants learned that their allotted lands were three miles inland and not on the coast as they had supposed. Most of the *Hector* passengers refused to take up these allocated lands, and Ross, in return, refused to distribute the promised year's provisions to any who would not settle on Company lots. The Highlanders seized the supplies by force. After enduring harsh winters, inadequate housing and lack of experience, they began to thrive as early as 1774.⁸⁰ They produced 171 bushels of wheat, 13 rye, 56 peas, 36 barley, 100 oats, 340 pounds of flax and 17,000 feet in boards. They possessed thirteen oxen, fifteen young cows, twenty-five sheep and one pig.⁸¹ While the grain crops were likely insufficient for Nova Scotia's harsh winters such a record was quite reasonable for a land which one year before had been covered in dense forest. Within a few years the Pictou people

⁷⁸ *The Celtic Magazine, Volume VIII*, "First Highland Emigration to Nova Scotia: Arrival of the Ship Hector," 141.

⁷⁹ Patterson, *A History of the County of Pictou*, 81.

⁸⁰ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 63-64.

⁸¹ George MacLaren, *The Pictou Book: Stories of Our Past*, (New Glasgow, NS: Hector Publishing Company, 1955), 39.

welcomed their fellow Scots who would come from the Island of St. John after their crops failed.⁸²

Dominating the Highland emigration story in the 1770s was organized migration. The examples witnessed above demonstrate the variety of methods by which Scots were brought to America. They confirm how often the initiative in emigration came from above. Even where an emigrant ship carried no leaders drawn from the upper tiers of the social structure; its cargo of men, women and young ones was likely to be bound together by the traditions formed in the old country. The most common group among the leaders of emigration consisted of the Highland tacksmen, whose fluctuating social and economic status lead them to seek a conservation, yet rather unrealistic solution of their difficulties in America. The attempt by the tacksmen to transfer the clan system to the New World was only one form of enterprise intertwining land speculation and settlement. Highland heritors, gentlemen of every rank and station, younger sons of great landed lairds, as well as tacksmen saw in the colonies an opportunity for preserving the rudiments of the feudal tradition. For the most part, the Highlander's presence was almost as compliant in America as he had been in Scotland. The malleable attitude was perhaps why the Highlander would rally to the Hanoverian cause under the leadership of tacksmen and landlord in both North Carolina and New York during the American Revolutionary War.⁸³

As a reminder, people who could afford to pay their own way to America, like those aboard the *Hector*, were not forced to emigrate; they had sufficient capital to remain in the Highlands if they had wished. During this period, the Highlander chose to

⁸² Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 64

⁸³ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 89.

come to America, of his own free will and usually to improve his economic situation rather than to escape grinding oppression. The truly oppressed Highlander like those from Glenaladale in South Uist, seldom migrated; but when they did seize opportunity, they did not complain about privation in America. In this sense, the theme of this era testifies of an implicit sense of choice, a decision between the promise of America against the abandonment of Scotland. This was an emigration based on Highlanders' rising expectations. The Highlander was less driven out of his native land during the 1770s and more a choice for him leave it.

The emigrants of the *Pearl*, *Falmouth* and *Hector* among others filled in British North America, which would remain loyal to the Crown in 1775. As mentioned above a few Highlanders arrived in smaller parties before the American Revolution was well underway. The total number of Highlanders in the loyal provinces in this early period most likely did not exceed six hundred, representing only about five percent of the estimated exodus of 1770-1775 from the Highland region of Scotland. Nevertheless, Highland emigration to America tended to cluster in those few districts where intrepid Scotsmen had established enclaves for their countrymen. Letters home and word-of-mouth accounts of American success were instruments of advertisement for the American attraction. The Highlander had no intention of abandoning traditions just because he left home. Instead the Highlander purposed to preserve the old ways, which were threatened in Scotland.

This conservative perspective led most prospective emigrants to prefer to join their compatriots in already established settlements rather than striking out in new directions. The Highlander recognized that wilderness land offered the best potential of

risk ambitions. By 1775, the Pictou region of Nova Scotia and the Island of St. John were established as territorial strongholds attractive to Highlanders, and the American Revolution enhanced this position considerably.⁸⁴

Probably the best illustration of the importance of this factor is the consistency with which emigrants from the same district in the Highlands sought the same part in America. The war affected but did not demolish this tendency. Many of the colonies already established in the New World were loyalist subsequently, refugees, a fact which diverted their stream of followers from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia and the banks of the Hudson River.⁸⁵

The post-Culloden period saw monumental change in culture, economy and society, for the land-holding patterns would be forever changed. In the face of this new reality, the idea that American land held the potential to establish their traditional lifestyle gave Highlanders a counterpoint to the domestic upheaval.⁸⁶ Some sold themselves into indentured servitude in order to grasp the liberty of culture deprived of them in the Highlands. While others emigrated to British North America after their Highland regiment was disbanded. With an economy that was unable to support the population already residing within the Highlands, the disbanded Highland regiments created a greater strain on an already precarious economic system. Many regiments would return back to British North America as emigrants instead of soldiers, in light of their dire situation in the Highlands. The most common type of emigrants during this era was organized by the tacksmen.

