

# Exiles of '98 Ulster Presbyterians and the United States

Peter Gilmore  
Trevor Parkhill  
William Roulston

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**Front cover illustration:** A commemorative jug commissioned in memory of John Nevin who died in exile in Tennessee in 1806, Ballymoney Museum (Courtesy Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council)

**Back cover illustration:** Summerville Cemetery, Augusta, Georgia, showing the burial place of James Bones, an exile from County Antrim (Courtesy Erick Montgomery)



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## Preface and acknowledgements

The origins of this book go back to a project commissioned by the Ministerial Advisory Group – Ulster Scots Academy on the contribution of Ulster Presbyterian exiles of the 1798 period to political thought in the United States of America. The project was delivered by the Ulster Historical Foundation and the initial research was carried out in 2013. The publication of this volume provides another opportunity to thank those who assisted with that study: Keith Beattie, Alister McReynolds, Dr Linde Lunney, Erick Montgomery and Dr Rankin Sherling. Since then others have shared information on particular individuals and we have acknowledged them in the relevant section of this book.

## Abbreviations

Campbell, <i>History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick</i>	John H. Campbell, <i>History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick and of the Hibernian Society for the Relief of Emigrants from Ireland, March 17, 1777–March 17, 1892</i> (Philadelphia, 1892)
DIB	<i>Dictionary of Irish Biography</i> , 9 vols (Cambridge, 2009)
Durey, <i>Transatlantic Radicals</i>	Michael Durey, <i>Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic</i> (Lawrence, KS, 1997)
LoC	Library of Congress
McBride, <i>Scripture Politics</i>	I. R. McBride, <i>Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterianism and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century</i> (Oxford, 1998)
MHS	Maryland Historical Society
Miller, <i>Irish Immigrants</i>	Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce D. Boling, David N. Doyle (eds), <i>Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815</i> (New York, 2003)
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RP	Rebellion Papers in the National Archives of Ireland
Wilson, <i>United Irishmen, United States</i>	David A. Wilson, <i>United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic</i> (Ithaca, 1998)
Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir'	David A. Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir: a case study in Ulster-American radicalism' in Wilson and Spencer, <i>Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World</i> (Dublin, 2006)

## Notes on contributors

**Peter Gilmore**, who received a PhD in history from Carnegie Mellon University in 2009, is an adjunct instructor in history at universities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has written extensively about the Ulster Presbyterian diaspora in the United States and is the author of *Irish Presbyterians and the Shaping of Western Pennsylvania, 1770–1830* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018).

**Trevor Parkhill** was Keeper of History at the Ulster Museum from 1995 to 2012, prior to which he had followed a career in archives, primarily with the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. He is the editor of *Familia: Ulster Genealogical Review* and his books include *The First World War Diaries of Emma Duffin* (2014) and *A Nurse in the Belfast Blitz* (2016).

**William Roulston** has been Research Director of the Ulster Historical Foundation since 2006. He holds a PhD in Archaeology from Queen's University Belfast. He is the author of a number of books looking at different aspects of the history of Ulster and is the co-editor of the new edition of *Plantations in Ulster, 1600–41: A Collection of Documents* (2018).

## I

## Eighteenth-century migration from Ulster to America

Trevor Parkhill

It is now generally accepted that some 100,000, and perhaps as many as 150,000, had migrated across the Atlantic to colonial America from Ireland, principally from Ulster, by 1776, the great majority of them Presbyterians of Scottish origins.<sup>1</sup> There is ongoing debate about whether the prime factor in these migratory waves was religious disaffection or whether, as is now more generally accepted, economic factors were uppermost in the decision to leave Ulster.<sup>2</sup> It true that the first waves from 1718 onwards included significant sections from a number of Presbyterian congregations effecting a root-and-branch migration from Ulster, exemplified in the migration to New England of a large contingent from the Aghadowey congregation in County Londonderry, led by Rev. James McGregor.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter, the decision to emigrate was more closely linked to prevailing economic conditions. This was particularly the case in the wave that arrived on American shores in the few years immediately prior to the American Revolution, when a combination of a downturn in the linen trade and the raising of rents on some landed estates prompted some 10,000 a year to leave. Nonetheless, the Presbyterianism that originated in Ulster was one of the determining factors in the pre-revolutionary American colonial culture.<sup>4</sup>

That Presbyterianism had been politicised throughout the eighteenth century largely in response to restrictions imposed by the Dublin parliament, citadel of the Anglican Protestant Ascendancy, on freedom of religious practice. The Test Act of 1704 was one of a number of measures that came to be known as the Penal Code, which were designed to obstruct the practice of the Roman Catholic religion. The restrictions it imposed on dissenting religions, principally Presbyterianism, included the religious ceremonies associated with marriage in particular, and the holding of civic office. Most crippling of all, perhaps, was the ruling that Presbyterian ministers would only receive a suitable training elsewhere. In the case of most, this entailed tuition at the University of Glasgow, itself something of a beacon of radical philosophical thought in the eighteenth century.

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This was especially the case when, in 1730, Francis Hutcheson was appointed by the university to the chair of moral philosophy. The son and grandson of Irish Presbyterian ministers, his teachings at Glasgow, where he himself had studied, earned him the title of 'the father of the Scottish enlightenment'. His influence in Ulster was maintained by the contact he renewed with Irish non-subscribers to the Westminster Confession of Faith. His radical philosophy included the view that the end of government was 'the greatest good of the greatest number' and that victims of unjust regimes had the right to rebel, a factor, says Finlay Holmes, 'that contributed to the ideology of revolution in Ireland and colonial America'.<sup>5</sup> Considerable numbers of licentiate Presbyterian ministers returned to Ulster with the intellectual and philosophical grounding that would be come an integral feature of the radical movements on both sides of the Atlantic.

Irish emigration, again principally from the province of Ulster, resumed in considerable numbers following the conclusion of the War of Independence by the Treaty of Paris of 1783.<sup>6</sup> One of the distinguishing features of this resumed migratory flow was the increasingly political element to be found in what was still a predominantly Presbyterian diaspora. The enhanced political profile of Presbyterians had become evident in public issues and controversies in Ireland throughout the 1780s and 1790s. The campaign for reform that emerged in the 1780s with the formation of the Irish Volunteers, established initially as a means of defence against invasion by France who had sided with the revolutionary forces in America against Britain, was characterised by a strong Presbyterian inclination to improve the position of and relations with their Catholic 'brethren', as they termed them.

From October 1791, the increasingly political nature of Presbyterianism became even more pronounced with the formation in Belfast of the Society of United Irishmen. It professed a commitment to a 'union of Irishmen of all denominations'.<sup>7</sup> Their ideology combined the radicalism of the American and French revolutions with the aim of parliamentary and, 'the removal of English control of Irish affairs'.<sup>8</sup> The lack of progress of these demands of the United Irishmen led almost inevitably to the rebellion that erupted in the summer of 1798, resulting in at least 10,000 deaths – one estimate has put the figure at 30,000 – in an orgy of violence between the rebels and the Crown forces.<sup>9</sup> And, even though it is recognized that, by the time rebellion broke out in 1798, many Presbyterians had stepped back from the brink of insurgency, the eventual rebellion that broke out in Ulster in counties and Antrim and Down in June 1798, following the initial upsurge in County Wicklow in late May, included many members of the Presbyterian churches in Ireland. Of particular interest was the considerable constituency of Presbyterian clergymen and licentiate ministers who were implicated in the events that led to the insurrection and, in many cases, the



rebellion itself. Other principal Presbyterian figures implicated in the rebellion included Samuel Neilson, son of a Presbyterian minister who edited the newspaper, *The United Irishman*, which was published from 1792 until its presses were destroyed in 1797.

For many, the failure of the rebellion left them with no choice but to take flight to America. As far as their reception in the United States is concerned, there was some disquiet on the American side that prominent leaders of a subversive movement that had been well organised and had so nearly succeeded were being dumped in the United States, at a time when anti-British and anti-French feeling was growing. By and large, however, not least because many were being received by members of their extended family who had previously emigrated to the United States and settled there, often maintaining a regular correspondence with their homeland, this was a process that proved to be a mutually beneficial arrangement to what was and could well have continued to be an embarrassment. As many as 49 Presbyterian ministers and licentiates were among those who thronged across the Atlantic in the immediate wake of the failed rebellion. For many, as was the case with the great majority of the thousands who emigrated in the eighteenth century, the life they were able to carve out for themselves in the New World would prove to be a significant improvement on that which would have been their lot had they continued in Ireland.

- 1 Thomas Bartlett, *Ireland. A History* (Cambridge, 2010), p.174, says that 'A majority of the hundred thousand emigrants estimated to have sailed from for the north American colonies between 1700 and 1776 were Presbyterians from Ulster'; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 7, gives the figures as 'at least 150,000 from Ulster prior to the American revolution and perhaps as many again between the end of that conflict and 1815'; L. M. Cullen, 'The Irish Diaspora in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries' in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *Europeans on the Move. Studies on European Migration 1500-1800* (Oxford, 1994), p. 115, warns against taking at face value 'the estimates of Irish Presbyterian migration frequently volunteered by contemporary observers'.
- 2 R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America 1718-1775* (1966, reprinted Belfast, 2016) p. 13, says that 'Rents, prices and wages formed a mighty triumvirate in determining the extent of north Irish emigration.'
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp 26-9
- 4 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 5: 'the early Irish migrants and their offspring dominated frontier settlement ... and played major - in some cases predominant - roles in the political tumults, economic developments social conflicts and religious revivals that created and shaped the new American nation'.
- 5 Sean Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford, 1998), pp 252-3.
- 6 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 34, states: 'Ulster emigration rapidly resumed at the war's end, with over 10,000 departures in 1784 alone'.
- 7 Connolly, *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, pp 567-8.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Bartlett, *Ireland. A History*, p. 224: 'around 10,000 rebels (including a high proportion of non-combatants) and about six hundred soldiers had been slain', though Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty* (London, 1969) had earlier put the figure at 30,000.

## 2

## The 1798 Presbyterian Exiles, the Irish Diaspora in the United States, and the Shaping of American Politics

Peter Gilmore

Irish Presbyterian immigrants with a connection to the political tumult in Ireland during the 1790s, including and especially the 1798 Rebellion, had a disproportionate role in the formation of the American political system. They contributed to the organization, leadership and ideology both of oppositional partisanship and governance during a crucial and defining stage of American political development, particularly the two decades between 1795 and 1815. In these years the United States experienced internal contention for power in the form of political parties, the first peaceful transfer of government from one party to another, difficult manoeuvring between major European nations at war, and eventually conflict with the world's foremost imperial power.

Based on a broad canvas of archival and documentary sources, this essay and those that follow by the present writer consider institutional and ceremonial expressions of the diasporic community, careers of notable figures both in the Rebellion and in American life, and the particular case-studies of more theologically conservative Presbyterians in this transatlantic movement.

Presbyterians from Ulster who arrived in the United States during the 1790s entered a new nation governed federally according to the terms of a Constitution written and adopted less than ten years earlier. A two-party political system emerged in this decade in the convergence of lingering divisions over the proper configuration of national government, disagreements over budgetary and taxing issues, and the proper relationship with Great Britain. In this process the political outlooks and interests of earlier, pre-revolutionary cohorts of Irish Presbyterian immigrants merged with those of more recently arrived immigrants. Thus, Irish Presbyterians came to form a significant segment of the coalition which became the oppositional Democratic-Republican Party.

Indeed, the formation and ultimate electoral victories of Thomas Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans would be inconceivable without the

support of Irish-American voters, and the creation of an Irish-American diaspora under the hegemony of Ulster Presbyterians was significantly facilitated by the Democratic-Republican Party. Political exiles among Irish Presbyterians contributed both the rank and file and leadership to this evolving dynamic.

As this study will demonstrate, much of the activity – political meetings, fraternal gatherings, publications – took place in Philadelphia, for a time the nation's capital, the American gateway for many Ulster immigrants and headquarters of American Presbyterianism. Vice President Thomas Jefferson – the lodestar for many individuals, and around whom documents here examined revolved – asserted his leadership of a new, oppositional second political party in Philadelphia in 1797 as numerous Irish Presbyterians associated with the United Irishmen arrived at that major port city.<sup>1</sup>

Increasing numbers of Presbyterian immigrants in the 1790s contributed personnel and leadership, and, in particular, a strong ideological commitment to republicanism, to the party associated with Thomas Jefferson. The official suppression of the Society of United Irishmen in 1794 and the martial law imposed on Ulster in 1797, especially, led to the immigration of individuals and groups of individuals discussed in this document. 'Both contemporary observers and modern historians agree that a continuing and major source of Republican electoral strength from the early 1790's onward was provided by the votes of the foreign born', wrote Edwin Carter II. 'Among this group none were more determined or effective in their support of the Jeffersonian Republican Party than the Irish of the seaport cities of Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia.'<sup>2</sup>

Political developments in the United States as well as in Ireland deepened the sense of identification between 'Irish' and 'republican.' The Federalists, members of the governing party, clearly recognized the contribution of the Irish to the Jeffersonian party and believed that recent 'Jacobinical' arrivals from rebellion-torn Ireland represented a significant threat to the order and stability of the United States.<sup>3</sup> As one Irish immigrant recalled:

The republican party was charged with an attachment to France – the federal party with an attachment to Britain – Emigrants from Ireland at this time, were placed in the most delicate situation – The most determined hostility to Britain was imputed to them, and it must be confessed to many not without cause, but a propensity, on their part, to weaken or destroy the pillars destined to support the social edifice in the United States was wantonly imputed.<sup>4</sup>

In May 1797 Federalists proposed changing the existing naturalization law to impose a \$20 tax on certificates of naturalization, in response to Irish immigration. It was in this context that Harrison Gray Otis declared in

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Congress that he did not 'wish to invite hoards [sic] of wild Irishmen, nor the turbulent and disorderly of all parts of the world, to come here with a view to disturb our tranquility, after having succeeded in the overthrow of their own governments.'<sup>5</sup>

That legislative initiative was defeated. However, Federalists responded successfully with a series of repressive laws enacted by the United States Congress in 1798, collectively known as 'the Alien and Sedition Acts.' With this legislation the governing Federalist Party hoped to stifle political criticism and cripple the new Democratic-Republican Party, particularly by striking at its connection to the Irish community. Irish immigrants regarded these laws as aimed at themselves. The legislation disgusted William Irvine, an American military leader during the Revolutionary War and native of County Fermanagh. The sedition act, he complained, 'is intended solely for a few wretched Refugee Irish, who meant only to take shelter from British persecution.'<sup>6</sup>

The actions of the John Adams administration and Federalist-controlled Congress restricted Irish immigration between 1798 and 1800. The opposition of Democratic-Republican legislators to these initiatives strengthened the connections between the Irish community and the Jeffersonian party, as did the easing of restrictions which allowed for the entry of leading United Irishmen once Jefferson took office in 1801. The already existing identification of Irish voters with Jefferson in the late 1790s became strengthened with his electoral triumph. 'By 1800 and the election of Jefferson', wrote David Noel Doyle, 'the bulk of the lower and middle class Scotch Irish and Irish Catholics were Republican; and the arriving United Irish leadership furnished them unparalleled political leadership in its support, through various Hibernian societies and the reconstituted Tammany societies of New York and Philadelphia.'<sup>7</sup>

The election of Jefferson together with repression in Ireland and economic distress encouraged further emigration. In reprinting an extract from a letter supposedly written by an Armagh resident to a friend in Fredericksburg, Virginia, Democratic-Republican newspapers in the United States attempted to build sympathy for immigrants while demonstrating their own reputation as friends of recently arrived Irish republicans:

The oppressed people seem anxious to get away to your happy country: the poor are truly in a distressed state, owing to the scarcity of provisions; many are nearly starving. It is conjectured that the French intend visiting us again and I hope they will be received.<sup>8</sup>

With the triumph of the Democratic-Republican Party at the turn of the nineteenth century, recent Irish Presbyterian immigrants were recruited both

to strengthen the base of the governing party and to assume leadership positions within party and government. The significant role thus afforded Ulster-born Presbyterians is directly attributable to their widely perceived devotion to republicanism, a perception underscored by the fact that many such individuals were indeed veterans of the 1798 Rebellion or had known associations with the Society of United Irishmen. Subsequent sections of this study present evidence which indicate and confirm the wide reach and significance of Irish Presbyterians in the Democratic-Republican Party and the administrations formed by Thomas Jefferson and his successor James Madison.

United Irish émigrés associated the cause of the United States with their own republican cause, and both with Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party. They had fought for Irish independence and a republic; in the United States they had found an independent republic. Initially those newly arrived in the United States tended to see themselves as exiles. United Irish refugees in Philadelphia in 1799 toasted '*The Emigrant Irish Republicans* – Soon and successful be their return.' The following year, with continued focus on Ireland, Philadelphia Democratic-Republicans toasted the proposition 'May the United Irish speedily break the chain which them to the footstool of Britain.' But in 1802, a 1798-era immigrant expressed the aspiration of Irish-American partisans of the Jeffersonian cause in the toast he gave at a Fourth of July celebration in Pittsburgh: 'The Irish emigrants, may they all become citizens, and remain true republicans.' This tension between self-perception as 'exile' and 'immigrant' could be found within the lives and careers of the same individuals.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of Irish Presbyterians on American government and culture in the period of the Early Republic was rooted in a thick web of interpersonal relations, of networks of fellow exiles, family and friends, which, in turn, connected to longstanding networks of family, friends, neighbours and associates linking Ulster and immigrant communities in the United States. Simply stated, the ability of individuals to enjoy influence depended upon who they knew and who knew them. Instead of a monolithic machine of Scotch-Irish power-broking, the record seems to suggest loosely connected personal alliances. Every individual revealed by the record simultaneously possessed conflated understandings of Irish identity, republicanism and Presbyterianism. To be 'Irish' also meant being 'republican', in some way, and also 'Presbyterian', as variously defined.

The identification with republicanism as a result of experience with the Rebellion and association with the Democratic-Republican Party and with Thomas Jefferson is reflected in the record in a variety of ways. Former revolutionary and master-builder John Neilson worked for Jefferson in the construction of the president's mansion, Monticello; ex-ministerial candidate

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David Bailie Warden served Jefferson's administration as a diplomat; John Glendy, Presbyterian minister and fervent republican, enjoyed Jefferson's patronage. Many other immigrants related to the third US President in more oblique ways: they served in local public office as Democratic-Republicans, they voted for Jeffersonian candidates, they toasted the republican cause in the old and new countries in frothy displays of ideological fervour.

For some Presbyterian ministers, acts of self-identification as 'republican' or 'Irish' were subsumed or dissolved in the larger purpose of preaching the Gospel. Their impetus for leaving Ireland may have been some connection to the Rebellion or the United Irishmen (real or imagined), but in the United States their exclusive cause would be that of Christ. (Their Presbyterianism, in other words, is not viewed simply as a convenient 'ethnic' label, but as an expression of authentic religious commitment.) The resulting influence on American government and culture – as writers, teachers, examples, exhorters – is thus incalculable.<sup>10</sup>

Crucial to understanding the exercise of influence through the operation of networks is the context of Irish Presbyterian communities. For example, upon his arrival in the United States John Glendy served Presbyterians overwhelmingly of Irish origin in western Virginia before taking up a full-time position in Baltimore, a seaport described by a historian as a 'Scotch-Irish boomtown' due to the role of its Ulster-born merchants.<sup>11</sup> The networks of refugee United Irishmen, the nuclei of activity by the veterans of 1798, are situated precisely in those communities created by previous cohorts of Irish Presbyterian immigrants. By one estimate, two-thirds of the Irish who landed in Philadelphia in the late 1790s moved west.<sup>12</sup> Thus we will see numerous references to United Irish exiles, Presbyterian immigrants and friends and relations settling in western Pennsylvania, as in the case of United Irishmen Thomas Ledlie Birch and Robert Steele, or in central Virginia, as in the case of John Neilson and James Dinsmore.

- 1 Edward C. Carter II, 'A "Wild Irishman" Under Every Federalist's Bed: Naturalization in Philadelphia, 1789–1806', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 94, no. 3 (July 1970), p. 331.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 332.
- 3 'In February 1798 Charles Nisbet (1736–1804), the Scottish-born founder of Dickinson College, had already expressed an obvious worry from Philadelphia that "We are in danger of an Inundation of Irish Rebels among us... nothing can hinder them from transporting themselves hither in private ships, while there is no law here to forbid their Reception, & while we are so ready to make them Citizens & Patriots as soon as they are among us"' (Maurice Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America, 1760–1800* (Dublin, 2008), pp 242–3).
- 4 James Mountain, 'A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Steele', *The Reporter* (Washington, PA), 21 May 1810.

- 5 Carter, 'A "Wild Irishman"', p. 334.
- 6 William Irvine to Gustavus de Rosenthal ('John Rose'), 3 Sept. 1800, David Library of the American Revolution, Film 60, Reel 96, Lyman Copeland Draper, The Draper manuscripts, Series NN, 163–164.
- 7 David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin, 1981), p. 200.
- 8 *Tree of Liberty* (Pittsburgh, PA), vol. 2, no. 55, 29 Aug. 1801.
- 9 Maurice J. Bric, 'The American Society of United Irishmen', *Irish Journal of American Studies*, vol. 7 (1998), p. 169; *Tree of Liberty* (Pittsburgh, PA), 1 Nov. 1800, 10 July 1802. The November 1800 article reprinted news from Philadelphia.
- 10 A consensus emerged in the nineteenth century that a preponderance of the Presbyterian clergy involved in the Rebellion were 'New Light', religious liberals who refused to subscribe to the Westminster Confession to confirm a required orthodoxy. This viewpoint more recently received the endorsement of a scholar of the New Lights, William McMillan in his essay 'Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising' in Liam Swords (ed.), *Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter: The Clergy and 1798* (Dublin, 1997). This conclusion, however, was challenged by David W. Miller in a 1978 article which found that 'orthodox and new light opinions were represented about equally among implicated clergy and probationers' ('Presbyterianism and "Modernization"', *Past and Present*, no. 80 (August 1978), p. 79). Although there are prominent New Light voices studied here, to be sure, the majority – it may be fair to say a considerable majority – of the clergy considered were orthodox in their religious views. Granted, an important caveat is that this report includes many individuals who became Presbyterian clergymen *after* immigration.
- 11 Richard K. MacMaster, *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America* (Belfast, 2009), p. 199.
- 12 Carter, 'A "Wild Irishman"', p. 343.

## 3

## Hibernian Societies, St Patrick's Day and *The Shamrock*

Peter Gilmore

Irish fraternal societies, largely created by Presbyterians, had existed since the colonial era. The influx of avowedly nationalist immigrants in the late 1790s and early 1800s gave rise to new and newly invigorated fraternalism in centres of Ulster-American settlement. Eighteenth-century Philadelphia, a major seaport, was the destination of many Ulster emigrants. Philadelphia was also the largest city in the United States, a mercantile and financial centre, and for a time, the national capital. In Philadelphia, the pre-revolutionary Friendly Sons of St Patrick gave rise in 1790 to the Hibernian Society for the Relief of Emigrants, which in the early 1800s replaced the parent as the principal organized expression of Irish-American patriotic activity. Thomas McKean, a prominent member of the Friendly Sons, served as first president of the Hibernian Society. He resigned when elected governor of Pennsylvania, a major Democratic-Republican victory. Opponents had accused the son of Ulster immigrant parents of seeking 'to import "Twenty Thousand United Irishmen" into the country as men who understood "true liberty and the Rights of Man".' Foes also accused McKean of having opposed war with France but willing to fight Britain.<sup>1</sup> The first president, with roots in colonial-era migration, thus identified with the outlook of post-revolutionary migration.<sup>2</sup> The Hibernian Society's second president similarly exemplified the continuities among Irish Presbyterian immigrants. A Presbyterian born and raised in County Antrim, Hugh Holmes came to public notice in the mid-1780s as a merchant dealing in cotton and linen textiles. He joined the Friendly Sons in 1791. One of the twelve founders of the Hibernian Society, he served as president from 1800 to 1818.<sup>3</sup>

Not hotbeds of radicalism, the Friendly Sons and the Hibernian Society nonetheless reflected the generalized sentiment of Irish America in favour of revolutionary France and republicanism, which itself represented a melding of pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary immigrant Irish politics. The Friendly Sons at their meeting on 17 March 1792 toasted both the newly formed Hibernian Society and 'The King and National Assembly



of France.<sup>74</sup> Meeting in March of the following year, the Hibernian Society celebrated 'The Republic of France' and the proposition that 'the *Universe* be formed into one *Republican Society*, and every honest man enjoy the blessings thereof.'<sup>75</sup> John Binns, Mathew Carey and William Duane – refugee radicals with strong ties to political movements in the British Isles – were prominent Hibernian Society members. (Each of the three, and especially Carey, had considerable influence on American politics and government, which in turn gives particular significance to their association with Presbyterian immigrants and émigrés.)<sup>76</sup>

Philadelphia's Hibernian Society continued the inclusivity of the Friendly Sons while evincing the non-sectarianism of the United Irishmen: Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters together honoured St Patrick and provided for the immigrant indigent. Respectable Presbyterians from Philadelphia's mercantile community continued to direct the organization, and recently arrived co-religionists with connections to the United Irishmen did not soon gain office. Two 1790s rebels and orthodox Presbyterian ministers, Rev. George C. Potts and Rev. Samuel B. Wylie, became the Society's Chaplains in 1835.<sup>77</sup> An 1892 official history made only a few, cautious, cursory references to the 1798 Rebellion. In providing a biographical sketch of prominent mid-nineteenth member Robert Patterson, a native of Strabane, County Tyrone, the official history notes that 'His father, Francis Patterson, a farmer, was engaged in the Rebellion of 1798, was forced to emigrate to America.' Some possible continuity in filial political outlook may be deduced from Robert Patterson's decision to name his son Robert Emmet Patterson, to honour the principal leader of the 1803 rebellion.<sup>78</sup> The ranks of the society may well have been comprised of numerous obscure Presbyterian émigrés such as Francis Patterson whose sons did not reach high office in the Hibernians; the 1892 history states for William Davidson, George Holmes, William Moore and many other individuals who joined the society in the opening decade of the nineteenth century: 'We have no information concerning him.'<sup>79</sup>

Also unrecoverable in detail are the membership lists and activities of the American Society of United Irishmen. We might readily suppose that Rev. George C. Potts, an individual deeply implicated in the inner workings of the United Irishmen, would have been involved in the American organization. Potts in 1795 reportedly served as a messenger from the underground leadership of the United Irishmen to the French National Convention. Inability to return to Ireland led to transatlantic emigration in 1797.<sup>80</sup> The Presbytery of New Castle (Delaware) accepted the application of the immigrant Potts, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Monaghan. In 1800, he was ordained minister of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia – a congregation organized the previous year by recent immigrants from

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Ireland, and possibly refugee United Irishmen.<sup>11</sup> An active role in the American Society for Potts may have precluded his immediate entry into the Hibernian Society. The future chaplain, recalled retrospectively as 'universally known and beloved', did not join the organization until 1811.<sup>12</sup>

(There is little information ready to hand about the American Society of United Irishmen for the rather obvious reason that it was, like its Irish model, 'a secret, oath-bound organization divided into close-knit and compact cells.' Apparently founded in 1797, we can assume its existence and effectiveness, and, indeed, its reason for being, ceased with the election of Thomas Jefferson and the opportunity for more public political work – and with the failure of the rebellions in 1798 and 1803. Most of the little that is known comes from the publications of the foes and detractors of immigrant Irish republicans. William Cobbett (as 'Peter Porcupine') in his 1798 essay 'Detection of a Conspiracy, Formed by the United Irishmen', warned that in Philadelphia and environs there were more than 1,500 enrolled in the city, with sections being organized in New York, Baltimore, and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Of interest is that two of these were major seaports where Irish emigrants disembarked in significant numbers, and the latter two in particular were locales with concentrations of Irish Presbyterians.<sup>13</sup>)

In the west across the Allegheny Mountains, the Irish in Pittsburgh decided in 1802 to emulate Philadelphia to consider a constitution for a 'Hibernian Society'. Earlier that year, some commemorated St Patrick's Day at the home of recent immigrant William Irwin. On that occasion, reported the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 'no discordant note, no jarring string in their harp [appeared] – the most perfect harmony prevailed' – as the immigrants lifted their glasses to the radical proposition that 'the sons of Hibernia and Columbia be a terror to the Oppressor, and a shield to the Oppressed.'<sup>14</sup> The newspaper's reference to the harp followed the explicit use of the patriotic symbol by organizers of this and other self-consciously Irish events.<sup>15</sup> Discordant notes, followed, however, as the Presbyterian immigrants of the late 1790s and early 1800s became embroiled in Democratic-Republican factionalism. Political success in the United States and failure in Ireland emphasized their 'immigrant' rather than 'exile' status. And electoral success engendered fracture and faction, and in Pittsburgh as elsewhere, the combatants sought to recruit the Presbyterian republicans.

Rival factions within Pennsylvania's Democratic-Republicans became increasingly fratricidal during Jefferson's eight years as President, especially during the bitter 1805 gubernatorial election, and again in the 1808 contest. Radicals, frequently younger and more recently arrived immigrants, enthusiastically endorsed the candidacy of Simon Snyder, while conservative and moderate Republicans supported the re-election of Governor Thomas

McKean. Congressman William Findley, a 1760s immigrant and member of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick, associated himself with the moderate Republican faction defending McKean. In return he received contemptuous rebukes from the *Washington Reporter*, a newspaper aligned with former United Irishman William Duane and his radical paper, the Philadelphia *Aurora*. 'No other state', Findley complained in an 1805 letter, 'is cursed with such a number of unprincipled emigrants.'<sup>16</sup> Newly settled Irishmen figured prominently among supporters of the *Commonwealth*, the Pittsburgh newspaper aligned with Snyder, Duane and the *Aurora*.

William Gazzam, in the early 1800s, was a leading voice of the newly immigrated Irish Presbyterians. Owner of a store on Market Street, near Pittsburgh's Diamond, Gazzam was among the 'Clapboard Row Junto', a political faction composed of shopkeepers and professional men, all aspiring Republican politicians avidly challenging the Federalism still dominant among Pittsburgh merchants – and, in addition, an older, American-born cohort of Jeffersonians. Although in the United States for only a few years, Gazzam had developed a reputation (at least among his foes) as a particularly aggressive and effective politician. The Irish-born Republican leader testified at the impeachment trial which led to the ouster of arch-Federalist Alexander Addison after a decade as president judge of the Pennsylvania Fifth District. Gazzam associated himself with other recent immigrants who may have been part of the 1790s revolutionary movement.<sup>17</sup>

As indicated above, many of the United Irish refugees and other Irish Presbyterian immigrants who disembarked in Philadelphia moved west. The record reveals the names of some of the more prominent and active. For example: Gazzam's associate William Semple, who applied for citizenship in early 1799; he was one of three Irish immigrants seeking naturalization before 1810 sponsored by James Morrison, another petition signer, and Allegheny County's first sheriff. He was an artisan looking for financial opportunity; this maker of carpenters' tools and cabinets was also in 1815 a director of the Bank of Pittsburgh. Merchant James Adams became a naturalized citizen in 1803; William Boggs, also a merchant, became a citizen in 1799. Philip Gilland, who left Ireland in 1797, became a citizen in 1804. He was a justice of the peace and director of the Sunday School established in the pastorate of Robert Steele, United Irishman and second settled minister of Pittsburgh's Presbyterian congregation. Joseph McClurg, a Covenanter who emigrated with his father, became a citizen in 1799. Boot-maker James Riddle became a citizen in 1799. Adams, Gilland, Morrison and Riddle were all communicants of Pittsburgh's Presbyterian congregation.<sup>18</sup>

Also prominent in Irish immigrant affairs was the lawyer James Mountain, naturalized in 1802. Suggestive of connections with the United

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Irishmen, Mountain represented Thomas Ledlie Birch in court and eulogized Robert Steele in print. Mountain frequently orated at events associated with the radical wing of the Democratic-Republican party. He also served as an early principal of the Pittsburgh Academy, a forerunner of the University of Pittsburgh.<sup>19</sup>

Many of these men financially supported the *Commonwealth* through their advertisements. Adams announced the sale of Irish linens and other goods and McClurg advertised 'dry goods, hardware, groceries.' Riddle advertised the sale of sole and upper shoe leather, shoes and boots; the firm of Gilland & Cochran advertised a large assortment of dry goods; the newspaper also announced that Gilland had opened a tavern.<sup>20</sup>

The *Commonwealth* sought to secure immigrants' support for dissidents by vilifying the opposition in Irish-American eyes, frequently calling public attention to conservatives' statements that disparaged the Irish and recent immigrants. The editor's task was made easier by the strategic alliance in the 1805 election between conservative Republicans and Federalists, which allowed the *Commonwealth* to revisit the controversies of the late 1790s in a way which depicted the Snyderites as the consistent and 'true republicans.' Thus, the *Commonwealth* denounced a statement by the McKean party which seemed to stigmatize naturalized citizens and concluded that the courageous Irish would surely vote correctly. In belittling westerners, the *Commonwealth* declared, conservative likewise 'sneer at the Irish and their descendants, who have peopled the wilderness, because they and their ancestors were oppressed by the British government.' Radical Republicans appealed to all cohorts of Irish emigrants, even if Findley, the leading spokesman of the 'old Irish', had chosen political apostasy. Those who opposed the true republican path were the splitters, in this view. Thus, a toast at a Fourth of July celebration deplored those who divided the native-born and 'adopted citizens.'<sup>21</sup>

With the *Tree of Liberty* (the '*Weekly Recorder of Apostacy* [sic]') in the opposing camp, the *Commonwealth* readily pilloried its editor, John Israel:

The apostate Israel can't refrain from abusing the *Irish* – he says, 'their shoes are not twice soal'd after landing, before they meddle with state affairs, &c. Who *fed* and *clothed* the apostate when he first came, poor and naked, to the western country? The *Irish!*<sup>22</sup>

A guilty verdict rendered against an immigrant purportedly furnished their opponents with an opportunity to vilify the Irish, which in turn supplied the *Commonwealth* with an opportunity to defend its imagined constituency and abuse political rivals. Robert Hopkins, formerly a clerk to the Republican Thomas Baird, had been found guilty of larceny. (Baird himself

had become a naturalized citizen in 1799.) Present in the courtroom when the verdict was announced, conservative attorney Henry Baldwin reportedly 'took the opportunity of ridiculing the democrats.' An intoxicated lawyer then asserted that had Hopkins '*been in his own country, and committed the crime, he would have danced the United Irishman's jig!*', that is, been hanged. The *Commonwealth* bristled in defence of the 'naturally virtuous and brave' Irish to condemn Baldwin and his associates.<sup>23</sup>

The bitter rivalry between the contending political factions eventually turned violent and deadly. The intensity of hostility increased with McKean's re-election and the purchase of the *Tree of Liberty* by McKean supporters Henry Baldwin and Tarleton Bates. Published insults grew more personal, leading to an assault on *Commonwealth* editor Ephraim Pentland by Bates and friends in early January 1806. That affray led to a duel between Bates and Thomas Stewart, a supporter of *The Commonwealth* generally described as a 'young Irish merchant.' Both men missed their targets in the duel's first exchange. Stewart's next shot struck Bates in the heart. He died shortly after.<sup>24</sup>

In 1807, simmering political differences resulted in two competing celebrations of St Patrick's Day. Both appear to have been largely Presbyterian gatherings. Republicans sympathetic to Governor Thomas McKean who described themselves as 'the sons of Hibernia' gathered at the house of immigrant George Stevenson for 'an elegant repast' accompanied by 'Mirth, hilarity and good humour.' With songs, cheers and uplifted glasses they toasted '*Green Erin, the land of our forefathers*', the memories of British parliamentarian Charles Fox and martyrs for Irish freedom such as Thomas Russell and William Orr, as well as Thomas Jefferson, agriculture, commerce and manufacturing, and, of course, Governor Thomas McKean. The memory of British Prime Minister William Pitt – an architect of the union between Ireland and Great Britain – was recalled with 'abhorrence'.<sup>25</sup>

The rival 'sons of Erin', met at 'the republican hotel, sign of Thomas Jefferson', where they toasted the iconic Presidents Washington and Jefferson, but offered no comments on British politicians or Pennsylvania's long-serving governor. After toasts to '*The land of our forefathers*', St Patrick and '*The exiled sons of Erin*', these exiles hoisted their glasses to Irish parliamentarians Henry Grattan, John Philpot Curran and Henry Flood, and to the memories of martyrs of the 1798 and 1803 rebellions. (Toasts were offered to Robert Emmet, Wolfe Tone, Rev. James Porter, William Orr, and Henry and John Shears.) A 'volunteer' toast – one not part of the formal programme – praised former United Irishman William Duane and his newspaper, *Aurora*; another praised Thomas Paine for his service to democracy. Toasts expressing a vision of a democratic, non-sectarian society and the final, formal invocation of the Irish Harp – 'may it never be strung

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to please the ear of a tyrant, or the enemy of Erin' – suggested a more obvious connection to the United Irishmen movement. Further, the 'sons of Erin' offered a toast to the memory of Robert Burns, in the form of a four-line stanza in Scots, and also praised the 'Irish Potatoe' in a quatrain adapted from Burns's 'Address to a Haggis.' The Sons of Erin also roused themselves that day with renditions of Burns's 'A Man's A Man for A' That' and 'St Patrick's Day in the Morning.' Both meetings sang 'The Exile of Erin', written in 1805 by Thomas Campbell to the popular Irish air "'S a Mhuirín Dáilis' (or 'Savoureen Deelish').<sup>26</sup>

Apparently only one gathering occurred in 1808. If so, attendees at both of the St Patrick's Day events in 1807 had acted prudently in lifting their glasses in a spirit of conciliatory good cheer toward comrades at the other celebration. The less numerous and less expansive toasts at the 1808 gathering suggest some continuing rancour, however. Uncharitably, the fourth formal toast wished 'the contempt of good men [for] those unfeeling Irishmen, who can smile at the calamities of their native country, and join in triumph with its oppressors and calumniators.' A militia company (2nd Light Infantry Company) sponsored the 1808 festivities at George Stevenson's, where Captain James Mountain presided. (Stevenson became a naturalized citizen on 20 May 1799.) Immigrant and lawyer, Mountain had been 'assistant president' at the 'sons of Erin' event at the Thomas Jefferson hotel in the previous year.<sup>27</sup>

The gubernatorial election of 1808, pitting Democratic-Republican contender Simon Snyder against veteran Federalist James Ross, facilitated this unity. Ross was the candidate Irish republicans loved to hate. *The Reporter* in Washington, Pennsylvania, carried this warning: 'Irishmen, Englishmen, Germans, remember this! Here is a wretch who would deny you a place of refuge from tyrants that would grind you into dust; here is a being who would refuse you the common rights of hospitality.'<sup>28</sup>

Less well recorded are the celebrations of folk humbler than shopkeepers and lawyers. A rare glimpse into their events comes from a glum report in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. To celebrate the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson in March 1801, the Federalist newspaper sourly noted, 'a number of the friends of anarchy and confusion, commonly called democrats', had gathered at a home in Beaver County, erected 'a whiskey alias sedition pole', and generally engaged in drunken revelry. The democratic antics included 'singing the favourite [sic] Jacobin songs "Ca Ira" and "Carmignole".' Both 'Jacobin' songs had appeared in *Paddy's Resource*, a 1790s anthology of political ballads and toasts edited by Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey, a Presbyterian clergyman hanged within sight of his meeting-house in 1798. *Paddy's Resource* had a Philadelphia edition. ('Carmignole' was to be sung to 'Dainty Davy', a tune also used by Robert Burns in transforming verse into song.)<sup>29</sup>

## HIBERNIAN SOCIETIES, ST PATRICK'S DAY AND THE SHAMROCK

The Baltimore Benevolent Hibernian Society dates from 1803. Here, too, newer and older immigrants combined to express a sense of Irish nationality linked to charitable purposes and republican politics. The Baltimore society that year elected as its first president John Campbell White, a Presbyterian radical and native of Templepatrick, County Antrim. An original member of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen and a member of its Ulster Directory, he left Ireland in 1798 with his wife Elizabeth Getty and their several sons, following the rebellion. Vice President Thomas McElderry, a wealthy and influential merchant born near Ballymoney, left County Antrim prior to the American War of Independence, as had the society secretary, Dr John Crawford, the second son of a Presbyterian minister and former physician for the British East India Company, who had arrived in Baltimore in 1775.<sup>30</sup> Later its secretary would be Rev. William Sinclair, a Presbyterian minister formerly of Newtownards, County Down, suspected of involvement in the 1798 Rebellion.<sup>31</sup>

The formal toasts at the Baltimore society's St Patrick's Day meetings in 1810 and 1811 combined an ongoing sense of connection to Ireland with more immediate concerns – American and international politics and US economic development – and with intentional efforts to create a seamless Irish-American political legacy. (In this the Baltimore toasts closely resembled those delivered at the Hibernian Society events in Philadelphia.) First celebrating the memory of St Patrick, toasts then called for 'Freedom and prosperity to the people of Ireland' and 'Emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland.' Society members saluted the President of the United States, and, mindful of possible American involvement in war, hailed the nation's army, navy and militia companies. The Baltimore Hibernians cheered the construction of canals, roads and bridges, agriculture and manufacturing, and American prosperity generally. And as the beneficiaries of and participants in transatlantic revolutions, the society invoked the memories of George Washington, the nation's first president and revolutionary military commander; Benjamin Franklin, revolutionary sage; and Richard Montgomery, the Irish-born general slain early in the Americans' War of Independence.<sup>32</sup>

(The transatlantic adulation of George Washington connected republicans in Ireland and in the United States; respect for Washington united cohorts of Irish Presbyterian immigrants. Writing from New York to a friend in Ireland within a fortnight of Washington's death in December 1799, the United Irish émigré David Bailie Warden acknowledged, 'I know he will be lamented on the other side of the Atlantic.' In the United States, Warden wrote, 'Federalists and Antifederalists and politicians of every description forget their envy and hatred and with one voice deplore the loss of him who did so much for the independence and liberty of Americans.'

