

The American connection

UNIT 1

ON EAGLE WING



PUPIL WORKBOOK

In this unit you will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about the earliest emigrant passenger ship to leave Ulster
- Write a script for a radio play
- Research using the Internet
- Listen to a song from the show “On Eagle’s Wing” and have the chance to write your own song
- Discover some information about the Eagle Wing Festival in Groomsport, County Down
- Work in a group to plan your own Ulster/America festival or celebration
- Plan a visit by American students to Northern Ireland
- Design/storyboard a TV or radio advertisement/a poster
- Take part in a role play
- Reflect on your own work and how to improve it



First choose how you will find out what you need to know about what happened to the Eagle Wing and its passengers.

choose one of these 	Read the story yourself or with your teacher or in a group 	Listen to the tape of the story 	Using the Internet research the story of the 'Eagle Wing' 

Now choose which task you would like to complete to show you have understood the information and can organise and use it appropriately.

choose one of these 	either Answer the 'Reading for Understanding' worksheet or Prepare a cartoon storyboard of what happened for a wall display 	either Answer the 'Listening Comprehension' questions or Retell the story to your partner 	either Complete the sequencing exercise or Do a role play of the story with your group 



On Eagle Wing

The first passenger ship to leave Ulster and head for North America was the Eagle Wing. The Eagle Wing left Groomsport bound for Boston on 9th September 1636 with 140 Presbyterians- four ministers (clergy) and 136 laity - from congregations in counties Down and Antrim on board seeking a new life in the New World. This was just 16 years after the Plymouth fathers sailed in the Mayflower to settle in Pennsylvania.

Groomsport had a thriving Presbyterian congregation who, because of persecution, did not have the opportunity to practise their beliefs freely. The son of the Governor of Massachusetts had invited them to come to the New World where they would have the freedom to worship as they wished and would not be persecuted for being non-conformists. Two ministers—Robert Blair and John Livingstone— commissioned the building of a ship which would be able to transport them and their congregations to America. The result was the Eagle Wing which was built in Groomsport with wood taken from the Dufferin Estates. The name, which was a popular one for ships at this time, is from a Bible verse: *'Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.'* (Exodus chapter 19, verse 4)

The total cost of construction would probably have been in the region of £1000. Records show that the ship had a carrying capacity (burden) of 150 tons and was rigged with fore and main masts, a mizzen at the stern and a bowsprit. The sails would have been made of hand-sewn flax canvas and the rigging (probably about 8 tons of it!) would have consisted of around 350 hemp ropes. There would probably have been a crew of between 20 and 35 men.

When all was ready the ship set out on 9th September 1636. This was too late in the year to sail around the southern coast of Ireland so instead they sailed towards the north. Blair records: *"When we had passed the back of Ireland and had entered the great ocean, O what mountains, not waves of sea did we meet. The swellings of the sea did rise higher than any mountains we had seen on earth, so that in the mid-day they hid the sun from our sight."*

On Eagle Wing

When the ship reached midway across the Atlantic it was caught up in a bad storm. *“Heavy rain did break our rudder, much of our gallon-head and fore-cross-trees, tore our foresail, five or six of our champlets and a great beam under the gunner-room door broke. Seas came in and wet all them that were between decks”* wrote Reverend John Livingstone.

Although the passengers had completed almost 800 miles, about two thirds of their journey to America—something that they may not have realised— they decided to turn back rather than go on. One of the Presbyterian ministers on board – the Reverend John Livingstone – said that it was God’s will that they should return. The ship’s captain agreed with him so the ship was turned around and they headed back for Ireland.

Perhaps it was just as well that they decided to turn back for reports say that when the Eagle Wing reached Carrickfergus Bay on the 3rd November 1636 the ship’s sails were ripped into shreds, the mainsail was in ribbons and the rudder had been badly damaged. Blair’s young son, William, died on the night they returned.

Although the Eagle Wing never reached its destination and returned home to Ulster after two months at sea, it could be said to be the spark that lit



the flame of emigration which was to be fanned into life over the next two centuries. Friends Goodwill sailed from Larne in 1727 and became the first recorded vessel from Ulster to reach North America heralding a beginning to the connection with America.