⁸⁴ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 63, 65.

⁸⁵ Margaret I. Adam, "The Causes of the Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," 76.

⁸⁶ Matthew P. Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire and the Highland Soldier in America*, (Yale University Press: 2015), 163.

The MacDonalds on the Island of St. John, the MacDonalds in North Carolina, the MacDonnells in New York and Adam Gordon in the Mohawk Valley of New York are examples of tacksmen organized emigration. Land speculators were the last type of organized emigration. In each of these four types of organized migration, emigration from the Highlands was much more rational choice for those who could afford it. The coordination and entrepreneurship of the Highlander is evident in each of the examples listed above. The organization of large groups of emigrants and their successful transatlantic voyage to British North America, often achieved despite landlord opposition, demonstrated resourcefulness and skill of high order. Given the initiative demonstrated, it was not surprising that new communities were successfully established across the Atlantic, confirming the resilience and determination of these pioneers.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ T.M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire: 1600-1815*, (London: Penguin Group, 2003), 138-139.

CHAPTER 4: POSTSCRIPT AND CONCLUSION 1776-1783

“The natives of the Highlands and isles of Scotland, have always been remarkable of the strongest attachment to the place of their nativity, and of the highest respect towards their masters and superiors. In this, they were wont to find kind patrons and protectors, and cherishing, indulgent fathers to themselves and families. This endeared to them a soil and climate to which nature has not been liberal of its favors, in so much, that they have ever shewn the utmost aversion to leaving their country, or removing to happier regions, and more indulgent climates. That this is true of the Highlanders in general, will be acknowledged by those who are in the least acquainted with them. The cause, then, that could induce a people of this cast, to forsake their native lands, in such numbers, and make them seek for habitations in countries far different and unknown, must, doubtless, be cogent and powerful.”¹

The first great period of emigration from the Highlands ended in 1776 with the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War. A perceptible pause followed not broken until the Paris Peace Treaty in 1783, which formed the starting point of the next phase in emigration.² The American Revolution had significant implications for the exodus from the Highlands to North America. Most immediately and obviously, the American War ended virtually all emigration from Scotland for the duration of the conflict. Sea travel was already hazardous enough during this era, but with hostilities heightened between mother country and its colony, travel between the two countries was downright perilous. Even if the enemy did not capture a vessel, its passengers were likely to be impressed by their own government.³ Several instances of impressment occurred in the first year of war alone.⁴

Moreover, no one knew what sort of conditions prevailed in wartime North America or what kind of reception awaited the Scottish emigrant. Emigration did not

¹ James Knox and Charles Elliot. *Americanus, Scotus, and Impartial Hand: Informations Concerning the Province of North Carolina: Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland.* (Edinburgh, 1773), 1.

² Margaret I. Adam, "The Causes of the Highland Emigrations of 1783-1803," 73.

³ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 66.

⁴ Stephen F. Gradish, "Wages and Manning: The Navy Act of 1758," *The English Historical Review* 93, no. 366 (1978): 63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/565317>.

cease completely; it just took on another form. The demand for British military manpower in America was considerable; much of the recruiting for the British regiments transpired in the Scottish Highlands, for its inhabitants were renowned as Britain's finest soldiers. The British army thus provided thousands of Highlanders with an assisted passage to America. Those who survived the fighting and chose to remain in the New World received land from the government in what was left of British North America.⁵ Joining the former military men were the recent arrivals to New York and North Carolina who had remained loyal to the Crown and migrated north.⁶

One of the groups that moved was already mentioned. The pre-war emigration of the Roman Catholic MacDonalds (1773), eventually needed to migrate again to Quebec on the North Bank of the St. Lawrence River west of Montreal (lower Canada after 1791). Captain John MacDonnell lead them northwards to upper Canada. The decision of the British to disband and resettle the American Regiments in Canada and Nova Scotia brought many Highlanders to these regions, and the number of Highland officers who were granted substantial American lands provided a group eager to attract settlers to an otherwise useless possession.