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Warden expressed his own admiration for the republican hero: 'his great actions and uncommon virtue seem to be informed on my heart.' Were Ireland's rulers to follow Washington's example, placing the people's prosperity first and checking their 'thirst for power and insatiate love of unlimited control ... no more would Irishmen be half so wretched as they are at present.'<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Irish-American republicans promoted something like a Montgomery cult in the years directly preceding the War of 1812.<sup>34</sup>)

The resonance and breadth of Irish fraternal organizations and their annual celebration of St Patrick's Day, mixing conviviality, charity and politics, received amplification with the launch in 1811 of *The Shamrock, or Hibernian Chronicles* in New York. The new publication received an enthusiastic and cheery endorsement from Baptiste Irvine, editor and publisher of the Baltimore newspaper, *The Whig*:

We confess that we have been considerably amused and instructed with this publication; we find it a good repository of essays, news, speeches and poetry, &c. connected with Irish affairs, calculated to beguile many a tedious hour.

In the politics of *The Shamrock*, asserted Irvine, lay the means 'to strengthen the bond of Union between one nation possessing liberty and another panting after it.' As *Shamrock* editor and publisher Edward Gillespy proposed in the newspaper's inaugural issue, 'the general good' could be attained by strengthening the connection between 'native Americans' and immigrants.<sup>35</sup> The means to that end, unstated but understood, would be close identification between the immigrant Irish and the authentic republicanism of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and their party.

Through the pages of *The Shamrock* one can begin to glimpse the national dimension of an Irish-American diaspora constructed by the 1798 cohort of Presbyterian immigrants in cooperation with the political exiles of other religious backgrounds and earlier Presbyterian migration streams. *The Shamrock* of 6 April 1811 reported that a Charleston, South Carolina, celebration of St Patrick's Day included a toast invoking Irish republican martyrs: 'The memory of Fitzgerald, Orr and Emmet – sacrificed by Tyranny at the shrine of Liberty – children of Erin! still bear their memory green in your souls.'<sup>36</sup> In the next issue *The Shamrock* reprinted from the Lexington, Kentucky, *Reporter* an account of a St Patrick's Day dinner which, rather expectedly, combined toasts to the memories of Irish patriots and the Americans Washington, Franklin, Montgomery.<sup>37</sup>

In the summer of 1811, New York's Irish-American fraternal organization met to celebrate the Fourth of July. Toasts evoked the day's association with



American independence, former President Thomas Jefferson and the memory of George Washington, hailed 'The Militia of the United States, Citizen Soldiers' and proposed the nation faced a choice between 'Commerce with Freedom, or War and Bondage.' With the ever-increasing possibility (and indeed, for some, the desirability) of war with Britain, the assembly recalled 'The memory of Emmet and Orr, martyrs of freedom – In the cause of liberty they suffered, their spirits hover over the green fields of Erin, and cherish the hopes of Irishmen that they yet may be free.'<sup>38</sup>

The outbreak of war neared the following year when the Baltimore Hibernian Society met for its annual St Patrick's Day commemoration. With *Shamrock* agent William D. Conway in the chair, toasts recalled Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey and hailed 'other departed heroes of Erin's cause.' The Baltimore Hibernians also applauded the militia, the American political leadership and the memories of Generals Washington and Montgomery.<sup>39</sup> The Philadelphia Hibernians, with their dinner, songs and toasts, similarly evoked American heroes and 'The memory of the patriots who fell attempting the emancipation of Ireland.' The Philadelphia gathering called for an end to British influence and congratulated the 'rising republic' of the United States. Two distinct events in the national capital toasted US political leaders and American economic activity along with Brian Boru, the Irish harp and an end to religious bigotry. Notably, the 'Society of the Sons of Erin' in Washington hailed the Irish union – by which they meant *not* the Union between Ireland and Great Britain (identified as 'subjection'), but rather the 'oblivion of prejudices, an equality of rights', creating a union among Irish people. In Fredericksburg, Virginia, Irish immigrants enjoyed whiskey punch, with toasts to economic achievement in the United States and civil and religious liberty for all, punctuated with music (including the popular Scots air, 'Roslin Castle').<sup>40</sup>

- 1 Harry Marlin Tinkcom, *The Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania, 1790–1801* (Harrisburg, 1950), p. 231. Thomas McKean had once been a respectable Federalist, but his sympathies for the French Revolution and antipathy towards the treaty reached with Great Britain led this son of Irish immigrants inexorably into the Republican camp – a shift which in 1799 gained him nomination as the Republican candidate for governor of Pennsylvania (*ibid.*, p. 225).
- 2 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 480–83.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp 62, 94, 115.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 162.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp 349–50, 368–74, 398–9.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 188. With regards to the ministers' orthodoxy: Wylie was the first minister ordained by the Reformed Presbyterian church in the United States; Potts was described as 'a sound Presbyterian' by the Covenanter minister James Renwick Willson. *A historical sketch of the opinions on the atonement interspersed with biographical notices of the leading*

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- doctors, and outlines of the sections of the church, from the incarnation of Christ, to the present time, with translations from Francis Turretin, on *The Atonement* (Philadelphia, 1817), p. 162.
- 8 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 497, 499.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, pp 388, 430, 464.
  - 10 William Ewing Du Bois, *A record of the families of Robert Patterson ...* (Philadelphia, 1847), p. 96.
  - 11 Alfred Nevin, *History of the Presbytery of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1888), pp 306–07; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 504.
  - 12 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 191, 504.
  - 13 Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 44; William Cobbett, *Peter Porcupine in America: Pamphlets on Republicanism and Revolution*, edited by David A. Wilson (Ithaca, NY, 1994), p. 251.
  - 14 *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 14 March 1795; *Tree of Liberty* (Pittsburgh, Pa.), 25 Dec. 1802; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 19 March 1802; *Tree of Liberty*, 10 July 1802. Irwin signified his intention to become a citizen on 20 May 1799, along with the exiled minister Robert Steele. He had been in the United States at least two years as of that date. Irwin sponsored a number of recent immigrants seeking naturalization, including the radical Ulster Seceder William Bennett and William O'Hara, who arrived in the US between June 1798 and April 1802. Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society, *A List of Immigrants Who Applied for Naturalization Papers in the District Courts of Allegheny County, Pa. 1798–1840*, vol. 1 (Pittsburgh, 1978), 4, 10, 44, 70, 101.
  - 15 *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 19 March 1802. The eleventh toast wished: 'May the tones of Erin's Harp be ever in unison with the American mind.'
  - 16 Sanford W. Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics 1800–1816* (Harrisburg, PA, 1952), p. 77; Russell J. Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics* (Pittsburgh, 1938), pp 194–5; *The Reporter*, 10 Oct. 1808; quoted in John Caldwell, *William Findley from West of the Mountains: Congressman, 1791–1821* (Gig Harbor, WA, 2002), p. 269.
  - 17 Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, pp 165, 170. The *Tree of Liberty* on 11 Oct. 1800 noted Gazzam as secretary of a Republican meeting; on 8 Nov. 1800 as a militia official.
  - 18 *A List of Immigrants Who Applied for Naturalization Papers in the District Courts of Allegheny County, Pa.*, pp 4, 5, 11 (for those sponsored by Morrison, pp 32, 50, 81); Frank C. Harper, *Pittsburgh of today, its resources and people*, vol. 3 (New York, 1931–2), p. 198; William Wilson McKinney, *Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism, Tracing the Development of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from 1758–1839* (Pittsburgh, 1938), p. 120; Presbyterian Church in the USA, Synod of Pittsburgh, *Centenary memorial of the planting and growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1876), p. 278.
  - 19 Law Library of the Courts of Washington County, Mary Lou Scott, 'Naturalizations from Circuit Court Proceedings, Washington County, Pennsylvania, 1795 to 1841' (unpublished MS), p. 66; Solon Buck and Elizabeth Hawthorn Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1995, reprint of 1939 edition), p. 395. For example, a Fourth of July celebration in 1805 heard an oration from Irish-born lawyer James Mountain (*Commonwealth* (Pittsburgh, PA), 24 July 1805).
  - 20 *Commonwealth*, 31 July, 14 Aug. 1805, 25 March 1807, 31 Dec. 1806.
  - 21 *Commonwealth*, 24 July, 31 July, 28 Aug. 1805.
  - 22 *Commonwealth*, 14 Aug. and 7 Aug. 1805. See also 31 Aug., 11 Sept. 1805. Presbyterian minister-in-exile Thomas Ledlie Birch may have been the author of an unsigned letter deploring Israel's politics (21 Aug. 1805).
  - 23 *Commonwealth*, 28 Sept. 1805; *A List of Immigrants*, p. 4. This condemnation of Henry Baldwin appeared as part of a commentary on an article in the *Tree of Liberty*, believed to have been written by Baldwin, applauding the imprisonment of William Duane.

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- 24 Higginbotham, *Keystone in the Democratic Arch*, p. 117; George Swetnam and Charles A. Locke, *The Bicentennial history of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County* (Hopkinsville, KY, 1955), pp 33–4; Ella Chalfant, *A goodly heritage: earliest wills on an American frontier* (Pittsburgh, 1955), p. 80; Charles W. Dahlinger, *Pittsburgh: a sketch of its early social life* (New York, 1916), p. 147. According to Swetnam and Locke, the two men reportedly fought ‘under Irish rules’, without an explanation of how these would have differed from the duelling practices familiar to Bates, a Virginian. They emphasize the personal nature of Pentland’s attacks on Bates; the intensity of the hostility may also lie in their former political comradeship. See Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, pp 165–7.
- 25 *Commonwealth*, 25 March 1807.
- 26 *Commonwealth*, 25 March 1807; Terry Moylan (ed.), *The Age of Revolution in the Irish Song Tradition* (Dublin, 2000), pp 94–5. The popular ‘Exile of Erin’ with Irish-language phrases including the United Irish slogan of ‘*Erin go bragh*’ (‘Ireland forever’) also appeared in a song collection published in Philadelphia by the exiled Irish revolutionary Mathew Carey: *The American poetical miscellany* (Philadelphia, 1809), p. 79.
- 27 *Commonwealth*, 25 March 1807, 23 March 1808; *A List of Immigrants*, p. 4.
- 28 *The Reporter*, 19 Sept. 1808.
- 29 *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 30 March 1801; *Paddy’s Resource, being a select collection of original and modern patriotic songs toasts and sentiments, compiled for the use of all firm patriots* (Philadelphia, 1796), pp 8, 46–7.
- 30 *The Whig* (Baltimore, MD), 24 March 1810; MHS, John Campbell White Papers, 1798–1926, MS 1005, Collection Finding Aid; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, fn41, 639; Irish Emigration Database (<http://ied.dippam.ac.uk/records/50596>).
- 31 *Baltimore Whig*, 20 March 1811; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 232.
- 32 *Baltimore Whig*, 20 March 1811; *The Whig* (Baltimore, MD), 24 March 1810.
- 33 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, MS 871, Roll I, Warden to unknown correspondent, Kinderhook, 20 Dec. 1799.
- 34 Helping to promote such a cult, *The Shamrock* (NY) began serializing the ‘Memoirs of General Montgomery, written shortly after his death, by Dr Smith of Philadelphia’ (27 April 1811).
- 35 *Baltimore Whig*, 8 March 1811; *The Shamrock*, 15 Dec. 1811.
- 36 *The Shamrock*, 6 April 1811.
- 37 *The Shamrock*, 13 April 1811.
- 38 *The Shamrock*, 27 July 1811.
- 39 *The Shamrock*, 28 March 1812.
- 40 *The Shamrock*, 4 April 1812.

## 4

## The American Edition of Plowden's Historical Review

Peter Gilmore

Irish Presbyterians who came to the United States in the late 1790s and early 1800s as a consequence of their involvement, real or perceived, in the United Irishmen, enjoyed disproportionate influence in American politics because of their often strong inclination towards republicanism. They gravitated to the Democratic-Republican Party, and that party in turn actively recruited Irish immigrants and solicited their support. These tendencies, in turn, were strengthened by the generalized support among Irish Presbyterians for republican politics. This dynamic, and its powerful gravitational pull on American politics, can be grasped in connection with the American edition of *An Historical Review of the state of Ireland* by Francis Plowden.

Francis Plowden (1749–1819), a respected and conservatively respectable barrister, was encouraged by the British government at the turn of the nineteenth century to write a history of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> However, as a Jesuit troubled by suggestions of Catholic disloyalty, his three-volume study displeased establishment critics by instead proposing that ill-considered actions of government were the fundamental cause of Ireland's troubled past.<sup>2</sup> Sir Richard Musgrave condemned Plowden's history as displaying 'party prejudice' and for attacking 'the Protestant party in Ireland and their ancestors, as well as the Governments of both countries.' Musgrave objected strongly to what he viewed as Plowden's benign treatment of the Society of United Irishmen; to Musgrave the United Irishmen had 'corrupted the public mind' and 'seduced into their Societies most of the middling and lower orders of Roman Catholics, and a very large proportion of the Presbyterians of the North.' Further, Musgrave fumed that Plowden had purposely misrepresented the Orange Order, 'that loyal body, so maligned and so meritorious.'<sup>3</sup> Such objections recommended Plowden's history to Irish republicans in the United States.

A five-volume edition published in Philadelphia appeared in 1806 through subscription.<sup>4</sup> The list of subscribers is of particular interest for its demonstration of the strength and reach of Irish political influence in the United States. The subscribers included Thomas Jefferson, President of the

United States; Aaron Burr, immediate past Vice President of the United States; Thomas McKean, Governor of Pennsylvania and De Witt Clinton, Mayor of the City of New York, who as Governor of New York would be associated with the Erie Canal. Irish-born Members of Congress William Findley and Matthew Lyon subscribed, both of them Democratic-Republicans. Subscriber Hugh Henry Brackenridge had been appointed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court by Governor McKean. Political economist Tench Coxe, appointed by President Jefferson as purveyor of public supplies, enjoyed considerable influence in the Democratic-Republican Party. Subscriber Alexander J. Dallas, former Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, was then United States District Attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania. Peter Muhlenberg, a prominent Pennsylvania landowner and Democratic-Republican, subscribed, as did the Irish-born Stephen Moylan, a founder of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick, and noted patriot leader in the American War for Independence. Mathew Carey, the politically influential Irish-American publisher, subscribed.

Michael Leib, physician, politician, scientist, inventor and leader of a Democratic-Republican faction subscribed; from 1809 to 1814 he served as United States Senator from Pennsylvania. Other subscribers who figured actively in Pennsylvania's Democratic-Republican politics included Joseph Clay, James Carson, Thomas Leiper and Joseph Lloyd – all associated with William Duane's newspaper, *Aurora*, and the insurgent candidacy of future governor Simon Snyder; William McCorkle, editor of the *Philadelphia Evening Post*, a factional rival to *Aurora*; and Joseph B. McKean, son of the governor.

The Right Rev. John Carroll, the first Roman Catholic bishop in the United States, was a subscriber. So was Charles Biddle, scion of an old and wealthy Quaker family in Pennsylvania; twice a British prisoner-of-war during the Revolutionary War, in the 1780s he served as vice president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, when Franklin was president. Another subscriber was James Caldwell, son of the Ulster-born merchant and Friendly Sons of St Patrick member of the same name. Samuel Barr of New Castle, Delaware, a County Londonderry man who had been Pittsburgh's first settled Presbyterian minister, subscribed. So did Rev. John Andrews, regarded as 'the father of Presbyterian journalism' in the United States. The Londonderry-born Baltimore merchant, Robert Purviance was a subscriber. So was the County Meath-born Baltimore merchant Luke Tiernan, a founder and officer of the city's Hibernian Society.

Among the subscribers we also find John Caldwell, New York merchant and Presbyterian United Irishman from north County Antrim; John Campbell White, Baltimore physician, Presbyterian elder, Hibernian Society officer and political exile; Rev. John McNiece of Newburgh, New York,

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formerly of Clough, County Antrim and the Presbytery of Ballymena, who had been linked to the United Irishmen; and Thomas Hoge of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Tyrone forced to flee in 1797 because of his revolutionary activities. Thomas Burke, a committed Irish republican who came to the United States in 1802 and Patrick Byrne, a middle class Catholic radical from Dublin, were both among the subscribers. As only a fraction of the subscribers could be identified, quite possibly many others, Presbyterians, Catholics and Episcopalians, had connections with the Rebellion and revolutionary movement.

However, the willingness of so many prominent and influential Americans to help bring the Plowden book to publication testifies to the success of the United Irishmen, and their supporters and sympathizers within the Irish-American diaspora and Democratic-Republican movement, in framing a particular understanding of events in Ireland. The success and pervasiveness of that influence, in turn, was dependent on the successful inclusion of the 1790s cohort of Irish Presbyterian immigrants in the well-established Presbyterian communities of the United States.

- 1 Alfred Webb, *A Compendium of Irish Biography* (Dublin, 1878), accessed via <http://www.libraryireland.com/biography/FrancisPlowden.php>; *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12 (1913), accessed via [http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Encyclopedia\\_\(1913\)/Volume\\_12](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Volume_12).
- 2 Francis Plowden, *An Historical Review of the State of Ireland* (3 vols, London, 1803).
- 3 Richard Musgrave, *Strictures upon an Historical Review of the State of Ireland ...* (London, 1804), pp 3, 146–7.
- 4 Francis Plowden, *An Historical Review of the State of Ireland ...* (5 vols, Philadelphia, 1806).

## 5

## David Bailie Warden and the Political Influence of Irish America

Peter Gilmore

As a diplomat, scientist, writer, and, above all, an enquiring mind, David Bailie Warden might well be expected to have had an extensive correspondence with a wide range of individuals. And indeed he did. However, in addition to the abilities, wit and intellectual curiosity which connected Warden to others, he can be seen as an individual element within numerous intersecting networks of Irish immigrants and Democratic-Republicans. Those connections would have profound personal meaning for him. When Warden was dismissed from his diplomatic post in September 1810, influential individuals in American government and society and politically prominent Irish immigrants – especially United Irishmen – worked successfully to restore him to his job. That effort represents a telling measure of the political influence enjoyed by this prominent Ulster-born Presbyterian radical and his circle of acquaintances.

Warden was born in 1772 into a tenant family working land on the Ards peninsula owned by the Earl of Londonderry, in the townland of Ballycastle in the parish of Greyabbey, County Down. His parents intended him for the Presbyterian ministry. He attended the University of Glasgow, studying anatomy, surgery and midwifery as well as theology. ‘In 1796-7 he obtained a University Silver Medal “for the best Historical and Philosophical Account of the Application of the Barometer to the Mensuration of Heights”.’ Upon his return to County Down, Warden served as a tutor in a school established by Rev. James Porter in Greyabbey. The Presbytery of Bangor in 1797 licensed him as a probationer, which allowed him to serve congregations as a preacher, but not to administer sacraments. He supplied various congregations in the Ards.<sup>1</sup>

Before receiving a call and ordination, however, Warden joined the United Irishmen. The young radical accepted a commission as colonel. He acted as aide-to-camp to Henry Munro, commander of the rebel forces in County Down. Following the Battle of Ballynahinch, Warden went into hiding, but soon surrendered himself. He was jailed first in Downpatrick, then Belfast, and eventually condemned along with several Presbyterian

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ministers to the prison ship *Postlethwaite* anchored in Belfast Lough. Warden resolved to emigrate. To his amazement and dismay, the Presbytery of Bangor refused his request for credentials which would have allowed him to be received by a presbytery in the United States. In May 1799 Warden set sail for New York from Belfast aboard the *Peggy* along with more than 140 other United Irishmen, among them John Caldwell, and Reverends William Sinclair and James Simpson.<sup>2</sup>

Settling in the State of New York, Warden returned to his medical studies. 'I perceive your attention is still toward the practice of physic', his friend Dr S. M. Stephenson wrote to him from Belfast. But if he continued an interest in medicine, teaching provided a more immediate source of income. The University of Glasgow graduate became principal of the Columbia Academy in Kinderhook, New York in 1801, receiving \$450 a year as principal tutor to some fifty students expected to be taught Greek, Latin, mathematics, logic, history and moral and natural philosophy. (Among his pupils was Martin Van Buren, a future President of the United States.) He later became principal of the Kingston Academy in Ulster County, between the Hudson River and Catskill Mountains, and tutor to the children of John Armstrong jun.<sup>3</sup>

When the then United States Senator Armstrong was named by President Thomas Jefferson as the American Minister to France, the appointee asked his children's tutor to accompany him to Paris as secretary. Armstrong assisted 'Reverend D. B. Warden' in achieving United States citizenship and safe conduct to France, where the Irish exile would spend most of his remaining long life. In 1808, President Jefferson appointed Warden as United States Consul in Paris.<sup>4</sup>

Warden's voluminous correspondence necessarily dealt with the details of his many duties, responsibilities complicated by his role as the official of a neutral nation posted in a combatant's capital. (As an ardent republican and Jefferson supporter, Warden personally congratulated the President on his policies: 'The measures ... you have pursued in the united [sic] States, are approved by all the reasonable, and patriotic men of this Country. It is to be hoped they will prevent war – so eagerly desired by some of the Enemies of your administration.'<sup>5</sup>) His responsibilities also required him (presumably pleasantly) to satiate the intellectual curiosity of his superior. Warden procured and sent books and maps to Thomas Jefferson, and more, and served as an intermediary for documents sent to Europeans by the President. Items shipped by Warden to Jefferson ranged from rice seeds to a plough. Jefferson also received Warden's own notes and translations of scientific treatises. This courtesy continued after Jefferson left office and retired to his plantation. On 17 April 1809 Warden dispatched his own analysis of tobacco for Jefferson's use at an upcoming meeting of the



American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Perhaps not coincidentally this information had been entrusted to ‘Mr Purviance’, perhaps the same Baltimore merchant who subscribed to Plowden’s *Historical Review*.<sup>6</sup>

In part, Warden’s correspondence kept the émigré in communication with an expansive coterie of radical reformers both in Ireland and in American exile; exchanges also connected him to Democratic-Republicans of Irish origin – representatives of earlier cohorts which created Irish Presbyterian communities and congregations. Repeatedly, a sense of personal connection appears to have been strengthened by mutual interests in the sciences and intellectual pursuits.

David Lyons, a Belfast printer, sent Warden a letter carried by a ‘particular friend’ John Abernethy Browne, who was also involved in printing business. Some details of the message were piquantly personal: ‘Your mother & family are well.’ Warden’s mother had received money from his friend and United Irish comrade John Caldwell in New York, Lyons reported. Lyons answered a question posed by Warden to say that manufacturing and commerce in the north ‘increase in much greater proportion than the Arts, Sciences, and above all the moral virtues of the people improve.’<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, Lyons informed Warden that he still hoped to launch a periodical.<sup>8</sup> A significant comment, in that it seems to point to Warden’s possibly pivotal role in transmitting Belfast literary and cultural productions to a wider audience among republicans in the United States, both American and Irish-born. Writing to Jefferson in early 1811, Warden informed the former President, ‘I have the pleasure of sending you winter no<sup>s</sup>. of an Irish magazine, edited by one of my friends’, and in another letter, made reference to an article in a Belfast magazine sent previously which called attention to the effects of cotton production on northern Ireland’s linen industry. ‘The author informs me in a letter’, Warden told Jefferson, ‘that the cotton has almost destroyed the linen business: and that the whole of the stock of one of his sons has remained unsold, on London for a year past – which has decided him to try his fortune in the United States.’<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, articles reprinted from the *Belfast Monthly Magazine* appeared in *The Shamrock*, and the newspaper’s office announced that it would receive subscriptions for the magazine.<sup>10</sup>

Warden maintained a correspondence with three men who had been among the principal leaders of the United Irishmen in Dublin, all of whom made homes in New York – Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr William MacNeven, and John Chambers – and with William Sampson, an attorney originally from County Londonderry. Physician Andrew Morton in New York informed Warden that he had seen one of his letters to (the newly arrived) Chambers and another sent to Bryson and Cuming. Bryson might refer to

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Andrew Bryson sen., who emigrated with John Caldwell in 1799, or to his sons Andrew and David – all Presbyterians and United Irishmen. George Cuming, or Cumming, a Presbyterian apothecary and physician originally from Newry, County Down, was a member of the Leinster Directory of the United Irishmen arrested in March 1798 with MacNeven and Emmet. He moved to New York in 1802 and housed Chambers upon his arrival three years later.<sup>11</sup> For many years, Warden carried on a correspondence with Matilda Tone, the widow of Wolfe Tone, founder of the Society of United Irishmen, a friendship strengthened by visitation during the many years when both resided in France. As a result, Warden became a conduit of news to United Irish émigrés in the United States about Tone. Thus, William Sampson in a November 1809 letter communicated to Warden his appreciation for news about Mrs Tone and family.<sup>12</sup>

A letter from a prominent political official conveys a sense of how American-born friends perceived Warden and his ongoing association with leading United Irishmen. Theodorus Bailey, a lawyer and former United States Representative and Senator, served as Postmaster of the City of New York at the time of writing. Calling attention to an enclosed letter of introduction for his son Robert, Bailey wrote:

I have the pleasure to inform you that your Countrymen who have become citizens and Inhabitants among us, and who were your Companions in adversity, are in general prosperous circumstances. M<sup>r</sup> Emmet is universally esteemed ... [and]... at the head of his Profession in this State; and in my opinion, the first in the United States – He has as much business as he can attend to, and I believe is rapidly making a fortune. He and his Children were last week naturalized in our Supreme Court. Doctor M<sup>r</sup>Neven is likewise successful in his profession ... M<sup>r</sup> Chambers is also doing well – He has opened an extensive assortment of Goods in his line of business and appears to be happy and prosperous – I ought not to omit Counsellor Sampson in this Enumeration – He is considered respectable in his profession and has a good share of business – all these friends of ours move in the first circles among us; and I have the satisfaction to believe that I also enjoy a portion of their Esteem.

As was typical in Warden correspondence, the Bailey letter then touched on scientific matters, specifically, mineral waters.<sup>13</sup>

An excerpt from a Warden letter to Chambers appeared in *The Shamrock* in July 1814. Possibly with Warden's assistance, Chambers's sons Frederick and William had been accepted as members of the French Legion of Honour. This provided an excuse for editorial comment which suggested a multi-vocal sense of national identity: 'Irishmen, reaping and enjoying those

honours in a foreign country which they would in vain aspire to in their own. When will Britain be wise, when will she be just, when will she call on her soldier Irishmen who conspicuously strive in foreign lands.’<sup>14</sup>

Warden communicated with fellow Ulster Presbyterian radicals with connections to recent exiles and immigrants of older cohorts, among them his fellow passenger on the *Peggy*, John Caldwell. In addition to launching businesses in New York, Caldwell became involved with both the Hibernian Provident Society and Friendly Sons of St Patrick, the members of which in New York also included Thomas Addis Emmet and William MacNeven. As we have seen, Caldwell subscribed to Plowden’s *Historical Review*.<sup>15</sup>

Correspondence with Ulster-born exiles, in turn, strengthened his connection to Presbyterians of compatible politics who had arrived prior to the crisis years in Ireland. Warden maintained a correspondence with Rev. William Sinclair, with whom he had been incarcerated on the prison ship *Postlethwaite*. Sinclair, who signed himself ‘your affectionate friend’, wrote in 1808 on behalf of Dr John Crawford, Baltimore, who sought the prize offered by Emperor Napoleon for an outstanding medical treatise. (Sinclair and Crawford, it will be recalled, were among the leaders of the Baltimore Hibernian Society.) Sinclair described his friend as a brother to the ‘ingenious D<sup>r</sup> Crawford of London ... & also to D<sup>r</sup> Crawford of Lisburn, near Belfast an eminent Physician’, with an additional brother who was a Presbyterian minister in Strabane. ‘His father was a Presbyterian minister in Crumlin for many Years – amiable learned & a Christian without guile.’ Thus, the Sinclair letter might have appealed to many of Warden’s varied interests and dimensions: medical science, republican politics, Irish Presbyterianism.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly a letter from an Ulster-born Presbyterian long resident in the United States both helped provide Warden with an introduction to an exiled Covenanter minister from County Antrim and requested of the US Consul the favour of directing a letter to the correspondent’s son, travelling in Europe to study medicine. The letter writer, Robert Patterson of Philadelphia, had been born in County Down and emigrated in 1768. He served as an officer in the revolutionary army in the American War of Independence; in 1790 became a member of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick; taught mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania; and was appointed by President Jefferson in 1805 the Director of the United States Mint at Philadelphia. For more than fifty years Patterson was an elder in the Scots Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Associate Reformed church.<sup>17</sup>

The Covenanter minister with whom Warden corresponded, Rev. Samuel Brown Wylie, shared with Patterson a connection to the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Irish-American fraternalism, and with

Warden education at the University of Glasgow and intellectual curiosity. Wylie may have spoken for many fellow émigrés when he wrote:

Now, My Dear Warden, before I take my leave of you, permit me to congratulate you both on the respectability of your present official capacity (which I have no doubt you will maintain with honour & dignity), and in the extensive opportunity ... offered you for the pursuit of your favoured studies.

Such esteem would prove invaluable in the personal and professional crisis in which Warden was already enveloped.<sup>18</sup>

Warden's principal difficulty was his insertion into the controversy engulfing his immediate superior, General John Armstrong jun., Minister to France. As a biographer observed, 'Armstrong was a favorite object of abuse in Federalist newspapers, and his enemies tried to discredit his handling of the interests of American citizens in France.' Armstrong's own personal liabilities exacerbated circumstances explosive with partisan intrigue, French imperial intentions and continental war. Henry Adams, the American historian, observed of Armstrong: 'In spite of Armstrong's services, abilities, and experience, something in his character always created distrust.'

Federalists seized on Armstrong as a weakness to be exploited in the Democratic-Republican administration of Jefferson's successor James Madison. The New York *Evening Post* vigorously attacked Armstrong, armed with affidavits and letters from purported victims of Armstrong's alleged incompetence and Francophile blundering. Warden responded to the attacks on Armstrong in the pages of the *Aurora*, edited by his friend and correspondent William Duane, 'a self-proclaimed United Irishman.'<sup>19</sup>

The *Evening Post* readily pounced on Warden, his connection to Duane and defence of Armstrong. Editor William Coleman sarcastically noted that having been 'appointed by Armstrong himself, in place of some more deserving and proper man, ... it is to be presumed that Mr Warden must be wonderfully impartial to Mr Armstrong.' Coleman continued: 'I am much misinformed if this man is an American citizen even artificially; he has formerly been an itinerant, or rather vagrant preacher, and of course must be intimately acquainted with commerce and law.' Over the next several issues Coleman reproduced in the *Evening Post* letters provided by Warden to Duane and published in the *Aurora* in an attempt to exculpate Armstrong.<sup>20</sup>

Warden's allies immediately rushed to his defence, providing Coleman with further material. The *Evening Post* reprinted from the Kingston (Ulster County, New York) *Plebian* a spirited defence of the immigrant, which recounted his academic achievements in Glasgow, early licensure by the Presbytery of Bangor, offer of teaching positions in the State of New York

and South Carolina, and service to country in France. The *Plebian* proclaimed:

In American politics Mr Warden did not interfere: yet his warmest feelings were embarked in the cause of the Irish patriots and the emancipation of his countrymen from the most abject tyranny, mingled with the first wishes of his heart. In his deportment, Mr Warden manifests a modesty bordering on diffidence – his probity is the most rigid, and the independence of his mind is beyond the reach of temptation.

The *Plebian* writer concluded by condemning Coleman for his shameful conduct.<sup>21</sup> Coleman gleefully ran the *Plebian's* defence of Warden alongside a stinging denunciation received 'from a respectable friend.' The writer expressed doubt as to whether Warden had become a United States citizen. In Ireland, this writer contended:

He was considered a zealot, attached to French politics, and though generally guarded, was viewed to be at heart a bitter Jacobin. He relinquished his ministerial functions when here, excepting the preaching now and then. He at first had the charge of the Academy at Kinderhook... , and afterwards of the one at Kingston. He boarded in Armstrong's family, and Armstrong took him with him when he went to France to serve in the double capacity of tutor to his children and private secretary to himself. And now it appears he is in the most unaccountable [sic] manner, constituted consul and agent of prize causes at Paris.

To Coleman, Warden represented an easy target in his offensive against Armstrong and the Madison administration.<sup>22</sup> (As suggested by the *Plebian* article, Warden met this attack by turning to the networks of United Irishmen and republican allies. Warden wrote to the United Irishman and Presbyterian minister William Sinclair encouraging an article in the Baltimore newspaper which affirmed his citizenship.)<sup>23</sup>

Warden, apparently, had already been feeling the pangs of rebuke and suspicion derived from his immigrant status, as he felt obliged in a letter earlier that year to his correspondent Thomas Jefferson to profess his allegiance:

I am bound to the United States by my principles, my feelings, and the solemnity of the oath which made me a Citizen; and I can say, with truth, that no Individual is more American than myself. I still cherish the hope, that I shall be allowed to remain in my present situation.<sup>24</sup>

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(In October 1809, Warden confessed to William Duane that he understood he had 'rivals', and that he had been aware of this before travelling to France.<sup>25</sup> An appreciation of Warden's difficulties led MacNeven to speak personally to the Vice President in early 1810, when George Clinton was in New York on his way to Washington. MacNeven informed Warden that Clinton: 'gave me a promise that he would personally interfere in your behalf with the President, the Ministry & the Senate. I have not been backward to press your Suit wherever I had access & a hope of being useful'.<sup>26</sup>)

As he feared, Warden did not long remain in his position. His relationship with Armstrong continued to deteriorate. Rather than enhancing his standing with his superior, Warden's robust defence of Armstrong had backfired. Although Warden was calumniated in the Federalist press as Armstrong's puppet, the Minister reacted indignantly to receiving more and worse abuse than his subordinate. Armstrong, declared an exasperated Thomas Jefferson, is 'cynical & irritable & implacable.' Armstrong, 'morose and uncommunicative', worried that Warden secretly undermined his standing in Washington and in Paris, where the Irishman was clearly more popular. Two days before relinquishing his own position, Armstrong formally relieved Warden of his duties.<sup>27</sup>

Nearly a year earlier, Warden had hoped for Armstrong's backing in seeking approval of the United States Senate for confirmation of an enhanced position. Indeed, he had hopes that President Madison, former President Jefferson and others would formally lend support to his diplomatic career. 'It is my great wish', as he told William Duane, 'to follow the political career, if encouraged by the Govt. and Country to which I have transferred all my political attachments – I trust the circumstances of my being born in another land will not operate against me.'<sup>28</sup> Thus circumstances, in fact, would both help and hinder him.

Part of his difficulties with Armstrong, leading to Warden's dismissal, was his perceived opposition to a candidate for diplomatic service from New England. In a letter to Armstrong in September 1810, Warden angrily rejected the notion that as an Irish-born, naturalized citizen he objected to being replaced by a native-born American:

I have not expressed either literally, approximately, or in any other Shape, that you had described me 'that I had been set aside to make Room for a Damned Yankey [sic]', or 'that an Irishman had nothing to expect from the present Administration'. Did I consider myself as a mere Irishman, & ought not to have been surprised that even a Yankey should have been referred to me. There is Some thing in the Case of more than Irish Contradictions, or rather to Say, the fact there is falsehood in the report. Attached as I feel to the present Administration of the US it is impossible that I should have uttered

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such words – Tho' born in Ireland, I have transferred to the US all my political affections: nor have I yet experienced, as in the Country that I had been compelled to abandon, that there also reigns a System of Invidious distinctions between members of the Same Society. This I feel so well that in whatever situations I may be placed in, or out of office never shall I be induced to attribute such prejudices to the Gov<sup>t</sup> of the U. States.<sup>29</sup>

Warden's attachment to the United States and its republican form of government had not been ignored by important friends who rallied to the immigrant's campaign for reinstatement. Not the least of these allies was the former President, Thomas Jefferson. From Monticello, Jefferson had earlier that year assured Warden of James Madison's approval of his reappointment: 'I am confident the President has a just sense of your merit, and a sufficient disposition to avail the public of your services where they would be useful.'<sup>30</sup> Jefferson, in fact, was among those working assiduously to convince President Madison of Warden's worthiness despite calumniations from the Federalist press and former friends. Madison had written to Jefferson expressing his concerns about Armstrong's accusations. Replying to his successor in April 1811, Jefferson informed Madison that, contrary to Armstrong's estimation, Warden was well-suited to the consular position.

What I saw of Warden during the ten days or fortnight he staid here, satisfied me that he merited all the good which Armstrong says of him, & that he was by no means the helpless & ineffective man in business which he represents him to be ... I have never heard a single person speak of Warden who did not rejoice in his appointment, and express disapprobation of Armstrong's conduct respecting him; and I am perfectly satisfied that, if the appointment is made to attract public attention it will be approved ...<sup>31</sup>

Warden also enjoyed the enthusiastic support of a well-placed and influential ally: Eliza Parke Custis, granddaughter of George Washington, close friend of Dolly Madison (the President's wife) and a frequent correspondent. General John R. Fenwick in a letter to Custis spoke glowingly of their mutual friend in terms that animated them both: 'I knew him Well at Paris – I knew him esteemed by Men of the first political worth – by persons of high distinction in the Literary World.' Commending Custis on her campaign for Warden, Fenwick wrote, 'May your efforts be crowned with success.'<sup>32</sup>

Crucial support for Warden came from within the Irish-America diaspora, and in particular, the networks of exiled United Irishmen and their

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supporters. Indeed, these individuals and agglomerations of individuals had become significant to Democratic-Republican electoral success in major eastern cities.<sup>33</sup> Early in 1811 the aggrieved Warden assured former President Jefferson that friends in the Irish Presbyterian strongholds of Philadelphia and Baltimore sending letters to Senators and Representatives. 'Mr. Duane has given me all his interest', Warden wrote,

and has written warmly in my favor to some of the Senators. The mass of Republican Irishmen, established in this Country, are interested in my success, and have declared that they will give obligation to the President if he nominates me as Consul to Paris – To you they are deeply grateful In new York and Baltimore they offered a public address ...<sup>34</sup>

As suggested above, President Madison hesitated in approving Warden's assignment in Paris due to the deterioration of the immigrant's relationship with his former patron and the consequent, continuing complaints from General Armstrong. On 6 April 1811 (shortly before Jefferson wrote the letter to Madison quoted above) Warden complained to Jefferson that:

I have already taken the liberty of informing you that my departure, for France, has been suspended by the President on my return here, I found that this was owing to the circumstances of his having received a note from General Armstrong, in which he vaguely states, that I ought not to have been appointed Counsel to Paris; tho' he has not presented any new allegations against me, in writing, in a satisfactory manner. General Armstrong now accuses me, as I am informed, of being the cause of his losing his popularity, by a statement which he conjectures I have made to the President, of his ministerial conduct on this account, he attacks me recently, persecutes me as much as on his power ...

Armstrong, Warden wrote, had gone so far as to insert an 'atrocious libel' in that 'acrimonious federal print', the New York *Evening Post*. As a remedy, Warden relied on his United Irish friend and colleague, the Londonderry-born lawyer William Sampson.<sup>35</sup> Within a week, Warden received a note from Sampson announcing success: 'Your character is fully vindicated', Sampson proclaimed.<sup>36</sup> Warden explained to Jefferson, 'I instructed my friend Counselor Sampson to prosecute them for libel, and they inserted an article, in their paper, of the 10<sup>th</sup>, proclaiming my innocence.'<sup>37</sup>

The reappointment secured, Warden prepared to return to Paris. He heard from some of the friends in Philadelphia and Baltimore who assisted in his campaign. Among these, the United Irishman and Presbyterian



minister George C. Potts, who offered words of pastoral concern, advice and encouragement. 'In every age of the world', Potts wrote, 'it has been a maxim, (& it is particularly an English one) that the childrens [sic] food should not be thrown to dogs, particularly to Irish dogs. More than you have felt the force of this maxim in every department of life.' Potts suggested that the advice of Robert Burns in his 1786 'Epistle to a Young Friend' was particularly sound and proceeded to quote a quatrain, apparently from memory. Be canny and be careful, the lines suggested. 'You require to take in the situation in which you are placed. – This country is like Noah's ark, it contains beasts, wild & tame, the clean & the unclean.'<sup>38</sup> Warden was welcomed back to Paris with a letter from long-time friend Matilda Tone. She told him, 'I am most truly glad to hear of your success not only, as it is honorable for you, but as it is honorable to our Native Country, and to the country you have adopted, & that has discernment & virtue to appreciate you.'<sup>39</sup>

Warden had a strong ally in Baptiste Irvine, the editor of the *Baltimore Whig*, who in 1810 and 1811 reprinted and serialized the former consul's reports from the French Council of Prizes (detailing defense of American claims), and translation from French of travellers' observations of the Mississippi valley and the Louisiana Territory and discoveries in chemistry, among other Warden productions.<sup>40</sup>

The second phase of Warden's diplomatic career would be short-lived. He was dismissed by the US Minister to France, William H. Crawford, in 1813. But he would continue to enjoy the friendship of American republicans, like Jefferson, and those from Ireland with whom he had gone into exile. His correspondence and books helped shape both an American identity and foreigners' conception of America. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859), the French political thinker and historian, visited Warden in Paris 'and probably read his books before embarking on his travels in America.' De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which remains an insightful and valuable study of American culture and institutions, thus owes something to Warden's perceptions.<sup>41</sup> Although Warden remained in France until his death in 1845, this naturalized citizen who lived only briefly United States helped define American politics from within a network of revolutionary exiles and Ulster Presbyterians.

The examination of other individual careers – as the following studies show – likewise helps to demonstrate both similarities and differences in the personal experiences of those whose emigration to the United States was affected by the political upheavals of the 1790s, individuals who would have their own particular impact on Presbyterianism, an Irish-American diaspora, and American government and politics.

