



Home Coming 2009 – Celebrating Scotland and
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Scotland's Reach Around The World

*Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic roar?*

In March of every year since 1998 the United States of America has celebrated a National Tartan Day; in April of this year Australia will hold its 32nd Annual Highland Gathering; and if you're in Canada over the summer be sure to seek out Nova Scotia's Highland games. But how have these Scottish events found a home so far from their ancestral origins?

AMERICA

The first Scots emigrated to the New World in the early 1600's. Some were transported with no choice other than prison or execution. These people ranged from political prisoners of rebellions, to paupers, to petty thieves and criminals. Others came because of poverty.

The Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745 also saw numbers of Scotsmen transported to America, as did the Highland Clearances which came somewhat later.

Scottish emigrants who had gone to Northern Ireland as colonists of the Ulster plantations in the first half of the 16th century also emigrated to America in the early 1700's. These people, who were referred to as the "Scotch-Irish" were by far the most numerous group of Scottish Colonists to come to America. Between 1715 and 1776 some 250,000 of them arrived.

A further wave of Scottish immigration came during the late 1800's and most of these Scots settled in the northeastern U.S. in the larger industrial cities, and included such notables as Alexander Graham Bell.

The Scots were looked down upon by the English, Dutch and Germans, who saw them as being less civilized, orderly and less interested in bettering themselves materially through hard work. The Scots quickly disproved the stereotypical views of the English and other colonists by becoming enormously successful in the New World.





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They brought their language, which influenced American English to some extent, but more than anything else, they brought their music, especially fiddle-music, which became what we know today as American "bluegrass" music.

They are the backbone of the American economy and political system, the very foundation upon which America was built. If it were not for the Scots, America would probably still be an English colony.

Australia

Poverty, famine and epidemics in Scotland in the 1820s and 1830s caused the first significant Scottish emigration to Australia. Victoria, in the far south, was the most popular colony in which to settle. Scottish squatters and rural workers established farms, and urban settlers worked as skilled artisans and professionals.

To this day Scottish customs and folklore are maintained through Caledonian Societies and Highland Games, church activities, and organizations such as the Victorian Scottish Union, Council of Clans and the Victorian Pipe Band Association.

In the early 20th century, assistance schemes for British immigrants promoted Scottish immigration. By the 1940s, recession and war affected Scotland's economy, prompting increasing numbers to emigrate. The Scotland-born community in Victoria grew from less than 25,000 in 1947 to over 40,000 by 1966.

Nova Scotia

Following defeat at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, life became very difficult in the Highlands. The people were forbidden to speak their language (Gaelic), play the Bagpipes (considered instruments of war) or to wear their Highland dress. The economy went from bad to worse, and the atrocities committed on the Highlanders by the English general "Butcher" Cumberland and his followers left Scotland in disarray. The Highlanders, if they could, left.

The first Highlanders to come to Nova Scotia arrived on the Ship Hector at Pictou in 1773. Through the years, up to and especially during the Highland Clearances, shipload after shipload of Highland emigrants crossed the difficult seas to Nova Scotia.

Following the American Revolution, many came with other Loyalists to Nova Scotia to begin their lives yet again. They settled mainly in the western regions of Nova Scotia. It is interesting that in Digby area, there is a small coastal community by the name of Culloden.