By the close of the American Revolution, the Highlander's circumstances had greatly altered. Excluding North Carolina, there were very few recognizable Highland districts left in the newly independent United States. Furthermore, a considerable legacy of hostility remained towards Scots in general and Highlanders specifically,

⁵ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 66.

⁶ Ian Charles Cargill Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 150-183.

because so many of the latter had fought for the British in the brutal guerrilla campaigns of the Carolinas and frontier New York.⁷

Three major centers of Highland culture remained in British North America. These areas were where Gaelic was spoken and traditional values were maintained: the Island of St. John (Prince Edward Island after 1798), the Pictou region of Nova Scotia and the Glengarry area of uppernCanada. These three centers are the destination for most Highland emigrants during the next wave of emigration, which occurred intermittently from the end of the American Revolution till the early 1790s when war with France would again greatly hamper travel in the Atlantic.⁸

In the immediate wake of the Revolutionary War the provinces of British North America were hardly prepared to accommodate or encourage the influx of emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland. Official British policy was hostile to population increases in its colonies based upon emigration from the mother country. The prohibition of British craftsmen and artisans was well publicized by 1784.⁹ In the early 1780s no skilled worker or manufacturer was legally free to emigrate from Great Britain or Ireland and enter any foreign country outside the Crown's dominions for the purpose of carrying on trade. Since the thirteen colonies were no longer part of Great Britain's dominion, emigration to this region was illegal. Textile workers were even prohibited from leaving the British Isles, implying that at least other artisans had the option to travel within the British Empire. Moreover, it was unlawful to entice skilled workers to emigrate to foreign shores. It became illegal to export, to anyplace outside of Britain and Ireland,

⁷ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 66-67.

⁸ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 67-68.

⁹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 70-71.

any glass-making, metal-working, clock-producing, paper manufacturing and textile equipment. The penalties for removing the living instruments of trade, the artisans, were much more severe than the repercussions for exporting the machines they were capable of reproducing on the new shores. Emigrants lost their nationality and property, and recruiters were fined £500 per migrant that was enticed and received twelve months incarceration.¹⁰

Moreover, British North America was in a poor position to attract migrants in the years immediately following the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783. The local governments were bogged down with a series of other problems. The entire decade of the 1780s on the Isle of St. John was spent in bitter contention between the Island's officers and its absentee proprietors over control of the 1767 land grants. Until the close of the decade, when land ownership conflicts were resolved, the Island was not an ideal place for settlement. The governments of Nova Scotia and Quebec, as a result of Loyalist resettlement, clashed so forcibly that the outcome ultimately divided both provinces. Most Highlanders did not regard the American states as a favorable destination; thus the emigration situation in the 1780s was hardly conducive to migration. Despite the unfavorable American stage, serious famines in 1782 and 1783 added more reason for a possible major exodus of the Highland population. These events seemed to threaten a major departure from Britain after the years of closure of the Atlantic migration routes. Many observers dismayed over a 'new craze for emigration.'¹¹

¹⁰ David I. Jeremy, "Damming the Flood: British Government Efforts to Check the Outflow of Technicians and Machinery, 1780-1843." *The Business History Review* 51, no. 1 (1977): 1-2 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3112919>; and Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Papers: 1780-1849 Volume 52, part 7 and 8, (1837)*.

¹¹ Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 71.

Because of the capriciousness of war, the dislocation of shipping during hostilities, and the fluctuations in the Scottish economy, especially in the Highlands, Scottish emigration was not a steady flow in the years before 1815. Instead, it was heavily concentrated in four periods 1770-1775, 1790-1793, 1801-1803, and 1805-1811. All but the last of these periods were times of peace, and the momentum of each wave of emigration was halted by the onset of active warfare, concluding with the War of 1812.¹²

Conclusion

As has been stated above, Highlanders leaving Scotland for British North America had a variety of reasons for emigrating, certainly people leaving at various times from a number of scattered locations would represent exponentially more differences in the variety of reasons for emigrating. Historians could never explain every single individual's reasons for emigrating. Historians can surmise with certainty that after the Battle of Culloden, seemingly everything changed for the Highland Scot. The clan system by which they had relied upon for decades was dismantled. No longer were Highlanders permitted to wear in Highland dress, to speak Gaelic, to play Highland music (bagpipes) and to practice their religion (Catholicism). The abolition of heritable jurisdictions and disarmament of the clans would dismantle the clan system over a few decades. The cultural changes after Culloden caused many Highlanders who were unwilling or unable to abide with this cultural persecution to emigrate.