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- 1 Francis C. Haber, 'David Bailie Warden, A Bibliographical Sketch of America's Cultural Ambassador to France, 1804–1845' in MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, MS 871, Roll II, p. 1; W. T. Latimer, 'David Bailie Warden, Patriot 1798, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 2nd series, vol. 13, no. 1 (1907), pp 29–30; William McMillan, 'Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising' in Liam Swords (ed.), *Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter: The Clergy and 1798* (Dublin, 1997), p. 108; Charles Dickson, *Revolt in the North: Antrim and Down in 1798* (London, 1997), p. 201. The quotation comes from Latimer, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 29.
- 2 Haber, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 2; Latimer, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 30; Dickson, *Revolt in the North*, pp 201–02; McMillan, 'Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising', p. 108; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir', pp 119–20.
- 3 Haber, 'David Bailie Warden', pp 3–4; Latimer, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 31; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir', p. 120. Dr Stephenson (identified in the 1806 *Belfast Traders Directory* as physician and midwife) made reference to acquaintances of Warden released from prison at Fort George in a letter of 25 April 1804 (MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, MS 871, Roll I). John Armstrong jun. was born in Carlisle, PA, the son of a County Fermanagh-born military and political leader. The younger Armstrong served in the Revolutionary War, and in the 1780s as Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under Presidents John Dickinson and Benjamin Franklin, and as a member of the Continental Congress. With marriage in 1789 to Alida Livingston, daughter of the wealthy and politically influential Robert Livingston of New York, Armstrong moved to the Hudson River valley as a gentleman farmer. He was elected to the US Senate in 1800 as a Jeffersonian Democratic-Republican to fill a vacancy; later elected to a full-time, he resigned, and for a while was appointed to fill his old seat. He briefly became a US Senator again in February 1804, replacing the future Warden correspondent Theodorus Bailey.
- 4 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, MS 871, Roll I, John Armstrong jun. to David Bailie Warden, 24 Aug. 1804; John Armstrong jun. to 'General Bailey', 30 Aug. 1804; John Armstrong jun., to David Bailie Warden, 24 Aug. 1808.
- 5 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, David Bailie Warden to Thomas Jefferson, 24 Nov. 1808 ([http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers)).
- 6 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Warden to Jefferson, 8 April, 24 July, 24 Nov. 1808; 17 April 1809. On 24 July 1808 Warden wrote that a study by Baron Humbolt, the German explorer and scientist, together with a letter from the author, was on its way via Mr Barry of Baltimore. Barry may have also been among the subscribers to Plowden's volume.
- 7 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, David Lyons to Warden, 7 July 1806.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Warden to Jefferson, 16 Jan., 18 March 1811.
- 10 *The Shamrock*, 11 and 18 May 1811.
- 11 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Andrew Morton to Warden, 4 Aug. 1806; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 635 n.14, 641 n.58; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 60.
- 12 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, William Sampson to Warden, 3 Nov. 1809.
- 13 Biographical Directory of the United States Congress (<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000049>); MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Theodorus Bailey to Warden, 28 Nov. 1809.
- 14 *The Shamrock*, 2 July 1814.
- 15 For correspondence, see, for example, February 1810. Biographical information largely from Wilson, 'John Caldwell's Memoir', pp 121–2.
- 16 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, William Sinclair to Warden, 18 Sept. 1808. Evidence of further exchanges between Warden and Sinclair was evident two years later when Dr Crawford wrote to Warden that he had spoken to Rev. Sinclair, who had received his letter. Warden wrote to Dr Crawford on 20 April 1809 in reference to his essay on eliminating croup (MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll VII, Letter Book A, 45).

## DAVID BAILIE WARDEN AND THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF IRISH AMERICA

- 17 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Robert Patterson to Warden, 22 Sept. 1809; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 496–7. Patterson's brother Joseph was also of the Burgher Seceder persuasion; upon arriving in North America in the early 1770s Joseph Patterson sought out Rev. Thomas Clark, formerly of Cahans, Ballybay, County Monaghan, who had led congregants to the New York colony. Joseph later became a minister in the mainstream Presbyterian Church.
- Patterson's son, Robert Maskell Patterson studied medicine in Philadelphia, Paris and London, but never practiced medicine. He did, however, follow in his father's footsteps. He was elected Professor of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania, and was later Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Virginia. Like his father, appointed Director of the United States Mint at Philadelphia in 1835, by President Andrew Jackson. The younger Patterson, a member of the Hibernian Society, married the daughter of Democratic-Republican leader Thomas Leiper, who was among the subscribers to Plowden's book (Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 499).
- 18 David Bailie Warden Papers, Samuel Brown Wylie to Warden, 15 Nov. 1809. In a later letter, Wylie informed Warden that Dr Patterson would be presenting him with diploma of American Philosophical Society.
- 19 Haber, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 10; Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of James Madison* (New York, 1986), p. 593. The description of Duane is in Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 4. A figure of scorn to Federalists, John Armstrong jun. was a hero to Democratic-Republicans. New Yorkers hailed Armstrong at a dinner in his honour in December 1810, and Baltimore citizens similarly organized a tribute (*Baltimore Whig*, 7, 11 and 20 Dec. 1810).
- 20 *Evening Post* (New York), 8, 9 and 10 Nov. 1809.
- 21 *Evening Post*, 11 Nov. 1809.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll VII, Letter Book A, 66, Warden to William Sinclair, 14 May 1810.
- 24 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, David Bailie Warden to Jefferson, 20 May 1809.
- 25 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll VII, Letter Book A, 49, Warden to William Duane, 6 Oct. 1809.
- 26 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll I, William MacNeven to Warden, 12 March 1810.
- 27 Haber, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 13; *Thomas Jefferson Papers* (Boston, 1900), p. 156; MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll I, John Armstrong, jun. to Warden, 10 Sept. 1810.
- 28 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll VII, Letter Book A, 49, Warden to William Duane, 6 Oct. 1809.
- 29 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll VII, Letter Book A, 71, Warden to John Armstrong, Jr., 9 Sept. 1810.
- 30 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll I, Thomas Jefferson to Warden, 10 Jan. 1811.
- 31 *Thomas Jefferson Papers* (Boston, 1900), Jefferson to James Madison, 7 April 1811, pp 155–6.
- 32 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll I, J. R. Fenwick to Eliza Parke Custis, 15 June 1811.
- 33 Haber, 'David Bailie Warden', p. 14.
- 34 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, David Bailie Warden to Jefferson, 26 Jan. 1811.
- 35 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, David Bailie Warden to Jefferson, 6 April 1811.
- 36 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, William Sampson to Warden, 11 April 1811.
- 37 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Warden to Jefferson, 14 April 1811.
- 38 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Baptiste Irvine to Warden, 14 April 1811; George C. Potts to Warden, 2 May 1811.
- 39 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Matilda Tone to Warden, 25 Sept. 1811.
- 40 *Baltimore Whig*, 24 Dec. 1810, 9 Jan., 23 Jan., 3 Feb. 1811.
- 41 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Roll II, Introduction, pp 2–3.

## 6

## John Neilson and James Dinsmore, Master Builders

Peter Gilmore

Unlike David Bailie Warden, John Neilson did not write books or undertake scientific inquiries. His lasting legacy, more visible, solid and tangible, are among the most prominent and stately buildings in central Virginia. Neilson also corresponded with Thomas Jefferson; instead of the references to fossils, scientific farming and foreign policy found in Warden's communiqués, however, Neilson spoke of flooring and brickwork, joists and window-frames. Like Warden, however, Neilson associated with Ulster-American Presbyterians and retained an attachment to the revolutionary cause and comrades of 1798.

John Neilson was the eldest of four brothers, the sons of a widow in the village of Ballycarry, County Antrim. He also had two sisters. The mother, a schoolmistress, had arranged an apprenticeship for her eldest son to James Hunter, an architect in Belfast. At least three of the brothers, including John, participated in the United Irishmen. Ballycarry, notably disaffected, was the home of the 'Old Croppy', James Burns, and the poet James Orr, who briefly fled to Pennsylvania following the collapse of the Rebellion. The youngest brother, teenaged William Neilson, was hanged in front of their mother for his role in the revolt (and entered legend and local history as 'the martyr of Ballycarry'). Brother Samuel was banished for life, but died while en route to the West Indies. John, sentenced to seven years' banishment, apparently escaped from the ship carrying Samuel. He made his way to Philadelphia, which as we have seen was the home of a sizeable Irish Presbyterian and United Irish émigré community. John Neilson became a naturalized United States citizen in Philadelphia in 1804.<sup>1</sup> Later that year Neilson went to work for Thomas Jefferson.

It is not known to the present writer how Neilson made the acquaintance of Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States, and leader of the political party which enjoyed the enthusiastic allegiance of exiled United Irishmen and Ulster Presbyterians of earlier cohorts. Neilson possibly came to Jefferson's attention through the politically active circles of Irish immigrants cultivated by the President and his American-born supporters.

Here, Neilson's story intersects with that of another Irish Presbyterian immigrant with whom he would remain closely associated. James Dinsmore, approximately the same age as Neilson, emigrated in the 1790s. He, too, settled in Philadelphia and became a naturalized citizen there in 1798. A master craftsman, the immigrant joiner made the acquaintance of Thomas Carstairs (1759–1830), a Philadelphia architect and house-builder originally from Fifeshire, Scotland. Carstairs was acquainted with Thomas Jefferson, whom he met in 1793. Carstairs acquired the services of Dinsmore for Jefferson. Eight days after becoming a citizen, Dinsmore had been hired by Jefferson to work on the ongoing renovation (and completion) of his palatial country home, Monticello.<sup>2</sup>

For close to a decade, from 1798 to 1809, Dinsmore created Monticello's interior woodwork. He also trained an assistant, Jefferson's slave John Hemmings. Dinsmore worked with fellow Irishman Hugh Chisholm, a carpenter, bricklayer and plasterer on the Monticello project. Dinsmore was also involved in the extensive renovation of Jefferson's summer home, Poplar Forest; Chisholm and Hemmings worked on Poplar Forest, with the workers and workshops of Monticello supplying entire units such as window-frames and doors.<sup>3</sup>

Jefferson evidently held Dinsmore in high regard. Although he banned the use of alcohol by workers, he granted the Ulsterman his customary dram – and paid for the whiskey. 'Dinsmore is said to have consumed nearly half a pint per day 'without discernible ill effects.' Perhaps as a consequence of such stability, Martha Jefferson Randolph later informed the President, 'I gave the keys to the wine cellar in to Dinsmore's hands who promised to superintend the bottling of the wine.' Jefferson frequently issued Dinsmore specific, exacting instructions, apparently confident that the 'master joiner' would carry them out.<sup>4</sup>

Dinsmore, appreciated by Jefferson's circle as a 'very fine housejoiner', is credited with the creation of 'much of the intricate turned and joined woodwork' for Monticello's interior: sashes, cornices, arches, balustrades, and shutters.' Dinsmore also worked on the privies, ice house, and coach house in the out-buildings. He thus had worked as the principal joiner on the project for some six years when joined by Neilson. Upon his arrival Neilson joined in the extensive work on Monticello.<sup>5</sup>

From Monticello, both Ulstermen went to work on Montpelier, the mansion of Jefferson's successor in office, James Madison, as he went off to Washington. Dinsmore, if he had not inspected the site, had at least discussed the project with Jefferson, who wrote Madison in September 1809: 'Dinsmore has suggested a very handsome improvement of your house, and I think the easiest by which you can make a fine room.' In April, Jefferson reported to Madison that Dinsmore and Neilson were on their

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way. Over the next few years, Dinsmore and Neilson became 'largely responsible for the renovations and additions made to Montpelier.'<sup>6</sup>

With the conclusion of the War of 1812, Jefferson had no doubt who was best qualified to oversee the restoration of the United States Capitol, which had been largely destroyed by British troops. 'You will therefore I presume be glad of the offer of good workmen from every quarter', Jefferson wrote to Thomas Munro in 1815:

Two such propose to offer themselves from hence, James Dinsmore and John Nielson. The former I brought to Philadelphia in 1798. and he lived with me 10. years. A more faithful, sober, discreet, honest and respectable man I have never known. He is at present half owner of a valuable manufacturing mill in this neighbourhood ... Both are house joiners of the first order. They have done the whole of that work in my house, to which I can affirm there is nothing superior in the US. After they had finished with me they worked 2. or 3. years for the President, to whom therefore they are well known ... The most difficult job you have is the dome of the Representatives, and I doubt if there be any men more equal to it than these. Dinsmore built the one to my house, which tho. smaller, is precisely on the same principles ... I strongly recommend these men to you, and if you employ them I shall have the double gratification of having served men worthy of trust, and of putting a public trust into worthy hands.

It is not known whether either man worked on the Capitol, nor is it known where Nielson and Dinsmore were working in the mid-1810s; architectural historian Edward Lay believed '[b]y 1817 Dinsmore was in Petersburg, where he prepared some drawings for James Monroe for a house.'<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Jefferson eagerly pursued the goal of establishing a university in Virginia, cajoling and charming legislators to approve the necessary appropriations, and drawing up the plans himself. He solicited Dinsmore and Neilson. 'I suppose the superintendance [sic] of the buildings will rest chiefly on myself as most convenient', Jefferson wrote Dinsmore:

so far as it does I should wish to commit it to yourself and mr Nelson [sic], and while little is called for this year which might disturb your present engagements, it will open a great field of future employment for you. will you undertake it? if you will, be so good as to let me hear from you as soon as you can, and I would rather wish it to be before the 6th. of May ... tender my esteem to mr Nelson & be assured of it respectfully yourself.<sup>8</sup>

## JOHN NEILSON AND JAMES DINSMORE, MASTER BUILDERS

For the next several years, Neilson worked on the University of Virginia, helping to design and executing the plans for Pavilions IX and X, seven dormitories, the Rotunda, and the Anatomical Theater. Jefferson, as anticipated, personally took charge of the project while continuing to handle the considerable lobbying effort required to ensure sufficient funds – all of which seemed to have left Neilson bemused, frustrated and honoured.

Mr Jefferson seems in high spirits in consequence of the money granted by the Assembly, he said he should write to the Visitors for them to sanction his measures, and fall to work immediately. I believe he would be anxious that Dinsmore and my self would undertake the carpenter work ... He is full of brickmaking ideas at present ... I hope you will not impute it to vanity or impertinence my thus intruding my opinion on you, it arises from a sincere desire that the work may be executed in a manner that will reflect credit on all who are concerned in it, in short I would wish it equal to the grandeur of the design, which I have never seen equaled.

Neilson's letters to Jefferson and his associates and University officials reflect the high hopes of the project's participants, a myriad of building details, and, inevitably, money concerns. On 11 March 1823, the University Proctor, Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, enclosed with a letter to Jefferson a proposed contract between the University and the two Ulster-born master builders. 'I found great difficulty in fixing the prices of a great portion of the work', he said.<sup>9</sup>

Before Neilson's skills were given over to the University of Virginia project, he had undertaken what has been considered 'most important work' – the Upper Bremo Plantation. According to architectural historian Lay, this mansion 'contains many Jeffersonian features' and may be 'the finest Jeffersonian building not designed by Jefferson.' In addition, Neilson built several houses: his own brick house, another sold to Andrew Dinsmore (the carpenter brother of James Dinsmore) in 1827, and a third, also brick, near the University. Drawings and paintings found among his possessions tend to confirm Neilson's design of the Upper Bremo Plantation, which had been attributed by some to Jefferson's granddaughter, and also indicate his creative contributions to the design and appearance of University buildings.<sup>10</sup>

Neilson's estate at the time of his death in 1827 revealed an extensive library of more than 245 titles, including several of Irish interest, among them Gordon's *History of the Irish Rebellion*, as well as artist's implements and carpentry tools, gardening equipment, crops, livestock, and eleven slaves. All of his wealth was bequeathed to relatives in Ireland, including his wife Mary and surviving brother, Jackson. (His widow was then living at

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Loughmorne, Carrickfergus.) Among the beneficiaries was Mary Ann McCracken of Belfast, 'the friend of my family', and sister of the executed rebel leader Henry Joy McCracken under whose leadership the Neilson brothers had fought in 1798.<sup>11</sup>

While working on the University of Virginia, James Dinsmore served as the principal master carpenter for Pavilions III, V and VIII and fourteen dormitories. As in the case of Neilson, it is believed that the full extent of Dinsmore work as designer and builder is unrecognized. Dinsmore acquired property in Charlottesville; among the purchasers of his lots was James Gorman, an Irish-born stonemason who worked with both master builders. Dinsmore deeded a portion of one lot to the Presbyterian church. Dinsmore drowned in 1830 at the age of fifty-nine. Among the recipients of his bequests was a brother Robert in Ireland.<sup>12</sup>

- 1 Dictionary of Ulster Biography ([www.ulsterbiography.co.uk](http://www.ulsterbiography.co.uk)); Dictionary of Irish Architects ([www.dia.ie/architects/view/7094/NEILSON-JOHN](http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/7094/NEILSON-JOHN)).
- 2 Dictionary of Ulster Biography, James Dinsmore' ([www.newulsterbiography.co.uk/index.php/home/viewPerson/1889](http://www.newulsterbiography.co.uk/index.php/home/viewPerson/1889)); Philadelphia Buildings and Architects entry on Thomas Carstairs ([www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23000](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23000)); Julian P. Boyd, Charles T. Cullen, John Catanzariti, Barbara B. Oberg, et al. (eds), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (33 vols, Princeton, 1950–), vol. 30, pp 248, 381, 435; James A. Bear, Jr., and Lucia C. Stanton (eds), *Jefferson's Memorandum Books: Accounts, with Legal Records and Miscellany, 1767–1826* (Princeton, 1997), vol. 2, p. 985; Boyd, et al., *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, pp 35–6.
- 3 'Thomas Jefferson's Monticello: People of the Plantation' ([www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/james-dinsmore](http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/james-dinsmore)); Encyclopedia Virginia, 'Poplar Forest' ([http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Poplar\\_Forest](http://encyclopediavirginia.org/Poplar_Forest)); K. Edward Lay, 'Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy', *The Magazine of Albemarle County History* 46 (1988), pp 28–93.
- 4 Dictionary of Ulster Biography, 'James Dinsmore'; Bear and Stanton, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, vol. 2, pp 1005, 1006; James A. Bear, Jr, *Jefferson at Monticello* (Charlottesville, 1967), pp 54–6; Edwin M. Betts and James Bear, Jr (eds), *Family Letters of Thomas Jefferson* (Columbia, MO, 1966; reprinted Charlottesville, 1986), p. 359; *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 38: 1 July to 12 November 1802 (Princeton, 2012), pp 108–09, 497; Jerry Holmes (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson: A Chronology of His Thoughts* (Lanham, MD, 2002), pp 180–81.
- 5 'Thomas Jefferson's Monticello: Mulberry Row' ([www.monticello.org/mulberry-row/people/james-dinsmore](http://www.monticello.org/mulberry-row/people/james-dinsmore)).
- 6 Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 23 Sept. 1808, letterpress copy available at Library of Congress, quoted in 'Thomas Jefferson's Monticello: People of the Plantation' ([www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/james-dinsmore](http://www.monticello.org/site/plantation-and-slavery/james-dinsmore)); J. Jefferson Looney (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series* (Princeton, 2004), vol. 1, p. 155; Digital Montpelier Project ([www.digitalmontpelier.org/explore\\_1812.html](http://www.digitalmontpelier.org/explore_1812.html)).
- 7 'Thomas Jefferson's Monticello: People of the Plantation'; Lay, 'Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy.' With regard to the 'mill' mentioned by Jefferson, Lay writes: 'In 1811, Dinsmore acquired a saw and merchant mill in Pen Park, north of Charlottesville, in partnership with John H. Craven. Craven purchased Dinsmore's share in the enterprise four years later.'



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- 8 University of Virginia Library, Electronic Text Center, Letters to and from Jefferson, 1805–17, Jefferson to James Dinsmore, 13 April 1817; Lay, 'Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy'.
- 9 University of Virginia Library, Electronic Text Center, Letters to and from Jefferson, 1823, John Neilson to John Hartwell Cocke, 22 Feb. 1823; Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough to Thomas Jefferson, 11 March 1823. For letters dealing with building supplies and building plans, see: Letters to and from Jefferson, 1821–2, Robert McCulloch to John Neilson, 2 Feb. 1822; John Neilson to Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, 11 Feb. 1822; John Neilson to Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, 16 March 1822; Letters to and from Jefferson, 1823, John Neilson to John Hartwell Cocke, 22 Feb. 1823; James Dinsmore and John Neilson and Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, Contract for Work on the Rotunda, 11 March 1823; Thomas Jefferson to Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, 12 March 1823; Thomas Jeffers to Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, 22 April 1823; John Neilson to Thomas Jefferson, 5 May 1823; Thomas Jefferson to Arthur Spicer Brockenbrough, 16 June 1823; John Neilson to John Hartwell Cocke, 23 Aug. 1823.
- 10 Lay, 'Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy'.
- 11 Ibid; Dictionary of Ulster Biography ([www.newulsterbiography.co.uk/index.php/home/viewPerson/1890](http://www.newulsterbiography.co.uk/index.php/home/viewPerson/1890)).
- 12 Lay, 'Charlottesville's Architectural Legacy.'

## 7

## John Glendy and the Presbytery of Baltimore

Peter Gilmore

As we have seen, eighteenth-century Baltimore had become a 'Scotch-Irish boom town' due in large part to the efforts of Ulster-born merchants who promoted and managed trade between the seaport and the interior linked by the Susquehanna River and between the seaboard United States and the British Isles, especially Ireland's northern ports. These merchants made use of and developed networks of familial and business relations linking together heavily Irish Presbyterian settlements in the American interior, Ulster-born merchants of American seaports and centres of commercial activity in Ireland. Through these connections Baltimore became a favoured destination for northern emigrants and home to a considerable émigré population at the turn of the nineteenth century, including clergy and ministerial candidates.<sup>1</sup>

The minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore for 29 April 1795 reported that:

M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Knox a Liciniate [sic] from the Presbytery of Belfast in Ireland applied to be taken under our Care, having produced regular Credentials of his Licensure & good Character, which were confirmed by a irrefutable private Letter to a Gentleman in this Town, & after having preached some time within our bounds & agreeable to Direction from the committee of Supply. Upon particular Inquiry & Sufficient Examination it was agreed to receive & employ him till the Sense of the General Assembly should be signified respecting his Care, & our Commissioners were directed to lay before them his Testimonials at their next Meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Knox's personal relations with Presbyterian clergy would become evident subsequently.

The denominational rules which allowed reception of Knox changed in 1798, against the backdrop of the restrictive Alien and Sedition Acts adopted by the United States Congress and the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. The rules required immigrant ministers to apply to regional committees already established to handle travelling clergy. Following a favourable initial inspection, ministers were to submit their credentials to the presbytery,

undergo an interview on their educational achievements, and then be examined on 'experimental acquaintance with religion, soundness in faith' to qualify for a one-year probation period. A minister or ministerial candidate rejected by one presbytery could not be accepted by another without permission of the General Assembly. The Baltimore Presbytery opposed the rule and continued two years after its adoption to seek its reversal. The Presbytery insisted that 'The Regulations respecting the reception of foreign Ministers & Licentiates adopted by the Gen<sup>l</sup> Ass<sup>y</sup>' violated the denomination's constitution.<sup>3</sup>

Rev. John Glendy may have applied to join the Baltimore Presbytery under controversial circumstances, but his application apparently did not encounter jurisdictional obstacles – possibly because the noted United Irishman carried credentials from an American and not an Irish presbytery. Glendy's activities on behalf of reform and sympathies for the United Irishmen were well-known in the vicinity of Maghera, County Londonderry, where he was ordained in 1778 as that congregation's fourth minister. (In the 1830s Glendy was still recalled locally as 'a United Irishman.')

Suspected of participation in the June 1798 uprising, Glendy's house was burned and the minister and his family forced to flee separately. (Walter Graham, a Maghera elder and son of the clerk of session, was hanged and beheaded for his role in the rebellion.) In 1799 Glendy, his wife and five children arrived in Norfolk, Virginia. From there Glendy and family removed to western Virginia's Augusta County in the Shenandoah valley, a well-established Irish Presbyterian enclave.<sup>4</sup>

The Presbytery of Lexington heard on 15 October 1799 that 'the Rev Jno. Glendy a Presbyterian Clergyman from Ireland' had been interviewed by the standing committee responsible for inspecting the credentials of incoming clergy and had been given permission to serve as an occasional preacher. Earlier that day, the Presbytery received a request from the joint congregation of 'Bethel & Brown's meeting house' for 'as much of the labours of the Rev. Jno. Glendy as might be at the disposal of Pres[bytery].'

On 16 October, the Presbytery heard directly from Glendy himself:

The Rev Jno. Glendy was introduced to Pres. & professed his wish & intention of putting himself under the care of this Pres., & becoming a member of the presbyterian [sic] church in the United States of America. He accordingly produced his testimonials formally draughted & signed by the clerk of the Pres of Roote [sic] in Ireland of which he was for 20 years a member: also agreeably to the act of the Gen<sup>l</sup> Assembly in the case provided such collateral testimony as was satisfactory to Pres., whereupon a private conference being had, upon the questions shall M<sup>r</sup> Glendy be received upon trials, it was answered unanimously in the affirmative.

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On the third day of the meeting, having passed his examinations, Glendy 'was permitted to preach in our bounds, & to take a seat with us in this occasion as directed by the Gen<sup>l</sup> assembly.' The General Assembly subsequently approved the admission of Glendy, noting on 27 May 1801:

The Presbytery of Lexington reported to the Assembly their proceedings in the case of the Rev. John Glendy, late a member of the Presbytery of Route in Ireland, who had applied to be admitted a member of the Presbytery of Lexington, together with his credentials. On motion, Resolved, That the proceedings of the Presbytery in this affair have been orderly and regular, and that Mr Glendy be received as a minister of the Presbyterian Church, in good standing.

Glendy subsequently served as stated supply to the Staunton congregation and at least one rural church for the next few years.<sup>5</sup>

The research of historian Katharine L. Brown illuminates interconnections that existed between pre-1798 and post-1798 Ulster Presbyterian immigrants, and, in particular, points to specific links between Glendy's congregations in Maghera and Staunton. For example, William Herron, the precentor who lined out the psalms to the Maghera congregation during worship had arrived in Staunton *c.* 1795. He again became the 'singing clerk' in Glendy's congregation. Based on her examination of Augusta County civil records pertaining to the extended families of those in Glendy's congregation, Brown concluded, 'It is likely that many of these immigrants to the Staunton area between 1795 and 1805 were United Irish sympathizers. Some who arrived after 1798 may even have participated in the Rebellion.' John Glendy's own brother-in-law, Robert Guy, who settled in Augusta County, may have been a United Irishman.<sup>6</sup>

It is not clear when Thomas Jefferson and John Glendy met, although almost certainly the acquaintance began while the Ulsterman preached in the Shenandoah valley. Theirs appears to have been a mutual respect: a well-educated, effective and eloquent preacher who had sacrificed his career in the cause of an Irish republic, and the intellectually curious, well-read leader of the political party unreservedly committed to America's republican experiment. Reportedly, Jefferson – then President of the United States – invited Glendy to Washington where the Presbyterian minister gave a good account of himself.<sup>7</sup>

In Baltimore, meanwhile, the restiveness within the Presbyterian congregation coincided with resentment towards a politically unacceptable minister. The infirmity (soon followed, in 1802, by death) of the long-serving pastor Rev. Dr Patrick Allison, necessitated a search for a new

minister. The congregation called New York licentiate James Inglis in 1802; the Presbytery received him in April 1802 and ordained him later the same month. There was a partisan political problem, however. Inglis, the son of Scottish immigrants and a graduate of Columbia University in New York, had studied law with arch-Federalist Alexander Hamilton. Staunchly republican Baltimore Presbyterians were indignant that an associate of the Jeffersonian *bête noir* should be their minister; their repugnance fed long-simmering demands for a second congregation. (As early as 1790 the Baltimore Presbytery had been approached by adherents of a new congregation.)<sup>8</sup>

Glendy had been among the ministerial candidates considered by the Baltimore congregation. President Jefferson likely used his influence, and certainly his knowledge of Glendy, to recommend the émigré minister to General Samuel Smith, a United States Congressman and leader of Baltimore republicans. Once the Baltimore Presbyterian Church called Inglis, dissidents mobilized, drawing up a list of subscribers by year's end. 'Persons Stiling themselves commissioners of the Second Presbyterian church of Baltimore' petitioned the Presbytery at its April meeting. Circumstances came together at the August meeting. First, the Presbytery admitted Glendy to membership, following a sermon and presentation of credentials from the Lexington Presbytery. The Presbytery then recognized the validity of a second Baltimore congregation and approved its call to Glendy:

Papers relative to a Society calling themselves the Second Presbyterian church in the City of Baltimore, were read, and considered, and the Presbytery recognized the evidence of a distinct worshipping society, in the city of Baltimore, under the name, and style aforesaid, and received them under their care. A call, containing a promise of adequate compensation from the Second Presbyterian Church in Baltimore to the Rev<sup>d</sup> John Glendy, was put into his hand, of which, having considered the matter, he declared his acceptance, whereupon ordered, that M<sup>r</sup> Glendy be installed as soon as may be, after the completion of the Edifice, contemplated by the foresaid Second Presbyterian Church.

With procedural ease, but not without controversy, Glendy had acquired an American pulpit.<sup>9</sup>

Glendy's new congregation contained some of Baltimore's more prominent Irish-Americans. John Campbell White, the 1798 émigré, and his sons were members. Dr White, a native of Templepatrick, County Antrim, was a leader of the Baltimore Hibernian Society and a subscriber to Plowden's *Historical Review*. John McKim jun., the son and grandson of immigrants from Londonderry, took an active role in the Hibernian Society

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and subscribed to Plowden's *Historical Review*. His uncle Alexander McKim was president of the Baltimore Republican Society in the 1790s and vice president of the Maryland Society for the Abolition of Slavery; in 1794 John McKim, also a member of the Republican Society, was among those who freed his slaves. James, Robert and John Purviance, prominent Baltimore merchants of Ulster origin, belonged to a family known for its strong anti-British government activism in the 1770s. Robert Purviance subscribed to Plowden's *Historical Review*.<sup>10</sup>

Already an admirer of Jefferson, the champion of 'civil and Religious Liberty', Glendy readily expressed his gratitude for the President's contribution to his Baltimore pastorate. 'I should deem myself lost to y<sup>e</sup> best Emotions of the human heart', Glendy wrote Jefferson in late 1803,

did I not seize with Avidity this flattering opportunity of addressing You, (thro' the medium of a dignified Citizen Gen<sup>l</sup> S. Smith) and acknowledging the debt of gratitude I owe You – Debt, beyond expression to calculate – Gratitude, too ardent to be conceded ... Your kind and benevolent recommendation, has raised me very high indeed, in y<sup>e</sup> scale of public estimation, and given to an obscure Individual, personal, moral, and political consequence in this City. Here am I, exhibiting a trial of skill in sound Divinity, pure Rhetoric, and natural Elocution.

In praising Jefferson for policies which seemed to contribute to peace, Glendy did not hesitate to remember Ireland or its position in the calculus of international politics:

Humanity bids me rejoice, while my heart bleeds for my devoted Country – Ah poor Erin! ill-fated Hibernia! much I fear thy chains are rivetted forever – Yet my Soul triumphs in the persuasion, that it will have direct tendency to tranquillize your Administration. Party-spirit begins already to hide its hateful Head; whilst Aristocracy blushes as ashamed of the light.<sup>11</sup>

In February 1805, as he prepared for ordination as Second Baltimore's minister, Glendy congratulated Jefferson on his re-election, hailing in fulsome terms a domestic triumph deemed of global significance. With these well-wishes out of the way, Glendy took the opportunity to express doubt about the Baltimore posting. Glendy began acknowledging Jefferson's 'lively interest ... in all that nearly and dearly concerns my ministerial responsibility, and the happiness of my promising, helpless ... family' as communicated by a mutual friend, 'my beloved friend, M<sup>r</sup> S. Hollins.' Glendy's difficulties were twofold. On the one hand, the committee of

Second Presbyterian had failed to raise the promised salary. On the other, Glendy had reason to believe he might be invited by First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, which now numbered Governor Thomas McKean among its congregants. ‘Duty, interest, seem at Variance’, protested Glendy. ‘In vain have I tried to reconcile them, in my personal storm of feeling and Situation. – I trust a benignant Providence will overrule it for the best.’<sup>12</sup> Jefferson responded promptly, informing Glendy that he had written to McKean on the minister’s behalf.<sup>13</sup>

Glendy and Jefferson apparently maintained their relationship for a number of years. In 1815 the two men attempted, but failed, to meet during a westward trip by Glendy. The minister hoped that on his way home to Baltimore from Staunton, Jefferson might arrange for him to be a guest preacher in Charlottesville, with the former President in attendance. Jefferson, who had been absent from Monticello when Glendy stopped by, missed the minister in Charlottesville by an hour due to ‘threatening’ weather. Jefferson wrote of his ‘affection and respect’ for the minister; Glendy mentioned in his letter that he had dined with President Madison on his trip west. Clearly, the former minister to Maghera’s Presbyterian congregation commanded the attention of American political leaders.<sup>14</sup>

Jefferson’s influence likely contributed to Glendy’s election as Chaplain for the United States House of Representatives for the first session of the Ninth Congress, on 4 December 1805. He declined the position, however. (The House elected Rev. James Laurie as chaplain a week later.) The US Senate chose Glendy as its chaplain on 6 December 1816, but he likewise declined to serve in that capacity.<sup>15</sup>

The reasons for minister’s declination are unknown. A surmise might be dissonance between the beliefs of ‘Old-Light’ (and old-country) Presbyterians and the reality of republicanism in its daily democratic practice in the United States – if not (guarded) dismay with the latitudinarism of their republican hero, Thomas Jefferson, and his secularized understanding of religious liberty. In his letter to Glendy on 3 March 1805, Jefferson observed that Congress was still at work, ‘for they have been obliged to consecrate the sabbath to the finishing as much of their business as they can before midnight when they politically expire.’ It is not known how Glendy reacted to what would have been for many contemporary Presbyterians a blasphemous disregard of the Lord’s Day. In June 1808, Jefferson wrote to Glendy soliciting his hospitality for James Ogilvie, an immigrant Scots lecturer and teacher believed to have combined fervent republicanism with skeptical rationalism. It is not known how Glendy responded to this request.<sup>16</sup>

The causes of republicanism and Old-Light Presbyterianism did not always adhere. The example of Samuel Miller may be instructive. Miller was a New York Presbyterian minister who supported the French Revolution

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and welcomed Irish exiles. In 1808, Miller wrote to Jefferson encouraging the President to declare a day of national fasting and prayer. Jefferson declined. The Constitution gave him no authority to proclaim a fast-day, Jefferson explained; for the President to recommend such a day would mean that he 'should indirectly assume to the US an authority over religious exercises which the Constitution has directly precluded them from.' The 'dictates of his own reason' told Jefferson that 'civil powers alone have been given to the President of the U. S. and no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents.'<sup>17</sup>

Seven years later, Miller wrote to William Duane, the Philadelphian republican leader and editor to stop his subscription to the *Aurora*. Miller explained that he continued to admire the newspaper's politics but could no longer accept articles which demeaned 'Bible societies' and 'vital religion.' (By 1810, Glendy served on the Board of Managers of the Baltimore Bible Society.) 'I would gladly have the newspaper come into my home', Miller said, if free from the abuse of beliefs and practices he held dear. Miller had come to the conclusion that religious interests come before politics.<sup>18</sup> In October 1826 Miller joined his old friend John Glendy in the sanctuary of Second Presbyterian of Baltimore for the ordination of John Breckinridge, the son of a Democratic-Republican politician and young clergyman who would become the aged Glendy's assistant and eventual successor. In an ordination sermon later published under the title *Christian Weapons Not Carnal, But Spiritual*, Miller argued that while the church does not need either interference or help from the civil magistrate,

it is nevertheless true, on the one hand that every civil magistrate ought to be a christian, to love the church, and to seek to promote her interests; and, on the other, that every christian ought to be a vigilant and active patriot, loving his country, and endeavouring to secure her welfare continually, by faithfully discharging all the duties of a good citizen.<sup>19</sup>

Was this a comment on the state of the Democratic-Republican Party? Does it in any way reflect the thinking of Glendy in refusing the honour of serving as Chaplain to the US House and Senate?

1 Among the Ulster radicals who spent time in Baltimore was the colourful Belfast poet Aeneas Lamont. John Gray has written of Lamont: 'At age seventeen in 1778 he was a Belfast Volunteer, spent time in revolutionary America, and certainly Baltimore, returned to Belfast by the 1790s, and was active in the Belfast Reading Society. A one-time correspondent with Benjamin Franklin, he was also a playwright and poet. His *Poems on Different Subjects* were published in Belfast on Bastille Day, 1795. Written in the conventional English mode, they mixed inconsequential love pieces with a brazenly



- republican agenda. Lamont secured 570 subscribers including almost the entire United Irish leadership ...' (John Gray, 'Burns and his Visitors from Ulster: From Adulation to Disaccord', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 33, issue 1, p. 326).
- 2 Archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Presbytery of Baltimore, *Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, vol. 1, pp 67–8.
  - 3 Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, From Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive* (Philadelphia, 1847), pp 148, 190; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, p. 114; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 121; Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Freeport, NY, 1970), p. 300.
  - 4 Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', pp 87–9; Angeliqye Day and Patrick McWilliams (eds), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, vol. 18. Parishes of County Londonderry V* (Belfast, 1993), p. 68; 'John Glendy, of Maghera, Co. Derry, Presbyterian Minister and Patriot, 1798', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 2nd series, vol. 13, no. 3 (Aug. 1907), pp 101–04.
  - 5 Archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, MF Pos. 736 r.9, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Presbytery of Lexington, *Minutes*, pp 160–62, 166–7; *Minutes of the General Assembly ... A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820*, p. 221; John Lewis Peyton, *History of Augusta County, Virginia* (Staunton, VA, 1882); Frank Robbins Pancake, *A historical sketch of the First Presbyterian Church [Staunton, Virginia]* (Richmond, VA, 1954), p. 4; Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', p. 89.
  - 6 Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', pp 91–2.
  - 7 *Ibid.*, p. 90; 'John Glendy, of Maghera', p. 105; James E. P. Boulden, *The Presbyterians of Baltimore: Their Churches and Historic Grave-yards* (Baltimore, 1875), pp 38–42.
  - 8 *Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, pp 126–7 (14 April 1802), 128 (25 April 1802); Boulden, *Presbyterians of Baltimore*, pp 38–42; Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, *One hundred fifty years, 1803–1853* (Baltimore, [1953?]), p. 7; 'James Inglis' (<http://famousamericans.net/jamesinglis>); Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore website, 'Our History' (<http://secondpresby.org/welcome/our-history>). Rev. James Inglis became chaplain of the St Andrew's Society (*Baltimore Whig*, 5 Dec. 1810).
  - 9 Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, *One hundred fifty years*; Boulden, *Presbyterians of Baltimore*, pp 38–42; Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', p. 90; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, vol. 1, p. 142 (9 Aug. 1803). The Presbytery ordered on 10 Oct. 1804 'that the Rev<sup>d</sup> John Glendy be installed in the Pastoral Charge of the Second Presbyterian congregation in the city of Baltimore on the Saturday immediately following the opening of the next stated meeting.'
  - 10 Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, *One hundred fifty years*; *The Shamrock*, 31 March 1811; Brantz Mayer, *Baltimore: Past and Present. With Biographical Sketches of Its Representative Men* (Baltimore, 1871), p. 391; Eugene Perry Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790–1800* (New York, 1942), pp 153–4; Richard K. MacMaster, *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America* (Belfast, 2009) especially Chapter 11.
  - 11 Barbara B. Oberg and J. Jefferson Looney (eds), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition* (Charlottesville, 2008), (<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TJSJN-01-36-02-0021>). Although sometimes dated 1801, the correct date would appear to be 5 Dec 1803.
  - 12 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, John Glendy to Jefferson, 28 Feb. 1805 ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:5:./temp/-ammem\\_oVfn::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:5:./temp/-ammem_oVfn::)). Glendy's 'beloved friend' may have been a partner in the firm of McBlair and Hollins and an associate of another Baltimore merchant family of Ulster origin, the Purviances. Michael McBlair came to the US from Belfast in 1789. This company (according to the MHS collection guide for the McBlair Papers) 'owned some famous ships and traded all over the world.' 'In 1801, McB. was married by the Presbyterian minister in Baltimore, to Pleasance, daughter of the

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- Revolutionary patriot Dr Lyde Goodwin.' Their fourth son: John Hollins McBlair. In Purviance papers (MHS), 2 Aug. 1798 document, 'Table of Coffee Exported by \_\_\_ Hollins.' McBlair was among the subscribers to Plowden's *Historical Review*.
- 13 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Jefferson to John Glendy, 3 March 1805 ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:4:./temp/-ammem\\_oVfn:](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:4:./temp/-ammem_oVfn:)).
  - 14 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, John Glendy to Jefferson, 28 Sept. 1815 ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:2:./temp/-ammem\\_oVfn:](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:2:./temp/-ammem_oVfn:)); Jefferson to John Glendy, 22 Oct. 1815 ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:1:./temp/-ammem\\_oVfn:](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:1:./temp/-ammem_oVfn:)).
  - 15 'Chaplains of the House' (<http://history.house.gov/People/Office/Chaplains>); 'Senate Chaplains', ([www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Senate\\_Chaplain.htm](http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Senate_Chaplain.htm)).
  - 16 LoC, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Jefferson to John Glendy, 3 March 1805 ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:4:./temp/-ammem\\_oVfn:](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/query/P?mtj:4:./temp/-ammem_oVfn:)); Jefferson's Monticello, 'Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer', ([www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/day-thanksgiving-and-prayer](http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/day-thanksgiving-and-prayer)); American History from Revolution to Reconstruction website, Jefferson letter to Samuel Miller, 23 Jan. 1808 ([www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl183.php](http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl183.php)). With regard to Miller's republican politics: members of a Pittsburgh anti-democratic club in the 1790s mentioned Samuel Miller as being among those who 'were also exceptions to the rule that the clergy served the Federalists faithfully' (Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, pp 199–200).
  - 17 American History from Revolution to Reconstruction website, Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Miller, 23 Jan. 1808 ([www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl183.php](http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl183.php)).
  - 18 Samuel Miller, *The Life of Samuel Miller, D.D., LL.D., second professor in the Theological seminary of the Presbyterian church, at Princeton, New Jersey*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1869), pp 18–20. Glendy reference: *Baltimore Whig*, 23 Nov. 1810.
  - 19 Samuel Miller, *Christian Weapons Not Carnal, But Spiritual* (Princeton, 1826), pp 38–9.

