EARLY HISTORY OF THE SCOTS IRISH
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WHAT DOES THE TERM SCOTS-IRISH REFER TO?
The term Scots-Irish is an American term used to identify the protestant Scots who were mainly Presbyterians moved from the Scotland Border area with England to Northern Ireland. England and Ireland used the term Ulster Scots to identify the Scots-Irish. Both of these terms refer to the Lowland Scots [poor], Border Scots and English living on the border. [The southern border of Scotland joins the northern border of England] As a result this area included both Lowland Scots and English people and both groups migrated to Northern Ireland. Most of the ancestors of immigrants coming to America are referred to as Scots-Irish and were from the Lowland area of Scotland.

WHERE IS ULSTER, IRELAND?

Ulster is a province on the north end of the island of Ireland. It is made up of nine counties, six of which are in Northern Ireland and three of which are in the Republic of Ireland.

BORDER AREA

This is about a group of immigrants from the north of Ireland in the 18th century [1700] who came to be known as the Scots-Irish, which is completely an American term and very misleading since very few of the people in this migration had any Irish blood at all only Scottish blood. Over a period of several centuries there was constant war between England and Scotland. The battles took place in the border areas of Scotland and England which was a war zone. This made their lives quite different than anywhere else in the British Isles. They had more in common with each other than Scotland or England. The men were very warrior like and often away at battle. They lived with constant economic oppression because soldiers trampled their crops, rustlers stole their livestock, taxes were high and wages very low. The border kept changing resulting in both countries claiming the border area. Eventually many of these people moved to Northern Ireland during the "Great Plantation Period" of the 17th century settling in the province of Ulster.

KING JAMES THE FIRST

When King James First of England [who was the Scottish King James VI and son of Mary, Queen of Scots] came to the throne in 1603, the border was finally pacified. Whole families from the border area were sent to Ireland by King James First with the hopes they would settle down to farming and be peaceful.

Movement across the Irish Sea between Scotland and Ireland had occurred for hundreds of years. The historical Scottish-Irish migration unfolded in the early seventeenth century when Britain's King James First encouraged his Scottish subjects to migrate across the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland. The forces motivating this migration were mixed: [1] Desire of James First [Presbyterian} to control and convert the Irish Catholics in Ireland by planting loyal protestants among the Catholics [2] economic hard times in Scotland [3] and the promise of a better life in Ireland. Throughout the seventeenth century, Lowland Scots along with a smaller number of

English from the Border region of Scotland and England settled in the northeast [Ulster] region of Ireland where they became known as Ulster-Scots [Later called Scotch-Irish or Scots-Irish in America].

One consequence of this movement of people into Ireland was conflict between the established Irish forced from their land by King James and the incoming Scots and English from Southern Scotland Northern England border dwellers. By the end of the seventeenth century [later 1600's] many of them were desperate enough to emigrate once again.

Between the 1680's and 1815, at least 100,000 Ulster Scots embarked on a new migration, this time across the Atlantic to North America. They were pushed out of Ulster: [1] discrimination by the Anglican Church of Ireland against their Presbyterian religion [2] by a depression in the linen trade that provided income to many of them [3] and by a steep increase in land rents [rack renting] driven by an explosion of population. By the 1680's trade between America and Irish ports had expanded, driven by the importation of American flaxseed so crucial to the Ulster linen industry. As more ships unloaded their cargoes in Ulster ports, their crews brought glowing reports of the wonders of America.

Although Scots-Irish immigrants arrived all along America's Atlantic coast, the major flow of new comers landed in Pennsylvania. That sea route was driven by the important trade that linked the port of Philadelphia with Ulster Ports. After unloading their American cargoes in Ulster, ship captains filled their vessels with emigrants for the return trip. As more and more Ulster people traveled to America, encouraging tales of its widespread opportunities flowed back to Ulster.

Most Scots-Irish emigrants to America traveled in family groups. Upon arrival in Philadelphia, some were forced to accept indentured servitude to pay off their travel costs. But once their indenture ended, typically after seven years, they were free to pursue their own fortunes. Land in America was cheap and abundant. For decades most immigrants could take up enough land to support a family through farming. The earliest arrivals filled the fertile soils of southeastern Pennsylvania. But as the flow continued, latecomers had to seek land claims further inland. The mountainous geography of Pennsylvania's western interior, combined with its hostile Indian inhabitants, encouraged many of them to turn southwestward instead, into Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. That region of mild climate and fertile soils drew a steady influx of settlers from the 1720's on. Once Virginia's Shenandoah Valley filled with settlers [around 1780] the settlers pushed on to North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

An ancestor from Ireland can often be identified as Scots-Irish from [1] Presbyterian religion [2] given names in the family [3] family traditions [4] association with other Scots-Irish.[1]