



ULSTER-SCOTS HERITAGE ON THE LANDSCAPE



The Plantation of Ulster

In order to understand who the Ulster-Scots are and the effect they have had on the landscape it is necessary to trace their arrival in Ulster.

There have always been close ties between south-west Scotland and north-east Ireland, after all, at their closest point they are only some 12-15 miles apart. The Early Mesolithic peoples about 100,000 years ago travelled to Ireland by this route.

In the 13th century Scots mercenary soldiers came to Ireland to support the Irish chieftains. When their work was done many stayed on, married and became part of the local community. But it is mainly to the 17th century that we look for the arrival of the Ulster-Scots. The English, under the Tudor monarchy, had conquered Ireland in the 16th century. They knew that after their military victories they still had to subdue the inhabitants: they wanted to 'civilize' Ireland and this meant houses, gardens and highways.

English Fears

The English were always fearful of an Irish uprising. Although the defeat of Lord Mountjoy in 1602 and the signing of the Treaty of Mellifont in 1603 seemed to offer a peaceful future, the English knew that Catholic Spain could quickly and easily supply the native Irish with arms to fight again. They therefore decided that a way of countering this was to 'plant' new areas with loyal Protestant inhabitants. To protect the new settlers from the Irish these new Plantation towns would be fortified.

In 1603 Queen Elizabeth died and her cousin, King James, the King of Scotland, became king of England too. Both he and his Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester (pictured), believed that new plantations were the best way of bringing peace to Ireland.



In 1609 the English mapped out 4,000,000 acres of land and the next year started distributing it. Counties Down, Monaghan and Antrim were planted privately. Derry and Armagh were planted with English settlers and Donegal and Tyrone were planted with Scots. Counties Fermanagh and Cavan were planted with both Scots and English.

Why go to Ulster?

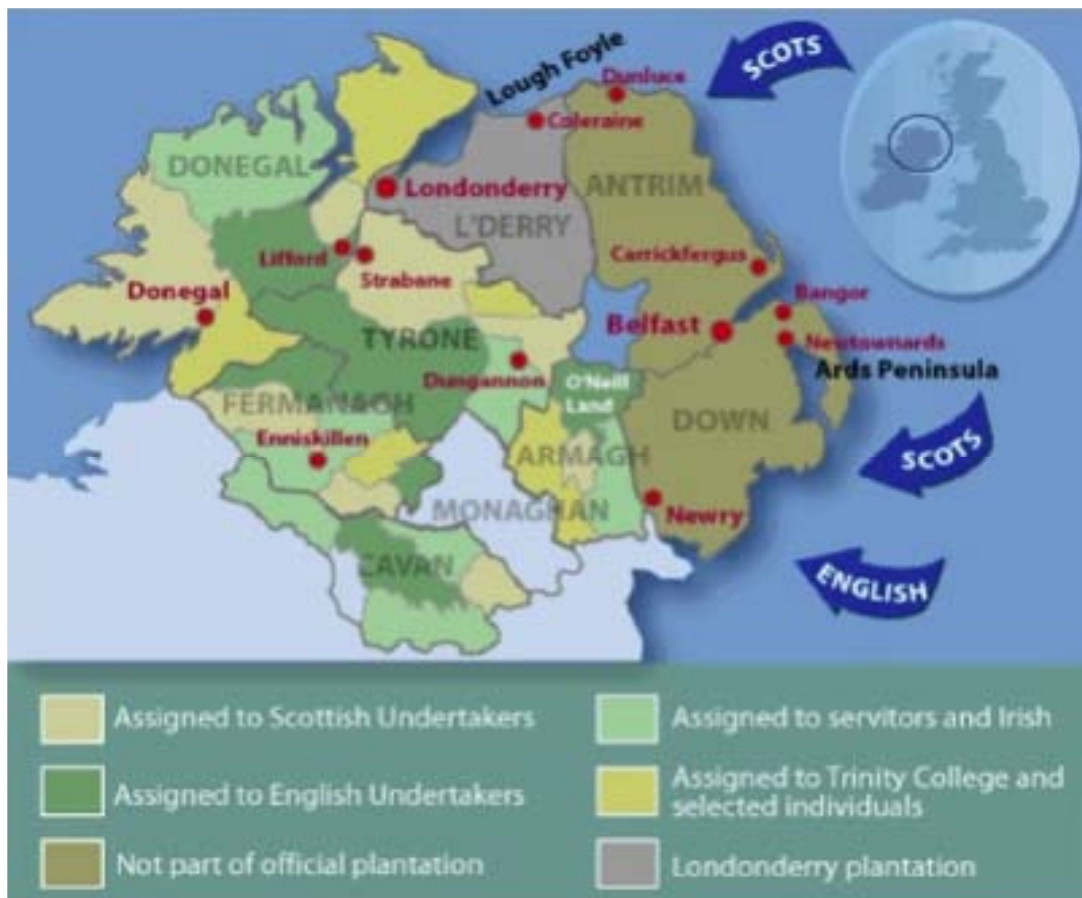
People came from Scotland to Ulster in large numbers throughout the seventeenth century. In particular, they settled in Antrim and Down. These counties are a distinct region within Ulster, and were not included within the official Plantation. They were wooded and hilly, and parts of them could be very hard to reach when bad weather made the roads impassable, or the rocky coasts dangerous for ships. A letter from Dublin, where the government of Ireland was centred, could take as long as twelve days to arrive in this area.