## 8

## Rev. William Sinclair

Peter Gilmore

Glendy and Miller were likely not alone in grappling with the implications of the marriage between republicanism and Presbyterianism. An unidentified writer in the *Baltimore Whig* in early 1811 argued that the relationship had a firm basis:

A Christian ... cannot fail of being a republican, for every precept of the Gospel inculcates those degrees of humility, self-denial and brotherly kindness, which are directly opposed to the pageantry of a court. A Christian cannot fail of being useful to the republic, for his religion teachest him, that no man 'liveth to himself.'<sup>1</sup>

A similar sentiment, in a similar style, can be found in an 1820 sermon delivered to an eastern Maryland Masonic meeting by Rev. William Sinclair, in Ireland a New-Light Presbyterian. He preached on Ephesians 5:2, 'walk in love'. 'All the noble virtues of humanity and charity', declared Sinclair,

of fortitude and greatness of soul, which shine in the illustrious actions of man and attract our applause in the pages of history, are derived from the native exercise and operation of this principle. – The hero who bled for the interest of his country, the parent who labours for the bread of his family, and the friend who died for his faithful companions; were all actuated by the same benevolent spirit and felt its influence in every honourable action.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the fourth son of William Sinclair, a farmer in Kilcronaghan parish, County Londonderry, Rev. William Sinclair, formerly minister of First Newtownards, County Down, appears to have been an early and consistent supporter of the Society of United Irishmen and the *Northern Star* newspaper. In early November 1796, Lord Castlereagh, son of the landlord of Newtownards, wrote to his wife that 'Sinclair has been playing a most artful game, and has done much to mislead.' Later that month, however, Castlereagh reported on a successful meeting where several hundred of the inhabitants of Newtownards and district took the oath of allegiance. Afterwards 'we had a very jolly dinner: Cleland quite drunk, Sinclair

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considerably so, my father not a little, others lying heads and points, the whole very happy, and 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia' declared permanent.<sup>3</sup>

During the Rebellion, Sinclair was one of a number of individuals who were part of an insurgent committee in Newtownards, though it was afterwards claimed that the minister was less than a willing participant in this.<sup>4</sup> Following the rising, he was arrested, faced a court martial, found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life. At the time of Sinclair's arrest, his manse was looted and torched. As the principal lay member of Sinclair's congregation was Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, Sinclair perhaps should not have expected mercy. And yet, apparently he did. As a youth Castlereagh had been Sinclair's student. In exile in Baltimore Sinclair was often heard to complain how badly he had been treated. He was imprisoned on the prison ship *Postlethwaite*, a former coal-tender anchored in Belfast Lough, along with ministers Thomas Ledlie Birch, William Steel Dickson, Robert Steele and James Simpson, and the licentiate David Bailie Warden. In May 1799, Sinclair set sail for New York on the *Peggy*, along with Simpson and Warden, and John Caldwell.<sup>5</sup>

Before his departure Sinclair received a certificate of ordination from the Presbytery of Antrim, signed by the Moderator. Apparently, however, he did not seek admission to a presbytery in the United States, certainly not to a presbytery centred on the city where he took up residence – Baltimore. Instead, like many other exiles, Sinclair opened a school, Baltimore Academy; in 1808, this academy along with another run by a fellow Presbyterian minister, Samuel Knox, were merged with Baltimore College with Sinclair becoming its vice-president; he was also the Professor of Logic and Rhetoric.<sup>6</sup> In 1809 he and Knox produced an edition of *Neilson's Greek exercises*.<sup>7</sup> A student who later became a United States Congressman and Secretary of the Navy recalled Sinclair as an 'old preceptor, friend and guide.'

He was a good scholar, with the kindest heart and the most attractive simplicity of character. Somewhat jovial in his humor, and as he grew old, it was thought perhaps a little too free in his living. The boys all loved him, and that is a good test of the goodness of his heart.<sup>8</sup>

Sinclair continued to give active voice to his political radicalism and was embraced by Baltimore's Irish Presbyterians and republicans. In 1810, Sinclair served on the presiding committee of the Baltimore Hibernian Benevolent Society; the following year, he became the society's secretary, and served alongside the Doctors John Campbell White and John Crawford. A student recalled how 'The Irish gentlemen of Baltimore, Mr Oliver, Mr Hugh Thompson, Mr Patterson, Mr Alexander Brown, Doctor White and Colonel Moore and others, were very kind to him throughout the period

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of his life.<sup>9</sup> Mention has already been made of his correspondence with David Bailie Warden. On 6 January 1811, Sinclair wrote to James Madison on Warden's behalf:

You will be surprised that a stranger in a strange land presumes to address you. ... The object of my letter is the case of Mr Warden late consul General in Paris. ... The private history of his life, manners and character previous and subsequent to his arrival in this Country, may not have Come accurately within the sphere of your knowledge. ... He & myself were banished together from the Country of our birth.<sup>10</sup>

Sinclair went on to describe Warden's educational achievements, the respect he carried in leading literary circles in France, and his authorship of several works. Pointing out that Warden had been a United States citizen for over five years, he argued:

Republican freedom is a charter from Nature not a boon of municipal law or National prejudice ... But what is his present situation – degraded from a high appointment without any alledged charge or even the suspicion of criminality.

In the same year, he was described by Mary Cumming, who was originally from Lisburn and whose parents had been married by Sinclair, as 'the same lively, laughing man he was when he was in Ireland'.<sup>11</sup> Sinclair also engaged in the cultural life of Baltimore; in 1816 he was one of the organizers and first president of the Delphian Club, a select literary society, though he would resign from the Club just a few weeks after his appointment.<sup>12</sup> He died in 1830.

- 1 *Baltimore Whig*, 9 Jan. 1811.
- 2 MHS, William Sinclair, *A Masonic sermon on general benevolence, preached before the brethren of Experience Lodge, no. 64* (Baltimore, 1820), pp 3–4.
- 3 PRONI, D3030/T/3.
- 4 PRONI, D607/F/313.
- 5 William McMillan, 'Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising' in Liam Swords (ed.), *Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter: The Clergy and 1798* (Dublin, 1997), pp 91–2; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 173; Henry Theodore Tuckerman, *The Life of John Pendleton Kennedy* (New York, 1871), p. 37; Thomas Ledlie Birch, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant to his Friend in the United States* ... (Philadelphia, 1779), p. 32; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, pp 119–20; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's Memoir', p. 120.
- 6 *The American Nepos: a collection of the lives of the most remarkable and the most eminent men, who have contributed to the discovery, the settlement, and the independence of America: calculated for the use of schools* (2nd Baltimore edition, 1811), p. iii.

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- 7 *Neilson's Greek exercises. Abridged and revised in syntax, ellipsis, dialects, prosody, and metaphrasis: to which is prefixed a concise, but comprehensive syntax for the use of colleges, academies and schools. By the principals of Baltimore College* (Baltimore, 1809).
- 8 McMillan, 'Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising', p. 93; Tuckerman, *Life of John Pendleton Kennedy*, p. 37.
- 9 *The Whig*, 24 March 1810; *Baltimore Whig*, 20 March 1811; Tuckerman, *Life of John Pendleton Kennedy*, p. 37. Sinclair may have escaped the wrath of political foes through American exile, but he did not quickly avoid creditors. He successfully petitioned the Maryland legislature for debt relief. On 6 Jan. 1810 legislators approved 'An ACT for the relief of William Sinclair, of the City of Baltimore' which shielded his property in Maryland while surrendering any and all property in Ireland to those seeking to recover debts incurred prior to his exile (Maryland State Archives, Laws of Maryland, Volume 570, Chapter CXV, p. 70, Archives of Maryland Online (<http://aomol.net/000001/000570/html/am570—70.html>)).
- 10 'To James Madison from William Sinclair, 6 January 1811 (Abstract)', Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/03-03-02-0120>, ver. 2013-08-02); source: *The Papers of James Madison*, Presidential Series, vol. 3, *3 November 1810–4 November 1811*, ed. J. C. A. Stagg, Jeanne Kerr Cross, and Susan Holbrook Perdue (Charlottesville, 1996), p. 103.
- 11 PRONI, T1475/2.
- 12 Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: 1741–1850* (Harvard, 1930), p. 294.

## 9

## James Simpson and the Presbytery of Huntingdon

Peter Gilmore

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Irish Presbyterian immigrants had extensively settled the Cumberland valley in central Pennsylvania and had pushed north of mountain ridges to create farmsteads along streams flowing toward the meandering Juniata River. Many of those who initially settled along the Juniata and its tributaries appear to have been from the north of Ireland. They gave their settlements names like 'Aughnacloy', 'Derry', 'Fermanagh' and 'Tyrone.' These settlers also organized Presbyterian congregations which gave rise in 1795 to the Presbytery of Huntingdon, which took its name from the Juniata River settlement which became the region's principal town.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly, three of the eight ministers present at the inaugural presbytery meeting had been born in Ireland: Hugh Magill, licensed and ordained in Ireland; James Martin, born and raised in County Down, originally licensed and ordained in the Associate Presbyterian Church following his immigration in 1774; and Matthew Stephens, born in Ireland, emigrated as an ordained minister. The following year, the Huntingdon Presbytery received John Johnston, who had been ordained by the Presbytery of Belfast prior to his emigration in the 1780s.<sup>2</sup>

The Huntingdon Presbytery continued to receive ministers and ministerial candidates leaving the violence and political tumult of Ulster. In late 1797 the Presbytery heard the request of Thomas Hogg, a probationer from the Presbytery of Tyrone, to be taken under its care. (More on Hogg/Hoge appears below.) In April 1798 Alexander McIlvaine, 'a probationer from under the care of the Presbytery of Letterkenny, north of Ireland, having produced testimonials of his regular licensure by said Presbytery, and of his good standing in the Church, requested to be taken under the care of the Presbytery.' The Presbytery certified McIlvaine's readiness for the ministry in 1799, when he was called as minister to two joined congregations. And in the fall of 1800, James Simpson came before the Presbytery.<sup>3</sup>

James Simpson had been minister of Second Newtownards in the Old Light Presbytery of Belfast at the time of the rebellion. With the collapse of

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the uprising Simpson was seized by the authorities and thrust onto the prison ship *Postlethwaite* along with Reverends William Steel Dickson, Robert Steele, William Sinclair and Thomas Ledlie Birch and licentiate David Bailie Warden. In May 1799 Simpson boarded the ship *Peggy* along with Sinclair and Warden, and John Caldwell. Caldwell recalled that Simpson, a strict Calvinist, 'grumbled so incessantly' during the voyage about the New Light views of Sinclair that passengers shunned his company.<sup>4</sup>

The Huntingdon Presbytery agreed to take Simpson on trials after satisfying the requirements. First, the presbyters inspected his credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast; agreed to waive an examination of languages, 'having received Satisfactory evidence of M<sup>r</sup> Simpsons literary attainments'; examined Simpson 'on Theology, Church History and Government'; and 'received full satisfaction of his soundness in the faith and of his experimental acquaintance with religion' following an interview with the entire Presbytery. Simpson was now available as preaching supply to congregations without ministers. Two congregations quickly applied for his services (Lewistown and Wayne [McVeytown]), a request largely granted. Simpson had two other assignments as well.<sup>5</sup>

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in May 1801 resolved:

The credentials of Mr James Simpson, an ordained minister from the kingdom of Ireland who has been taken under the care of the Presbytery of Huntingdon, were, by order of that Presbytery, laid before the Assembly, together with their proceedings in his case. After reading and considering the whole, the Assembly has determined that they are sufficient to place Mr Simpson in good and full standing with our church, in case his conduct and character shall receive the approbation of his Presbytery at the close of his period of probation, which is not yet completed.<sup>6</sup>

Simpson became a member of Huntingdon Presbytery on 6 October 1801, his probation completed and his paperwork having been approved by the General Assembly. Any satisfaction derived from this achievement proved short-lived, however. The next day, the Presbytery received a joint petition seeking Simpson's services from united congregations located in the Juniata valley towns of Lewistown, Wayne and Derry *and* petitions from Lewistown and Wayne and Derry asking that Simpson *not* be settled among them. The Presbytery, having no choice but to act, decided that:

Whereas, insinuations have been made by remonstrances handed into Presbytery by a commissioner from the congregations of Derry and Wayne, injurious to Mr Simpson's moral character, the Rev.



## JAMES SIMPSON AND THE PRESBYTERY OF HUNTINGDON

Messrs. John Johnston, John Coulter and William Stuart with Messrs David Riddle and David Caldwell, elders, were appointed a committee to meet at the house of Mr Casper Dull in Waynesburg [present-day McVeytown], on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of [October], and inquire into the foundation of these insinuations and the truth of the reports said to be in circulation, and to send for those persons who have either in writing or otherwise circulated them. And if, after inquiry being made, it appears that they are without foundation or cannot be supported, the stated clerk is ordered to furnish Mr Simpson with proper credentials, he being about to travel out of our bounds.

Presbyters found no evidence substantial enough to prevent issuance of the requested credentials.<sup>7</sup>

Church members brought ‘aggravated charges’ before the Huntingdon Presbytery meeting of April 1802. Simpson stood accused of ‘moral delinquency.’ The Presbytery held a special meeting – a trial – in Lewistown in June. (Appropriate to the proceedings, the Presbytery met in a courthouse as Lewistown lacked a meetinghouse.) This time, Simpson was found guilty on all charges and suspended.<sup>8</sup>

Simpson appeared before the Presbytery in October 1802, ‘professing sorrow for the crime of intemperance and other irregularities, but denying the most aggravated charge brought against him’, and requesting that additional witnesses be brought forward, in order to be restored to the ministry. The Presbytery agreed to hear Simpson’s new witnesses but their evidence was unconvincing. In an act of defiance Simpson continued to preach to his supporters and tried again in April 1803 to clear his name. He applied for restoration, professed ‘penitence and humility’, a sense of ‘real guilt’ and willingness to abide by the Presbytery’s decisions. The assembled ministers and elders welcomed Simpson’s profession, but declared they could not restore him to the ministry without witnessing a matching reformation of behaviour. Realizing that he would not be immediately restored, the no-longer-penitent Simpson snatched his confession from the clerk’s desk and stormed out of the room. The Presbytery proceeded to depose Simpson from the Presbyterian ministry.<sup>9</sup>

At least one other recent Irish immigrant with possible connections to the rebellion or the United Irishmen came before the Huntingdon Presbytery. William Jackson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Londonderry, presented his credentials to the Presbytery on 22 April 1801. He was taken under the Presbytery’s care and placed on trials. In May 1802, the General Assembly noted and approved of the admission of ‘Mr Jackson, a licentiate from the Presbytery of Londonderry, in Ireland.’ The following October he was formally recognized as a licentiate of the Huntingdon Presbytery and received assignments as a supply preacher. In April 1803 Jackson received a

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call from the congregation of Greenwood but returned it. Like Warden and other ministerial candidates Jackson had studied medicine as well as theology at university. By early 1803 Jackson had launched a medical practice in the borough of Alexandria. In 1807 he formally abandoned the ministry, resigned his license to preach and devoted himself to medicine until his death in about 1816.<sup>10</sup>

- 1 Peter E. Gilmore, 'From Rapho to Rostraver: Ulster Place-Names and the Eighteenth-Century Scotch-Irish Migration across Pennsylvania', *Journal of Scotch-Irish Studies*, 3 (Fall 2011), pp 20–23, 26–8; William J. Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon* (Bellefonte, PA, 1874), p. 10.
- 2 Archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbytery of Huntingdon minister biographies; Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 10–12; Archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church in the US, Presbytery of Huntingdon, *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, 19 (12 April 1796).
- 3 Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 29, 28, 34; Presbytery of Huntingdon minister biographies; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 124 (8 Oct. 1800).
- 4 McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 233; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 119; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's Memoir', p. 120.
- 5 *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 124, 127 (8 Oct. 1800); Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 40.
- 6 *Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 221.
- 7 Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 40; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 142, 143 (6, 7 Oct. 1801).
- 8 Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, 40; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 153 (18 June 1802).
- 9 *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 161–2 (21 April 1803); Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 41–2.
- 10 Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, pp 43–45; *Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 249; J. Simpson Africa, *History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 428. Agnes Irvine, born in Ballykeel, County Down, in June 1799, emigrated at age 17 with her mother. They settled in Alexandria, Huntingdon Co., Pennsylvania, where the Irish-born, former licentiate Dr William Jackson practiced medicine. Irvine married John Scott in Alexandria in 1821. Their son, Col. George Scott, provided funds to establish a woman's college in Georgia named after his mother – Agnes Scott (*Agnes Scott Bulletin*, series 36, no. 3, p. 11).

## 10

## Thomas Ledlie Birch

Peter Gilmore

Thomas Ledlie Birch was well-known as a supporter of the United Irishmen by the time of the Rebellion. He was also minister of the sizeable Saintfield congregation in County Down. He organized the Saintfield branch of the Society of United Irishmen in January 1792, proselytizing and recruiting among his congregants. Writing to the radical Belfast newspaper *Northern Star* in 1792 from his manse, Liberty Hill, Birch described with satisfaction his congregants' celebration of 'the happy progress of French liberty'. And he was a member of the orthodox Presbytery of Belfast. Birch preached to the General Synod in June 1793 a millenarian message that provided biblical justification of revolutions that would hasten genuine revival of religion and sweep away established churches.<sup>1</sup>

In 1797, Birch faced charges of high treason; in 1798, charges that 'included attempted bribery to prevent prosecution of United Irishmen.' A few days after the Battle of Ballynahinch dragoons removed Birch from his manse to face charges of treason and rebellion. The military tribunal decided he would be exiled, not hanged. Birch was lodged on the prison ship *Postlethwaite* along with Reverends William Steel Dickson, James Simpson, William Sinclair and Robert Steele, and licentiate David Bailie Warden, and, in the words of prisoner Birch, 'others of great respectability, in all about two hundred and forty on board.'<sup>2</sup>

In his own inimitable, garrulous way, Birch found spiritual gold in prison dross:

... blessed and merciful God! thy ways are not like men's ways! the loathsome gloomy mansions of a prison-ship's hold did not shut out the light thy heart-cheering, enlightening countenance from these outcasts of society ... They like Paul and Silas, those ancient *United Rebel turners* of the world upside down, enemies to all regular governments, with joyful hearts celebrated the praises of their gracious ruler and preserver morning and evening ...

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As David A. Wilson interpreted John Caldwell's memories of the scenes within the *Postlethwaite's* cramped decks, there was 'the irrepressibly loquacious Thomas Ledlie Birch, preaching millenarianism to his jailers ...'.<sup>3</sup>

By September 1798 Birch and his family were in New York, where they were the guests of the prominent and radical Presbyterian minister Samuel Miller. Birch penned a 58-page pamphlet, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant*, and made contact with other exiles and with Presbyterian clergy. He moved on to Philadelphia, 'headquarters of American Presbyterianism and gateway for Ulster immigrants, where he met with approval from the committee of the Presbytery of Philadelphia responsible for examining the credentials of travelling and foreign ministers. Birch preached for several months in 1799 at Third Presbyterian in Philadelphia and in East Nottingham, Maryland, garnering another clutch of recommendations.'<sup>4</sup>

Birch travelled through the backcountry in early 1800, and made the fateful decision to accept an invitation from the elders of the Presbyterian congregation of Washington, Pennsylvania, to settle there. He would later conclude that based on his study of the books of Daniel and Revelation that the second coming of Christ would occur in Washington in 1848. He also reported that 'there was a number of my old hearers and neighbours from Ireland' in Washington. Perhaps, like Glendy in Staunton and Baltimore, Potts in Philadelphia and McNiece in New York, Birch saw opportunity – if not a pastoral responsibility – in organizing and ministering to other political exiles.<sup>5</sup>

The Washington Session reaffirmed the earlier invitation by a three-to-one vote in the summer of 1800; Birch passed an initial interview with a committee of the Presbytery of Ohio, the bounds of which encompassed the south-western corner of Pennsylvania. This early success must have accorded well with Birch's hopes and expectations (after all, he had written in 1799 that those 'engaged in the great cause of reformation, are not doubtful of success'). But Birch would experience repeated setbacks, despite the concentration of Irish Presbyterians in his new home in Washington County.<sup>6</sup>

The problems Birch experienced were both political and religious. Birch had made no secret of his radical republicanism, which in the US context translated into support for Thomas Jefferson and his Democratic-Republican Party. However, most shopkeepers, merchants and landowners in and around the market towns of Washington and Pittsburgh supported the Federalist Party. Business, political and personal alliances tied them to Philadelphia's elite, politically opposed to farmers of the west. Unfortunately for Birch, the Ohio Presbytery tended to follow the direction of founding member Rev. John McMillan, a leading Federalist. Another immigrant minister told him bluntly, 'Birch's politicks were not suited to Washington.'

THOMAS LEDLIE BIRCH

Arriving in Washington during a particularly contentious presidential election year, Birch observed ‘Parties [were] at that time running high (for purposes not of a religious nature).’ ‘The wealthy and powerful John Hoge reportedly told the minister ‘that he had marked Birch, from his hearing in the newspapers of his arrival at New York.’ Hoge barred Birch from the Washington Academy, the building used by Washington Presbyterians for their services.<sup>7</sup>

Birch was initially confused and increasingly dismayed to discover that under new denominational rules, presbyteries questioned ministerial candidates about personal faith experiences (‘experimental acquaintance with religion’, in the contemporary phrase). And he was aghast that Ohio Presbytery clergymen encouraged emotion-laded religious revivals even as they blocked his entry into the American ministry. To Birch, these revivals represented a false reformation that would retard, not hasten, the arrival of Christ’s kingdom on earth. For their part, the Ohio Presbyters concluded that the unrepentant Birch would only harm a general revival of religion.<sup>8</sup> Birch, declared Rev. John McMillan, was ‘a liar, a drunkard and a minister of the devil.’<sup>9</sup>

The Ohio Presbytery refused Birch’s admission in October 1800 and January and March 1801. Birch received some satisfaction from the General Assembly in May 1801, but was rejected again by the Ohio Presbytery in June 1801. In May 1802 he lodged another protest with the General Assembly. And the following month he applied for admission to the Presbytery of Huntingdon.<sup>10</sup>

The Huntingdon Presbytery would have seemed a sensible choice. As we have seen, the Juniata River valley had been extensively settled by Presbyterians from Ireland. Several ministers who belonged to the Presbytery had been born in Ireland. One of those ministers, Rev. James Johnston of Huntingdon, had known Birch for 25 years, and regarded him as ‘a man of real piety and good moral character.’ Rev. David Bard, a member of Presbytery, had been elected to the US Congress as a Democratic-Republican. Two recent Irish immigrants, Alexander McIlvaine and James Simpson, with whom Birch had been incarcerated on the *Postlethwaite*, had become members of Presbytery. Unfortunately, the Huntingdon Presbytery was well aware of the charges made within the Ohio Presbytery against Birch – drunkenness and ‘imprudent and irregular conduct.’ And the timing of Birch’s application could hardly have been worse. On 18 June 1802, the day ‘The Rev. Thomas L. Birch, an ordained Minister from Ireland, applied to be taken under our care’, Huntingdon Presbytery heard the charges against James Simpson and voted to suspend him from the ministry. The Huntingdon Presbytery decided it could not accept Birch.<sup>11</sup>

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The shocking result from Huntingdon figured into Birch's decision to sue Rev. John McMillan for defamation of character in November 1802, a strategy no doubt encouraged by the disaster at the General Assembly in June 1803. In what was his third appeal to the American church's highest judicatory, Birch objected that the Huntingdon Presbytery had rejected him on the basis of 'certain reports ... circulated within the bounds of the Presbytery of Ohio.' The debate took two days. Birch allies advanced a resolution stating that the Huntingdon Presbytery acted improperly in rejecting Birch. After discussion, the Assembly approved a substitute resolution that, given the previous Assembly's declaration that 'any Presbytery is at liberty to receive Mr Birch on trials', the Huntingdon Presbytery should have dealt with him on his merits. Victory seemed to be in sight for Birch, finally, as the Assembly took up a second motion directing Huntingdon to accept him on trials.<sup>12</sup>

Action had not been finalized when the Assembly adjourned for the day. Between sessions Birch's foes regrouped. They secured postponement on the Huntingdon resolution in order to investigate whether Birch had followed the General Assembly's instructions to refrain from preaching in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Assembly granted Birch the opportunity to defend himself from these specific charges. If this was a trap, Birch marched into and sprang it. Stung by the Ohio delegates' diversion from what he considered to be the real issue at hand, Birch insisted on speaking on the merits of his petition. The Assembly, nearing the end of its patience, directed Birch to confine his defence to the charge of preaching in Washington County. Enraged, Birch stormed out of the hall. The Assembly then resolved to 'decline all farther proceedings with Mr Birch' and declared him to be without any church authority to perform ministerial functions.<sup>13</sup>

The Birch suit, when it came to trial in October 1804, was both high-stakes and high-profile. Three of the four defence attorneys were leading Federalists with state-wide reputations; two of them judges, one a US Senator and gubernatorial candidate.<sup>14</sup> The content of the testimony centred on McMillan's statements and his motive and the veracity of reports of Birch's intemperance. Birch relied heavily on allies among the region's republican and Irish immigrant communities for testimony to demonstrate the maliciousness of McMillan's comments.

Andrew McMahan, possibly a 1798 exile, testified of Birch, 'I have heard of him in Ireland and I never heard but he was a careful faithful Minister.' Rev. James Johnston, formerly of the Belfast Presbytery, testified to Birch's genuine piety. The plaintiff's legal team, headed by the Irish republican James Mountain, entered into the record credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast and certificates from the Synod of New York and General Assembly affirming that Birch was a regularly ordained minister who might be accepted by any

American presbytery, as well as a certificate from the Synod of Ulster stating that Birch 'was a sober respectable member of the body for above 20 years, particularly remarkable Piety, Chastity and inflexible integrity, for warm zeal for the interest and prosperity of the church of Christ.'<sup>15</sup>

Pittsburgh's Presbyterian and Episcopalian ministers, both born in Ireland, vouched for Birch's character. Rev. Robert Steele told the court, 'I have been in synod with him frequently when he was always looked on with respect. Rev. John Taylor stated, 'I never heard any evil of his character.' William Bennett, a Seceder and republican who emigrated from Ireland in 1795, knew Birch in the old country to be 'judicious, a minister of the Gospel, good to the poor, both as to their bodies and souls.' John Israel, the publisher of Washington's Democratic-Republican newspaper, *Herald of Liberty*, rejected the rumours of Birch's intoxication as groundless and said he continued his subscription to Birch's ministry despite the allegations of intemperance. James Riddle, a ruling elder, testified that in his interactions with Birch the minister was 'duly sober.' He added, 'an Irishman then present said, I knew he is an Irishman, by his Grace.'<sup>16</sup>

The jury found for Birch, but the verdict was later invalidated by the state Supreme Court. Birch and his attorney reinstated the suit in 1808. At the time McMillan lawyer and protégé James Ross was running for governor as a Federalist and the Democratic-Republican press gleefully linked the Birch defamation suit and McMillan's defense of Ross's alleged deism. McMillan settled out of court.<sup>17</sup> But despite this rather remarkable victory, Birch remained outside the Presbyterian Church.

Birch sought admission to the national church in 1809. He again became the subject of considerable debate. The General Assembly apparently was aware of *Seemingly Experimental Religion*, his 144-page blast against his foes, and not pleased. Declaring itself as 'always disposed to exercise charity and mercy towards an offender who repents', the General Assembly announced its willingness to 'give Mr Birch the relief he wishes, whenever he afford sufficient testimony of his penitence.' In the absence of real repentance, the decision of 1803 remained in place.<sup>18</sup>

Suitably chastened, Birch tried again the following year. This time he humbled himself, making 'an unreserved acknowledgement of having done wrong in his conduct before the Assembly in 1803, and also in his publications against the Assembly.' Further, Birch expressed 'his hearty regret for his conduct.' The General Assembly extended to Birch its promised mercy.<sup>19</sup>

Birch next sought admission to the Baltimore Presbytery, enlisting old colleagues and allies. On 7 May 1811, as the Presbytery met in Glendy's church, Second Baltimore, Samuel Knox raised the question of Birch's membership. The following day,

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Application having been made to the Presbytery of Baltimore for the admission of the Rev. Thomas Ledlie Birch as a Member; after duly examining his testimonials, & considering his long probation & respected standing in the Church of Christ, Presbytery resolved to receive him the said Thomas Ledlie Birch, & he is hereby received, according to the liberal principles & provisions of a resolution of the General Assembly of 1802 ...

The General Assembly nine years earlier had stipulated that Birch not exercise his ministry within the bounds of the Ohio Presbytery. His friends in Baltimore proposed to evade this restriction with the fiction that Birch be employed as 'Missionary among the Indians inhabiting the country adjacent to the Alleghany River.'<sup>20</sup>

The deliberations in Baltimore resulted in a peculiar advertisement placed the Washington newspaper:

We are happy in complying with the request of announcing, that the unhappy clerical difference, long before the public, and which occasioned very disagreeable sensations in America, and kindred European nations is happily terminated, by the cordial reception of the revd. *Thomas L. Birch*, into the revd. presbytery of Baltimore, and his admission into the general assembly of the presbyterian church of America.<sup>21</sup>

Further appearances by Birch before the General Assembly took place in his capacity as a delegate from the Baltimore Presbytery.<sup>22</sup>

Subsequently Birch seems to have lost neither his radical republican fervour nor his aptitude for controversy. In 1809, at a meeting of the Hibernian Provident Society in New York, he proposed a toast to the 'friends of liberty' and a 'general reformation.' A letter to the editor signed by 'A Friend to Reform Without the Sword', which appeared in the Washington paper in October 1809, was almost certainly authored by Birch. The writer applauded proposals for a state constitutional convention, referred to Birch as 'a foreign clergyman, and persecuted friend of liberty' unjustly denied a pulpit, castigated the Ohio Presbytery, and hailed Napoleon for the abolition of Rome's inquisitorial tribunal.<sup>23</sup> In October 1810, for reasons not readily apparent, Birch stood as a candidate for Congress against Aaron Lyle, the Democratic-Republican nominee. Given the collapse of the Federalist Party, Birch was in effect the candidate of his former antagonists. Birch failed in his bid, 564 to 1,344, receiving 42 per cent of the vote. In Washington town he performed marginally better than he did county-wide, and in one balloting station actually outpolled his opponent 101 to 82.<sup>24</sup>



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Washington's Democratic organ, *The Reporter*, refrained from attacking Birch directly during the 1810 election season, instead choosing to reprint a disputation that appeared in the rival Federalist paper, the *Western Telegraphe*. The occasion was a lively local controversy over a student production at Washington College. A letter to the *Western Telegraphe*, entitled 'The Millenium [sic]!!!', commented on the prediction in *Seemingly Experimental Religion* that the millennium would commence in Washington. The signs of the times, as gleaned from the newspapers, suggested to the letter-writer that the millennium was truly underway. These included the presence of 'extraordinary reformers', among them the Campbells, father Thomas and son Alexander, and 'my old friend 'Seemingly', who must go to congress.' (The elder Campbell, born in County Antrim and ordained by Antiburgher Seceder Church in Ireland, and been received and deposed by the Associate Synod in North America; he and his son launched a new denomination, the Disciples of Christ.) The Campbells (although not mentioned by name) had been 'urged on by the force of genius to ascend the pulpit without waiting the tedious process of regular authority. These men were raised up for no common purpose', suggested the letter-writer. 'Taking all these circumstances, together with others that might be mentioned, the conclusion is inevitable. The millennium [sic]!! Hail, happy period! Hail highly favoured Washington! Hail, "O ye people"!!'<sup>25</sup>

A 'Friend to the People', almost certainly Birch himself, quickly penned a response. Indeed, wrote 'Friend', the signs do point the millennium – signs that included an aristocratic clergy, seminaries in the hands of aristocrats and the burlesque of religion in student productions at the local seminary.

Pray, what *sign* is it, when a junto of your ministers of the synod of Pittsburgh, stood publicly convicted of combining to destroy the character of a brother minister. Who tho' now publicly acquitted both by church and state, of the malicious, slanderous impeachments, laid to his charge; they still continue to avoid as dangerous or unworthy person; though unimpeached with error or immorality. But he is an Irishman and a democrat, O ye people!

'Friend' lauded the work of the Campbells. He concluded, 'And happy will you be O ye people, should your Birches prove successful in scourging those tyrants of the world, who infest your shores, impress and murder your citizens, and menace your tranquility.' Without civil and religious reformation, he warned, woe to Washington, woe to the clergy, and woe to the people.<sup>26</sup> Such a message of civil and religious reformation – a seamless welding of republicanism and Reformed millennial expectations – was at the heart of the worldview evinced by the rebel minister from County Down.

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Birch may seem eccentric to twenty-first century observers, and may have seemed so to his contemporaries. But he was also a significant presence in Ulster and western Pennsylvania, an individual whose words and deeds received scrutiny and grudging respect. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church devoted days of discussion and reports concerning his status in the denomination, and eventually he became a member of the General Assembly as a commissioner from the Presbytery of Baltimore. He was a conspicuous figure in the town of Washington where, like many of his contemporary brother ministers, he practiced medicine and dealt in herbal remedies and cures. (As a physician, Birch promised 'a moderate charge', no charges without cures, and 'Every attention to the poor gratis.')

He also attempted to rent out a 'tanning yard', acquired land and explored the entrepreneurial possibilities of sheep-rearing. His books, especially his account of his American travails, *Seemingly Experimental Religion*, circulated widely. (For example, ever mindful of his base among Irish-Americans and United Irish émigrés, Thomas Jefferson acquired a copy for his library.) If his millenarianism did not attract a following, his fervent preaching on behalf of social and political equality nevertheless became subsumed in the normative political discourse. His orthodox, old-world Presbyterianism likewise helped strengthen the traditionalist, Ulster Presbyterian counterbalance against any latitudinarian drifting by the clergy of the mainstream church.<sup>27</sup>

In a region dominated by his political and theological foes Birch had little space to develop a solid base for his religious and political undertakings. Inevitably Birch relied on Irish connections and the networks of United Irish émigrés and republican-minded immigrants. He chose to settle in Washington County because of former congregants from County Down; there Birch cared for an extensive extended family: his wife Isabella, their seven children, and his niece Jane Gilmore Paxton and her three children. Joseph Ledlie, his wife and four children sailed from Newry to New York in the summer of 1803, then followed cousin Thomas Ledlie Birch to western Pennsylvania. Ledlie was born Ballygoney in south County Londonderry (and was thus likely acquainted with the Kerr family; more below) and married Margaret Ekin of Ruskey, County Londonderry. As a linen bleacher in County Tyrone, Ledlie was regarded as the 'chief agent and organizer of the Society of United Irishmen' in the barony of Dungannon. He later taught school in Pittsburgh. The Ledlie family may have been accompanied by relative James Ekin.<sup>28</sup>

Thus in the United States Birch had significance in terms of his direct and indirect contact with and influence on other Irish Presbyterian immigrants and their families, the Presbyterian Church, the Irish-American

community, the Democratic-Republican networks, newspapers and their readers – in short, the world of Irish-Americans in the opening decade of the nineteenth century.

- 1 Peter Gilmore, 'Thomas Ledlie Birch, Presbyterian Rebel in Exile' in David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spencer, *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World*, (Dublin, 2006), pp 68–9.
- 2 Ibid.; Birch, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant*, p. 32.
- 3 Birch, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant*, p. 33; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir', p. 119.
- 4 Gilmore, 'Thomas Ledlie Birch', pp 70–71.
- 5 Ibid., p. 71. Birch's millennial expectations for Washington can be found in his *Seemingly Experimental Religion* (Washington, 1806), pp 7–23.
- 6 Gilmore, 'Thomas Ledlie Birch', p. 71. The quotation is taken from Birch, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant*, p. 54.
- 7 Gilmore, 'Thomas Ledlie Birch', pp 74–5.
- 8 'Extraordinary Revivals are indeed expected', declared Birch. A summary of his critique of revivalism can be found in an extended footnote on pages 134 and 135 in *Seemingly Experimental Religion*.
- 9 *Birch v. McMillan* [typescript of unpublished transcript], Historical Collections, Washington and Jefferson College, Washington), pp 1, 4.
- 10 Gilmore, 'Thomas Ledlie Birch', p. 71.
- 11 Ibid., pp 71, 77–8; *Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 153 (18 June 1802). The Johnston quote is found in *Birch v. McMillan*, p. 19. William J. Gibson, author of *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, recalled seeing Birch at the home of his father, a minister: 'In personal appearance ... he was a large, fleshy man, and then must have been considerably beyond the meridian of life, apparently near the age of his host, who was then sixty or sixty-five years of age [49].'
- 12 *Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 272.
- 13 Ibid., pp 272-3.
- 14 Dwight Raymond Guthrie, *John McMillan, The Apostle of Presbyterianism in the West, 1752–1783* (Pittsburgh, 1952), p. 141; Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, pp 47, 48, 115, 147, 150.
- 15 *Birch v. McMillan*, pp 8, 19, 20.
- 16 Ibid., pp 21, 37, 39.
- 17 Guthrie, *John McMillan*, p. 143.
- 18 *Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 431.
- 19 Ibid., p. 456.
- 20 *Minutes of the Presbytery of Baltimore*, vol. 2, p. 87 (7 May 1811), p. 90 (8 May 1811), p. 96 (9 May 1811).
- 21 *The Reporter* (Washington, PA), 5 Aug., 1811.
- 22 *Minutes of the General Assembly*, pp 517, 575, 603, 604, 698.
- 23 *The Reporter*, 16 October 1808.
- 24 Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 131; *The Reporter*, 15 Oct. 1810. The following year Birch finished sixth in a field of eight candidates for a seat in the Pennsylvania legislature. (*The Reporter*, 14 Oct. 1811). And he polled a very distant third in a three-way race for Congress in 1812 (*The Reporter*, 19 Oct. 1812).
- 25 *The Reporter*, 26 Nov. 1810. The author of the letter is given as 'R.' of Mingo Creek. This is almost certainly Rev. Samuel Ralston, the Donegal-born pastor of the Mingo Creek Presbyterian congregation.
- 26 *The Reporter*, November 26, 1810.

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- 27 Birch advertised 'Drugs and medical aid' in *The Reporter* on 14 Jan. 1811. Apparently with the proceeds of his property in County Down, Birch and partners obtained a parcel of land in western Allegheny County. An advertisement for Birch's book occupied the most prominent location in the 18 June 1806 edition of *Commonwealth*.
- 28 Mary Lou Scott, *Naturalizations from Circuit Court Proceedings, Washington County, Pennsylvania, 1795 to 1841* (1974), p. 6; J. H. Newton, G. G. Nichols and A. G. Sprankle, *History of the Pan-Handle* (Wheeling, WV, 1879), p. 259; Ledlie Irwin Laughlin, *Joseph Ledlie and William Moody, early Pittsburgh residents; their background and some of their descendants* (Pittsburgh, 1961), pp 16, 22.

Joseph Ledlie was recalled in family tradition as 'a very active member of the United Irishmen'; however, this may be the same Joseph Ledlie identified as a 'high-placed informer' in south County Londonderry who supplied Sir George Hill, Member of Parliament for Derry city, with detailed information about the organization's activities (Laughlin, *Joseph Ledlie and William Moody*, pp 1–2, 14, 16, 18; Breandán Mac Suibhne, 'Up not Out: Why Did North-West Ulster Not Rise in 1798?' in Cathal Póirtéir (ed.), *The Great Irish Rebellion of 1798* (Dublin, 1998), p. 89).

A grand-nephew of Birch, William Paxton largely lived with the minister growing up. He later became a successful and prominent West Virginia businessman.

## II

## Rev. Robert Steele and Pittsburgh

Peter Gilmore

Another émigré Irish minister who relocated in western Pennsylvania also experienced difficulty in gaining admittance to the American church remained aloof from revivals and endured political controversy. But the circumstances confronting Rev. Robert Steele were not those experienced by Birch. Steele applied for admission to Redstone Presbytery, which placed less emphasis on revival, to minister in Pittsburgh, which evinced no interest in revival. Republican factionalism fractured Steele's congregation; unlike Birch he did insert himself into a Republican-Federalist showdown.

