
The important story of the Scots emigrants who made their way to the wild, unsettled regions of Canada in search of independence and a life free of the burdens experienced at home, has received considerable attention in recent decades. Important studies such as Jack Bumstead's *The People's Clearance*, and Marianne McLean’s *The People of Glengarry*, have greatly enlarged our understanding of the Scots emigrant experience. However, there is much more room for further studies in this extremely fascinating and important topic. By focusing on one specific emigration from Lochaber in 1802, and more specifically on the McMillans who led the exodus, the book *The Lochaber Emigrants to Glengarry* attempts to contribute to the previous body of scholarship.

The book boasts contributions from a variety of specialists, beginning with Marianne McLean who contributed the introduction, to E.J. Cowan and Stanley R. Barrett. Unfortunately, apart from a few bright spots the book is rather disappointing as a study of emigration and adds little to current historiography.

The work begins with a succinct, well-informed introduction from Marianne McLean which puts the book in perspective. Chapter one consists of a reprint of the ships' lists of the Lochaber emigrants; an important document to both the professional historian and anyone tracing their family history. E.J. Cowan offers a particularly incisive chapter examining the Scottish background to the emigration. Of special interest is his analysis of the state of clanship during the period after Culloden. His analysis goes far to cut through much of the mythology surrounding the Highlands during the emigration period. Chapter three examines the origins of the Lochaber MacMillans. While certainly of value to anyone interested in McMillan family history, the chapter seems somewhat out of place here and is of little interest to the historian or others interested in emigration. The final chapter in this portion of the book, entitled "How Far is it to Canada," is a general re-iteration of what E.J. Cowan so successfully examined in chapter two. This portion is particularly disappointing as it provides an overly romantic vision of what was going on. Phrases such as "the haters of the Gael, and
there were many, rejoiced," are not backed up by sufficient evidence and even contradict several important points made in the previous chapter. Further, the chapter is somewhat misnamed as Canada and the emigration of 1802 is not even mentioned until page eight of a nine page chapter. The chapter says little of the emigration, the emigrant experience, and never does address the question "How far is it to Canada?"

The following section contains two chapters devoted to documents of the Lochaber emigrants. As Marianne McLean so rightly points out in the introduction, the "stars of the book may just be its original documents." The letters reprinted in this section and the ships' lists of chapter one, form an important body of primary material which provides important information about the emigrants arriving in 1802 and the life they led in the following years.

However, this section is marred by problems which detract from the overall effectiveness of the work. To begin, it is difficult to understand why chapter five, the chapter written by Ian McMillan, was even included. The chapter contains no introduction or conclusion to speak of, no analysis, and the meagre list of documents could easily have been incorporated into the following chapter (Which by the way has the very same title!). Chapter six has much more analysis and contains some interesting documents, but like other chapters is hindered by an overly romantic view and insufficient documentary evidence to back up the statements being made. For example, the author begins by stating that Archibald 'Murlaggin' McMillan was "a remarkable individual who left 'a large number of letters" and then continues on to outline the hardships faced following Culloden—a period when Archibald 'Murlaggin' McMillan had yet to be born (1769). The author further goes on to state that during the war of 1812 there were instances of desertion—which he attributes to the fact that "some may still have harboured a distaste for the Crown which their Jacobite forbears had fought against at Culloden." Hear some proof would have gone a long way. The Highlanders of the Mohawk Valley demonstrated their high degree of loyalty to king and country during the American Revolutionary War. The fact that they followed Sir John Johnson to Glengarry, losing wealth and property demonstrates the
point. Therefore, such arguments harking back to Culloden hardly seem justifiable in the face of all the evidence to the contrary. And finally, the analysis is dominated by a definite pro-Archibald tone which does not really take into account what he was trying to do. Like many others before and after him, Archibald ‘Murlaggin’ McMillan was attempting to recreate the anachronistic Highland system in the New World. The establishment of such a system in Canada was not in the best interests of the average emigrants - although Archibald likely saw it as such. What most emigrants wanted was land. With land came independence; independence from the arbitrary actions of lairds, chieftains and absentee landlords. We therefore should not feel sympathy for those who failed in their grand schemes of recreating the clan system in Canada, but rather admiration for those tenants who escaped the burden of poverty and domination to gain the independence they desired.

The following and perhaps most interesting sections of the book examine the connections between the McMillans of Glengarry and the West Indies and western Canada respectively. Stanley Barrett’s chapter on the McMillans of the West Indies raises some interesting questions but could have provided much more information on the history of the family in the islands. Barrett quickly moves from a discussion of the McMillans emigrating there around 1800 to a look at one of the present contributors (Hugh McMillan) families. The importance of this chapter lies in the authors illustration of the impact Scots settlers had in the region, particularly through intermarrriage with the non-white population, and of demonstrating some unique possibilities for further study.

In chapter eight, “Westward from Glengarry,” Hugh McMillan provides an interesting and valuable account of Duncan Ban McMillan and his experiences upon arriving in Canada. The chapter describes in detail the movement of members of this one particular Mcmillan family and how they adapted to the changing realities of life in the colonies. Perhaps the most intriguing and valuable chapter is that written by Heather Devine. In chapter nine Devine traces the career and family ties of one of the original emigrants. In doing so the author establishes the important relationship which existed between Scots
traders and the native community—particularly the native women. This chapter is by far the most valuable and well-researched portion of the book. And like the previous chapter demonstrates that there is ample room for continued research.

The book concludes with a substantial body of charts of considerable importance to the family researcher or genealogist, yet admittedly confusing to the present writer. Following the charts is a colourful piece outlining how the book came to be.

In conclusion it must be said that I found the book to be something of a disappointment. Amidst a number of worthwhile pieces are chapters which quite frankly do not fit in with the general theme of the book. The large body of documentary evidence which is available for this emigration would have lent itself to a much more indepth analysis of the emigration itself and the initial establishment of the emigrants in Upper Canada and beyond. One has to question the choices made by the editor, who in the end assumes ultimate responsibility. Why, for instance, begin with a reprint of the ships' list, and then later have two chapters specifically looking at documents relating to the emigration? Could the ships' lists not have been incorporated into this section? Further, why have two chapters on documents, one a mere three pages, written by two separate contributors. Clearly the documents section of the book could have been collapsed into one chapter and possibly expanded. However, despite the obvious shortfalls in a number of sections the book does contain some chapters of merit which are worth reading, particularly for those interested in family history.

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