The repercussions of the Highlanders' defeat at Culloden reverberated for the next several decades to come. Not only was Highland culture decimated, but the economic system would be completely overhauled. With this refashioning of the

¹² Bumsted "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes," 66.

economy, the social structure, which was so intertwined with the economy, would be forever changed. Slowly the changes in land management (surveying of land, improving leases and eliminating run-rig) would spread all over the Highlands. With these newly implemented changes, landlords expected a financial return on their investment. In order to see those monetary gains, landlords made the leases longer, enclosed the land and increased the rent. These three changes were the three main economic push factors from 1770-1783.

All of these changes were concerning land, and land was tied to the social structure.¹³ The tacksmen class was no longer a pivotal element of the Highland economy. In traditional estates where practically all the land was held on lease by the tacksmen, the landlord had little direct power of granting leases to the crofters. To introduce a system of leases generally meant that proprietors must start by dismissing the superfluous tacksmen; that is, they must start by destroying the whole social structure with which they were familiar.¹⁴ The introduction of longer leases, was rooted in increased commercialism of many Highland landlords. Accumulation of capital was replacing the paternalistic patterns (loyalty to kin) and long established traditions.¹⁵

The tacksmen were no longer necessary in the leasing of land, but they also were superfluous because the land was being enclosed. Parcels that at one time had many tenants, were enclosed to one large piece of land more suitable for commercial farming. Having invested in their land, the landlord expected some financial reimbursement, so he would increase the rent due to him by the tacksmen. The

¹³ Every Highland emigrant did not necessarily gain his own lands. Without the finances to purchase land himself, the Highlander became a tenant of another person's land.

¹⁴ Margaret I. Adam, "Eighteenth Century Highland Landlords and the Poverty Problem," 16.

¹⁵ Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 210.

increased rent left the tacksmen a few choices: he could pay the increased price at the cost of his standard of living; he could squeeze more out of his limited tenants; or he could leave. The landlord stood to gain from the abolition of the middleman system in the Highland economy, and most of the landlords were willing to proceed. Without economic funding, the tacksmen were left with a sinking social status. In addition to their diminishing role in society and the economy, the tacksmen's position as the military leader of the clan was dissolved. The military culture of the Highland was banned by the Proscription Act of 1746, thus the tacksmen's role as lieutenant was eradicated. Oppressed from all sides (culturally, society and economy) the tacksmen faced disparaging odds during this era. An alteration in the economy had affected the social status of thousands of Highlanders (the tacksmen specifically)—leaving many with little choice but to migrate to British North America.

This migration was unique to Scotland. Migration of the tacksmen class dominated the first wave (1770-1776) of emigration, that is not to say the tacksmen ceased from influencing emigration; quite the contrary actually, recruitment would continue and expand in most regions of the Highlands. There were other types of emigration as well. John Lawson and Sir James Montgomery are examples of a Highlander traveling as an indentured servant or as an organizer of indentured servants, respectively. In addition to indentured servants, retired soldiers were organizers of emigrants. Upon their return from the Seven Years War (1763), many Highland regiments were disbanded. With the disintegration of the Highland military culture after Culloden, the increase in population (because of the cultivation of the potato, the returning soldiers and immunization against small pox), and the familiarity with British

North America having spent years fighting for the British, many Highland officers emigrated to North America. Some officers took their families and even the enlisted men of their regiment. Fraser's Highlanders, Montgomery's Highlanders and the Black Watch are just three examples of these retired military migrating to North America. Land speculators such as Daniel MacLeod and John Witherspoon were also instrumental in organizing emigration from the Highlands. However during the first wave of emigration (1770-1776), no other class influenced the migration of Highlanders like the tacksmen did.¹⁶

This thesis took a brief snapshot of a very large and complex picture. The reasons for emigration varied incredibly in this short time period, and by lengthening the time period one would undoubtedly increase the reasons for emigration.

Regardless of the many who left their homes and bravely travelled to a land unknown, unfamiliar and unexplored, more were left behind. Encouragement to follow their courageous lead came back to the Highlands in the form of letters. Such accounts made for good listening around the fires on a cold winter's evening, and they simultaneously recorded the progress that had been made in British North America while expounding upon the difficulties of starting over in a foreign land.

Despite the myths surrounding emigration, these early Highlanders deserve to be remembered as much for their intrepidity and foresight as for their tribulations in the New World. Seeking most of all to be left alone to continue in their old pastoral traditions, the early Highland emigrants were not so much innocent victims of landlord

¹⁶ Land speculators would become more impactful after 1815 with Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk and Hugh Dunoon. For more on recruitment of Highlanders see George E. Carter, "Lord Selkirk and the Red River Colony," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 18, no. 1 (1968): 60-69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4517222>.

barbarism, but rather conscious actors, makers and masters of their own destiny
choosing new life in a new world.

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