Like other Irish ministerial candidates Steele attended the University of Glasgow. He returned to his native County Londonderry, where he accepted a call from the congregation of Scriggan in the parish of Dungiven and was ordained by the Presbytery of Londonderry in 1790. If Steele became as involved in the United Irishmen as his older colleague Birch he may have been more circumspect in his activities. An 1810 remembrance suggested the minister had been a victim of informers, eulogizing Steele as 'the innocent man'. But Steele made no claim of innocence when brought before a military tribunal in the immediate aftermath of the 1798 Rebellion. At a meeting in Lurgan, County Armagh, on 29 August 1798, the General Synod of Ulster noted that 'the Revd. Robert Steel, having pleaded Guilty to a charge of Treason & Rebellion before a Court Martial, his name was erased from the list of the Presbytery [of Londonderry].' Steele was then incarcerated along with Birch and other Presbyterian ministers on a prison ship in Belfast Lough as a preliminary to his American exile.<sup>1</sup>

To James Mountain, an Irish Presbyterian who became a naturalized citizen in 1802, Steele's particular story could be best understood in the context of the turbulent 1790s, when

Irishmen began to contend for their rights – to contend for freedom, and this contest between the rulers and the ruled, the innocent [sic] are often by base informers confounded with the guilty – if a term imputing blame can be applied to men struggling for their long lost rights. In the year 1798, the storm burst on the head of the innocent

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man. He was forced to abandon his peaceful dwelling – to leave his green fields, and to bid an eternal adieu, in this world, to his loving and beloved congregation.<sup>2</sup>

Steele, his wife and the youngest of their three children, arrived in the United States in 1799. The two oldest children were left in Ireland, in the care of friends. The exiled family soon travelled west to Pittsburgh where his brother William had established himself as a merchant; by May of that year he had filed papers in an Allegheny County court to become a naturalized citizen. The following month Steele presented himself to the Presbytery of Redstone to seek admission to the American ministry – a process which would prove more complex than achieving United States citizenship.<sup>3</sup>

Similar to the Ohio Presbytery's stance toward Birch, the Redstone Presbytery evinced concern with the applicant's theology and refused to accept Steele solely on the basis of his Irish ordination and credentials. Redstone claimed it had failed to receive 'all the satisfaction from Mr Steel which they desired on the subject of experimental religion.' However, Steele seems to have had more patience than Birch, and Redstone greater sympathy toward their immigrant applicant than Ohio toward theirs. Further, Pittsburgh's desire for a full-time minister – something the well-heeled congregation could readily afford – provided pressure on Presbytery to action positively. Steele received permission to preach within its territory while Presbytery sought guidance from the General Assembly. During a lengthy probation, Steele submitted to repeated examinations, professed adherence to the doctrinal and disciplinary standards of the American church and promised 'subjection' to Redstone. Eventually he gained admission to the ministry – nearly three years after his first application. In October 1802 Steele received and accepted a call from the Pittsburgh congregation.<sup>4</sup>

As minister to Pittsburgh's mainstream Presbyterian congregation, Steele maintained his republican credentials but gravitated toward the business-oriented, moderate wing of the state's Jeffersonian party. Steele's political trajectory was likely a consequence of his social position: he mixed comfortably with fellow Masons in the upper echelons of Pittsburgh's Presbyterian society. Indeed, Steele served as chaplain to Masonic Lodge No. 45, which brought together such members of the local elite as Isaac Craig, Abraham Kirkpatrick, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, and Ebenezer Denny, who would become the city's first mayor in 1816. Steele dressed the part; '[h]e was careful of his appearance, wore satin breeches, silk stockings, knee-buckles and pumps.' The immigrant clergyman was regarded as 'somewhat tolerant of worldly fashions and indulgent toward erring church members.' Steele enjoyed a higher salary than ministers of larger country churches, but of course was poor in comparison to elite congregants.<sup>5</sup>

At a time of religious ferment in the countryside, Steele's urban congregation remained conspicuously uninterested in revival. 'His brethren in the Presbytery felt that he was a bit remiss in not putting the fear of God into the hearts of his congregation', wrote a church historian. 'The thunders of revival were rarely heard in his pulpit.' The three anecdotal examples of the 'falling work' from Steele's pastorate are all unsympathetic; in each the female responsible for moans and physical collapse was removed from the meeting-house as a disruptor. In two of these stories, Rev. Samuel Porter, a revival-friendly minister from Westmoreland County, appeared as an assistant to Steele in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and (for narrative purposes) a counterweight to a disapproving Steele. The cultured, 'undemonstrative, but strong', Steele turned his attention to his garden and to teaching. The exiled minister served as a tutor for and principal of the (Pittsburgh) Academy (later the University of Pittsburgh).<sup>6</sup>

Controversy brushed Steele's ministry, not over revivalism, but as a result of continued resentment against the town's Federalist elite, combined with internecine squabbling among Pittsburgh's Republicans following their 1799–1800 electoral triumphs. As early as December 1800, Redstone Presbytery rejected a request from the Pittsburgh congregation for preaching 'supplies', 'on account of some existing difficulties in the Congregation.' Less than a year after Steele finally secured the Pittsburgh pulpit in October 1802, 'A petition from a number of the Inhabitants of *Pittsburgh* Praying that they might be erected into a *different* Congregation and receive supplies was laid before [Redstone]' in June 1803. The Pittsburgh dissenters, in their petition for a new congregation, announced they had not joined in the call for Steele, attended his preaching, but found 'no spiritual advantage' by doing so:

being averse to a separation, if it could be avoided consistently with our spiritual advantage, did for some time attend the preaching of the said Rev. gentleman, and most of us did subscribe to his support, but finding no kind of spiritual advantage, have long since withdrawn, and are now as sheep without a shepherd. We bring forward no charges against Mr Steel, or any member of said Church, considering that if even sufficient ground should exist, this is not our present object; but assure the Rev. Synod, that our present object is to receive the immediate benefits of what we deem to be a Gospel ministry.

The spiritual concerns at the heart of the request for a new congregation commingled with political and economic interests.<sup>7</sup>

Presbytery referred the issue to the Pittsburgh Synod, which heard the particulars on 6 October 1803. Synod responded the next day by essentially finding for both parties: there would be no formal division of the Pittsburgh

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congregation, but Redstone could make temporary ministerial assignments to the town's *de facto* second Presbyterian church. On behalf of the Pittsburgh congregation's trustees, Alexander Addison protested what he viewed as the irregularity and disorderliness of Synod's decision. Nearly twenty years earlier as a licentiate newly arrived from Scotland Addison had been taken under the care of the Redstone Presbytery. He instead pursued a career in law as attorney and jurist, becoming ever-more right-wing in his political outlook with deepening, obsessive fears which bordered on the delusional. Recently removed from the bench, the ex-judge displayed in his petition to Synod something of the elitist paranoia which contributed to his ouster. Should the dissidents' petition be granted, Addison declared, congregations throughout the region would be divided, unable to adequately support ministers, and the Presbyterian church west of the mountains destroyed within a year. The four petition signatories – James Morrison, William Barrett, William Sample and William Gazzam – particularly aroused Addison's ire: 'never was there a petition more contemptibly supported by names and property'. Never, the ex-judge growled, had there been 'a petition whose promises afforded less confidence'. In an echo of the Birch case, Addison claimed that some the signatories had never been regular church members or attended worship and were 'known to profess opinions adverse to the Presbyterian Church'.<sup>8</sup>

Addison's comments begin to bring the schism's politics into focus. The petitioners had been active in Democratic-Republican politics, especially the recruitment of recent immigrants. William Gazzam, an Irish-born Republican leader, testified at the impeachment trial which led to Addison's ouster after a decade as president judge of the Pennsylvania Fifth District. Owners of adjacent stores on Market Street, petitioners Gazzam and Barrett figured in the 'Clapboard Row Junto', a political faction composed of shopkeepers and professional men attached to the republican party, all aspiring Republican politicians avidly challenging the Federalism still dominant among Pittsburgh merchants. Gazzam, although in the United States for only a few years, had developed a reputation as a particularly aggressive and effective politician.<sup>9</sup>

Months before the petition to Redstone Presbytery, Gazzam became embroiled in a dispute with another member of the Clapboard Junto, Alexander Fowler. The encounter suggests the strength of Irish-ethnic and republican sentiment among prospective voters and naturalized citizens of Irish Presbyterian origin. Fowler's foes in 1801 spread a rumour suggesting a connection between the militia general and the Orange Order, detested by Presbyterians for its role in crushing the 1798 Rebellion. As a former officer in the Royal Irish Regiment, in 1774 (the English-born) Fowler was alleged to have proposed a toast (following an officers' dinner in Fort Pitt)



to 'The immortal memory of King William the Third' and then to have ordered the band to strike up the 'Boyne March', commemorating William of Orange's famous victory in 1690. Such Orange and royalist sympathies, declared an open letter in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, were prominent 'feature[s] in the character of General Alexander Fowler'.<sup>10</sup>

The Gazzam-Fowler dispute arose in a bitter factional fight among Republicans in late 1802. General Fowler sought a seat in Congress. His slate was opposed by the 'Clapboard Row Junto'. This disagreement figured into the schism within the Pittsburgh congregation.<sup>11</sup> Fowler bitterly denounced Gazzam in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, charging him with seeking political office under 'the cloak of Republicanism and religion'. In other words, Fowler seemed to ascribe the schismatic movement against Steele to Gazzam's secular and political ambitions, rather than to the latter's alleged spiritual concerns. Further intensifying the divisions, the Democratic-Republican *Tree of Liberty* condemned William Steele, the minister's merchant brother, for his support of a Federalist candidate who happened to be the son of a church elder.<sup>12</sup>

The results of the rancour and division were anticlimactic. Fowler lost badly. In 1804 the General Assembly confirmed the Synod's judgment; by 1805 (with the help of ministers sympathetic to revivalism) the congregation formally constituted as Second Pittsburgh called its own minister. The dissidents initially met for worship in the borough Court House; when this venue was denied them, they met in the home (and probably workshop) of metalworking artisan James Morrison.<sup>13</sup>

Robert Steele died in March 1810, aged 43. A fire had broken out in the densely congested town before dawn. Steele rushed from bed to help quell the blaze, helping to carry water hoisted from a hole in the ice on the Allegheny River. Although ill, he then bustled about the village in the freezing cold to collect funds to assist the people now homeless due to the fire. As Mountain recalled in his eulogy,

In his friend and his neighbour, he saw himself enlarged into another form, in the service of his neighbours whose houses were in flames and in soliciting contributions for the unhappy sufferers, he felt the presentiments of his approaching dissolution. The season was inclement, but his humanity was paramount to every consideration for himself.

Steele never recovered from these events. He died soon after. Congregants, and the Masonic lodge, assisted the minister's widow and their children.<sup>14</sup>

By most accounts Steele succeeded as a teacher more than as a preacher. His vision in organizing a Sabbath School was described by a later minister

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as 'far, far ahead of its time'. Steele taught classes which included 'Bible reading, memorizing the Longer and Shorter Catechism, prayer, exposition of Scripture, and a systemic oral instruction in faith and conduct'. While Steele did not directly promote revival, the instruction inculcated young people who would later lead the revivals that swept through First Presbyterian of Pittsburgh and devote themselves to evangelism.<sup>15</sup> Further, Steele's legacy endures as a consequence of his leadership of the institution which would eventually become the University of Pittsburgh.

<sup>1</sup> James Mountain, 'A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Steele', *The Reporter* (Washington, PA), 21 May 1810; Birch, *A Letter from an Irish Emigrant*, pp 19, 32; *Records of the General Synod of Ulster from 1691 to 1820*, vol. 3 [1778–1820] (Belfast, 1898), p. 205. Steele was licensed by the Presbytery of Route in 1789 following his subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, 'according to the Synods [sic] Formula'; he was ordained in Dungiven by the Presbytery of Londonderry in 1790. Both Steele and Birch were candidates for the moderatorship of the General Synod in 1794 and 1796 (*Records of the General Synod of Ulster*, pp 109, 129, 164, 186).

<sup>2</sup> Mountain, 'A Brief Memoir'; *The Reporter*, 21 May 1810.

<sup>3</sup> Mountain, 'A Brief Memoir'; *A List of Immigrants Who Applied for Naturalization Papers in the District Courts of Allegheny County, Pa. 1798–1840*, vol. 1 (Pittsburgh, 1978), p. 4. Robert Steele signed an affidavit on 20 May 1799 signifying his intention to become a United States citizen; William Steele was naturalized on the same date. Both men appear to have been preceded by a third relative: also named Robert Steele, this Irish immigrant had lived in the United States prior to 29 Jan. 1795 and was naturalized in March 1804, his sponsor William Steele (*A List of Immigrants*, pp 4, 84).

<sup>4</sup> *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp 148, 148–9, 151, 161–2, 163, 171, 174, 179. William W. McKinney, *Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism. Tracing the Development of the Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1758–1889* (Pittsburgh, 1938), p. 101. Steele was hampered in the initial application process by having only papers from his congregation: 'being under the necessity of precipitately leaving [sic] his Country it was impracticable to obtain Testimonials of his standing as a Gospel Minister' (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 148).

According to Birch, revivalists encouraged Steele to study at the academy established by McMillan and the Ohio Presbytery, nicknamed 'the College of Graces.' Steele declined, replying 'that grace was not a gift to be conferred in a human College.' (Birch, *Seemingly Experimental Religion*, p. 51 fn2).

<sup>5</sup> *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp 148–9, 161–4, 166, 167, 170–71, 179; McKinney, *Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism*, pp 101–06; Sylvester Scovel, *Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1884), p. 152; Scott C. Martin, 'Fathers Against Sons, Sons Against Fathers: Antimasonry in Pittsburgh' (University of Pittsburgh seminar paper, n.d.), p. 17. The paragraph is adapted from Peter Gilmore and Kerby Miller, 'Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1780–1810: Searching for "Irish" Freedom – Settling for "Scotch-Irish" Respectability' in Warren Hofstra (ed.), *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience* (Knoxville, 2012), p. 193.

Steele received an initial salary of \$450, later raised to \$500. James Graham, who accepted a call from Beulah congregation east of Pittsburgh in 1804, received about \$350 a year. Some two decades and more later, the better ministerial salaries seemed to have been about \$500 (See, for example, salaries pledged by the united congregations of Round Hill and Rehoboth and of Indiana and Gilgal in 1818 (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 291)

and Warren and Saltsburg and Kittanning and Crooked Creek in 1830 (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp 403, 404). Following a succession of revivals, Cross Creek Presbyterian Church in December 1835 decided to raise the salary of its minister to \$700, a raise from the \$500 promised in its 1827 call, 'the amount to be raised by voluntary subscription', in addition to the annual pew rentals. However, as the congregation apparently had difficulty meeting this new obligation and raising funds for a fence around the graveyard, Rev. John Stockton suggested an increase of \$165 over the \$500 salary, rather than the full \$200 (Scovel, *Centennial Volume*, p. 152; *History of Washington Presbytery*, pp 294–5; Lenore W. Bayus, *Beulah Presbyterian Church, 1784–1984* (Pittsburgh, 1984), p. 39; Alvin D. White, *History of the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church* (Parsons, WV, 1969); *History of Washington Presbytery*, p. 36).

Mrs Abishai Way, who came to Pittsburgh in 1797, recalled that, to her mother (wife of congregational trustee William Anderson), the Steeles were quite poor. Eventually, however, the Steeles obtained a servant (*Centennial Volume*, pp 153, 154).

- <sup>6</sup> McKinney, *Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism*, pp 105–06; Scovel, *Centennial Volume*, pp 150–51, 156; *Evils of the Work*, p. 35; Dwight R. Guthrie, 'Early Educational Development' in William W. McKinney (ed.), *The Presbyterian Valley* (Pittsburgh, 1958), pp 40–41. Steele is also credited with pioneering the modern Sunday School concept in Pittsburgh (McKinney, 'Many Streams, One River' in McKinney, *The Presbyterian Valley*, pp 542–3).
- <sup>7</sup> Scovel, *Centennial Volume*, p. 152; Martin, 'Fathers Against Sons', p. 17; *Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp 166, 187; *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, From Its First Organization, September 29, 1802, to October, 1832, Inclusive* (Pittsburgh, 1852), p. 18.
- <sup>8</sup> *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, pp 18, 19; *Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania and Parts Adjacent* (Pittsburgh, 1876), p. 213; Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, p. 168; *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, pp 19, 20. Addison's inflammatory, idiosyncratically political remarks to grand juries – for example, his suggestion that the election of Democratic-Republican Governor Thomas McKean was linked to the United Irishmen, the Illuminati and destruction of Christianity – aroused public ridicule and ire. However, the proximate cause of his impeachment was his refusal to allow an associate justice, a French-born, Democratic-Republican, to address the court.
- Indicative of general (Republican) animus to Addison, a letter-writer in the *Tree of Liberty* (Pittsburgh) on 8 Nov. 1800 suggested that Addison as treasurer of the Pittsburgh Academy had misused funds for the unfinished school building, commenting, 'That creature will always be fingering the money.' Perhaps trying to try a wedge between the minister and a socially prestigious congregant, *Tree of Liberty* suggested Robert Steele had accused Addison of being a monarchist (1 Nov. 1800).
- <sup>9</sup> Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, pp 170, 165.
- <sup>10</sup> *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 4 July 1801; Gilmore and Miller, 'Southwestern Pennsylvania', p. 195. The letter was signed by William Semple. This may or may not be one of the four signatories of the dissidents' petition to the Redstone Presbytery; the Irish-born Semple applied for citizenship in early 1799. William Simple, an Irish-born immigrant in the United States before January 1795, was sponsored for citizenship by James Morrison, another petition signer. William Barrett, born in England, arrived in the United States in 1795 (*A List*, pp 80, 81, 8).
- <sup>11</sup> Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, pp 164–5, 170; Martin, 'Fathers Against Sons', p. 14; Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch*, p. 38.
- <sup>12</sup> *Tree of Liberty*, 11 Oct. 1800, 8 Nov. 1800, 30 Oct. 1802; Martin, 'Fathers Against Sons', pp 14–15; Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch*, p. 38. Denouncing William Steele, *Tree of Liberty* said: 'Mechanicks say steel files will not cut steel; but Steele cuts seem to cut *itself* and 'William Steele, a merchant, a federalist, lately from Ireland, not much known' (30 Oct. 1802).

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- <sup>13</sup> *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, pp 24, 66; *Minutes of the General Assembly*, pp 297–8; McKinney, *Early Pittsburgh Presbyterianism*, pp 109–11. The suggestion that revivalist ministers supported the dissidents who organized Second Presbyterian comes originally from a letter to the *Presbyterian Banner* in 1867 which objected to the suggestion in the *Banner* that the founders of Second Pittsburgh were 'schismatics.' As members of the General Assembly in 1804, the Revs. Jacob Jennings, James Hughes, Cephas Dodd and Thomas Hughes 'defended the action of the Synod, and advocated the organization of the Second church' ('Origins of the Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh', *Presbyterian Banner* [Pittsburgh], 9 Oct. 1867).

In October 1804 Redstone Presbytery received 'A Petition from a number of the Inhabitants of Pittsburgh styling themselves the second Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh' asking for permission to request preaching supplies from other presbyteries within the Synod of Pittsburgh. Based on Synod's earlier decision, confirmed by the General Assembly, Presbytery acquiesced (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, p. 198 [16 Oct. 1804]).

A year later, Nathaniel Snowden accepted a call from Second Pittsburgh only to disclaim interest weeks later (*Minutes of Redstone Presbytery*, pp 206 [16 Oct. 1805], 209 [9–10 Dec. 1805]). Thomas Hoge, an Irish Presbyterian with connections to the United Irishmen, was called to Second Pittsburgh, but declined.

- <sup>14</sup> Ernest Edwin Logan, *The Church That Kept On Being Born Again: A History of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, 1773–1997* (Pittsburgh, 1998), p. 16; Mountain, 'A Brief Memoir'; Scovel, *Centennial Volume*, p. 154.
- <sup>15</sup> Logan, *The Church That Kept On Being Born Again*, p. 17; Scovel, *Centennial Volume*, p. 32; J. M. Duff, *A Record of Twenty-Five Years of the Pastorate of Maitland Alexander, D.D., LL.D. in the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Pittsburgh* (by the church, [1924?]), p. 13.

## 12

## Thomas Hoge

Peter Gilmore

As a young man in the final decade of the eighteenth century, Thomas Hoge studied and prepared for the Presbyterian ministry. Hoge left his native Ulster for the United States when the tumultuous events of the late 1790s intervened. In the State of Pennsylvania he married, had a family, and worked and prospered as a merchant before responding to his earlier calling. He concluded a noteworthy career as an evangelist by serving on the Board of Domestic Missions of the national Presbyterian Church.

Hoge was born on 3 May 1775 in either County Tyrone or County Londonderry.<sup>1</sup> Church histories written in the United States say nothing about his earlier education but note that he attended the University of Edinburgh. These accounts are also unanimous in the assertion that Hoge was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Tyrone.<sup>2</sup> Two principal secondary sources also claim that the licentiate left Ireland as a result of his sympathies for the United Irishmen, if not his participation in the 1798 rebellion.<sup>3</sup> However, the evidence indicates Hoge emigrated prior to the outbreak of rebellion in June 1798.

By all accounts, Hoge landed in Philadelphia, and soon struck out west, to Carlisle. Here, according to a church historian, ‘a Scotch-Irish element seemed to prevail and proved to be more congenial.’<sup>4</sup> As the historian Richard K. MacMaster explains, ‘[colonial-era] Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna [River] was the domain of the Scotch-Irish;’ Carlisle was their economic and cultural capital.<sup>5</sup>

Most likely, the Thomas Hoge who is the subject of the present profile was the Thomas Hogg, ‘a probationer from the Presbytery of Tyrone, Ireland’, received by the Presbytery of Huntingdon (Pennsylvania) at its fall meeting in 1797. Presbytery agreed to take Hogg under its care. He spent a little more than two years on trials, serving as a supply minister. Complaints about his character arose from some of the congregations he served, but these were deemed groundless. Nevertheless, Hogg decided to give up his ministerial career.<sup>6</sup>

Betsey Holmes and Thomas Hogg married on 18 October 1798 at the First Presbyterian Church in Carlisle.<sup>7</sup> By October 1798 Thomas Hoge had

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the responsibility of an academy in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, where the two branches of the Susquehanna River combine; in one account he was referred to as 'Thomas Hoge of Northumberland.'<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth 'Betsey' Holmes was the daughter of an Irish-born merchant who at various times had business interests in Carlisle, Donegal Township, in Lancaster County, and Baltimore, Maryland. Born in or near Coleraine, Abraham Holmes (1731–81) arrived in Carlisle by 1759, becoming one of several Ulster-born merchants.<sup>9</sup> Business and personal relations also tied him to Donegal Township, Lancaster County, where he operated a tavern known by the 'Sign of the Bear', and ultimately to Baltimore.<sup>10</sup> Daughter Elizabeth was born in Lancaster County in 1775. Ten years after her husband's death, Esther Holmes in 1791 sought to have her son-in-law, the Carlisle merchant Hugh Wilson, appointed as her teenaged daughter's guardian.<sup>11</sup> Wilson hailed from the parish of Ballyaghan, County Londonderry.<sup>12</sup>

Within five years of marrying into this well-established mercantile family, Thomas Hoge moved west across the Allegheny Mountains to the market town of Greensburg, the new seat of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Hoge became a United States citizen in Greensburg in March 1803. His mother-in-law, Esther Holmes, apparently accompanied the couple to Greensburg, where she died on 11 January 1804; a daughter born to Thomas and Elizabeth in 1807 was named in her grandmother's honour.<sup>13</sup> In 1806 Thomas Hoge joined exiled United Irishmen and brother Presbyterians John Caldwell, John Campbell White and Rev. John McNiece in subscribing to the Philadelphia edition of Francis Plowden's *An Historical Inquiry of the state of Ireland*.

It is unknown what Hoge was doing during much of the opening decade of the nineteenth century, but in late 1808 he opened a store. Two large advertisements in the Greensburg newspaper, the *Farmers Register*, on 9 December 1808 indicated that shopkeeper Hoge offered a wide assortment of goods. The top ad (in terms of placement) announced the availability of furniture and an enticing array of textiles – among them, 'Irish Linens', ginghams, 'Genoa Velvets', 'Fancy Calicoes' and flannels. The second advertisement offered 'Liquors & Groceries', including teas, 'A most extensive Assortment of Ironmongery & Sadlery [sic]', and chinaware and glassware. As was typical, goods were sold for cash or country produce, which might include wheat, pork, flour or whiskey.<sup>14</sup>

What does appear certain is that Hoge spent the early 1800s accumulating social and political capital in addition to the means necessary to launch his store. He had developed close relationships in Greensburg with other Presbyterians, shopkeepers and Democratic-Republicans.<sup>15</sup> In 1812–13 Hoge served as Treasurer of Westmoreland County, an indication of the trust and confidence of his peers.<sup>16</sup> In October 1813, Thomas Hoge, elder

of the Greensburg church, represented the Presbytery of Redstone at a meeting of the Synod of Pittsburgh.<sup>17</sup>

The storekeeper had done reasonably well for himself and family. Town tax documents for 1811 (the earliest available) record that Thomas Hoge, storekeeper, owned a house, a lot, a horse and a cow; by 1814, he had doubled the number of livestock.<sup>18</sup> His business both expanded and contracted after 1808. Thomas Hoge & Company began operations to the north in Indiana County. However, in July 1812 the firm ceased business there.<sup>19</sup> By the end of 1813 Hoge decided to quit his business. An advertisement placed in the Greensburg paper on 6 December 1813 announced the dissolution of the partnership between Thomas Hoge and Robert Brady operating under the name Thomas Hoge & Co. Brady separately announced that he had purchased the stock of Hoge's firm.<sup>20</sup>

Hoge's actions over the next few years are unknown. He and his family moved further west, to Washington, Pennsylvania, the county seat of Washington County. Some 20 years after he had prepared for the ministry within the Presbytery of Tyrone, he apparently decided to return to preparation for a ministerial career. In April 1816, he was taken under the care of the Ohio Presbytery. The Presbytery reported to the Synod of Pittsburgh at its meeting of October 1816 'That on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, they received after the usual trials, Mr Thomas Hoge, a licentiate from the Presbytery of Tyrone, Ireland.'<sup>21</sup>

Hoge was ordained by the Ohio Presbytery in January 1817 as an 'evangelist'. In May of that year he represented the Presbytery at a meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. (Coincidentally, the meeting was also attended by 1790s Ulster immigrant Samuel Knox and the United Irishman George C. Potts.) The evangelist Thomas Hoge was appointed to spend a month itinerating in the State of Ohio ('between Steubenville, Tuskarawa, and Canton'). Hoge also assigned to serve as the Ohio Presbytery agent to collect funds raised for seminary education.<sup>22</sup> The following year he received a call to Pittsburgh's Second Presbyterian Church. However, the 'opposition of Mrs Hoge constrained him to decline the invitation.'<sup>23</sup> Instead, he served for the next few years as stated supply for the Washington County congregations of Upper Ten-Mile Run and East Buffalo.<sup>24</sup>

Hoge evidently evinced an evangelical zeal, a real passion for communicating the Gospel as he understood it. At the Pittsburgh Synod meeting in 1820, the Ohio Presbytery reported that 51 adults had been baptized during the preceding year. Thomas Hoge had been responsible for 44 of those baptisms. His peers already accorded him respect. When Rev. Francis Herron, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, stepped down as Stated Clerk of the Pittsburgh Synod in 1818, the newly ordained

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Thomas Hoge was elected to succeed him. He was also chosen as a trustee of the Synod's board of missions.<sup>25</sup> Indicative of his interest in missions, in 1820 Hoge responded to a request for preaching from Presbyterians in the village of Claysville, in Donegal Township, Washington County. Over the next several months he helped to organize a congregation and became its stated supply.<sup>26</sup>

In 1821 the Ohio Presbytery installed Hoge as pastor of the united congregations of Claysville and East Buffalo. From just 19 members in 1821, the Claysville congregation had 51 in 1824 and 116 in 1830 – surely a testimony to Hoge's commitment to evangelism. (Among his original elders at East Buffalo was Joseph Donaghey sen., originally from County Tyrone; he and his wife Mary had left Omagh in 1790.)<sup>27</sup>

Hoge's continuing interest in civic affairs was revealed in his participation in a petition signed by more than 200 citizens in the city of Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1824 criticizing plans for a new county jail because of the paucity of cells and housing space. Also in the 1820s, Hoge became involved in the American Colonization Society, the major mainstream anti-slavery organization, which proposed to gradually secure the emancipation of slaves and assist in colonization efforts in Africa. In 1828, Hoge was reported to be the vice president of the Washington County affiliate of the Society.<sup>28</sup>

Hoge was a founding member of the Washington Presbytery in 1819, and served for many years as its Stated Clerk. In 1822 he was elected to a two-year term as Stated Clerk of the Pittsburgh Synod and soon after elected Moderator of the Synod. He continued his work of evangelism in Washington County as well. The *History of the Presbytery of Washington* recalled:

... while connected with this Presbytery he did much valuable service, with little earthly reward, in supplying vacant churches, and in forming and fostering new organizations. The warm gratitude of the survivors from among the people he so generously saved, still keeps his memory fresh. The churches of East Buffalo, Claysville and Mt. Nebo, were all his debtors for their existence chiefly to his laborious zeal.<sup>29</sup>

He left Washington for Philadelphia, where he served on the national denomination's Board of Domestic Missions, in 1844 working for the Board as its treasurer.<sup>30</sup>

Thomas Hoge, a man on no-one's list of suspected United Irishmen, left his country because of his political engagement. In doing so he postponed his ministerial career for nearly two decades. Ultimately, Hoge would exercise considerable influence on local and national events both as an



elected official and a leader of the Presbyterian denomination's efforts nationally to expand its ranks and territory.

- 1 The biographical details on a memorial plaque in the Claysville Presbyterian Church have the following information: born 3 May 1775, County Tyrone; died 23 January 1846, Philadelphia. (George W. F. Birch, *Our Church and Our Village* (New York, 1899), p. 74). Andrew S. Eagleson, *History of the East Buffalo Presbyterian Church* (Washington, PA, 1911) cites Londonderry as Hoge's county of birth (p. 5).
- 2 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 77; Eagleson, *History of the East Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, p. 5; Presbyterian Church of the United States, Presbytery of Washington, *History of the Presbytery of Washington* (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 129.
- 3 Eagleson wrote that because of his sympathy for the rebellion, Hoge fled Ireland in 1798 (p. 5). Birch wrote that Hoge's 'participation in the Irish Rebellion of 1798 caused him to flee to the United States' (p. 27). It is noteworthy that the name Thomas Hoge (or Hogg) does not appear on the lists of ministers and probationers suspected of involvement in the rebellion published in McBride, *Scripture Politics* and Miller, 'Presbyterianism and 'Modernization' in Ulster'.
- 4 Eagleson, *History of the East Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, p. 5; Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 103.
- 5 Richard K. MacMaster, 'Searching for Community: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1750s–1780s' in Warren Hofstra, *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience* (Knoxville, 2012), pp 77, 80.
- 6 Minutes of the Presbytery of Huntingdon, quoted in Gibson, *History of the Presbytery of Huntingdon*, p. 29. Both the timeline and geography allow the possibility that Hoge and Hogg were one and the same. The territory encompassed by the Huntingdon Presbytery lay immediately to the north and northwest of Carlisle and Cumberland County. Northumberland, situated where two branches of the Susquehanna River meet, presumably would have been accessible both to Carlisle and the Juniata River Valley at the heart of the Huntingdon Presbytery's territory.
- 7 John B. Linn and William H. Egle, *Record of Pennsylvania Marriages Prior to 1810*, vol. 1 (reprinted Baltimore, 2008), p. 75. Rev. Robert Davidson performed the marriage; two years previously he had served as Moderator of the General Assembly. (*Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*, vol. 9, p. 487).
- 8 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 104;  
<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>.
- 9 <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>;  
MacMaster, 'Searching for Community', pp 91, 102 fn77.
- 10 <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>;  
Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, *History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: With Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 788; Richard K. MacMaster, *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America* (Belfast, 2009), p. 279.
- 11 <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>.
- 12 <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>;  
[www.placenamesni.org](http://www.placenamesni.org).
- 13 William L. Iscrupe (compiler), *Naturalization Records, 1802–1852, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania* (Laughlintown, PA, 1978), p. 140; *Kline's Gazette*, 25 Jan. 1804;  
<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PAWASHIN/2009-03/1238115262>.  
The naturalization petition asserted Hoge to be a native of Ireland living in the US between 29 Jan. 1795 and 18 Jan. 1798.
- 14 *Farmers Register* (Greensburg, PA), 9 Dec. 1808.

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- 15 For example, Hoge had business dealings with James Brady, one of the first two elders of the Greensburg Presbyterian Church, and an elected official, and with Simon Drum and Samuel Guthrie, also members of the Greensburg church (*Westmoreland and Indiana Register*, 4 June, 11 June 1812; Robert Van Atta, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 1788–1988* (Greensburg, 1988), pp 28–9, 43).
- 16 *Greensburg & Indiana Register* (Greensburg, PA), 3 Dec. 1812; 4 Feb., 27 March, 1813.
- 17 Presbyterian Church, Synod of Pittsburgh, *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, From Its First Organization, September 29, 1802, to October, 1832, Inclusive*. (Pittsburgh, 1852), p. 93 (5 Oct. 1813).
- 18 Archives of the Westmoreland Historical Society, 'Tax Records of Greensburg Borough' (MS), pp 8, 79. He had two horses and two cows.
- 19 *Greensburg & Indiana Register*, 30 July 1812.
- 20 *Greensburg & Indiana Register*, 5 Nov., 6 Dec. 1813.
- 21 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 104; *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, p. 118.
- 22 Eagleson, *History of the East Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, p. 6; *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Assembly* (Philadelphia, 1817), pp 6, 5, 3, 15, 32.
- 23 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 104; Presbyterian Church in the USA, *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Elm Street Printing, 1878), p. 295.
- 24 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 104; *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, pp 129, 139. Early Presbyterian congregations in Pennsylvania were frequently named for nearby streams, in this case, Ten-Mile Creek and Buffalo Creek.
- 25 *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, pp 160, 142; Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, pp 104–05.
- 26 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 105.
- 27 Eagleson, *History of the East Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, p. 6; Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 105; *Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh*, p. 176; *History of the Presbytery of Washington* (Philadelphia, 1889), p. 232. Hoge seemed to have a somewhat tangled relationship with the Claysville congregation. The formal pastoral relationship with Claysville was dissolved in 1826, at his request. After an interval of two weeks he continued work there as stated supply and in 1830 was again installed as pastor. (Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, p. 105).
- 28 Boyd Crumrine, Franklin Ellis and Austin N. Hungerford, *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 466; *Message from the President of the United States ...* (Washington, 1828), pp 50, 197.
- 29 *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 129.
- 30 Birch, *Our Church and Our Village*, pp 106–07; *The Missionary Chronicle*, vol. 12 (1844), pp 260, 296, 396.

## 13

## John Chambers

Peter Gilmore

Elsewhere in this volume reference is made to John Chambers, a 'Dublin bookseller and United Irish leader', a correspondent of David Bailie Warden, who was released from Fort George prison in Scotland in 1802.<sup>1</sup> There were at least two individuals named John Chambers with United Irish connections who made their homes in the United States. The bookseller and Warden correspondent was preceded to the United States by an infant John Chambers, the son of a United Irishman on the run. Although circumscribed by heavy reliance on a single source, the story of the other John Chambers touches on many points already observed: the identification of the 1798 exiles with the Democratic-Republican Party of Thomas Jefferson; lifelong hostility toward the British government and monarchy; the networks of individuals associated with the Burgher Seceder tradition in Ulster; and the importance of Baltimore and Philadelphia in drawing together 1798 exiles, older cohorts of Irish Presbyterian immigrants, and various strands of Presbyterianism.<sup>2</sup>

The 'other' John Chambers was born in Stewartstown, County Tyrone, on 19 December 1797, the second son of William Chambers and the former 'Miss Smythe.'<sup>3</sup> William Chambers, then about 29 years of age, 'was a hot-headed, impulsive man of great physical vigour, a superb horseman, and a leader in athletic sports.' The older Chambers, wrote William E. Griffis, 'was powerfully influenced in his political opinions and actions by the ideas exploited in both the American and French Revolutions. A fierce patriot, he became a follower of the famous Wolf[e] Tone.' William Chambers joined the Society of United Irishmen.<sup>4</sup>

Chambers was arrested and incarcerated in the Stewartstown jail. Somehow he escaped, avoided capture, and made his way to the ship where his wife and two young sons, James and John, awaited passage to America. (John was described as 'an infant of three months at the breast.') According to family legend, William Chambers buried himself deeply under a load of cabbage, thus avoiding detection from British troops who searched the vessel.<sup>5</sup>

Some 14 weeks later, in the spring of 1798, the ship's emigrants, among them the Chambers family, reached Delaware Bay. Once disembarked at

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New Castle, Delaware, the Chambers family trekked west to the newly opened frontier of Ohio and made their home with other Irish Presbyterians.<sup>6</sup> 'As pretty much all Irishmen are very fond of religion and whiskey and a bit of a fight there were often rough scenes', according to the Chambers biographer.

William Chambers was a strong character and his hot temper was easily roused, but his wife, an equally strong character, but with finer strength, was cool-headed and made a good balance for her husband. She was a noted nurse and especially skilful in the sickroom ... Devoutly pious, she trained up her children in the fear and love of God, and by them and even by later generations her memory is treasured.<sup>7</sup>

John Chambers grew up with what the biographer described as the pioneers' 'strong and deep' religion, but his own religiosity came to eschew the doctrinal singularity of his neighbours.<sup>8</sup>

Even in his early life, as I remember Mr Chambers saying, he revolted against bigotry and the kind of religion that was not rich in love to one's neighbour ... The boy John once heard an old gentleman say that he would as soon sit down to the Lord's Supper with a horse-thief, as with a man who sang Dr Watt's [sic] version of the Psalms.<sup>9</sup>

An innovation in Chambers' own practice would be his lifelong commitment to teetotalism, a decisive break with the cultural norms of his parents' generation. 'On one occasion', wrote Griffis, 'the little fellow rebuked a crowd of men, including his own father, for their drinking habits whereby the parent, William Chambers was greatly affected.'<sup>10</sup> Consonant with the experiences of their contemporaries, from frontier regions to cosmopolitan port cities, the Chambers family identified with the party of Thomas Jefferson.<sup>11</sup>

William Chambers and his wife were connected to Baltimore by more than political outlook. Like most Irish immigrants of the era, they belonged to networks of family, friends and co-religionists that transcended mountain ranges and oceans. The Chambers had relatives in Baltimore. They sent their fifteen-year-old son John to live with his Baltimore relations as he learned a trade. The younger Chambers arrived in the port city in 1813, with the Americans' war with Britain already underway. He joined others in the city in digging and hauling earth to build the ramparts which helped enable Fort McHenry resist a British bombardment.<sup>12</sup>

In Baltimore, John Chambers joined the city's Associate Reformed congregation. The minister, the youthful John Mason Duncan, was regarded

as ‘the greatest of all John Chambers’ teachers.’ Although not a 1798 exile, not born in Ireland and not, apparently, a political radical, Duncan nonetheless linked John Chambers to the networks and varieties of immigrant Ulster Presbyterian experience explored in the main report, and is therefore worthy of extended notice.<sup>13</sup>

The minister’s paternal grandparents, Isaac and Margaret Duncan, arrived in Philadelphia from Ireland in 1767. Isaac died only a few years later. His widow, however, became a successful merchant and landowner. The record strongly connects Duncan to Ireland’s Burgher Seceder communion, a source of both clergy and communicants for the Associate Reformed Church in the United States after its organization in 1782. Writing home to Stewartstown, County Tyrone, in 1785 she commented on the death of Rev. Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney, the Burgher Seceder minister who lived along the Londonderry-Tyrone border, and father of ministers (Joseph and Moses Kerr) discussed elsewhere. In the same letter she commented on having seen ‘doctor clark’ – Rev. Thomas Clark, formerly Burgher Seceder minister of Ballybay, County Monaghan – on his way from New York State to the Carolinas. In her correspondence Margaret Duncan also took the side of the Associate Reformed Church in its dispute with the Associate Presbyterian Presbytery over Philadelphia’s ‘Old Scots Presbyterian Church.’<sup>14</sup>

The Duncans’ son Matthew served as a captain in the Revolutionary Army, and went into business with his brother David. Both men were members of Philadelphia’s Hibernian Society. A third brother, Isaac, also went into business with them. Matthew Duncan married Helen Mason, the sister of Rev. John Mason, a prominent leader of the Associate Reformed Church. Their sons’ names reflected their parents’ identification with that denomination: David Telfair Duncan and John Mason Duncan.<sup>15</sup> John Mason Duncan was schooled in Philadelphia and attended the University of Pennsylvania. He graduated in 1805. Two years later, upon the death of his father, Duncan joined the household of his theological tutor and mentor, Rev. Dr James Gray.<sup>16</sup>

Gray was born in Corvoam, County Monaghan on Christmas Day, 1770, attended the University of Glasgow, and was licensed to preach by the Burgher Presbytery of Monaghan in 1796. Gray emigrated the following year. Griffis surmised, ‘Probably he had been one of the United Irishmen.’ The Associate Reformed Presbytery of Washington in upper New York State ordained Gray in 1797. He moved to Philadelphia in 1803, and the following year accepted a call as minister to the ‘Old Scots Presbyterian Church’, the Associate Reformed congregation on Spruce Street. He launched a classical academy in partnership with the Reformed Presbyterian minister and United Irishman, Samuel Brown Wylie. And in 1813, Gray became a member of Philadelphia’s Hibernian Society.<sup>17</sup>

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From Philadelphia, John Mason Duncan went to New York and four years of study at the Associate Reformed Theological Seminary, where his famous uncle, John Mason, was the principal. Duncan boarded with his uncle's family. He was licensed by the Associate Reformed Philadelphia Presbytery in 1811 and ordained the following year as minister to the Baltimore congregation. In 1815 Duncan married Eliza, the daughter of John McKim jun. As noted earlier, McKim subscribed to Francis Plowden's *Historical Review* and assumed an active role in Baltimore's Hibernian Society. Gray moved to Baltimore the following year and opened a school.<sup>18</sup> Duncan took an interest in young John Chambers, and convinced him to study for the ministry. To that end, he persuaded this son of a United Irishman to enter the classical academy of Rev. Dr Gray.<sup>19</sup> Chambers was licensed by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1824. Early the next year he was invited to preach at the Margaret Duncan Church in Philadelphia.<sup>20</sup>

In 1798, aged 75, Margaret Duncan returned to Ireland to visit family and friends in Stewartstown, accompanied by her little grandson John Mason Duncan. They returned to the United States on a ship that sailed from Belfast crammed with desperate emigrants. It was an ill-fated voyage, beset by an inexperienced captain and a storm, then a calm sea and windless skies. Becalmed for days, the panicking passengers ran out of food and water. Margaret Duncan prayed for deliverance, and vowed that if the passengers were spared, she would build a meeting-house for the Associate Reformed Church and raise her grandson to be a minister. Shortly thereafter, gentle rains fell and what became a rescue ship sailed into view.<sup>21</sup>

True to her word, Margaret Duncan provided for a church in her will. She died four years after her Irish excursion. Her executor, son Matthew, before his death in 1807 made provisions which ensured that the brick 'Vow Church' was erected on Thirteenth Street near Filbert Street in Philadelphia in 1815.<sup>22</sup> The congregation of the Margaret Duncan Church issued a call to John Chambers.<sup>23</sup>

Elsewhere in this volume there is a discussion of how the suspected United Irishmen Thomas Smith and Joseph Kerr resisted the latitudinarian tendencies of John Mason, and participated in a secession from the Associate Reformed Church which preserved that denomination's ethnic character and doctrinal uniqueness in central and western Pennsylvania. On the east coast, however, the story was quite different. 'In 1822, against the judgment of a majority of the presbyteries, the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, by a small majority adopted a basis of union with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.'<sup>24</sup> Several presbyteries of the Associate Reformed Church were absorbed by the Presbyterian Church. The Associate Reformed Presbytery of Philadelphia became the Second

Presbytery of Philadelphia and subsequently voted to dissolve.<sup>25</sup> John Chambers had been licensed to preach by a presbytery which just a few months later ceased to exist.