Eagle Wing Comprehension

Reading for Understanding

1. From which port in Ulster did the ship the Eagle Wing set sail?
2. Who invited the group to go to America?
3. Why did they want to leave Ulster?
4. How many in total were on the ship?
5. Of what were the sails of the ship made?
6. On what date did the ship set sail?
7. Why did the ship sail north?
8. In your own words, explain what happened to the Eagle Wing and its passengers.
9. Which port in Ulster did the ship return to?
10. Why was the homecoming sad for the Rev Robert Blair?

Work It out

What does the word 'commission' mean?

Work It out

Work out, from the information in the passage, approximately how far the journey from Ulster to America was. Explain how you reached your answer.

Further Research

The name 'Eagle Wing' was a very popular one for ships. In the passage you can find the bible reference.

Why not look at the story and find out why people would have been glad to use this name.



On Eagle Wing: Listening comprehension

- Listen carefully to the story of the Eagle Wing ship and its passengers
- You will have the opportunity to hear the story twice
- When the story ends answer these questions



Questions

- 1 In which year did the Eagle Wing leave Ulster?
- 2 She sailed from Groomsport bound for which American port?
- 3 Who had invited the Presbyterians to come to America?
- 4 The Reverend Robert Blair was one of the leaders. Who was the other?
- 5 Where did they probably get the wood to build the ship?
- 6 Where did they get the name for the ship?
- 7 What would have been used to make the sails?
- 8 Why did they have to sail northwards when they left Groomsport?
- 9 About how far had the ship sailed before it turned back?
- 10 Where did they land in Ulster when they came back?
- 11 How long had they been at sea?
- 12 What was the name of the first recorded ship to reach America from Ulster?

Eagle Wing cloze

Having read or heard the story of the ship The Eagle Wing and its passengers, fill in the blanks in the following passage:



The Eagle Wing was the first passenger ship to

leave Ulster for North America. It set sail from _____

on the 9th September _____. They were sailing to _____.

The two men who led the journey were _____

and _____. They were both _____

Ministers.

Because they set out _____

they had to sail northwards. Soon they were hit by a _____.

Although they had travelled almost _____ they turned back.

They reached _____ on

_____ 1636 with their sails ripped to pieces.

Sequencing Exercise

Below you will find statements about the Eagle Wing. They are all jumbled up. Cut out the sentences and then rearrange them to tell the story in the correct order as it happened.



✂ The ship was tossed about in a violent storm.

✂ Blair's son, William died.

✂ The son of the Governor of Boston invited Presbyterians from Ulster to come to settle in America.

✂ 140 members of the ministers' congregations embarked on the ship.

✂ They returned to Carrickfergus Bay.

✂ Robert Blair and John Livingstone commissioned a ship to take their congregations to America.

✂ Eagle Wing set sail late in the year.

✂ They named the ship after a Bible verse which was a very popular thing to do at that time.

✂ They travelled about 800 miles.

On Board Eagle Wing



We do not know exactly what the Eagle Wing was like but we can have a good idea from looking at other ships of the same size built at this time. We can also research records which show that it had a carrying capacity of 150 tons and we do have details about the rigging on the ship which also helps us to work out its size.

Researchers estimate that Eagle Wing was:

Length	70 feet	21.4 metres
Breadth	21 feet	6.4 metres
Depth	10 feet	3 metres



Perhaps you could measure out this size in your assembly hall or gym.

Think about what it would have been like on board the Eagle Wing. Remember these dimensions were the overall ship not the interior which would have been even smaller!

Conditions would have been difficult because:

- There was no heat
- There was no water for washing
- There were buckets for toilets
- The deck leaked soaking the passengers
- Drinking water was strictly rationed
- Food was mostly biscuits and salted beef and pork
- There were cooking facilities for the passengers to make their own meals
- The ship's crossbeams were 5 feet above the floor
- The ship's hold carried food for 2 years on land
- The deck was cluttered with livestock pens



Read or listen to the details of the story of Eagle Wing and those who sailed in her.

Imagine that you have been commissioned to write a radio play about this adventure.

Write a script for the section of the play when the captain and passengers decide to turn back.

Your scene should last about 2 minutes.

THINK ABOUT.....

You will need to think about why they make this decision and also who would take it.

Consider which characters should be in your scene and how they would speak. You should also consider what sound effects you will need.

NOW...