What made Antrim and Down so attractive to Scottish settlers? On the next page you will find 8 reasons. Read them carefully and try to memorize them. Then fill in the reasons below. See how many you can remember.

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1. They were close. The map shows how narrow the North Channel between Scotland and East Ulster is—only 12 miles across. Long before the Plantation, in the 15th century, the MacDonnells, a Catholic family of Scots, settled in the North Antrim Glens area.
2. Land was cheap and resources such as timber and fish were valuable. People made the short journey hoping to become rich and to rise in importance as landowners.
3. Migrants who already owned land in Scotland often took their own tenants across the Channel with them, to ensure they would have labour available to work on their new lands.
4. For a long time there were no checks on migrants. Criminals wishing to escape justice could slip across the Channel with property they had stolen, or with debts still owing.
5. The population in south-west Scotland grew quickly in the first half of the 17th century. This put a strain on local resources and the availability of land, forcing up food prices and rents.
6. The Anglican church began to enforce the payment of tithes in Scotland (10% of income, often demanded in cash), where the population was largely Presbyterian.
7. The Scottish Borders and Islands had been very independent and often rebellious regions, but royal authority, based in London became more effectively enforced. Rebels sometimes moved to Ulster to escape execution.
8. Between 1660 and 1690 it is estimated that 30,000 Scottish Covenanters, devout Presbyterians, emigrated to Ulster to escape religious persecution.



As it turned out, the largest group in the new settlers was the Scots and they brought with them their religion. Presbyterianism was different from both the Roman Catholicism of the Irish and the Anglican (Church of Ireland) form of Protestantism of the English lords. They also brought with them new farming methods and a Puritan outlook and lifestyle.

All these differences made these Ulster-Scots stand out as different. Over time it would make the north-east part of the island culturally very different from the rest of Ireland.

At the beginning the native Ulstermen often attacked the new settlers and burned their crops. As a result, some were shipped off to the continent. However many native Irish stayed and worked for the settlers. The Ulster Plantation became the most successful plantation to date.

Plantation Organisation

Surveyors set aside lands in each county for towns. There were to be free schools in each county and also a new University of Dublin. Land was to be divided up into estates— of either 1000, 1500 or 2000 acres each. These lands were to be rented out to three different kinds of tenants:

- The Undertakers
- The Servitors
- The Gaels

The Undertakers

The Undertakers were English or Scottish gentlemen. They would agree to bring to Ireland English or Scottish tenants who would farm the land and also agree to bear arms to protect it. No Undertaker was allowed to have Gaelic tenants.