With the merger, Chambers was placed under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Baltimore of the mainstream church. Chambers asked to be taken under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in response to the call from what was now the Ninth Presbyterian Church. Like some of his contemporaries – most notably the father and son, Thomas and Alexander Campbell – Chambers had let go of key doctrinal elements of traditional religiosity. Chambers proclaimed the sole authority of the Bible and rejected the requirement to subscribe to the Westminster Confession and other human creeds. The Philadelphia Presbytery rejected his application, returned his papers, and declared the pulpit of Ninth Presbyterian to be vacant.<sup>26</sup> A sizeable majority of the Margaret Duncan congregation then voted to relinquish their connection to the Presbyterian Church and voted to retain Chambers as their minister. (He found members of Connecticut's Congregational Ministerial Association who were willing to ordain him.) The Margaret Duncan/Ninth Presbyterian Church became the First Independent Church of Philadelphia.<sup>27</sup>

The difficulty encountered by Chambers was both individual in nature and representative of a generalized unease with the merger between portions of the Associate Reformed and mainstream Presbyterian churches. Chambers' mentor and pastor, John Mason Duncan, had earlier faced a very similar set of circumstances. With the dissolution of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, Duncan was to join the Presbytery of Baltimore. But Duncan had delivered, then published, a sermon entitled 'A Plea for Ministerial Liberty', which aroused the ire of Baltimore Presbyterian clergy. The Presbytery voted unanimously to refuse him. The Synod upheld the action by the Presbytery and ruled that the pastoral relation between Duncan and his congregation were dissolved. But a majority of the congregation stood by him. A year before the secession of Chambers' Philadelphia church, the independent Presbyterian church of Baltimore – legally known as the 'A.R.' church – came into existence. Duncan's rejection of doctrinal tradition was arguably consistent with the Ulster Presbyterian tradition of doctrinal disputation – and may well have been seen in that way by a congregation heavily of Irish origin.<sup>28</sup>

Chambers became a popular and well-known preacher, and a noted Sabbatarian and temperance stalwart. This son of a fugitive United Irishman was an intimate of President James Buchanan, well-known at the White House and the Democratic politician's estate, Wheatlands. (The only Pennsylvanian President, James Buchanan was born in 1791 to a Donegal-born father in what became Fulton County.) On at least one occasion, he

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opened a session of the House of Representatives with prayer. Ultimately, though, Chambers' commitment to the political party favoured by his parents may have foreclosed the possibilities of greater acclaim.<sup>29</sup>

Chambers did not deviate from lifelong devotion to the Democratic Party, embracing the party's support for slavery and opposition to abolitionism. The Civil War – and the minister's hostility to the war – divided his congregation. In a sermon delivered in 1859, Chambers employed the rhetoric of republicanism to denounce (by implication) Republicans and abolitionists. The American republic must be preserved from divisions, he declared, because the United States was a bulwark against Great Britain.<sup>30</sup> The minister's political outlook may have been reinforced by a trip to Ireland in 1830, when he visited the family's former home in Stewartstown, County Tyrone, and 'the prison in which his father had been incarcerated and from which he escaped.'<sup>31</sup>

Chambers married three times. His second wife, in an interesting twist, was Martha, the widow of Silas Weir, merchant of Philadelphia. Thus, indirectly Chambers had connected to the Weir family of Stewartstown, County Tyrone, the relatives of the celebrated Margaret Duncan. Martha was also a daughter of Alexander Henry, a Philadelphia merchant who emigrated from Loughbrickland, County Down, and was a member of the Hibernian Society.<sup>32</sup>

Chambers' church eventually affiliated with the mainstream Presbyterian denomination; it became known as the Chambers Presbyterian Church. With construction of a new building at the turn of the twentieth century, the church became known as the Chambers-Wylie Presbyterian Church, in honour of John Chambers, Samuel B. Wylie (known for his United Irish connections) and his son Theodorus W. J. Wylie. (The younger Wylie succeeded his father both as pastor and professor at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary.)<sup>33</sup>

- 1 Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 58.
- 2 This report relies heavily on William Elliot Griffis, *John Chambers, Servant of Christ and Master of Hearts and His Ministry in Philadelphia* (Ithaca, NY, 1903). A clergyman and prolific writer, Griffis grew up in Chambers' church and knew him well.
- 3 William Melancthon Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America ...* (Pittsburgh, 1903), p. 74; Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 9. Griffis gave September as the month of Chambers' death, but based on the internal evidence within his own document, December as given by Glasgow is more likely.
- 4 Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 10.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid., p. 12.
- 7 Ibid., p. 15.
- 8 Ibid.



- 9 Ibid., p. 16.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid., pp 16–17.
- 12 Ibid., pp 17–18.
- 13 Ibid, p. 19.
- 14 Margaret Duncan to William Weir, December 1785, PRONI D1140/4, and July 1786, PRONI D1140/5, Weir Family Letters, transcribed by Kerby A. Miller. Among other land deals, in 1789 Margaret Duncan obtained a tract in Northumberland Co. called Lough Derg ('Lough Darrach'). (Northumberland Co., PA Deeds, Family History Library Film 961,194).
- 15 William Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX: Lutheran, Reformed Dutch, Associate Reformed, Reformed Presbyterian* (New York, 1869), p. 145; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 400–01.
- 16 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX*, p. 145; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 104.
- 17 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 141; Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 22; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 418.
- 18 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX*, pp 145–6; Clayton Colman Hall, *Baltimore: its history and its people*, vol. 3 (New York, 1912, reprinted 2007), p. 653; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 141.
- 19 Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 19.
- 20 Ibid., p. 23.
- 21 Ibid., pp 25–6; [www.900blockssouthbodine.com](http://www.900blockssouthbodine.com).
- 22 Ibid., p. 26; [www.900blockssouthbodine.com](http://www.900blockssouthbodine.com).
- 23 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 74; Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 28.
- 24 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 12.
- 25 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX*, p. 146.
- 26 Griffis, *John Chambers*, pp 30–31.
- 27 Ibid., pp 32, 35.
- 28 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX*, p. 146; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 104. See John M. Duncan, *A Reply to Dr Miller's Letter to a Gentleman of Baltimore, in Reference to the Case of the Rev. Mr Duncan* (Baltimore, 1826), which relentlessly insists on the supremacy of biblical revelation over traditional creeds and confessions.
- 29 Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 112.
- 30 Ibid., pp 113–15. Chambers enjoyed the friendship of Rev. William Swan Plumer, a Pennsylvanian-born leader of Old School Presbyterianism. Much of Plumer's career as pastor and theologian was spent in the South. However, he was a minister in Allegheny City (today Pittsburgh's North Side) at the outset of the Civil War where he was censured by his presbytery for refusal to pray for President Lincoln.
- 31 Ibid., pp 59–60.
- 32 Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 66; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 427.
- 33 Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 6; Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. IX*, p. 35.

## 14

## John Campbell White of Baltimore

William Roulston

John Campbell White was one of the more successful exiles of 1798, becoming a wealthy and respected citizen of Baltimore in the first half of the nineteenth century. Born in Templepatrick, where his father Robert had been ordained minister of the Presbyterian congregation in 1755, White went on to study medicine at Glasgow University (MB 1782).<sup>1</sup> In 1778, he married Elizabeth Getty. White was apothecary to the Poor House in Belfast from *c.* 1777 to 1781, and later became the attending physician to the Belfast Dispensary, which he had helped to establish in 1792 along with Dr James McDonnell.<sup>2</sup> He was an active member of the Belfast Reading Society, serving on its committee, and was a strong campaigner for the establishment of a Free School in Belfast for the education of the lower classes.<sup>3</sup>

A brother, Patrick, emigrated to America before the summer of 1791 and established himself as a merchant in Petersburg, Virginia, specialising in the grain and flour trade. In the course of the 1790s he shipped various commodities, mainly tobacco, to his brother John and others in Belfast, and imported Irish linens and nails.<sup>4</sup> Patrick White corresponded with Thomas Jefferson in 1796 in relation to his role as administrator of the estate of the late John Banister.<sup>5</sup>

John Campbell White had been active in radical politics in Belfast from at least the early 1780s.<sup>6</sup> An early member of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen, in January 1792 he was one of a group of Presbyterians, also including Samuel Neilson, that most forcefully demanded Catholic emancipation.<sup>7</sup> He would go on to serve on the Ulster provincial directory of the United Irishmen. To what extent he was involved in preparations for the Rebellion is unclear and similarly how he made his way to America is not known, though he had crossed the Atlantic by October 1798.<sup>8</sup> He would settle in Baltimore where, by 1801, he was a member of the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of Maryland.<sup>9</sup> He attended the Presbyterian Church in Baltimore pastored by fellow exile Rev. John Glendy. On 3 April 1804 White was naturalized, but due to a clerical error his name was entered as John Campbell; in 1839 the United States Congress authorised the correction of this error.<sup>10</sup>

JOHN CAMPBELL WHITE OF BALTIMORE

To friends in America and those back in Belfast White waxed lyrical on the positive aspects of his new home. In a letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, informed his correspondent:

there is no Man of your acquaintance become a more enthusiastick American than Docter White, he has adopted their ways & manners & admits he never felt real comfort & happiness to the degree he now enjoys – in the land he left – He is held in high estimation & what is extraordinary, by the very violent Political People of both parties.<sup>11</sup>

Writing to Robert Simms on 16 November 1804, White himself commented, ‘the democrattick Government with its chief the illustrious Jefferson are daily gaining ground and fixing themselves more securely in the hearts ... of the majority of the American people’, adding, ‘in my opinion, associations of men cannot afford more [comfort], security & happiness to its people than are enjoyed in the United States.’ White was anxious that Simms should follow him to America and gave him the following advice: ‘you must know that a settlement in a new country is attended with many inconveniences, & that a considerable time must lapse before a new settler will find himself at his ease. He must serve a kind of noviate or apprenticeship’.<sup>12</sup> Less than a month later he again wrote to Simms to tell him that America was ‘a young country where civil, religious and political liberty are enjoyed to the fullest extent, and where no more taxes are levied on the Citizens than are barely ... to the interests and security of the state’.<sup>13</sup> In a subsequent letter to Simms, White provided a detailed critique of the Federalists and made clear the position of the United States on international relations: ‘we want no colonies, no connections but commercial ones with European powers’.<sup>14</sup>

White is considered the founder of the Benevolent Hibernian Society of Baltimore. His concern for the wellbeing of recently arrived immigrants from Ireland was paramount as an advertisement placed in the *American Patriot and Fells Point Advertiser* in the summer of 1803 indicates: ‘Emigrants are daily arriving from Ireland; many of them are in a friendless and forlorn condition, deprived of health and an asylum. They have a claim upon those who have preceded them, to whom industry has proved propitious.’ The initial meeting was held in a city tavern on 17 August, with a further meeting on 8 October at which a constitution was agreed and White elected president.<sup>15</sup> The republican sympathies of the Society are very clear from the reports of its meetings. For example, at the Society’s St Patrick’s day gathering in 1804, where White was re-elected president, the following toasts were among the 31 proposed: ‘Our Native Land’, ‘Our Adopted

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Country', 'Thomas Jefferson', 'Lately Imported Patriots', 'United States as Asylum for the Persecuted', 'Civil and Religious Liberty to All Mankind', 'Our Distressed Brethren in Ireland', and 'Fair Daughters of Erin, may they never smile on the enemies of their country'.<sup>16</sup> White remained as president of the Society until 1811–12. During the War of 1812 he played a leading role in the defence of Baltimore, serving as a member of the 'committee of supply' which had at its disposal \$20,000 for defensive purposes.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to practising as a doctor, White established a successful gin-producing distillery in Holliday Street, Baltimore.<sup>18</sup> He also conducted business in New York City under the name John White & Co., placing some of his older sons in this firm.<sup>19</sup> He invested in property and owned extensive tracts of land in New York State.<sup>20</sup> He was also President of the Trustees of Baltimore College.<sup>21</sup> He died in 1847 and the following obituary was published in a Dublin newspaper:

As an ardent philanthropist and sincere patriot, whose aspirations were always directed to the best interests of mankind and the promotion of the freedom of his native land, his name is intimately associated with the political history of Belfast, during the eventful years of the Volunteers, and the subsequent period of excitement. Nearly fifty years ago, Dr White, disgusted with the state of public affairs in Ireland, abandoned his professional prospects here, and emigrated to America, then in the early enjoyment of freedom, where he enjoyed a long career of prosperity and happiness, and with better fortune than many of his compatriots, survived the recognition of Great Britain, of those great measures of civil and religious liberty for which he had, in early life, unsuccessfully contended.<sup>22</sup>

Years later, he continued to be remembered fondly:

The old Doctor White was a famous man. He was the most elegant man that ever appeared in the old-time ball rooms. He was the very impersonation of what was known as an *Irish* gentleman. ... Old Doctor White, the father, was one of the most splendid-looking men that ever walked the streets of Baltimore. He lived in a handsome residence [at the] corner of Fayette and Holiday streets.<sup>23</sup>

White's eldest son Robert became a successful banker in New York, while another son, Campbell Patrick, was Congressman for New York from 1829 to 1835. A further son, Joseph, married Isabella Pinkney, daughter of the famous politician William Pinkney.<sup>24</sup> Their son William Pinkney Whyte (he changed the spelling of his surname to dissociate himself from other

members of the family after a falling-out) was governor of Maryland from 1872 to 1874.<sup>25</sup> The Maryland Historical Society holds the John Campbell White Papers, 1798–1926.<sup>26</sup>

- 1 His father also ran a school in Templepatrick where his pupils included William Steel Dickson, later to become a Presbyterian minister and leading United Irishman (A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Summer Soldiers* (Belfast, 1995), pp 171–2).
- 2 R. S. J. Clarke, *A Directory of Ulster Doctors (who qualified before 1901)* (2 vols, Belfast, 2013), vol. 1, p. 1184.
- 3 John Anderson, *History of the Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge, commonly known as the Linen Hall Library, chiefly taken from the minutes of the Society, and published in connection with the centenary celebration in 1888* (Belfast, 1888), pp 18, 34, 93, 95.
- 4 Patrick White's letterbook for 1791–7 is in the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/clementsms/umich-wcl-M-1591whi?view=text>).
- 5 'To Thomas Jefferson from Patrick White, 25 March 1796', Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-29-02-0028>, ver. 2013-08-02). Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 29, 1 March 1796–31 December 1797, ed. Barbara B. Oberg (Princeton, 2002), p. 45.
- 6 *Belfast Newsletter*, 26–30 Dec. 1783.
- 7 McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 172.
- 8 *Acts and resolutions ... of the United States of America ...* (1839), pp 15–6.
- 9 H. A. Williams, *History of the Hibernian Society of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1957), p. 2.
- 10 *Acts and resolutions ... of the United States of America ...* (1839), pp 15–6.
- 11 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 639.
- 12 PRONI, T1815/3, John Campbell White to Robert Simms, 16 Nov. 1804.
- 13 PRONI, T1815/14, same to same, 4 Dec. 1804.
- 14 PRONI, T1815/11, same to same, 5 Sept. 1805.
- 15 Williams, *History of the Hibernian Society of Baltimore, 1803–1957*, p. 2.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 18 *The Ordinances of the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore* (1834), p. 67.
- 19 PRONI, T1815/7, John Caldwell to Robert Simms, 15 May 1806; Walter Barrett, *The old merchants of New York City* (New York, 1885), vol. 4, p. 144.
- 20 Avril J. M. Pedley (comp.), *The manuscript collections of the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore, 1968), p. 306.
- 21 *Memorial of the trustees of the University of Maryland, and the trustees of Baltimore College, to the legislature of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1830), p. 31.
- 22 *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1847; his wife Elizabeth died on 11 Feb. 1839.
- 23 Barrett, *Old merchants of New York*, pp 146–7.
- 24 For more on Dr White's sons see Barrett, *Old merchants of New York*, pp 144–9.
- 25 Heinrich Ewald Buchholz, *Governors of Maryland: from the revolution to the year 1908* (Baltimore, 1908), p. 199.
- 26 MHS, John Campbell White Papers ([www.mdhs.org/findingaid/john-campbell-white-papers-1798-1926-ms-1005](http://www.mdhs.org/findingaid/john-campbell-white-papers-1798-1926-ms-1005)).

## 15

## Rev. John McNiece of New York

William Roulston

Rev. John McNiece is a little known figure, both in Presbyterian and United Irish studies.<sup>1</sup> Of his family background nothing can be said with certainty, other than that one biographical entry, with several details that are not supported by other evidence, states that he was born in Belfast in 1772.<sup>2</sup> He may have been educated at Glasgow University, though conclusive proof of this has not been found.<sup>3</sup> At the Synod of June 1793 the Templepatrick Presbytery reported that they had 'Mr McNish' on first trials.<sup>4</sup> He next appears in the minutes of Synod of September 1797 when the Ballymena Presbytery reported that they had entered McNish on second trials.<sup>5</sup>

At this same Synod a memorial was presented by 'that part of the congregation of Clough, styling themselves the Majority, praying that the ordination of the Revd Mr McNish might be forwarded among them'. Another petition from a minority within the congregation asked for him to either be removed 'from among them' or else for another poll of the Clough membership to be taken. Clearly McNiece had divided opinion in the Clough congregation and in response to these requests, Synod agreed that a committee should meet at Clough on the third Tuesday in October to 'take a poll of the congregation, and if they see cause, enjoin the Presbytery of Ballymena, to proceed to the ordination of Mr McNish, with all convenient expedition'.<sup>6</sup> It is not entirely clear whether the ordination of McNiece was carried out for at the August 1798 Synod it was simply recorded that 'the committee appointed to meet at Clough had issued the object of their appointment, & the Synod unanimously approved of their conduct'.<sup>7</sup>

How, why and to what extent McNiece was drawn into United Irish activities is not known. However, during the rebellion itself he was reported to have been in command of a large number of insurgents that marched from Clough to Ballymena, capturing a party of the Dunseverick Yeomanry along the way. After the rebellion, McNiece secured a pass to emigrate to America, thanks to the intervention of Neale McPeake of Harryville and a Presbyterian clergyman named Douglas.<sup>8</sup> McNiece travelled to New York on the *Peggy* chartered by John Caldwell jun. in the spring of 1799 and seems to have spent most, if not all, of the rest of his life there.

Soon after arriving in New York McNiece began to teach and preach. Among a few surviving items of his at the Westchester County Historical Society are three tuition receipts, dating from 1799–1801, two of which are signed by him, as well as a subscription list for McNiece to preach for one year commencing 2 December 1801.<sup>9</sup> In that year he is known to have preached to Presbyterians in Somers, Westchester County.<sup>10</sup> By this time he was also teaching at North Salem Academy, Westchester County, which had an enrolment of 80 pupils.<sup>11</sup> McNiece has been credited with reviving this institution and it was later said that ‘the most prosperous years’ of the Academy, which was housed in the Town Hall, were under his tutelage; several prominent figures in the political history of New York were educated here.<sup>12</sup> In 1802, he delivered the Fourth of July oration at Stephentown, New York; the text of his address was subsequently published.<sup>13</sup> In November 1803 he became minister of the Presbyterian Church of Fredericksburg (now Patterson) where he remained until 1808.<sup>14</sup> In 1806, like many other United Irish exiles in America, he was a subscriber to an edition of Francis Plowden’s *An historical review of the state of Ireland*, published in Philadelphia.

On 28 June 1809, McNiece was installed as pastor of the ‘Irish Church’ (also known as the Orange Street Church and later as the Canal Street Church) in New York City, the members of which were mainly Irish Presbyterians.<sup>15</sup> In the Fourth of July celebrations in New York City in 1813, held on Monday, 5 July, McNiece played a prominent role in the service held in the Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth Street, to which the various societies in the city had paraded, giving the ‘address to the throne of Grace’ as well as the concluding prayer.<sup>16</sup> On 7 July 1815 McNiece was released from his pastoral charge.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter he concentrated on teaching and was principal of the North Salem Academy from 1816 to 1824.<sup>18</sup> Of his own family very little is known. In the US census of 1810 he was listed as a resident of Ward 8, New York City and his household included: one male aged 26–44 (McNiece himself), two males under 10, one female aged 45 and over, two females aged 26–44, and one female under 10, plus one other ‘free person’. In the Old Colonial Cemetery, in the town of Johnstown, Fulton County, New York, a tombstone commemorates Joan McNiece, wife of Rev. John McNiece, who died on 8 May 1838 in her fifty-fifth year.<sup>19</sup> McNiece himself died in 1839 and presumably his body was laid to rest beside that of his wife.<sup>20</sup>

1 His name also appears as McNeice, McNish, Minees and Miniss.

2 W. M. Glasgow (ed.), *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America* (Pittsburgh, 1903), p. 240. The Irish Presbyterian *Fasti* has nothing on his background.

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- 3 A John McNish, son of John, a Glasgow merchant, matriculated in 1789, though this student has been identified with John Killian Macnish, a prominent medical practitioner. See *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, 1728–1858* (Glasgow, 1913), p. 157.
- 4 *Records of the General Synod of Ulster from 1691 to 1820*, vol. 3 (Belfast, 1898), p. 153.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 199.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- 8 *Old Ballymena* (Ballymena, 1857), p. 47; Douglas was noted as being 'then of Coleraine'. Possibly he was McNiece's predecessor in Clough, Rev. Joseph Douglass, who has been described as 'an outstanding man in many ways'. Installed in Clough in 1760, he became heavily involved in the Volunteers, often preaching in military uniform. He resigned because of ill-health in 1795 and died in 1805. See *Fasti*, p. 138.
- 9 'Descriptive inventory of the Mead family papers' (2006), Westchester County Historical Society ([www.westchesterhistory.com/media/pdf/library/MeadInventory.pdf](http://www.westchesterhistory.com/media/pdf/library/MeadInventory.pdf)).
- 10 Robert Bolton, *History of the County of Westchester* (New York, 1848), vol. 2, p. 138.
- 11 Historic American Buildings Survey of Town Hall, North Salem (<http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/ny/ny0800/ny0866/data/ny0866data.pdf>).
- 12 Robert Bolton, *A History of the County of Westchester* (New York, 1848), vol. 1, p. 476; *The Brewster Standard* [Putnam County, NY], 29 June 1928.
- 13 *An oration, delivered on the fifth of July, 1802, at Stephentown, New-York* (Danbury, CT, 1802); in that year 4 July was a Sunday and in consequence of that the commemorations were held on the following day.
- 14 *The journal of the Reverend Silas Constant, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Yorktown, New York; with some of the records of the church and a list of his marriages, 1784–1825, together with notes on the Nelson, Van Cortlandt, Warren, and some other families mentioned in the journal* (Philadelphia, 1903), p. 334. In this work McNiece is acknowledged as having been 'one of the Irish patriots of 1795 [sic], who left home with Emmet and others and for the same cause'.
- 15 S. D. Alexander, *The presbytery of New York, 1738 to 1888* (New York, 1887), pp 29, 38; *Patient continuance in well-doing: a memoir of Elibu W. Baldwin* (New York, 1843), p. 170; *Inventory of the church archives of New York City* (New York, 1940), p. 39.
- 16 R. S. Guernsey, *New York city and vicinity during the war of 1812–15, being a military, civic and financial local history of that period* (New York, 1889), vol. 1, p. 246.
- 17 Alexander, *The presbytery of New York, 1738 to 1888*, pp 29, 38.
- 18 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual*, p. 240; *Journal of the Reverend Silas Constant*, p. 334.
- 19 [www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/cem-ny-fulton-johnstown-oldcolonial.htm](http://www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/cem-ny-fulton-johnstown-oldcolonial.htm).
- 20 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual*, p. 240.



## 16

## Rev. James Hull of New Orleans

William Roulston

The careers of few of the Presbyterian probationers who found refuge in the United States have been traced with any success.<sup>1</sup> With regard to James Hull, however, it is possible to explore his life in America in comparative detail. Hull was a son of the manse. His father, Rev. James Hull senior, was from Limavady, County Londonderry, and in 1749 he had been ordained minister of the Presbyterian congregation in Cookstown, County Tyrone. Fourteen years later he was installed as minister of Bangor, County Down. Hull senior served as moderator of the Synod of Ulster in 1769 and continued to minister in Bangor until his retirement in 1793. The family home was at Ballyvarnon and it was probably here that the elderly Hull died on 30 March 1794.<sup>2</sup> His wife was later described as a woman ‘distinguished not only for her intellect, but her patriotism and was an intimate friend of Lord Castlereagh’.<sup>3</sup>

According to the inscription that was placed on his tomb in New Orleans, James Hull junior was born in Belfast on 15 May 1776.<sup>4</sup> He matriculated at Glasgow University in 1792.<sup>5</sup> After completing his university studies, he is said to have ‘travelled extensively under circumstances highly favourable to intellectual improvement’.<sup>6</sup> Following in his father’s footsteps, he began to prepare for the Presbyterian ministry and in 1796 was licensed by the Bangor Presbytery. By this time he may already have become associated with the United Irishman. As far as his actual involvement in the rebellion is concerned, we know that he was closely associated with David Bailie Warden, probably being the ‘Mr H’ who accompanied Warden on a reconnaissance expedition to Newtownards on 7 June 1798. Soon afterwards he rallied faltering support for the United Irishmen in Bangor.<sup>7</sup> Among the depositions made before Rev. James Cleland, a County Down magistrate, there is the following statement: ‘Saw Revd. James Hull at Bangor ... saying he was going for the cannon ...’.<sup>8</sup> This suggests a certain belligerence on the part of the young probationer and Hull’s prominence is further indicated by the fact that he was included among those for whom a reward of fifty guineas was offered.<sup>9</sup> In the event, Hull evaded capture and escaped to America. At the meeting of the Synod of Ulster of June 1799 the Bangor Presbytery reported that Hull, along with John Miles and David Bailie Warden, ‘having been charged with being concerned in the insurrection of June 1798 & not

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having stood their trials, but as they understand having sailed for America, are not to be considered as probationers under their care.<sup>10</sup>

On arriving in America, Hull headed for Augusta, Georgia, where, as Katharine Brown has noted, there was 'a close-knit Ulster community'; furthermore, it became the location of a 'significant colony of United Irishmen and their sympathizers'.<sup>11</sup> Already resident in Georgia was Hull's brother, George Irwin Hull, who had married Sarah Williams in Savannah in 1795, and was a federal marshal in both Savannah and Augusta; he died in October 1800 in Augusta, leaving one son, Thomas H. Hull. Other members of the family to settle in Augusta included James Hull's mother Jane or Jean who died in 1820; his sister Jane who died 1817; his brother Dr Hugh Montgomery Hull<sup>12</sup> who subsequently moved to New Orleans and died there in 1805; and another sister who married Dr Benjamin Harris of Augusta.<sup>13</sup>

Possibly James Hull had ambitions to become a Presbyterian minister in America, but, if so, these were dealt a blow by the fact that his former presbytery in Ireland refused to grant certificates of probation to him and the other probationers under its care. The General Assembly of the American Presbyterian Church had issued a ruling in 1798 that only ordained ministers with appropriate credentials would be admitted and then only after a year's probation.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, not long after arriving in Augusta, Hull – who in America was usually referred to as James F. Hull, the middle initial standing apparently for Foster<sup>15</sup> – began to preach and conduct marriages. The first marriage ceremony he is known to have performed was that of Dr Burke and Miss Elbert on 5 May 1799. A week later it was announced in the *Augusta Chronicle* that he would be conducting the service in St Paul's Church on the following Sunday.<sup>16</sup> His preaching was acceptable to the local populace with good attendances at his services, and in July 1799 he was invited to continue his ministry in Augusta for a six-month period. It was hoped that those who were in agreement with this would offer him reasonable financial support. In January 1800 he was invited to remain in Augusta for the whole of that year.

In the summer of 1801 Hull made plans to visit the new capital, Washington, and pay his respects to the President, Thomas Jefferson. He secured three letters of introduction. One was from George Walton, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence and a former governor and senator for Georgia. In introducing Hull, Walton wrote that he was 'the established and principal Clergyman of this City', adding that his 'talents and virtues have acquired and secured the esteem and respect of the Citizens here; as his personal decorum and deportment will, no doubt, do every where.' A second letter was secured from Senator Abraham Baldwin which noted that Hull was a native of Ireland and the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, and that he had come to America to escape 'political persecution';

Baldwin considered Hull to be 'a Gentleman of good education, of good morals and a good Republican'. The final letter was written by Congressman John Milledge who stated that that Hull's 'talents, and correctness of Character' made him 'amiable' to the inhabitants of Augusta. Hull passed on all three letters to Jefferson on 25 September 1801.<sup>17</sup>

At some point in the following year this Hull seems to have given up full time preaching to pursue a career as a lawyer. He was still performing marriages in May 1802, though by December of that year, when he married Magdalane Agatha O'Keefe ('an Irish lady of great beauty and elegance'<sup>18</sup>), he was James F. Hull Esq., not Reverend. His reasons for this change of direction are not clear. He studied law under John E. Anderson of Augusta, from whom he received his certificate to practise as an attorney. His legal practice in Georgia was not as successful as he had hoped and he moved to Henley, Cambridge (now Ninety Six), South Carolina, where he was naturalized on 30 October 1805; those supporting his application included John Cormick, himself a United Irish exile in Augusta.<sup>19</sup> His application for admission to the Bar in South Carolina was supported by Thomas P. Carnes of Columbia (Anderson having died shortly after issuing the relevant certificate to Hull) who stated on 29 November 1805 that he had known Hull for at least five years and believed him to be a 'person of strictly moral & upright character & deportment'.<sup>20</sup> Some information on Hull's legal career has come to light. For example, on 27 November 1806 he was one of three men to receive a power of attorney from Eliza Cormick in Dublin to act for her in the matter of her divorce from John Cormick, Hull's friend and fellow United Irish émigré.<sup>21</sup>

At some point prior to 1812, Hull moved to St Louis, Missouri (then part of Louisiana Territory), which had an expanding Irish population. A number of the town's residents had been involved in radical and seditious activities in Ireland in the 1790s, among them Joseph Charless from County Westmeath, the founder, in 1808, of the *Missouri Gazette*.<sup>22</sup> Hull continued his legal career in St Louis and when a vacancy for a judgeship arose in early 1812 he sought support from various quarters for his candidacy. Among those to whom he turned was an old friend, Colonel Hammond, who personally delivered a letter to the mayor of Washington, Robert Brent, on or before 30 January. In passing on this recommendation to President James Madison, Brent admitted that he had no personal knowledge of Hull though he was said to be a 'a man of probity and Talents acting as attorney at Law ... and altho a decided Republican in principal has never joined in the violence of party spirit'.<sup>23</sup> Further petitions on Hull's behalf arrived in the following weeks. One submitted by two inhabitants of Louisiana Territory, John Rice Jones and Clement B. Penrose, argued that it would 'give general satisfaction to the inhabitants, both French and Americans'.<sup>24</sup> It seems that

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Hull was not successful in securing this appointment. He was, however, active in public affairs in St Louis and indicators of this include his delivery of the oration at the Fourth of July celebrations in 1812 and a week later his acting as secretary at the town meeting held in response to the outbreak of war with Great Britain.<sup>25</sup> In October of that year he announced that he would be standing for the General Assembly, though it does not appear that he was elected.<sup>26</sup>

In 1814, seeking new opportunities and perhaps even in response to frustrated political ambitions in St Louis, Hull moved to New Orleans. According to one historian, many United Irish exiles 'looked to New Orleans as an attractive refuge' and a significant Irish community developed there in the early nineteenth century; the first St Patrick's Day celebration was held in 1809.<sup>27</sup> In New Orleans Hull was to become the city's Episcopal minister, though the precise circumstances that led to this are not altogether clear. One source states that he came to New Orleans to take charge of a church, officiating first of all as a Presbyterian minister before, at the request of the church members, taking orders in the Episcopal Church.<sup>28</sup> Another account relates that when Hull arrived in New Orleans he was unsure whether to practice law or preach. However, what helped him make up his mind to pursue the latter was finding the bar 'abundantly and ably supplied', while the Protestant ministry was represented by someone 'of no high pretensions'.<sup>29</sup> Whichever may have been the case, the Episcopalians in New Orleans, presumably aware of his past career as a minister, invited Hull to preach to them soon after his arrival in the city.

At this time the Episcopal Church in New Orleans was without a minister of its own, the previous rector, Rev. Philander Chase, having resigned in 1811. When Hull arrived in the city the services in Episcopal Church were being taken by a Methodist preacher, William Winans. In order to accommodate Hull, Winans was asked to vacate the pulpit. However, upon hearing what he felt were 'obliquities in the Christian and Ministerial character' (Winans described Hull as 'a boon companion at wine, and an adroit Whist-player'), he refused to do so, causing some consternation. In order to defuse the situation, Winans proposed that he would preach at 10 o'clock in the morning allowing Hull to follow him at 11 o'clock, a suggestion that was accepted. On the day in question, 11 June 1814, Hull arrived to take the service in a 'ruffled shirt and black gloves'.<sup>30</sup>

Hull's preaching proved popular with many of the Episcopalians in New Orleans and he was invited to be their minister once Winans's contract with them had expired on 1 January 1815. He was regarded by some as a 'a Scholar and an eloquent Orator', though Winans dismissed his supporters as the 'fashionable and gay elements' of the congregation.<sup>31</sup> It is also possible to detect some local political tensions contributing to the choice of Hull as

minister. Hull's main supporter was the leading Jeffersonian Republican in New Orleans, A. L. Duncan, while Winans was accused of being a tool of the Federalist Edward Livingston, later to become Secretary of State during Jackson's first term as President. Hull's background and politics would certainly have made him popular with the Jeffersonians in New Orleans. At the same time, Winans claimed that he himself was 'an enthusiastic Jeffersonian' at that period.<sup>32</sup>

A mere week after Hull began to officiate full time in New Orleans the famous battle was fought on 8 January 1815.<sup>33</sup> An anecdote of Hull's contribution to the American cause has been preserved:

Of the two protestant ministers in New Orleans, a Mr Hull is particularly distinguished. He is by birth an Irishman, and is said to have made himself remarkable during the troubles of his native country; at all events he is looked upon as a clever man, and possessed of much sound sense. He payed a visit to General Jackson, who accosted him on entering, thus: 'I don't presume you will go with us to fight the enemy?' 'Why not, General, if you will take me along with you?' 'How could you help us dear black coat?' 'Why you know I have had some rencontres with the red coats, and perhaps I could be of some use to you.' 'Well, I am going to take a ride to the lines, you may come along with me; have you a horse?' 'No Sir.' 'Bill,' cried the General, 'get Beelzebub saddled for the parson!' And with judgment and discretion, which did equal honour to his understanding and to his republican sense, he availed himself of the counsels of the rector, which, as I was assured by several respectable people, proved to be neither superfluous nor unserviceable.<sup>34</sup>

Hull ministered in New Orleans for over a year before indicating to the congregation that, having carefully considered the claims of the Episcopal Church, he would like to be ordained. Accordingly, a committee of the vestry met with him and offered him the position of rector.<sup>35</sup> In order to prepare himself for ordination, Hull travelled to New York to pursue further study and was received into holy orders there in October 1816.<sup>36</sup> A month before this he had made a return visit to Augusta to preach.<sup>37</sup> During this period the first Episcopal Church building in New Orleans was constructed. It took the form of a small brick edifice in the shape of an octagon and was in the Gothic style. It was called Christ Church and was the forerunner of the present Christ Church cathedral.<sup>38</sup>

Hull remained in New Orleans until his death in 1833. There was wide divergence of opinion on the performance of his clerical duties. William Winans, the man he had supplanted in New Orleans, was scathing in his criticism of Hull's ministry and preaching:

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The ministry of Mr Hull was a great evil. ... Pity that he was unfortunate as to preach a Religion he did not experimentally and practically understand to a people who emphatically needed Religious instruction, as the people of New Orleans then most unquestionably did. ... His ministry would have been just as it was, had he substituted Socrates for Jesus Christ, and Plato for St Paul.<sup>39</sup>

Winans further charged Hull with being a notorious drunkard, and of frequently being under the influence of opium or brandy, or both, even during 'seasons of official ministrations'. He firmly believed that New Orleans would have been no worse off in having no religious services than those provided by the Irishman. Winans, of course, had his own issues with Hull. A more sympathetic verdict on Hull's time in New Orleans relates that the congregation 'greatly prospered' under their rector with the results 'largely of a spiritual character'.<sup>40</sup> Another view of the Episcopal clergyman is provided by the distinguished British architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe who spent his final years in New Orleans where he died in 1820. Latrobe gave the following assessment of Hull preaching style:

He is a man of good talents & of an exemplary character. His sermons are plain & useful discourses, well composed, never rising to energetic eloquence and never sinking below mediocrity of argument or style. His delivery has only one fault, without which it would be really excellent: he drops his voice at the close of every period to the lowest tone of its compass.<sup>41</sup>

Hull is credited with improving relations between the Episcopal Church and other denominations in New Orleans.<sup>42</sup> He gave permission for members of the Presbyterian congregation in New Orleans to worship in Christ Church until they had a building of their own, while he contributed \$300 towards the construction of the first Presbyterian meeting house.<sup>43</sup> He was close friends with the eloquent and much respected Presbyterian minister in New Orleans, Rev. Sylvester Larned, officiating at his funeral in 1820.<sup>44</sup> In 1825, he attempted to establish a seaman's mission in New Orleans.<sup>45</sup> Hull was also responsible for establishing a successful school for young ladies in New Orleans, which was continued by his daughter Sarah.<sup>46</sup> In 1825, a rectory was begun next to Christ Church with Hull himself contributing just under \$1,300 of the \$8,500 cost.<sup>47</sup>

There is only limited evidence that Hull kept in touch with other United Irish exiles in America. We do know that on 26 August 1820 Hull wrote to William Sampson in New York to offer his condolences on the death of Sampson's only son, John Philpot Curran Sampson.<sup>48</sup> Sampson junior had died of a fever after only a few days' illness aged only twenty-five. He had

moved to Louisiana in 1818, where he had been admitted to the Bar and had been appointed deputy to the Attorney-General. However, he had resigned from this position to become a newspaper editor, thinking that he could have had a positive influence on public affairs through the press. At the same time, when Hull wrote to William Sampson he did so as one 'whom you may recognise as having been introduced to your family four years ago', indicating that there had been no long-standing relationship between the two. Hull knew the Porter brothers, sons of Rev. James Porter, who had been executed in 1798 for alleged complicity in the rebellion, regaling them with stories of their father, whom he would have known in Ireland.<sup>49</sup>

Towards the end of his life Hull began to suffer increasingly from ill-health. In the hope that it would benefit his condition Hull spent the summer of 1829 at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia.<sup>50</sup> On 10 January 1830 Christ Church was consecrated by the visiting bishop of Connecticut, Dr Brownell. A week later the bishop administered confirmation in the church for the first time. Brownell left New Orleans with the impression that the Episcopal Church in the city was in a thriving condition. However, while it was said of Hull that 'he worked with all his zeal until he could no longer work', it is also apparent that his health and consequent inability to fulfil all his ministerial responsibilities was affecting the general well-being of his congregation, giving the vestry serious cause for concern.<sup>51</sup> Eventually, in February 1832, an assistant minister, Rev. Ulysses M. Wheeler, was appointed.<sup>52</sup> In late 1832 there was an attempt to have Hull removed, leading to a major row with the vestrymen. Hull refused to go, claiming that he was protected by Canon law.<sup>53</sup> However, the vestry declared the rectorship of Christ Church vacant, though a stipend of \$1,200 was allowed to Hull for the rest of his life.<sup>54</sup>

Hull died of tuberculosis on 6 June 1833. In his last weeks this 'lingering consumption' had left him confined to his house. At the time of his death, New Orleans had just experienced an outbreak of cholera, though Rev. Theodore Clapp, the local Presbyterian minister, recorded that Hull had never 'left the city in sickly seasons but fearlessly continued at his post however great and alarming the mortality around him.'<sup>55</sup> He was buried in the Girod Street Cemetery that he himself had played a part in creating in 1822. Prior to this, Protestants in New Orleans had used a section in St Louis's Cemetery. In the early 1820s additional burial space was needed and on 10 August 1822 the city council authorised the mayor to sell to the Christ Church congregation, represented by Hull and the vestrymen, a tract of land for a cemetery.<sup>56</sup> In 1957, after years of neglect, the cemetery was deconsecrated. By this time Hull's once fine tomb was a crumbling ruin.<sup>57</sup> Hull's remains were among those that were removed to a special crypt in the Hope Mausoleum in Christ Church.<sup>58</sup> He was survived by his wife

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Magdalane and daughter Sarah. The fate of another daughter, Rosetta Lincoln, is unknown. She had been born on 10 November 1823 and baptised in Trinity Church, Natchez, Mississippi, on 6 May 1826.<sup>59</sup> Magdalane Hull died on 5 December 1844 aged 54.<sup>60</sup> Sarah Hull died some time after the Civil War.<sup>61</sup>

- 1 In his excellent study of political exiles in America Michael Durey was forced to admit that, with the exception of the well-known David Bailie Warden, he had not been able to trace the fates of any of those Presbyterian licentiates (excluding Covenanters) who had emigrated as a result of their involvement in the United Irishmen and/or 1798 Rebellion (Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 189).
- 2 *Fasts of the Irish Presbyterian Church* (Belfast, 1951), p. 148.
- 3 W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4 (New York, 1858), p. 561.
- 4 The statement that Belfast was his place of birth may refer in general terms to the area in which he was born (Belfast is around 12 miles from Bangor), though it is possible that his mother did give birth to him while in that town.
- 5 W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow from 1728 to 1858* (Glasgow, 1913), p. 166.
- 6 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4, p. 561.
- 7 Kenneth Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798* (Bangor, 1998), pp 55, 58.
- 8 PRONI, D714/3/29.
- 9 *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 July 1798.
- 10 *Records of the General Synod of Ulster from 1691 to 1820*, vol. 3 (Belfast, 1898), p. 216.
- 11 Katharine Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South' in David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spencer (eds), *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin, 2006), p. 96.
- 12 Educated at Apothecaries Hall, Dublin, he was the first apothecary of the Belfast Dispensary, 1792–5 (R. S. J. Clarke, *A Directory of Ulster Doctors (who qualified before 1901)* (Belfast, 2013), vol. 1, p. 479; R. W. M. Strain, *Belfast and its Charitable Society* (Oxford, 1961), pp 154, 156).
- 13 Information provided by Erick Montgomery, Augusta, GA.
- 14 Durey, *Transatlantic radicals*, p. 189.
- 15 There is no evidence for this middle name in any Irish source, though this is not unusual with Irish immigrants to America. However, it is not clear where the middle name of Foster came from.
- 16 *Augusta Chronicle*, 12 May 1799 (reference supplied by Erick Montgomery).
- 17 'To Thomas Jefferson from George Walton, 25 June 1801,' Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-34-02-0355>, ver. 2013-06-26). Source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 34, 1 May–31 July 1801, ed. Barbara B. Oberg (Princeton, 2007), p. 455.
- 18 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4, p. 561; Magdalane was a native of Dublin.
- 19 *Ancestoring*, III, p. 9 (reference supplied by Erick Montgomery); Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 129, 159.
- 20 Statement of Thomas P. Carnes, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC (reference supplied by Erick Montgomery).
- 21 Egan Family Collection, Northwestern State University of Louisiana (<http://library.nsula.edu/egan-family>).
- 22 *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, ed. Lawrence O. Christensen, William E. Foley, Gary Kremer, Kenneth H. Winn (Columbia and London, 1999), pp 162-3; Michael C. O'Laughlin, *Missouri Irish: The Original History of the Irish in Missouri* (Kansas City, 2007),



- pp 37-8; William Barnaby Faherty, *The St Louis Irish: An Unmatched Celtic Community* (St Louis, 2001), pp 1-16.
- 23 'To James Madison from Robert Brent, 30 January 1812 (Abstract),' Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/03-04-02-0170>, ver. 2013-06-26). Source: *The Papers of James Madison*, Presidential Series, vol. 4, 5 November 1811-9 July 1812 and supplement 5 March 1809-19 October 1811, ed. J. C. A. Stagg, Jeanne Kerr Cross, Jewel L. Spangler, Ellen J. Barber, Martha J. King, Anne Mandeville Colony, and Susan Holbrook Perdue (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 157.
- 24 C. E. Carter (ed.), *The Territorial papers of the United States. Volume XIV. The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri 1806-1814* (Washington, DC, 1949), pp 530-31.
- 25 F. L. Billon, *Annals of St Louis in its Territorial Days, from 1804 to 1821* (St Louis, 1888), pp 37-8, 71. He is referred to as 'James T. Hull' with reference to the Fourth of July celebrations, though this is probably an error (found elsewhere in relation to his middle initial); at the town meeting he is referred to as James F. Hull.
- 26 *Missouri Gazette*, 31 Oct. 1812.
- 27 Earl. F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1965), pp 3-12; rather surprisingly, the author makes no reference to Hull in this volume.
- 28 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4, p. 561.
- 29 Ray Holder, 'Methodist Beginnings in New Orleans, 1813-1814' in Charles E. Nolan (ed.), *Religion in Louisiana* (Lafayette, 2004), p. 241.
- 30 'Dr James F. Hull, Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, of New Orleans' *Hull Family Association Journal* (Spring, 2000), p. 6.
- 31 *Louisiana: a guide to the state* (Baton Rouge, 1941), p. 130.
- 32 Nolan, *Religion in Louisiana*, p. 242.
- 33 An account of the battle by Hull appeared in the press: *Missouri Gazette*, 25 Feb. 1815.
- 34 Charles Sealsfield, *The United States of North America as They are* (London, 1828), pp 81-2.
- 35 H. C. Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana, some of its history, 1838-1888; also some of the history of its parishes and missions, 1805-1888* (New Orleans, 1888), p. 52.
- 36 *Journals of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York Episcopal Church. Diocese of New York* (1844), p. 338.
- 37 Information provided by Erick Montgomery.
- 38 Mary Louise Christovich, Roulhac Toledano, *New Orleans Architecture: Volume II: The American Sector* (Gretna, LA, 1998), p. 21.
- 39 Nolan, *Religion in Louisiana*, p. 248, quoting from 'Autobiography of William Winans', an unpublished manuscript in Millsaps-Wilson Library, Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi.
- 40 Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana*, p. 53.
- 41 Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Impressions Respecting New Orleans: Diary & Sketches, 1818-1820* (New York, 1951), p. 98.
- 42 Dictionary of Louisiana Biography (<http://www.lahistory.org/site25.php>), referencing Timothy F. Reilly, 'Religious Leaders and Social Criticism in New Orleans, 1800-1861' (PhD dissertation, University of Missouri at Columbia, 1972).
- 43 John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1922), vol. 2, p. 710.
- 44 Ralph Randolph Gurley, *Life and eloquence of the Rev. Sylvester Larned; first pastor of the First Presbyterian church in New Orleans* (New York, 1844), p. 98.
- 45 Glenn Robins, *The Bishop of the Old South: The Ministry And Civil War Legacy of Leonidas Polk* (Macon, GA, 2006), p. 66.
- 46 Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana*, p. 53. Hull's daughter Sarah Sinclair Hull may have been given her middle name in honour of Rev. William Sinclair, a Presbyterian minister in Newtownards, County Down, who was also forced into exile in America for his alleged involvement in the 1798 Rebellion. The two men would certainly have known each other in Ireland.
- 47 'Dr James F. Hull, Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, of New Orleans', p. 6.