Write your script. If you need help to set it out ask your teacher for the 'How to set out a drama script' helpsheet.

Finally

Why not get together in groups and record your scene? Then each group can play back their scene for the whole class to hear and you can compare how you have interpreted the story.





The musical “On Eagle’s Wing” had its world premiere in Belfast in May 2004. It tells the story of the Ulster-Scots or Scots-Irish. Your task is to find out more about the show.

Below are web addresses for some sites to help you.

Find the answers to the following questions:

- 1 Who wrote and composed “On Eagle’s Wing”?
- 2 Name an instrument you would expect to see and hear in the show.
- 3 How many American presidents does the show claim came from Scots-Irish backgrounds?
- 4 The show claims to an “epic tale of emigration, separation, love and loyalty”. What does the word epic mean?
- 5 Name one of the two main singers at the world premiere.
- 6 Where in Belfast did the world premiere take place?
- 7 Name 1 of the songs from the show.
- 8 What does the word ‘piobaireachd’ mean?
- 9 When did the first pipe band competition take place?
- 10 Name a famous Ulster bagpiper.



WEBSITES TO HELP YOU

www.oneagleswingshow.com
[www.ulsterscotsagency.com/
pipesandbands.asp](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/pipesandbands.asp)
www.network-irl-tv.com



VOCABULARY WORK

PREMIERE
EPIC
ORATORIO



Songs From The Show



Listen to the song Shenandoah which was featured in the show “On Eagle’s Wing”. This is a traditional song which was arranged for this show.

Here are the words:

*Sail away, sail on out
Cross the wide Missouri*

*O Shenandoah I long to see you
Far away you rollin' river
O Shenandoah I long to see you
Away I'm bound away 'cross the
wide Missouri*

*Sail away, sail on out
'Cross the wide Missouri
O Shenandoah I am a rover
Far away you rollin' river
A-searchin' for the greenest clover
Away I'm bound away 'cross the
wide Missouri*

*So it's fare thee well, my love
I'm bound to leave you
Far away you rollin' river
But Shenandoah I'll ne'er deceive
you
Tho' away I'm bound away 'cross
the wide Missouri*

*O Shenandoah I love your waters
Far away you rollin' river
O Shenandoah I long to see you
Away I'm bound away
'Cross the wide Missouri*

*Sail away, sail on out
'Cross the wide Missouri*

Task

This song tells of a particular area which is very important to the songwriter. He is now having to go away and he is thinking sadly about leaving

The passengers on Eagle Wing left their native land and headed to America. They probably had people and places they were leaving behind which they thought they would never see again. Imagine you are leaving home. Write a song or a piece of music about a place which means a lot to you.

How It All Started.....

One of the ways Groomsport Presbyterian Church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1991 was with *The Pageant of Groomsport* held in the Walter Nelson Hall in the village. Seventy-eight villagers of all ages participated. One of the scenes enacted during the pageant told of the heroic voyage of the Eagle Wing and its passengers.

Inspired by the story, North Down Borough Council, Groomsport Village Association and the Community relations Unit organised the first Eagle Wing Festival in 1994. This was such a huge success that it has now become an annual event attracting visitors from all over the island and further away.

The aim of the Eagle Wing Festival is to celebrate our cultural links with America. This is accomplished through music, dance, talks and displays with the emphasis on education, entertainment and fun for all.



CELEBRATING OUR CULTURAL LINKS WITH AMERICA1636 AND ALL THAT

The Mayflower had landed in America in 1620. Sixteen years later the Eagle Wing set sail from Groomsport. You know the rest of the story—they didn't quite make it and ended up back here a few months later with unsteady legs and huge relief.

What was it like on board Eagle Wing?

Probably cold, damp and cramped. There were 140 people on board in a space not much larger than a double-decker bus. Ships' crews at the time referred to the passengers as puke stockings on account of their ability to spatter the latter with the former.

The ship is thought to have finally sunk at Strangford Bar in 1715.

What was Groomsport like at the time?

In 1616 (the year that Shakespeare died), Groomsport was considered a good place for fishing and for seafaring men. The fishermen obviously didn't limit their entrepreneurial activities to fishing alone as a customs man was appointed in 1620 due to high levels of smuggling.