The land given to the Undertakers was banded together. This was both for protection and also to help bring 'civilization' to the area.

The Servitors

The Servitors were government officials who were already working in Ireland. Many of them were army officers. They were allowed to take Gaelic tenants.

The Gaels

The final pieces of land were to go to the dispossessed Irish clans—but only to those the English felt they could trust. These men were to be moved from their own old lands unto new estates near Servitors whose duty it was to control them.

Bawns

Each new landowner—whether an Undertaker, a Servitor or a Gael—had to agree to build a walled enclosure around his land. This was known as a 'bawn'. The idea of the bawn was to offer protection from attack by Gaelic clansmen.

Have you ever heard of a bawn?



Model of a bawn

Perhaps the most famous one in Ulster today is Bellaghy Bawn, associated with the Nobel Prize-winning poet, Seamus Heaney. It is in County Londonderry.

The word 'bawn' comes from two Gaelic words—'Ba' which is Irish for cow and 'Dhun' which means fort. The anglicised version 'bawn' was used to describe the type of fortified courtyard, usually built of stone, which could be easily defended by the Plantation settlers.

Bellaghy Bawn

This bawn was built around 1614 to protect the lands granted to the Vinters Company of London. It was built as a square with a brick tower situated in one corner. Unfortunately the original bawn was burnt down during the 1641 rebellion but was rebuilt in 1643 and the entire bawn has been reconstructed so that today it is used as a cultural centre with a library dedicated to Seamus Heaney.



Bellaghy Bawn today



Work in groups of 5 or 6.

Imagine you are all living in Ayrshire, south-west Scotland in the year 1606. One (or more) of you is considering migrating to Ulster. Perhaps others in the group could imagine they have family or friends already there.

In your group talk about:

- Your different reasons for wanting to migrate
- What you have heard about Ulster, both positive and negative
- Your hopes and fears about emigration
- The decision you finally reach about moving to Ulster

Be prepared to perform your role play for the class.

BRINGING IT UP-TO-DATE

The Scots came to Ulster and settled the land. They hadn't come very far in distance but it was still something new for them and they had to adjust to a new way of life.

Role play a situation in modern Ulster where a foreign immigrant is trying to adjust to a new life in Ulster. Your scene could be:

- In a shop
- In school
- In the street

Perhaps you could use a freeze frame technique to explore how all the various characters are feeling about the situation.

Plantations



The most successful “plantations” were not those directly organised by the English government at all, but two settlements undertaken privately. If you look at the map on page 3 you will see that counties Antrim and Down were not part of the ‘official’ plantation. In fact by the time of the organised government plantation, successful settlements were already flourishing in Antrim and Down.

These two areas were settled by two Scottish adventurers named James Hamilton and Hugh Montgomery. Both men came from Ayrshire in the Lowlands of Scotland. They were born within a year of each other-Hamilton in 1559 and Montgomery a year later-and brought up just five miles apart.

Hamilton was the eldest son of a minister, Rev. Hans Hamilton who was one of the founders of Trinity College, Dublin, while Montgomery was the son of the Laird of Braidstane. Montgomery’s family was one of the most powerful in Scotland and Hugh was a fighting man having served in a Scottish regiment in Holland against the Spanish.



You can read all about these men and their settlements at:

www.hamiltonmontgomery1606.com



Find the Answers

Find the answers to these questions about the Hamilton and Montgomery settlements on the website at

www.hamiltonmontgomery1606.com

All your answers should be in paragraphs.

1. Why were Hamilton and Montgomery interested in coming to Ulster?
2. How did Con O'Neill's imprisonment in Carrickfergus Castle play a part in Hamilton and Montgomery's settlement?
3. What was the main sea crossing used by the settlers?
4. Where did the two men live in Ulster?
5. How did these two settlements have a worldwide effect?