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- 48 A transcript of this letter is included in William Henry Curran, *The Life of the Right Honourable John Philpot Curran* (New York, 1820), pp xxix–xxx.
- 49 PRONI, D3579/2: referred to as Rev. James Hall [sic].
- 50 'Dr James F. Hull, Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, of New Orleans', p. 6.
- 51 Duncan, *The Diocese of Louisiana*, p. 53–4.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- 53 Dictionary of Louisiana Biography (<http://www.lahistory.org/site25.php>), referencing Reilly, 'Religious Leaders and Social Criticism in New Orleans, 1800–1861'.
- 54 *Jewell's Crescent City, Illustrated* (New Orleans, 1873), not paginated.
- 55 Theodore Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches and Recollections: During a Thirty-five Years Residence in New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1858), p. 232.
- 56 Leonard Victor Huber, Peggy McDowell, *New Orleans Architecture: Vol. III: The Cemeteries* (Gretna, LA, 1996), p. 18.
- 57 Leonard Victor Huber, Guy F. Bernard, *To Glorious Immortality: The Rise and Fall of the Girod Street Cemetery, New Orleans' First Protestant Cemetery, 1822–1957* (New Orleans, 1961), p. 37. The cemetery is now the site of the New Orleans Superdome (Christopher M. Duncan, 'Benjamin Morgan Palmer: Southern Presbyterian Divine' (PhD Dissertation, Auburn University, 2008), p. 86).
- 58 See Eric J. Brock, *New Orleans Cemeteries* (1999), p. 109 for a photograph of the plaque to those ministers re-interred in Christ Church, including Hull.
- 59 <http://genealogytrails.com/miss/adams/christenings-natches.html>.
- 60 *History of the yellow fever in New Orleans, during the summer of 1853 ...* (Philadelphia, 1854), p. 67.
- 61 'Dr James F. Hull, Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, of New Orleans', p. 6.

## Alexander Porter of Louisiana

William Roulston

Despite being the most politically successful of all Ulstermen to have left Ireland for America in the wake of the 1798 Rebellion, as well as the subject of a biography, Alexander Porter has been overlooked in studies of United Irish exiles in America.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps because of his youth when he emigrated and a question mark over the extent to which he was involved directly in the insurrection. Nonetheless, as the son of the executed Presbyterian minister Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey, whom he deeply revered, who crossed the Atlantic in the aftermath of the rising, he is worthy of study, not least because of his remarkable career in the United States.

Alexander Porter was born on 24 June 1785, one of eight children of Rev. James Porter and his wife Anna Knox. A number of places have been suggested for his place of birth including County Donegal, where the Porter family originated, and Drogheda, where his father spent a brief period as a schoolmaster. His headstone in Nashville City Cemetery states that he was born 'near Armagh County Tyrone Ireland'.<sup>2</sup> In what was widely believed to have been a serious miscarriage of justice, Porter senior was executed for alleged involvement in the 1798 Rebellion, the only ordained Presbyterian minister to face capital punishment after the insurrection. Several later accounts describe young Alexander's involvement in the 1798 Rebellion, though no contemporary records are available. He is said to have carried a stand of colours for the rebels at the Battle of Ballynahinch on 13 June 1798, bravely holding them up even after they had been riddled with bullet holes; afterwards he escaped to Ballindrait in Donegal, his father's home place, and lay low for a time with a kinsman, Andrew Stilly. Doubts have been expressed on the veracity of this tale – he was, after all, only just shy of his thirteenth birthday at the time – and it remains unproven whether he actually took part in the Rebellion.<sup>3</sup> Porter himself recorded that when his father was on his way to the scaffold he told his wife to send their sons to America when they were of an age to leave her.<sup>4</sup>

Several accounts state that Alexander and his brother James were brought to America through the efforts of their uncle, Alexander Porter. He had

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emigrated there in 1793, initially living in Wilmington, Delaware, before heading west to Tennessee where he settled in Nashville, and married into the influential Massengill family.<sup>5</sup> On learning of the disturbed state of the island, this Alexander Porter is said to have returned to Ireland and succeeded in helping his younger brothers Robert and William escape to America, afterwards bringing out two of his sisters and his young nephews, the sons of his executed brother.<sup>6</sup> In the early nineteenth century Alexander Porter senior established a successful business as a linen merchant. He also worked as a commission agent, built up an extensive property base, and is credited with having helped to develop much of downtown Nashville. He was on friendly terms with Andrew Jackson and in 1817 commissioned Ralph E. W. Earl to paint a portrait of Jackson, paying the artist \$100 for this and for another painting of himself.<sup>7</sup>

The younger Alexander Porter studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1807. Due to intense competition opportunities to succeed in this profession were limited in Nashville. However, new territories to the south and west were opening up and Porter was giving serious consideration to moving to one of them. Based on stories frequently recounted by him in his latter years, W. H. Sparks provided the following account of how Andrew Jackson had convinced Porter to relocate to Louisiana:

Pondering these facts in his ardent mind, and riding alone on one occasion to a justice's court in the country to attend to some trifling matter, he chanced to overtake General Jackson. He had been frequently importuned by Jackson to remove to Louisiana. ... Mentioning his wish to emigrate to some point or place where he might expect more speedy success in his profession, Jackson, with his accustomed ardor and emphasis, advised him to go to one of these new Territories, and in such colors did he paint their advantages and the certain and immediate success of any young man of abilities and industry, that Porter's imagination was fired, and he immediately determined to go at once to one of these El Dorados ...<sup>8</sup>

Porter, however, began to have doubts about the wisdom of this move and it was only after a stern lecture from Jackson that he set off for Louisiana. He began a legal practice in the Attakapas region of the Territory of Orleans and here he was drawn into the world of politics. He is reckoned to have been the key figure in the framing of the Louisiana constitution in 1812; it is said that the fact that he was from Ireland contributed to the greater degree of trust placed in him by the French than in other English-speakers.<sup>9</sup> He was a member of the Louisiana State Legislature from 1816 to 1818 and in 1821 became a judge on the state's Supreme Court. Shortly after his appointment Porter's brother-in-law, Isaac Lewis Baker, wrote to Jackson to

inform him of this and to tell him that Porter had secured six month's leave of absence to visit his mother and family in Ireland.<sup>10</sup>

With regard to his own family, Porter married 'the beautiful and much admired' Evelina V. Baker, daughter of Col. Joshua Baker, in the summer of 1815.<sup>11</sup> However, his domestic life was marked by much sadness. Just four years into their marriage, and having borne two daughters, Evelina died in October 1819 while on a visit to friends in Nashville and was buried in the City Cemetery there.<sup>12</sup> One of Porter's sisters, who had moved to live with him in Louisiana, then took charge of his household. Tragedy again struck the family in 1831 when his daughter Evelina died.<sup>13</sup> His other daughter, Ann, married a Mr Alston of South Carolina, but died a short time afterwards, apparently in her father's lifetime.<sup>14</sup> Porter's home was a large plantation in St Mary's Parish, located, appropriately enough, at Irish Bend. Named Oak Lawn, this property extended to 2,000 cultivated acres. A handsome mansion was built in the late 1830s replacing a more modest dwelling. Porter had a keen interest in horse-racing and imported thoroughbreds from Europe. Among his contributions to cultural life was his active role in the creation of an early Historical Society of Louisiana.<sup>15</sup>

Like other wealthy southern landowners, Porter owned large numbers of slaves – certainly more than 150. A visitor to Oak Lawn observed that Porter did not consider his slaves to be 'morally responsible beings', but that they were treated well by the standards of the time. In a letter to his close friend Josiah S. Johnston he indicated that emancipation was a worthy cause, but warned that the subject must be approached 'by slow and almost imperceptible degrees.'<sup>16</sup> He also expressed his support for the American Colonization Society, which had as its object the repatriation of freed slaves to Africa. After his death he was described by the Society as a 'zealous advocate and liberal patron'. He was, however, hostile to the interference of northern abolitionists in the South. As a senator he would condemn those who maligned slave-owners and in January 1836 wrote, 'Our interests imperatively require a slave holding president'.<sup>17</sup>

For over thirty years, Porter was the most high profile Irishman in Louisiana and was, to quote one historian, 'always proud of his Irish heritage'.<sup>18</sup> It was said that 'Many of his witticisms had an Irish setting' and that he was known to entertain guests by singing 'Irish melodies' and telling 'good native stories'.<sup>19</sup> One visitor to his home afterwards wrote that all who had stayed with Porter 'will remember the warm Irish welcome and luxurious hospitality of its accomplished and talented master.'<sup>20</sup> The respect for his Irish background prompted a number of Irishmen in Philadelphia, where Porter had gone for the sake of his health in April 1834, to invite him to a public dinner. Their invitation was due in part to 'the deep veneration we entertain for the memory of your illustrious father'. In declining this

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invitation on health grounds, Porter replied, 'In every period of American history, Irishmen have been found the strenuous supporters of liberal principles.'<sup>21</sup> His political opponents, however, made much of the fact that "Paddy" Porter was not the stereotypical Irish immigrant.<sup>22</sup> His wealth and status set him apart from the great majority of the Irish in Louisiana and his broad respect for the British government and constitution, notwithstanding his family's earlier suffering at its hands, led to accusations that he was never 'at heart opposed to British oppression'.<sup>23</sup>

Andrew Jackson was well known to the Porters in Nashville and, as noted above, Jackson is credited with encouraging Alexander to move to Louisiana.<sup>24</sup> Later, however, they became political opponents. Porter blamed elements within the Jackson party, 'silly fools' as he described them, for persuading his friend of 20 years to turn against him. In December 1831 he wrote, 'Many Jackson men who bear the name & avow it, are not so in their hearts'.<sup>25</sup> Porter became a leading figure in the Whig party that opposed Jacksonian democracy. The Whigs were the conservatives in antebellum Louisiana, stronger in the south of the state and more popular among the longer established, wealthier families. It has been said of Porter's role, 'Though he would never dominate the Whig party in Louisiana ... he probably came closer than anyone else to being a state-wide Whig leader.'<sup>26</sup> Having studied Porter's very frank correspondence with Josiah S. Johnston, who represented Louisiana in the US Senate, Joseph Tregle made the following observations on the reasons for the Ulsterman's hostility to the Jacksonians:

It was in effect because Jacksonianism appeared to him to threaten the continuity of the Union that he fought against it with such vigor. The followers of the General seemed to him oblivious to the sacred character of the republic and thus likely to let it die in an orgy of selfishness and vulgarity. ... More dangerously still, he thought, Jacksonianism pandered to fanatical factionalism and begat yet other factions of even greater divisive force, and factionalism, he felt, was the fatal disease of republics.<sup>27</sup>

The death of Johnston in a steamboat explosion in May 1833 created a vacancy in the state's representation in the US Senate. Porter worked hard behind the scenes to win support for his candidacy. This was strongly opposed by the Jackson party which regarded him as a 'thorough going opponent of the administration'.<sup>28</sup> Porter was maligned by Martin Gordon, the leading Jacksonian in the state, as an 'Alien in every sense of the word', and was wrongly accused by him of not being a US citizen. This opposition could not prevent Porter's selection as senator. One of his opponents is

afterwards said to have referred to him as a 'damned Irishman'.<sup>29</sup> Porter continued as senator until January 1837 when he resigned due to ill-health.

In the 1834 election for the governorship of Louisiana, the Whig candidate was Edward Douglass White, himself of northern Irish ancestry. In many ways, White was Porter's protégé and Porter actively campaigned for him. As the son of an executed Irish clergyman, Porter had great emotional appeal for Louisiana's Irish community. Much was also made of White's Irish roots by the pro-Whig press. On the other hand, the pro-Democrat newspapers made Porter their target, accusing him of not being a true Irishman, but an aristocrat who had forgotten his original poverty. In response, the Whigs presented every criticism of Porter as a slur on all the Irish. In the event, White won the election by a respectable margin, with Porter's sponsorship of his candidature considered decisive.<sup>30</sup>

Porter's hostility to Jackson continued even after the latter ceased to be president. When Porter visited Europe in 1840 he apparently made enquiries into Jackson's family background and, although he could not establish anything beyond doubt, 'learned enough to satisfy his own mind that Andrew Jackson was born in Ireland and brought to the United States by his parents when only two years old.'<sup>31</sup> According to a senatorial colleague, Porter's visit to the Old World was 'a melancholy one for him', and he was distressed 'at the state of his fellow man'.<sup>32</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Porter prepared a biography of his father.<sup>33</sup> He was prompted to do so by David Bailie Warden who had been one of his father's pupils and who was thinking of writing a history of the United Irishmen.<sup>34</sup> Porter provided an understandably sympathetic description of the circumstances that led to his father's death. After discussing his father's involvement in the United Irishman, he continued:

... now after a great lapse of time in a distant country and looking back with a calm eye on what took place in 1798, I can say to you in perfect honesty of heart and in sincerity I would rather he had died as he did an ignominious death on the scaffold, than to be now haunted with the reflexion that he did not feel for the wrongs of his native land and pant to avenge them. I believe he did both.<sup>35</sup>

He concluded that his father was 'an honest man, whose only fault lay in loving his country too well!'<sup>36</sup>

Porter was again elected to the Senate in 1843, but died at Oak Lawn on 13 January 1844 without taking his seat. Nearly three months later his body was brought to Nashville by steamboat for burial beside his wife's remains.<sup>37</sup> John Quincy Adams said of him, 'He was a man of fine talents, amiable disposition, pleasant temper, benevolent heart, elegant taste and

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classical acquirements. His death is a grievous loss to the country.' A newspaper obituary described him as an 'eloquent and distinguished Irishman, upright judge, talented senator, and able statesman'. On 28 February 1844 a number of residents of St Louis, Missouri, wrote to the editor of the *Missourian* newspaper, requesting that he reprint in pamphlet form the eulogy that had been delivered by Thomas H. Benton, Porter's acquaintance of over 30 years, in the US Senate on 2 February 1844. Delighted that Benton had referred to Porter as the son of a man 'martyred in the cause of freedom', the St Louis petitioners declared:

As natives of Ireland, and as American citizens, we are justly proud of the successful and brilliant career of the deceased. ... Like him, too, some of us are connection by blood and affection – all of us by sympathy – with the men who in '98 struck for the freedom of Ireland, and who, betrayed and overwhelmed, sealed their fidelity to her with their blood.<sup>38</sup>

Under the terms of his will Porter left some \$40,000 dollars between his sisters, or their heirs, as well as an annuity of £15 per annum to the poor of the parish of Greyabbey to be distributed by his brother-in-law, Rev. James Templeton, minister of Ballywalter. He also left \$500 to five children named after him. Oaklawn was inherited by Porter's brother James who thereafter withdrew gradually from legal practice. In August 1848 he returned to Ireland, visiting the site of the family home, by then gone.<sup>39</sup> James Porter died at Oak Lawn on 24 March 1849. He was described in his obituary as 'a gentleman of elevated principles, refined manners and great intellectual vigour.'<sup>40</sup>

- 1 W. H. Stephenson, *Alexander Porter, Whig Planter of Old Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1934). He does not appear at all in either Wilson, *United Irishmen. United States*, or Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*. He is, however, included in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.
- 2 See [http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/110052\\_porter.htm](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/110052_porter.htm) for the inscription and photographs of the monument. The phraseology of this statement is puzzling and one is left wondering if it meant that Porter was born in County Tyrone, but near its boundary with County Armagh. Another possibility is that the place intended was Omagh not Armagh.
- 3 O. D. P. Waters, 'The Rev. James Porter, Dissenting Minister of Greyabbey, 1753–1798', *Seanchas Ardmhacha*, 14:1 (1990), p. 98. In an unverified letter purportedly written by Alexander Porter the author relates: 'as a lad I was in the thick of it at Ballynahinch, where I bore the green banner of liberty with its golden uncrowned harp' (article on 'Judge Porter' by Colin J. Robb in *Sunday Press*, 2 June 1957).
- 4 PRONI, D3579/2, p. 7.
- 5 John Berrien Lindsley, *An Address on the Life and Character of Robert M. Porter, M.D., Late Professor of Anatomy in the University of Nashville* (Nashville, 1857), p. 5.



- 6 William S. Speer, *Sketches of Prominent Tennesseans: Containing Biographies and Records of Many of the Families who Have Attained Prominence in Tennessee* (Nashville, 1888), p. 28.
- 7 Rachel Elizabeth Stephens, 'America's portraitist: Ralph E. W. Earl and the imaging of the Jacksonian era', PhD, University of Iowa (2010), p. 206. The original Jackson portrait is in The Hermitage, Nashville, though several copies are known to exist, including one in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington.
- 8 W. H. Sparks, *The Memories of Fifty Years* (Philadelphia, 1870), p. 414.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 418.
- 10 *The Papers of Andrew Jackson, Volume V, 1821–1824*, ed. H. D. Moser, D. R. Hoth and G. H. Hoemann (Knoxville, TN, 1996), p. 11.
- 11 *Louisiana Gazette*, 2 Sept. 1815; the bride had been born near Washington, Kentucky, in 1797.
- 12 [http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/110051\\_porter.htm](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/110051_porter.htm). Lyle Saxon, *Father Mississippi* (1927, reprinted Gretna, LA, 2000), p. 162. The source of this information was a memoir written by Martha Martin who died in 1886 aged 93. She and her husband Thomas, who was from Bangor, County Down, were near neighbours of Porter in Louisiana.
- 13 *The Papers of Henry Clay*, vol. 8 (University of Kentucky Press, 1984), p. 359.
- 14 Sparks, *Memories of Fifty Years*, p. 419.
- 15 Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1965), pp 74–5.
- 16 Joseph G. Tregle, Jr, 'Through Friends and Foes with Alexander Porter', *Louisiana History*, 3:3 (Summer, 1962), pp 187–8.
- 17 Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (Oxford, 2003), p. 43.
- 18 David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815–1877* (Chapel Hill, 2001), p. 102.
- 19 Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, p. 139; Niehaus, *Irish in New Orleans*, pp 74–5.
- 20 Sparks, *Memories of Fifty Years*, p. 421.
- 21 Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, pp 90–91.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- 23 Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, p. 134.
- 24 Sparks, *Memories of Fifty Years*, pp 414–5.
- 25 John M. Sacher, *A Perfect War of Politics: Parties, Politicians, and Democracy in Louisiana, 1824–1861* (Baton Rouge, 2003), pp 43, 50.
- 26 Judith Kelleher Schafer, 'The Political Development of Antebellum Louisiana' in B. H. Wall and J. C. Rodrigue (eds), *Louisiana: A History* (6th ed., Hoboken, 2013), p. 138.
- 27 Tregle, Jr, 'Through Friends and Foes with Alexander Porter', p. 189.
- 28 Sacher, *Perfect War of Politics*, p. 64.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp 64–5, 158.
- 30 Niehaus, *Irish in New Orleans*, pp 74–7.
- 31 Sparks, *Memories of Fifty Years*, pp 146–7.
- 32 *Eulogy delivered by the Hon. Thomas H. Benton in the Senate of the United States on the 2d day of February, 1844 on the annunciation to that body of the death of the Hon. Alexander Porter, late a Senator from Louisiana* (St Louis, 1844), p. 14.
- 33 A typescript copy of this manuscript is in PRONI (D3579/2). Porter's manuscript was taken up by his brother James who included some additional notes. James Porter introduced the account as follows: 'In this volume I have attempted to preserve some memorialis of my ancestors and other relations. The materials are scanty, but my own regrets through life, at not possessing more information on the subject, make me desirous for the sake of those who survive me that what does not exist should be preserved. My father and brother were both distinguished men, the former having more, I believe, of what is called genius, the latter both from nature and his professional pursuits, greater prudence and sagacity. The recent death of the latter has been the principal inducing cause of this undertaking, considering it due by me to his memory to perpetuate as far as in my power

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- a knowledge of the qualities and conduct that made him what he was. Need I say that the birth of a daughter to me the day before yesterday is an additional motive – one which parents will understand and which, if not praiseworthy, is at least excusable. Oaklawn, 25 April 1844, James Porter.' He continued: 'In the remainder of this notice I shall follow pretty closely a short account of my father's life and fate drawn up by my brother Alexr. ... The manuscript is now before me.'
- 34 Warden brought with him to America a book containing abstracts of Rev. James Porter's lectures on natural and experimental philosophy which he subsequently passed on to the Porters (PRONI, D3579/2, p. 9).
- 35 PRONI, D3579/2, p. 4.
- 36 Lengthy extracts from Porter's account are included in the article by Waters on Rev. James Porter. A further possible insight into his thoughts on the rebellion is in an admittedly unverified letter written years afterwards to his family back in Ireland: 'We honour those who fell in battle and died for Ireland. But in my sober opinion now, if the Society of United Irishmen had maintained its inception command not to have recourse to open rebellion, the cause of liberty could have been brought to the doors of Westminster to the shame of that Parliament into granting the parliamentary reforms so many died for, but were achieved later by the sheer force of the clamour of Ireland's great general public and their able advocates' (Colin J. Robb, 'Judge Porter', *Sunday Press* 2 June 1957).
- 37 The *Nashville Whig* of 9 April 1844 carried the following notice: 'The remains of the Honor. Alexander Porter which were brought from his late residence in the Steamer Westwood, were, on Sunday last, committed to the tomb in the cemetery near the city. A procession was formed at the Wharf and proceeded to the grave where a brief but impressive discourse was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Edgar. The remains of this distinguished man now rest in peace beside the body of his wife who died in this city some twenty-five years ago.'
- 38 *Eulogy delivered by the Hon. Thomas H. Benton ...*, p. [3].
- 39 PRONI, D3579/2, p. 8.
- 40 *Belfast Newsletter*, 8 May 1849. Though several accounts state that James Porter was the Attorney General for Louisiana, no conclusive evidence of this has been found.

## 18

## Associate Reformed Clergy and the 1798 Rebellion

Peter Gilmore

Little has been written about the involvement of Secession Church ministers and their hearers in the Rebellion of 1798, and less has been composed about the clergy and laity who were in some way associated with the 1790s revolutionary movement, and then emigrated and enrolled in the Associate Reformed Church in the United States.

No ministers connected to the Antiburgher Associate Synod are believed to have been implicated in the Rebellion. However, the Scots-born minister Francis Pringle was forced into an American exile because members of the Gilnahirk congregation *disproved* of his loyalty – a statement pregnant with opportunity for further research. Ian McBride in his study *Scripture Politics* concludes that the ‘most significant testimony’ to the political loyalty of the Secession Church ‘is the fact that only two ministers, James Harper and Thomas Smith, were implicated in the rebellion, and one of these had been turned in by a fellow clergyman.’ Both men were members of the Burgher Seceder communion.<sup>1</sup>

Harper and Smith both immigrated to the United States, where they joined the Associate Reformed Synod. Harper did not travel alone; he was accompanied by his son, also Rev. James Harper, who also affiliated with the Associate Reformed Synod. McBride, in the appendix of *Scripture Politics*, makes reference to a third Burgher Seceder clergyman suspected of involvement in the Rebellion. He also came to the United States and joined the Associate Reformed Synod. A fourth individual, for whom there exists reason to suspect a connection to the Rebellion, emigrated, and settled in Pennsylvania as an Associate Reformed minister. In fact, several ministers and ministerial candidates of Burgher Seceder background left Ireland in the late 1790s and early 1800s and in the United States applied for admission to the Associate Reformed Synod.

While it is difficult (if not impossible) to prove a definite connection to the United Irishmen in each instance, the coincidence of older men in the prime of their careers and young men at the outset of theirs choosing life in the United States at time of rebellion and political repression in Ireland is

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at least highly suggestive, and may not be coincidental at all. Before proceeding we should briefly review the various organizations and their tenets.

Irish Seceder churches came into existence as a result of the Secession from the Church of Scotland in the 1730s. The Secession represented both a reaction to perceived legalism, formality, and laxness within the Kirk and a protest against the right of landowners to nominate ministers without regard for congregational wishes (contrary to the terms of 1707 Treaty of Union). The latter issue did not attain in Ireland. However, a Synod of Ulster ruling in 1733 gave added weight to the opinions of the wealthy when calling a minister. This created resentment which, in turn, stoked sympathy for the Seceders among less affluent members of the Ulster Presbyterian community. Seceder congregations developed amid theological controversies within Ulster Presbyterianism, especially where there existed doubts of ministerial orthodoxy. The Seceders had particular success in those areas perceived to be underserved by the Synod of Ulster, especially where the Synod rejected petitions to erect new congregations in a more convenient locations. A rapid proliferation of congregations took place by 1750; the Seceders became Ulster Presbyterianism's 'growth sector' in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

In the mid-1740s, the Associate Presbytery in Scotland divided into two rival factions, 'Burgher' and 'Antiburgher' Seceders. The Burgess Oath demanded in Scotland on the eve of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion required allegiance to 'the true religion presently professed within this realm.' The Burghers accepted the oath on the grounds that the Secession represented the true Kirk; the Antiburghers argued the oath should be rejected as it implicitly recognized the authority of the Church of Scotland. Further, and of considerable consequence for future events, the division represented the development of differing understandings of the nature of the civil magistrate. The Secession Church as a whole continued to reverence the seventeenth-century covenants (the National Covenant of 1638 and Solemn League and Covenant of 1643), proposing that the Covenants be honoured and renewed, but with allowances for changed circumstances. The Seceders rejected a political reading of the Covenants and distanced themselves from the demand that civil government use its morally sanctioned violence to extirpate prelacy and popery. Thus in 1743, writes McBride, 'when the Seceders renewed the Covenants, they condemned those who rejected the legitimacy of the civil power.' For the Antiburghers, the requirement of the Burgess Oath was a step too far. For the Burghers, the implicit acceptance of the oath was consistent with their evolving understanding of separation of church and state.<sup>3</sup>

Both of these tendencies took root in the north of Ireland and were

transported to North America with colonial-era immigrants. As the issue of the Burgess Oath had less relevance in the colonies than it did in Ireland, the two varieties of Seceder coexisted and collaborated. In 1782, after years of negotiation, the Associate Presbyteries of New York and Philadelphia (which included Antiburghers and Burghers) merged with the Reformed Presbytery to create the Associate Reformed Church.<sup>4</sup>

Within the ranks of the Seceders, two ministers and three elders who opposed the merger steadfastly remained unreconciled to the decision. They declared themselves to be the ongoing Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. Their points of difference concerned the ongoing requirements of the Covenants, and public covenanting, and the role of the civil magistrate. The First Article of the 1784 Constitution of the Associate Reformed Church affirmed the new denomination's acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith without change *except* for three sections upholding the powers of the civil magistrate. Article VII proclaimed a duty 'to treat pious people of other denominations with great attention and tenderness.' Further deliberation within the new denomination – and controversy with the Associate Presbytery – ratified modification of the Westminster Confession in the church's 1799 Constitution.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning in the 1780s, therefore, Antiburgher Seceders coming from Ireland and Scotland tended to affiliate with the Associate Presbyterian church (after 1801 the Associate Synod of North America) and Burgher Seceder immigrants tended to join the Associate Reformed Synod. This writer contends that an ecclesiastical commitment to civil and religious liberty in Ireland and in the United States permitted members of the Burgher wing of the Secession Church to support the republicanism of both the United Irishmen and the Jeffersonians.

The first Rebellion-era Burgher Seceder from Ireland seeking admittance to the Associate Reformed Synod appeared within a year of the uprising. James Walker, born in Dervock, County Antrim, in 1774, had been licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Down in 1797. The following year, apparently, he made his way across the Atlantic. The probationer's reception by the Associate Reformed First Presbytery of Pennsylvania was reported to the Synod at its meeting of 28 May 1799. Walker was ordained and installed as the pastor of the joint congregation of Shippensburg and Chambersburg in central Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup>

Walker had been preceded by two individuals connected with the Burgher Seceder communion in Ulster, both of whom arrived in 1797. Probationer James McConnell, like Walker, was born in Dervock, County Antrim. Licensed to preach by his Burgher Seceder presbytery in Ireland, McConnell was ordained by the First Pennsylvania Presbytery as minister of the Big Spring congregation near Newville, Pennsylvania, in September

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1799. Robert Kerr, born at Cookstown, County Tyrone, in 1757, had been licensed by the Belfast Presbytery in 1782 and ordained the following year. (The information about Kerr's Irish ministry is sketchy; he may have also served Seceders in Ahoghill.) Received by the Associate Reformed Synod in 1797, he served as stated supply at Newburgh, New York, 1797–99 and as pastor there 1799 until 1802. He was deposed in 1803, but the following year was restored having 'demeaned himself ... in so humble, exemplary, and edifying a manner, as to satisfy the Presbytery of his penitence, and, in their judgment, to heal the wound inflicted by his fall.'<sup>7</sup>

(Another Burgher Seceder immigrant with possible Rebellion connections was mentioned above in connection with the 'other' John Chambers. A licentiate of the Burgher Presbytery of Monaghan, James Gray was ordained by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Washington in New York in 1797. It has been suggested that Gray may have been a United Irishman.<sup>8</sup>)

When the Associate Reformed Synod met in May 1800, the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania announced its reception of the two clergymen whose possible connection to the Rebellion has long been recognized: James Harper and Thomas Smith. Both men were received from the Associate Presbytery of Derry by the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania at its meeting of 25 December 1799. The Synod on 28 May 1800 ordered that the names of its newest members be formally entered into its rolls. Four of the five had arrived recently from Ulster.<sup>9</sup>

Harper had been the minister to the Burgher Seceder congregation of Knockloughrim in the parish of Termoneeny, County Londonderry – in fact, he had been the congregation's first and only settled minister, beginning his pastorate in 1771. For the first two years of his ministry Harper had responsibility for the care of Seceders in Garvagh as well. The historian of the Secession Church in Ireland writes, 'Mr Harper seems to have sympathized with the United Irishmen and the Rebellion of 1798.' Further, Harper's eldest son William was deeply implicated in the Rebellion and fled to the United States. His property was confiscated. Rev. Harper was brought before a military tribunal on charges of treason. He was acquitted. Nonetheless, at the age of sixty, Harper appears to have concluded that his ministerial career of some twenty-seven years had been irreparably compromised. He opted to emigrate.<sup>10</sup>

Through correspondence from abroad, Harper 'laid a charge of perjury and persecution against his neighbour, Rev. Adam Boyle, Boveedy.' Boyle had testified against Harper – the 'fellow clergyman' who turned him in, as referenced by Ian McBride. The Associate Synod in Ireland acquitted Boyle.<sup>11</sup> Harper's new presbytery encompassed Virginia, and Harper was assigned to minister to a cluster of small congregations in the Appalachian

southwestern corner of Virginia, among them: Abingdon, Beaver Creek, Silver Spring, Rock Spring, Glade Spring and the Middle Forks of the Holston. His ministry there was of brief duration: Harper died on 15 September 1802. He was succeeded by another son, also named James Harper.<sup>12</sup>

The younger Harper, born in Ahoghill, County Antrim, in 1767, had previously assumed the older man's pulpit at Knockloughrim when his father went into exile. In 1800, he likewise decided to leave Ireland (possibly when the Synod chose to acquit his father's accuser, Boyle). James Harper jun. was received by the American presbytery from the Associate Presbytery of Derry in October of that year.<sup>13</sup> Harper began to serve the scattered congregations his father supplied. In 1803, he accepted their call to be their pastor. He died in 1815.<sup>14</sup>

Rev. Thomas Smith, born in Brigh, County Tyrone, in 1755, was licensed to preach in 1776 by the Presbytery of Derry. He may have occasionally served the Seceders in Ahoghill, birthplace of both James Harpers. In 1779, he was ordained and installed as minister of the Burgher congregation in Randalstown, County Antrim. Randalstown was the scene of fierce fighting in June 1798, and the Seceder minister was somehow involved in the Rebellion. He separated from the congregation in October 1798 and came to the United States the following year.<sup>15</sup>

At the October 1802 of the Associate Reformed Synod, the same which heard reports of the death of James Harper sen. and arrival of James Harper jun., Thomas Smith was appointed to serve the 70 families and struggling congregations of Tuscarora and Path Valley in Mifflin County, in the Appalachian valleys of central Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup>

His mother-in-law wondered how far Smith had to travel to carry out his duties. '[I]f we have any School he has to ride about four [miles] one day and 17 [miles] another', explained the minister's wife in a letter to her brother, John Wier of Stewartstown, County Tyrone. In her letter Jane Smith expressed her relief at having left Ireland:

I am sure I have reason to praise & bless his Holy Name for our escape from that Country & more especially from that unhappy place we Lived in What have the poor endured by scarsity & how unthankfull & unworthy in the time of plenty the[y] seemed to be hardened under both Judgements and mercies pitiable case indeed o may we take warning & not do Likewise.<sup>17</sup>

The minister's wife sounded themes crucial to understanding the influence of the immigrant Associate Reformed clergy. In the United States, as in Ireland, Seceder ministers believed they had a responsibility to critique

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existing society, especially other churches. In this way they exemplified the validity and uniqueness of their own creed. An immigrant minister like the suspected United Irishman Thomas Smith exerted influence by stressing the theological differences between the Secession Church and the mainstream Presbyterian Church. In this way, the Associate Reformed Church in the United States provided an alternative spiritual home to Irish Presbyterians. Of particular appeal to Presbyterians of Irish origin in the US was the resolute insistence of the Associate Reformed Synod on the exclusive use of the Psalms in worship. The willingness of the mainstream Presbyterian Church to use hymns composed by Isaac Watts and others spurred defections to Associate Reformed congregations, just as theological deviations led 'General Synod' Presbyterians in Ulster to form Burgher Seceder congregations.

Jane Smith denounced the 'General Assembly' Presbyterians in familiar terms, but a new context:

Religion in this country in the hands of the assembly seems Greatly on the decline nothing but disputing for Wats Psalms says the Bible Psalms not fit to be sung by Christians says that the old testament saints knew Nothing of a redeemer in Short the[y] mostly refuse the old testament altogether what the[y] will turn too we do not know.

Her letter also belittled the revival then sweeping through portions of the American backcountry in tones reminiscent of Thomas Ledlie Birch and 'old country' clergy. Rev. Smith, she wrote, looked forward to greeting 'a great many old country Minesters' at the Associate Reformed Synod. The Associate Reformed Church greatly needed the ministers arriving from Ireland, Jane Smith told her brother.<sup>18</sup>

And indeed, what must have seen like 'a great many old country Minesters' were leaving Ireland in the sometimes ugly aftermath of the Rebellion and arriving in the United States. At the same meeting which confirmed Rev. Smith's appointments, the General Synod met two ministers and one ministerial candidate from the Burgher communion in Ireland: Rev. Andrew Wilson, Rev. Charles Campbell and Joseph Kerr.<sup>19</sup>

Andrew Wilson was born at Markethill, County Armagh, in 1762, licensed in 1787 and ordained in Crieve, County Monaghan in 1791, where he served until 1800. The Presbytery of New York reported on 21 October 1802:

That, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1801, the Rev<sup>d</sup> Andrew Wilson, from the Associate Synod of Ireland, was, upon the faith of sufficient credentials from the Associate Presbytery of Derry, in Ireland was



received into Christian communion, and as a probationer for the Christian ministry, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1802; and obtained, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May following, a transfer to the First Presbytery of Pennsylvania ...

The Presbytery added that the transfer would not be completed until Wilson 'fulfilled some appointments', meaning assignments to preach. However, Wilson had travelled north in the state of New York to the Presbytery of Washington, which reported at the same meeting:

That the Rev<sup>d</sup> Andrew Wilson, recently from the Burgher communion in Ireland, was received into Christian and Ministerial communion in virtue of testimonials from the Presbytery of New York; and, in consequence of an unanimous call, was installed, the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1802, in the united Congregations of Albany and Linsingburgh.