The Raven Map dated 1625 in Bangor Heritage Centre shows Groomsport as having a pier, fishing boats in the harbour, two streets, a settlement of just under 30 houses and a rabbit warren. The earliest recorded Market Charter for Groomsport was granted in 1626. In the mid-1600s, Groomsport became the main coastal terminal for the postal service in Ireland. The mail left Dublin at noon on a Monday and reached Groomsport on Thursday but by 1671, the post had been transferred to Donaghadee.

Emigration to America has continued since the 17th Century and, after the 1840s Famine, the population of Groomsport had fallen from 560 to 280.

Amazing developments have taken place in communication between Ireland and America in the intervening centuries.

- By sea with the great ocean liners such as the White Star liners built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast
- By wireless technology which was developed in Ballycastle by Marconi.
- By air, from the first transatlantic flight by Alcock and Brown, to today's regular flights from Belfast.
- And most recently by televised broadcasting and the Internet.

We have become familiar with American culture, but here in Groomsport we feel we have a special reason to celebrate it. The festival aims to foster good community relations between neighbours, whether they live next door or 3000 miles away in America.

So, whether you're from West Virginia or West Belfast, we hope that you will join us and enjoy this celebration of our cultural links with America, with the sea and with each other.

This article was part of the souvenir programme for the 2001 8th Annual Eagle Wing Festival



You are going to work in a group to plan a festival or celebration of the links between Ulster and America. This could be either within your own school or in your local community.

YOU WILL NEED TO THINK ABOUT

- When your celebration is going to take place
- How long it is going to last
- Who you would invite to take part



1. Plan all the activities
- 2 Design the programme that would be sold to the public at your event
- 3 Design a poster or radio advertisement promoting your event
- 4 Role play (and video if possible) a 2-3 minutes news feature for a 'UTV Life' type programme including interviews with a variety of people at the festival/celebration



Designing Your Programme

There are two different aspects you will have to consider:

- You need to decide what kinds of activities/events are going to take place as part of your celebration
- Once all the events have been decided by your group you will then have to design and 'publish' your souvenir programme for the festival

Events



Think about the different events which could be included in a festival celebrating links with the U.S.A. to be held in your school or your town.

Remember you will need to research your local area to see what specific links you have. Then you should try to include as many different activities as possible to suit a range of people both old and young.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

CONCERT
PARADE
FIREWORK DISPLAY
EXHIBITION
TALK
MUSIC
WORKSHOPS

Your Programme



Your programme should include all the information needed to help people get the most out of your festival or celebration.

You will also need to think about how you present this information and how you can make it as appealing as possible to your readers.

Here are a few ideas about what you should include:

FOREWORD
PHOTOGRAPHS
ADVERTISEMENTS
A TIMETABLE OF EVENTS
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
ABOUT THE FESTIVAL
DETAILS OF ALL THE EVENTS

Now you can create your own programme using 'Publisher' or another piece of IT software.

End of Unit Tasks

Either

You are going to organise a visit to Northern Ireland for a group of school-age Americans. They are coming to see the land which their ancestors left to journey to America. They have two weeks to do and see as much as possible.

YOU WILL NEED TO THINK ABOUT



Where they will stay and how they will travel around Ulster.
Where it would be important and/or interesting for them to visit

1. You will need to do a lot of research to discover the range of sites of interest to tourists. (Perhaps you may want to limit it to your own county)
2. Plan out their routes and visits.
3. Make out a programme of activities for the two weeks. (Remember they need time to relax and shop as well as sightseeing!)
4. Write a welcoming letter to the American group including an itinerary for their visit.

Or

Imagine that you have organised your festival or celebration and now have the opportunity to advertise it on television.

Using the blank storyboard sheet you will be given design your 30 second commercial for showing on UTV.

YOU WILL NEED TO THINK ABOUT

- Number and type of camera shots
- Use of voiceover—you will need to write a script
- Use of music
- Camera angles
- Appeal to target audience

To Help You



- Blank storyboard
- 'How to Storyboard' help sheet
- 'Writing a Script' help sheet
- 'Camera Shots and Angles' help sheet

End of Unit Evaluation.

Tick the appropriate box -

I worked mostly on my own

I worked mostly with a partner or in a group

The task I enjoyed doing most was because

.....

The thing I found most difficult in this unit was because

.....

If I was doing this again the thing I would do differently is

.....

TEACHER COMMENTS

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