BRINGING SCOTS TO ULSTER

The settlers came speaking not English but Lowland Scots.

To show you what it was like, here is an extract from a poem by Hugh Montgomery's uncle:

*Quhy wes my mother blyth when I wes borne?
Quhy heght the weirds my weilfair to advance ?
Quhy wes my birth on Eister day at morne ?
Quhy did Apollo then appeir to dance ?
Quhy gave he me good morrow with a glance ?
Quhy leugh he in his golden chair and lap,
Since that the hevins are hinderers of my hap ?”*

**The Montgomery Manuscripts p400*

Life for Scottish Migrants in Antrim and Down

How did the arrival of the Scots affect the landscape ?

Before the Plantation livestock, mainly cattle, were the most important part of farming. Corn was grown in some areas, including north Antrim. The population was low and the workforce small, so where land was wooded or boggy, little was done to make it suitable for farming. Irish houses, apart from the great castles and monasteries, were fairly simple, with poor chimney systems.

The Plantation settlers changed the landscape in a number of ways:

- Forests were cleared and exported as timber for barrels.
- Wood was also used for building new homes, although stone was still used when available. The Scots liked the castellated tower house style.
- Farmers began enclosing the land around their homes, giving the fields a patchwork appearance, where there had once been open countryside.
- New breeds of cattle and sheep were introduced from Scotland and England.
- More corn was grown.
- Industries began to develop in the countryside, eg. tanning and linen making.
- Towns were built with central squares and long straight streets.



County Down from the air—see the patchwork effect

Map illustrating farming practices in 17th century Coleraine.



Task



Changing times:

Imagine you are an old man or woman who belongs to an Irish family that lived in County Antrim before the Plantation. You have watched the settlers arrive and observed all the changes they have made over many years.

Write an entry for your journal describing how life and the landscape have changed. Include some of your thoughts and feelings about the changes.

The obvious change which the plantation introduced and one which we can see clear evidence of to this day was the establishment of towns. In 1603 there were only two towns in the province of Ulster-Carrickfergus and Newry.

The first new towns were established in Antrim and Down. To build houses skilled craftsmen are needed. So carpenters, stonemasons and smiths arrived among the settlers. The three most important new towns were Belfast, Newtownards and Bangor. In all, land was set aside to build 23 towns including Londonderry, Cavan, Enniskillen, Omagh, Dungannon and Armagh.

Town Planning

It might seem that the idea of town planning is something quite modern but this is not so. The Plantation settlers planned their new towns in quite a different way to the older Irish cities so that it is still possible today to see the characteristics of a plantation town.

What would a plantation town look like?

Well, first of all it would usually have a central square where the main public buildings would be situated. This could include a town hall, a courthouse, perhaps a jail and also a church.

Radiating from this central square the streets would run in a grid pattern. Plantation streets were wide and straight.

The houses usually faced unto the street and each would have a long back garden. They were usually two-storey and would be built of stone or timber with a slate (or sometimes a thatched) roof.

In some of the towns the streets were paved with cobblestones. To protect them from attack they would have stone walls around the town or ramparts made of piledup earthworks.



Greyabbey

Plantation Towns

Let's look at Plantation Towns

Characteristic 1

A central square:



The town square in Newtownards (above) and Comber (below)



Plantation Towns

Let's look at Plantation Towns

Characteristic 2

Principal buildings around the square



Newtownards



Comber

Plantation Towns

Let's look at Plantation Towns

Characteristic 3

Broad, straight streets

Two views of a street in
Newtownards



Town Planning

A new town is going to be created near you.

You are on the planning sub-committee of the local council.

Your committee's responsibility is to ensure that the town is well designed with all necessary amenities for the new inhabitants.

Within the set time you must produce:

- An aerial map of the layout of the town with all public buildings marked
- A written report for the government who is funding the development which explains your decisions

OR

- An oral presentation (which may include the use of PowerPoint or other AV resources) for the government minister in which all members of the council planning subcommittee should take part