Wilson would remain in upstate New York until his death in 1812.<sup>20</sup>

Charles Campbell was born at Stewartstown, County Tyrone, in 1768. He was ordained by the Monaghan Presbytery in 1788 as the pastor of the Burgher Seceder congregations in County Londonderry at Crossgar, formed thirteen years earlier, and Dunboe, where congregants met in a thatched-roof church. In 1800 the Associate Presbytery of Derry suspended him 'for scandal.' (There is no explanation of that scandal in the American record.) Campbell emigrated not long after. He had been received by the Associate Reformed First Presbytery of Pennsylvania and permitted to preach the Gospel. The Synod in 1802 pronounced this action 'incautious and precipitate' and reminded presbyteries 'to exercise utmost caution in the admission of ministers from other countries.' In the specific case of Campbell, action would be deferred until receiving further information from the Associate Presbytery of Derry.<sup>21</sup>

The Associate Reformed Synod, 'in consequence of an official statement of his case having been received from the Presbytery of Derry, in Ireland, and the united good opinion of the churches where he had labored', restored Campbell to the ministry. In the meantime, he served as stated supply to the congregations of Hopewell and Lower Chanceford, Pennsylvania. Campbell became their pastor in July 1803 and died less than a year later.<sup>22</sup>

Josiah Wilson, the third Burgher Seceder minister who appears on McBride's list of ministers and probationers suspected of involvement in the Rebellion, joined the Associate Reformed Church in 1807. A native of County Armagh, Wilson was born in the townland of Aughlish, parish of Ballymore, less than a mile from the village of Scarva. Although uncertain himself of the year of his birth, Wilson was apparently born in 1764. His

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parents were farming folk and Burgher Seceders. The young Wilson studied moral philosophy, logic, Hebrew and church history at the University of Glasgow and later theology with the famed Scottish Seceder theologian, John Brown of Haddington. Returning to Glasgow, Wilson studied anatomy, surgery, and midwifery, as well as moral philosophy. He returned to the south of Scotland to study with Brown's successor, Rev. George Dawson. He was licensed to preach by the Burgher Seceder Presbytery of Down in February 1788.<sup>23</sup>

After several years as a peregrinating supply preacher Wilson received a call from a small congregation in the parish of Donegore, County Antrim. Some Donegore Presbyterians dissatisfied with the Unitarian leanings of their minister had organized a Burgher Seceder congregation in 1788. Six years later, the Burgher Presbytery of Derry ordained and installed Josiah Wilson as the congregation's first minister; Rev. Thomas Smith officiated.<sup>24</sup>

In his autobiographical writing, Wilson recorded the publication in 1796 of 'a sermon which I had preached on a day appointed by our presbytery for humiliation & thanksgiving on Jeremiah V chapter 29th – Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord, and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?' That sermon, *The Guilt and Danger of the Nation, a sermon from Jeremiah V, 29, humbly inscribed to the people of Ireland* (Belfast, 1796), received favourable notice in the *Northern Star*, the radical newspaper associated with the Society of United Irishmen. 'With this sermon', writes historian Richard MacMaster, 'Wilson identified himself with the goals of the United Irishmen.'<sup>25</sup>

Although himself unwilling to formally join the organization, the minister acknowledged that sentiment among Presbyterians and Seceders in southern County Antrim strongly favoured the United Irishmen: 'I never myself took the oath of the united Irishmen, although almost every man in our country did & although ever since I was capable of understanding the subject I had been a warm friend to liberty.' Nonetheless, Wilson agreed to take an oath of secrecy, pledging never to reveal information about the United Irishmen to a magistrate. The oath was administered by a member of his congregation, Thomas White of Clady near Killead.<sup>26</sup> Wilson's autobiographical sketches are silent on what he saw or experienced in the tumult of rebellion. He and his family emigrated in 1807. On 1 January 1808, Wilson became pastor of two Pennsylvania congregations of the Associate Reformed Church, Hopewell and Lower Chanceford.<sup>27</sup>

Joseph Kerr appears on no lists of ministers and probationers involved with the Rebellion. He was a student at the University of Glasgow in 1798 and was neither ordained nor licensed at the time of his emigration in 1801. (Following his university education, Kerr was taken under care of Associate Presbytery of Derry and studied under Rev. Dr Rogers of Ballybay, County

Monaghan.)<sup>28</sup> However, circumstantial evidence suggests that Kerr, who would become an influential and leading member of the Associate Reformed Church, was sympathetic to the United Irishmen, if not actively involved in their movement.

Joseph Kerr was the son of a Burgher Seceder minister also named Joseph Kerr and his second wife, Elizabeth Reynolds, and was born near the border of counties Londonderry and Tyrone. The elder Kerr had been ordained pastor of the Ballygoney congregation in County Londonderry and Muree congregation in Tyrone in 1762. Joseph and brothers Ebenezer and William left Ireland at the beginning of the nineteenth century and settled in western Pennsylvania. An older half-brother, Moses, emigrated in 1817 after serving as a Burgher Seceder minister in north County Antrim for more than twenty years.<sup>29</sup>

A man named John Kerr, who believed himself to be a distant relative of the clerical family, wrote home to Ireland from outside Pittsburgh in 1844:

There are a great many persons in Pittsburgh & the neighborhood, of the name of Kerr, many of whom came from Ireland. Three brothers, Moses, Joseph, & William . . . were obliged to leave Ireland for taking part in the rebellion of 1798. Moses & Joseph were ministers but are dead.

Strengthening the assertion, the writer in another letter home says that he was acquainted with the surviving brother, William, who had 'lived near Ballymena.' One can perceive the effects of word-of-mouth reports and conflation in this account, but there are no substantive reasons for doubting the Kerr brothers' sympathies for the United Irishmen.<sup>30</sup>

While minister of the Magheraboy Seceder congregation (what later became Second Kilraughts), Moses Kerr experienced a notable run-in with the authorities in 1798 which may have contributed to the general impression of the family's loyalties (or disloyalties). We are told that in 1798 two men from the neighbourhood were seized in connection with a murder plot allegedly linked to the Rebellion. They were summarily sentenced to death on Dungorbery Hill. When the local minister (Rev. James Elder?) refused to pray for them, the condemned men turned to Kerr. The Seceder minister reportedly prayed so earnestly that the magistrate threatened him, too, with execution.<sup>31</sup> (A sister of the minister reported matter-of-factly in a family letter to Ireland that her second husband, whom she married in the United States, 'came here at the time of the Rebellion' – indicating, possibly, that rebellion-related migration was understood to be a common experience.)<sup>32</sup>

The First Presbytery of Pennsylvania reported to the Associate Reformed Synod for 21 October 1802 that Joseph Kerr:

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duly recommended from the Associate Presbytery of Derry, in Ireland, has been received under the care of this Presbytery, and exhibited part of the usual trials for license, which were sustained; but at their last meeting, in order to accommodate his peculiar circumstances was transferred to the care of the Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

There is no indication of what those 'peculiar circumstances' were.<sup>33</sup> Another Irish immigrant, Rev. John Riddell, formally presented Kerr to the Second Pennsylvania Presbytery; Kerr carried with him a statement from the First Pennsylvania Presbytery certifying that he was a divinity student and proposing (without clarification) that his education would be best completed in the West.<sup>34</sup>

Brash and energetic, Kerr seemed to energize his new church; his personal story quickly merged with the revitalization and growth of the Associate Reformed Church in western Pennsylvania. At its first meeting, the Mononaghela Presbytery (the former Second Presbytery of Pennsylvania, now renamed and regrouped) licensed Kerr to preach on 27 April 1803. He itinerated for a year. At the meeting of Presbytery on 26 April 1804 Kerr was ordained. Later that year he accepted a call as minister of the united congregations of Mifflin and St Clair, south of Pittsburgh.<sup>35</sup>

Kerr then briefly returned to Ireland, having received permission from the Presbytery. The Presbytery minutes later recorded, 'What that business was we may infer from the fact that when returned he brought with him Mrs. Kerr.'<sup>36</sup> He married Agnes Reynolds in Ireland on 6 April 1806. Interestingly, he had not yet become a naturalized US citizen. The three Kerr brothers – Ebenezer, Joseph and William – filed papers declaring their intention to become citizens on the same day, 10 August 1808, all with the same sponsor. Daniel McDonald of St Clair, a native of Ireland, had become a naturalized citizen two years earlier.<sup>37</sup>

Kerr quickly became embroiled in controversy with the mainstream Presbyterian Church, particularly with the formidable Rev. John McMillan. Kerr challenged the orthodoxy of the region's most influential Presbyterian minister (and best-known clerical Federalist), the man who had publicly denounced the exiled United Irishman, Thomas Ledlie Birch. During a sermon delivered at a sacramental occasion in fall 1807, Kerr reportedly declared that 'that some of the Presbyterian ministers were arminians & Socinians, and exhorted his hearers not to attend their ministrations.'<sup>38</sup>

Confronted with another controversy involving an Irish-born minister even as its Birch problem continued to fester, the Ohio Presbytery proceeded cautiously by naming a three-member committee to question Kerr. Perhaps not coincidentally, two of the three ministers were themselves Irish

immigrants. They were to ask the brash young Seceder ‘to name the persons who were guilty of propagating such doctrines, that they may be called to an account.’ The committee found Kerr recalcitrant. Despite their best and many arguments, he refused to name names. Instead, Kerr took the opportunity to again impugn the theology of the mainstream church. He told his guests that

from his own personal knowledge and from information of a number of indisputable characters, he believed that there were some of our ministers, east of the mountains, Socinians and Arminians, and also that he was induced to believe from a number of indisputable characters, that some ministers of the Synod of Pittsburgh, held the above-mentioned errors.

Lastly, the committee reported, Kerr announced that ‘he understood by some persons that Dr McMillan was a Socinian.’<sup>39</sup>

In short, Kerr was replicating in western Pennsylvania the mode of thought and action which had characterized Seceders in Ulster. The denunciation as a Unitarian of the man whom they regarded as western Presbyterianism’s founder was a slur mainstream clergy could not allow to stand without challenge. In June 1808 Presbytery, ‘with reluctance’, appointed a committee to prosecute a charge of slander against Kerr before the Associate Reformed Church’s Monongahela Presbytery. The mainstream ministers and elders recognized the ‘Union Seceders’ would not likely accede to a trial. The Ohio Presbytery would withdraw the charge should Kerr decide that he lacked sufficient reason to make such allegations against mainstream clergy and McMillan in particular. The Ohio Presbytery sought not punishment, but a retraction or disavowal. Lack of success led to appointment of a new committee in October consisting of McMillan himself, Andrew Gwin and Samuel Ralston of the Mingo Creek congregation. Still the issue festered without progress. In December, Presbytery appointed yet another committee.<sup>40</sup>

When Kerr finally spoke to a committee of the Ohio Presbytery he revealed that Ralston was the source of his belief that McMillan was a Socinian. In early 1809 Ralston then set about proving *his* innocence. Accompanied by an elder, the Mingo Creek minister visited Kerr to insist upon answers. Elder James Kiddo, in a statement to Presbytery, reported that Kerr claimed that he could not recall the source of the original assertion. However, ‘after some hesitation’, Kerr named three men as possible authors of the Socinian story – ‘Mr. Willson, Licentiate, under the care of the reformed Presbytery, and Andrew Monroe & John McFarlane both of Canonsburgh.’ Kiddo swore further that ‘In the same conversation, Mr Kerr said that he had heard one of our ministers acknowledge that there were

Socinians and Arminians among the presbyterian clergy.' Once again, despite Ralston's insistence, Kerr refused to name names.<sup>41</sup>

Ralston acted using the new information. Disregarding Willson as 'for some considerable time ... in a state of derangement', Ralston obtained affidavits from Monroe and McFarlane. The two well-known residents of Canonsburg proclaimed that they 'never heard Mr Ralston say that Dr McMillan was a Socinian, nor did we ever tell the Rev. Joseph Kerr any such thing.' The Ohio Presbytery then forwarded this information to the Monongahela Presbytery.<sup>42</sup>

At first, the Associate Reformed Presbytery reacted dismissively to the mainstream body's demand for action, agreeing to deal with the complaint, 'notwithstanding its informality', but under the condition that 'the Presbytery of Ohio will come forward and explicitly deny the truth of what the member is charged with having said.' Before the affair ended, McMillan appeared before a committee of the Associate Reformed Presbytery and 'avowed his firmest belief in the perfect equality of the Persons of the adorable Trinity.' In 1810, after more than two years, the controversy thus reached a kind of conclusion.<sup>43</sup>

Thomas Smith, the suspected United Irishman from Randalstown, played a leading role in a schism within the Associate Reformed Church in the 1810s and 1820s. A consequence of this split would be the denomination's viability as the organizational expression of traditional Ulster Presbyterianism in the United States for more than a generation. Irish immigrants, both clerical and lay, more than stabilized the denomination in western Pennsylvania and beyond in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. In part, growth derived from the Union Seceders' defence of psalmody as the issue continued to divide mainstream Presbyterians. When the western presbyteries broke with those of the east coast in the early 1820s, they did so from a unified position of strength.<sup>44</sup>

Differences between backcountry ministers and socially prominent clergy in New York and Philadelphia increasingly became a source of friction in the 1810s. Rev. John Mitchell Mason – 'the Great Mr Mason', as Jane Wier Smith sarcastically called him – stood at the centre of the controversy. Recent immigrants joined the Associate Reformed Church because of its modified traditionalism; by contrast, Mason sought to transform an ethno-religious bastion into a broadly based American denomination. Mason outraged westerners by occasionally conducting 'joint communion and worship services with a neighbouring Presbyterian church in New York' – services which involved the use of Watts' psalms. Western representatives at the 1811 General Synod meeting sought – unsuccessfully – to censure Mason and other Associate Reformed ministers involved in these latitudinarian exercises for having violated the standards of the church. The General Synod's failure

to act resulted in protests submitted to the 1812 gathering. That meeting heard protests from the alarmed and energized presbyteries of Monongahela, Kentucky, First and Second Carolinas and the congregation of 'Fermanah' in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania.<sup>45</sup>

Other contentious issues further widened the divisions. At the 1816 General Synod a committee on psalmody recommended adoption of the version used by the Dutch Reformed Church; a particularly 'warm' debate ensued. Opponents resented the 'zeal and rapidity' with which the resolution had been introduced, and the very idea of deviating from the historic Scots metrical psalms, but in vain; the motion carried. The Monongahela Presbytery publicly expressed 'astonishment [and] dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the last General Synod, relative to psalmody', complaining that the Dutch Reformed version of the Psalms 'consist[ed] of Dr Watts' mutilated "imitation".' Traditionalists mounted an attempt at the 1817 General Synod to repeal the previous year's resolution and adopt a motion calling for the exclusive use of 'David's Psalms.' Tellingly, the attempt failed – suggesting to some that the Associate Reformed Church could no longer fulfil its role as defender of Westminster standards.<sup>46</sup>

Two Irish-born ministers, John Riddell and Thomas Smith, moved a resolution that religious fellowship with 'Episcopalians, Independents, Antipedobaptists, Arminians, Hopkinsians is contrary to the word of God and standards of the church.' Rather than be seen as openly opposing such a statement, a majority successfully voted to defer its consideration. Mason and his supporters and his supporters then unveiled a plan of union with the Dutch Reformed Church. Their motion passed by exactly the same margin.<sup>47</sup>

A point-of-no-return came at the 1819 General Synod meeting when the majority successfully proposed 'brotherly correspondence' with the General Assembly (that is, the mainstream Presbyterian Church). Later that year the Synod of Scioto – consisting of the Presbyteries of Kentucky and Monongahela – considered and approved the 'propriety' of breaking away from the General Synod: 'what one builds up as righteousness, truth and piety, another casts down as iniquity, falsehood and will-worship', a synodical statement declared. In April 1820 the Associate Reformed presbyteries west of the Allegheny Mountains declared their independence, adopting the name 'Associate Reformed Synod of the West.' The new body affirmed its 'strict adherence to the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Church-government, and Directories for Worship, as received at Green Castle on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, 1799.' Rev. John Riddell of the Robinson's Run congregation was appointed to inform the General Synod that brotherly relations could once again obtain should the eastern churches reverse their position on issues such as 'inter-communion' and psalmody.

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Thomas Smith, following this decisive meeting, saw to it that the congregations between the Susquehanna River and Allegheny Mountains were connected to the Monongahela (western Pennsylvania) Presbytery until a new presbytery could be organized as part of the Associate Presbytery of the West.<sup>48</sup>

Having thus rededicated themselves to the defence and maintenance of an old-world religiosity, it is perhaps not surprising that the assembled ministers and elders then initiated an attempt to merge their moments-old denomination with the Associate Synod. A union of Irish Antiburghers and Burghers only two years earlier had created the United Secession Synod. In the United States, hopes were high that the two branches of the Secession Church could likewise unify. But talks among immigrant Irish and native-born Seceders foundered on the role of the civil magistrate, public covenanting, and allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith. The arguments in the negotiations over merger revisited the decades-old differences and mistrust between the Antiburgher and Burgher wings of the Secession movement, complicated by negotiation and renegotiation occasioned by migration.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, the representatives of the Associate Reformed General Synod in these negotiations were the Irish-born ministers Joseph Kerr and John Riddell.

These disputes and controversies should not be dismissed as the arcane, narrow concerns of old-world, other-worldly, cranky Calvinists. These issues were hotly debated and keenly felt in their day, and helped shape the political and personal philosophies of generations of leaders of government and industry. Joseph Kerr, whose preparations for a ministerial career in Ireland may have been interrupted by the ramifications of his sympathies for (if not involvement in) the United Irishmen, had become a recognized leader of a denomination which grew due to the immigration of Ulster Presbyterians. By the time of the 1820s debates discussed immediately above, Kerr was the minister of a substantial church in the rapidly expanding city of Pittsburgh and soon to become a professor of theology in a newly established seminary. He was the father of three ministers ordained in the Associate Reformed Church. His influence radiated.

And this is the larger point: the creative tension among the various branches of American Presbyterianism in the opening decades of the nineteenth century transmitted and transformed the values and beliefs of generations of Ulster Presbyterians derived from the eighteenth century while providing immigrants a variety of paths to Americanization. In the process, the influx of Burgher Seceder clergy and laity in the wake of the 1798 Rebellion helped shaped American society. Ministers like Smith and Kerr, elders like William Kerr, a judge and legislator, schooled generations of men and women who were building and rebuilding the American nation



from east to west. And individuals such as David Reynolds Kerr, the youngest son of Joseph and Agnes Reynolds Kerr, a teacher, pastor and editor, realized the union of the Associate Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Churches in 1858.

That union, consummated in Pittsburgh, created the United Presbyterian Church, a direct ancestor of the present-day Presbyterian Church (USA). Surely it is of significance that among the 'Declaratory Articles' proclaimed by the two partners to the union was an unambiguous denunciation of slavery – this, barely three years before the start of the American Civil War. 'We declare', the founders of the United Presbyterian Church wrote, 'That slaveholding... is a violation of the law of God and contrary both to the letter and spirit of Christianity.'<sup>50</sup> The institutional edifice from which this banner had been unfurled had been sustained in large part by the generation of '98.

- 1 McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 107. Rev. Thomas Ledlie Birch suggested that the majority of Seceding ministers had been 'become so loyal, or rather royal in Ireland ... by more rapid strides than their people [were] prepared to follow them' (Birch, *Letter of an Irish Emigrant*, p. 29).
- 2 David Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland* (Belfast, 1950), pp 82–3; Laurence Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland, An Illustrated History* (Belfast, 2006), p. 45; Myrtle Hill, 'The religious context: Protestantism in county Down in 1798' in Myrtle Hill, Brian Turner and Kenneth Dawson (eds), *1798 Rebellion in County Down* (Newtownards, 1998), p. 63; Ian R. McBride, "'When Ulster joined Ireland": anti-popery, Presbyterian radicalism and Irish republicanism in the 1790s', *Past and Present* (November 1997) (Online version at [www.findarticles/p/articles/mi\\_m2279/is\\_n157/ai\\_2022](http://www.findarticles/p/articles/mi_m2279/is_n157/ai_2022)), p. 8; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, pp 72–3; David W. Miller, 'Illiteracy, Apparitions, Stigmata: The 1859 Crisis in Irish Presbyterianism' (a paper delivered at the Keough Center for Irish Studies, Notre Dame University, 1 Feb. 2002), p. 9. The reluctance of the Synod of Ulster to create new congregations has been linked to the perceived failure of the Synod to negotiate an increase in the *regium donum* that corresponded to the expanding number of congregations led to 'certain minimum requirements before a new congregation could receive a grant towards its minister's stipend. The next applicants who met with refusal thereupon sent to Scotland for assistance from the Seceders.' (W. H. Crawford, 'Ulster as a Mirror of the Two Societies' in T. M. Devine and David Dickson (eds), *Ireland and Scotland, 1600–1850: Parallels and Contrasts in Economic and Social Development* (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 66.) As noted above, 'a Synod ruling in 1733 required a vacant congregation to issue a call to a new minister with minimal support of two-thirds of the votes. Two-thirds was calculated by both actual numbers and contributors to a minister's stipend. This 'two-thirds men and money' rule gave undue influence, or a veto, to wealthier members of any vacant congregation – and caused considerable resentment' (Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, pp 45–6).
- 3 Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism: The Historical Perspective, 1610–1970* (New York, 1987), p. 107; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, pp 104–05.
- 4 Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, p. 178. Stewart notes that of the eleven Seceder ministers participating in the union which created the Associate Reformed Synod, nine were Antiburgher and all born in Scotland.
- 5 James Brown Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, 1751–1881* (Harrisburg, PA, 1881), pp 26–7; Associate Reformed Synod, *The constitution*

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- of the associate-reformed synod (Glasgow, 1784), pp 3, 6; *The Constitution and Standards of the Associate Reformed Church in North America* (New York, 1799), p. 8.
- 6 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 349; James Brown Scouller, *History of the Big Spring Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church... 1750–1879* (Harrisburg, PA, 1879), p. 55; Associate Reformed Church in North America, *General Synod minutes, 1782–1822*, vol. 1, p. 255 (28 May 1799), no page number (28 May 1800).
  - 7 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, pp 185, 214; Associate Reformed Church, *General Synod minutes, 1782–1822*, vol. 2, p. 15 (30 May 1804). McConnell does not appear on the list of Burgher probationers who emigrated to America, Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, pp 180–81. Kerr appears on the list as a probationer, although Glasgow states he had been ordained in Ireland.
  - 8 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 141; Griffis, *John Chambers*, p. 22; Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 418.
  - 9 *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 28 May 1800. Harper and Smith were thus received by the Synod at the same meeting which heard report of Walker's ordination. The fifth, John Steele, was born in York County, PA (Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 323.)
  - 10 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 148; Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, p. 331; Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, pp 191, 352; George West Diehl, *The brick church on Timber Ridge* (Rockbridge Co., VA, 1975), p. 46. On page 191 of his book Kirkpatrick identified the minister as 'Harpur' but clearly they are the same individual.
  - 11 Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, p. 331; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 107.
  - 12 Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, p. 50.
  - 13 Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, p. 352; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 149; Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, p. 50. Stewart includes Harper sen., but not Harper jun. on his list of Burgher ministers who immigrated to America (*Seceders in Ireland*, p. 180).
  - 14 Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, p. 50; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 149.
  - 15 Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, p. 50; Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, p. 341; Angeliqye Day and Patrick McWilliams (eds), *Ordinance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Parishes of County Antrim VI* (Belfast, 1993), p. 41; Second Randalstown Presbyterian Church, Co. Antrim, congregational history ('Mr. Smith resigned in 1799 and fled to America following his involvement in the 1798 rebellion'), (<http://2rpc.org/node/352>); John W. Jordan, *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography*, vol. 10, pp 237–8. In 1802, the year of the senior Harper's death, Rev. Smith and his wife named their ninth child James Harper Smith.
  - 16 *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 21 Oct. 1802. The territory assigned to Rev. Smith corresponded to a portion of the bounds of the mainstream church's Huntingdon Presbytery described above.
  - 17 PRONI, D1140/3: Jane Smith to John Wier, Stewartstown [probably Oct. 1802] (transcribed by Kerby A. Miller).
  - 18 Ibid.
  - 19 *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 21 Oct. 1802. The names of Wilson and Campbell both appear on Stewart's list of emigrant ministers (*Seceders in Ireland*, p. 180). Kerr is properly not included as he was not a probationer at the time of his emigration. However, Stewart discusses him in connection with his father and the congregation of Ballygoney, County Londonderry (*Seceders in Ireland*, p. 279).
  - 20 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 365; *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 21 Oct. 1802.
  - 21 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 68; Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, p. 191; *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 21 Oct., 25 Oct., 26 Oct. 1802.

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- 22 *General Synod minutes*, vol. 2, p. 16 (30 May 1804); Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 68.
  - 23 Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, p. 313; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 366; Richard K. MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the Uses of Autobiography', an unpublished paper based on a presentation to the Ulster-Scots Diaspora Writing Conference at the University of Ulster Magee Campus, 23 Oct. 2009.
  - 24 Kirkpatrick, *Presbyterians in Ireland*, p. 341; MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the Uses of Autobiography'.
  - 25 MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the Uses of Autobiography'.
  - 26 Josias Wilson, 'Life of Josias Wilson', Library and Archives, York County Heritage Trust, York, Pennsylvania, quoted in MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the Uses of Autobiography'.
  - 27 MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the Uses of Autobiography'; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 366; Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, p. 62. Thus Wilson succeeded Charles Campbell, originally from the Associate Presbytery of Derry. After Wilson's death, those congregations sought in vain the recently arrived Irish ministers Thomas Smith and Isaac Niblock (Scouller, *A Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America*, pp 62–3).
  - 28 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 182; Rev. James Prestley, 'Joseph Kerr' in William Sprague (ed.), *Annals of the American Presbyterian Pulpit* (New York, 1859), p. 118.
  - 29 Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, p. 279; Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, pp 182, 183; Mary Alice Kerr Arbuckle (compiler), *Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney and His Descendants* (Brooklyn, NY, 1904) pp 6, 44–5, 57, 59–60, 68–9.
  - 30 PRONI, MIC144/1: John Kerr, Upper St Clair, Allegheny County, to James Graham, Newpark, County Antrim, 26 Jan. 1844 (transcribed by Kerby A. Miller).
  - 31 BBC Radio Northern Ireland, *A Kist o' Wurds*, Series 30, Episode 14; Angeliqye Day and Patrick McWilliams (eds), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Parishes of County Antrim V*, vol. 16 (Belfast, 1992), p. 128. Published letters written by Moses Kerr following his emigration make no reference to the Rebellion which had occurred two decades earlier. On the other hand, he boasted of his brother Ebenezer's military service against 'the British' in the recently concluded war; enthused about the general prosperity of farmers and their ability to financially support clergy, and low taxes. 'The neighborhood in and near Pittsburgh resembles the description given of the land of promise', Kerr proposed to his relation in County Antrim. There is at least an implicit critique of contemporary Irish social conditions which may lead one to conclude, apropos Birch (above), that Rev. Kerr was not too far removed from the thinking of his congregants. (Found in *Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney*, pp 48, 53–4; the two letters cited are Moses Kerr to James Sinclair, 2 Oct. 1818, and Moses Kerr to James Sinclair, 25 Aug. 1820).
- What may have been a tendency within the Kerr family to a social critique consonant with the rank-and-file of the 1798 Rebellion can be glimpsed in a letter written by the nephew and namesake of the previously cited correspondent; Rev. Moses Kerr was a son of Joseph Kerr and born in western Pennsylvania. Observations recorded during his one visit to Ireland in 1833 have the righteous indignation of one raised among tenant farmers, however: 'The people are oppressed and robbed, for the support of an extravagant and worthless aristocracy... My spirit is impatient with such men. They are the curse of Ireland – they fatten upon the life-blood of its inhabitants' (*The Associate-Reformer*, vol. 1, no. 8 [April 1833], pp 250–51).
- 32 *Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney*, letter of Margaret Renfrew, Coshocton, Ohio, to James Sinclair, Drunkendult, Ballymoney, County Antrim, 10 April 1824, p. 27.
  - 33 *General Synod minutes*, vol. 1, 21 Oct. 1802. The minute refers to Kerr as 'James'; based on internal and external evidence this is clearly an error.
  - 34 Archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society, *Minutes or Proceedings of the 2d Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania*, 27 April 1803. Riddell presented credentials from the

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- Associate Presbytery of Monaghan at the 15 May 1794 meeting of the Second Pennsylvania Presbytery.
- 35 Prestley, 'Joseph Kerr', pp 118–19; *Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney*, p. 68; *General Synod minutes*, vol. 2, p. 16 (30 May 1804); Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 182.
- 36 Prestley, 'Joseph Kerr', p. 122; *Joseph Kerr of Ballygoney*, p. 68.
- 37 *List of Immigrants*, p. 57.
- 38 *Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery*, vol. 2, p. 31 (9 Feb. 1808); *Proceedings, Second Pennsylvania Presbytery*, 27 April 1803, 7 Oct. 1804; 'Sinclair' was the typical Scots pronunciation of 'St. Clair.'
- Arminianism (from the late seventeenth-century Dutch theologian and pastor Jacobus Arminius) broke with Calvinism by insisting on an unlimited atonement; that is, renouncing the Calvinist notion that only a predetermined 'elect' are eligible for salvation. Socinianism is a predecessor of Unitarianism in that it rejected the orthodox view of an existence for Christ co-eternal with God the Father. The anti-trinitarian theology of the sixteenth-century Italian Faustus Socinus (Fausto Sozzini) and his uncle, Laelius Socinus, also held that Christ became savior by virtue of his exemplary life rather than his divinity.
- 39 *Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery*, p. 31 (9 Feb. 1808), p. 37 (28 June 1808). The committee consisted of Reverends Joseph Patterson (Raccoon), Andrew Gwin (Pigeon Creek) and John McClain (Montours Run). The first two were born in Ireland.
- 40 *Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery*, p. 38 (28 June 1808), p. 46 (20 Oct. 1808), p. 53 (22 Dec. 1808). The second committee—McMillan, Gwin, Ralston—again was comprised of two Irishmen. The prosecution committee consisted of Reverends James Hughes (Lower Buffalo and Short Creek), Thomas Marquis (Cross Creek) and William McMillan (Two Ridges and Yellow Creek). The last-named was John McMillan's nephew.
- 41 *Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery*, pp 61–3 (21 April 1809). Kiddo (Kidoo in the *Minutes*) may have been the man of that name who was an elder of Bethel Presbyterian Church; his farm would have been on Ralston's way to Kerr's home. James Kiddo was born in Ireland; his son Samuel later married Rev. Ralston's daughter Margaret (*History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1889), p. 407). 'Mr. Willson' was almost certainly James Renwick Willson, born in the Forks of Yough in 1780. Willson was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery on 9 June 1807 but was not ordained and installed as a pastor for another decade. During his ministry in New York, the state legislature denounced a controversial sermon he delivered; the sermon was publicly burnt, as was the minister in effigy.
- 42 *Minutes of the Ohio Presbytery*, pp 64–5 (21 April 1809). Andrew Monroe (also Munroe) was an elder of the Associate congregation of Chartiers and served Canonsburg as clerk of the market and postmaster; McFarland (an alternative spelling), a tailor in the market village (see Crumrine, *History of Washington County*).
- 43 *Proceedings, Second Associate Reformed Presbytery, 1810; History of the Second Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania*, p. 12.
- 44 Other Associate Reformed ministers from Ireland, 1802–19: David Risk, born in 1768 in Coleraine, licensed by the Presbytery of Derry in 1794, emigrated in 1802, ordained by the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Kentucky in 1804 (Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 297); Samuel Weir, born in 1777 in Coleraine, ordained as pastor of 'The Whins' near Coleraine in 1800, came to the United States and was received by the Associate Reformed Church in 1818 (*ibid.*, p. 357); Isaiah Niblock, born in 1794 in County Monaghan, was licensed by the (Burgher) Associate Presbytery of Monaghan in 1817 and ordained by the Monongahela Presbytery in 1819 (*ibid.*, p. 464); Hugh McRoddin was received as a probationer from the United Associate Synod of Ireland in 1819. As we noted above, James Walker, originally received as a licentiate by the First Pennsylvania Associate Reformed Presbytery from the (Burgher) Associate Presbytery of Down in 1799 ministered to western Pennsylvania congregations in the 1820s (*ibid.*, pp 565–6). Except where noted otherwise, page numbers refer to Scouller, *A Manual of*

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*the United Presbyterian Church*; otherwise the information is derived primarily from *Proceedings, Second Pennsylvania Presbytery*.

- 45 William Lyons Fisk, *The Scottish High Church Tradition in America: An Essay in Scotch-Irish Ethnoreligious History* (Lanham, MD, 1995), p. 58; Jane Smith to (her brother) John Weir, Stewartstown, c. 1801: transcription by Kerby A. Miller, University of Missouri from originals, PRONI, D1140; Associate Reformed Synod of the West, *A Statement of the Grievances on account of which, that section of the church now called the Associate Reformed Synod of the West, Separated from, And Declared Themselves Independent of, The Associate Reformed Synod of North America* (Pittsburgh, 1823), pp 10–13. The minister of the Fermanagh congregation (renamed Mexico) was none other than the suspected United Irishman Thomas Smith. He ministered to that congregation from 1806 to 1832 (Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 439).
- 46 *A Statement of the Grievances*, pp 20–22, 26.
- 47 *Ibid*, pp 26–7.
- 48 *A Statement of the Grievances*, pp 37, 39–43, 46; James Brown Scouller, ‘Thomas Smith’ in *The Evangelical Repository and Bible Teacher*, 4th series, vol. 6, no. 8 (Jan. 1880), p. 245. Inter-communion refers to practice of John M. Mason and other ministers of holding joint services with other denominations. The Synod of the Carolinas withdrew from the General Synod in 1822, same year the General Union entered its plan of union with the mainstream church. (Fisk, *The Scottish High Church Tradition in America*, p. 60.) Associate Reformed congregations in Philadelphia, New York City and New England joined the Presbyterian Church. The reference is to Greencastle, PA, not to the same-named communities in counties Donegal and Down.
- 49 See Peter Gilmore, ‘The ‘moral duty’ of public covenanting in the ante-bellum United States: New-World exigencies, Old-World response’ in *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2 (June 2013), pp 177–92.
- 50 Glasgow, *Cyclopedic Manual of the United Presbyterian Church*, p. 15.

## 19

## Reformed Presbyterians and Rebellion-Related Migration

Peter Gilmore

The disaffection of Reformed Presbyterians from the established order led to migration in the 1790s preceding the Rebellion, involvement in the Rebellion and the events leading up to it, and post-Rebellion migration. Their arrival in the United States allowed for the re-establishment of a Reformed Presbytery and its subsequent growth and activity.

The effects of emigration, death and disagreement brought about the collapse in 1779 of the Reformed Presbytery in Ireland, founded in 1763.<sup>1</sup> The reorganization of the Irish presbytery in 1792 with six ministers and twelve congregations owed much to the leadership of Rev. William Stavely.<sup>2</sup> Under Stavely's leadership, Reformed Presbyterians explored interstices between republicanism, the social, economic and political grievances of Presbyterians in Ulster, and their denomination's historical theological critique of the British constitution. As a result, Irish Covenanter clergy (at least) seemed to have been disproportionately in sympathy with the United Irishmen.

Rev. James McKinney, a native of Cookstown, County Tyrone, was among those whose bold advocacy of biblically inspired rights provoked consternation among the authorities and accusations of connection to the United Irishmen. Like most Presbyterian clergy, McKinney studied at the University of Glasgow and was ordained as minister at Kirkhills (Dervock), County Antrim. Rev. Samuel Brown Wylie later described McKinney both as 'a strict and steady adherent to the whole doctrine and system of covenanted reformed' and as 'a most ardent Patriot and Republican, having no sympathy with British domination and Irish vassalage.' McKinney, wrote Wylie, was a man 'of vigorous intellect, and strong passions' who

... did not much regard the cold formalities or ceremonious etiquette of fashionable patrician society. He was a warm-hearted, generous Irishman. He was zealous and enterprising, vigilant and indefatigable in his Master's service. And, although rather stern in his manner, and uncompromising in his sectarian principles, he both was and

deserved to be eminently popular among his scattered adherents. He had been, from his early youth, an enthusiastic admirer of republican institutions, as exclusively congenial to the universal rights of men.

McKinney's successes both in organizing a militia company and drawing audiences to sermons which proclaimed the superiority of divine right to regal prerogatives of kings excited 'the jealousy and resentment of the minions of despotism in that vicinity.' A church historian asserted in 1888 that the 'true cause' of McKinney's difficulty with the authorities was a sermon on 'the rights of God' which was deemed treasonous. Soldiers were sent to seize him. He fled Ireland abruptly in 1793.<sup>3</sup>

Rev. William Gibson followed McKinney four years later. Gibson was born in 1753 near Knockbracken, County Down. After education in Glasgow, he served as pastor of the united congregations of Kellswater and Cullybackey in County Antrim. His colleagues recalled:

He bore a solemn and earnest testimony against what he believed to be the corruptions of the various churches in upholding the Government of the British Empire; and, more than that, he is said to have encouraged the private associations of United Irishmen, which aimed at nothing less than the independence of Ireland.

Gibson and other Covenanter ministers drew crowds of thousands as they toured north-eastern Ulster. In his itinerant preaching, he prophesied the 'immediate destruction of the British monarchy.'<sup>4</sup>

Stavely, meanwhile, reportedly had taken the United Irish oath, administered it to others and took part planning an arms raid. He was jailed for two months in 1797. In 1798, the authorities would place Stavely on the prison ship *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough along with Thomas Ledlie Birch, David Bailie Warden and many others.<sup>5</sup>

Probationers John Black and Samuel Brown Wylie contributed to the Covenanter protests against immoral government, which they regarded as exemplified by the abuses under martial law in 1797. John Black was born in the townland of Bracknamuckley, near Portglenone, County Antrim, and appears to have spent all of his youth there prior to attending the University of Glasgow. Wylie was born in Moylurg, near Cullybackey, County Antrim, on 21 May 1773. The two young men formed a close friendship in childhood and attended the University of Glasgow together.

Black and Wylie studied theology under Gibson. There can be no doubt of their connection to the United Irishmen. A biographical letter by a son of Wylie described his father and Black as 'Ardent friends of liberty [who] took part together in the United Irishmen movement, at the risk of their lives.' As Wylie recalled:

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Mr Black was asked by several societies of United Irishmen, to deliver a political lecture developing the principles of their association, and detailing some of the evils to which the country was subjected. With this request he complied. The lecture was delivered; its argumentation was cogent, its statements luminous, and all performed with his usual accuracy. It was printed, and extensively read. It soon fell under the eye of some of the government hacks, and altho there was no warrant issued, nor prosecution entered, Mr Black prudently withdrew from his native country.<sup>6</sup>

As Wylie would later explain to the public, they had three choices – pollute their consciences by taking the hated oath of allegiance, risk execution, or take refuge abroad.<sup>7</sup>

The two young friends left on the ship *New York*, ‘then lying in Lough Foyle, at Clare River foot’, together with ‘many other acquaintances, bound for the land of liberty.’ Among them was their mentor Rev. William Gibson and his family. Also on board were Andrew Acheson and a cousin of Gibson, also named William Gibson. According to family legend, William Rodgers came to the United States in the company of John Black due to his own involvement with the United Irishmen.<sup>8</sup>

Reuniting in Philadelphia in the spring of 1798, the brothers-in-law McKinney and Gibson constituted themselves as the Reformed Presbytery in North America – despite the lack of any authorization to do so from either Ireland or Scotland. ‘[S]ensible that a mere committee of the Irish Presbytery was utterly inadequate to the existing exigencies of the church ... after much deliberation and due consultation with the elders in Philadelphia, it was finally resolved to organize themselves into a Presbyterial capacity.’<sup>9</sup> Black and Wylie, taken under the care of the new presbytery, were licensed to preach in 1799. The following year Wylie became the first Covenanter minister ordained in the United States.<sup>10</sup> The new presbytery became a spiritual home for recent immigrants as well as a rallying point for those Covenanters unhappy with the 1782 union with the Seceders which formed the Associate Reformed Church.

William Gibson the minister headed north to the northeast corner of Vermont. The determined republican took his Federalist congregants by surprise. ‘Being a cordial hater of the British Government’, recalled Rev. William Sloane in 1863, ‘he pleaded the cause of Democracy with so much fervour that the people said he was no minister, but an emissary of France.’ His cousin, William Gibson, and Andrew Acheson headed across the mountains into western Pennsylvania where Gibson became a farmer in Washington County.<sup>11</sup>

Black and Wylie, both classical scholars, found work as teachers. Some six weeks after arriving in Philadelphia, Black ‘obtained a small school in



the township of Cheltenham, about ten miles north of Philadelphia.’ After about three months he re-joined Wylie as a tutor at the University of Pennsylvania. Wylie taught at the University of Pennsylvania for several years, and eventually opened his own academy. When the Reformed Presbytery Synod opened a theological seminary in 1809, he became a professor there. From 1828 to 1845 he was the chair of ancient languages at the University of Pennsylvania. A colleague at the university was the Ulster-born mathematician Robert Patterson, a correspondent of David Bailie Warden.<sup>12</sup>

Writing in 1809 to the United Irishman David Bailie Warden, Samuel Brown Wylie made clear his sense of priorities:

I am by profession a Clergyman. I have a small congregation in Philadelphia. It is thriving and healthy. There is a prospect that in a short time it will be able to afford me a competency. I covet no more. In the mean time I supply the deficit by teaching in the University of Pennsylvania, for which I receive a moderate compensation.<sup>13</sup>

The prestige of teaching at a highly regarded university mattered less than his pastoral role.

In Philadelphia, Wylie and Black sought out members of the Covenanter church and renewed contact with a number of ‘fellow passengers’ from the refugee ship, in particular ‘Mr John Reilly and Mr Thomas McAdam, with whose Society and intimacy [Black] was greatly comforted.’ John Reilly, a native of Ballybay, County Monaghan, became a ruling elder in Wylie’s church and later studied theology under Wylie. Reilly was licensed to preach in 1809 and ordained in 1813.<sup>14</sup>

Quite possibly many of these young men became involved in the American Society of United Irishmen. The *Gazette of the United States* published a list of purported members of Philadelphia’s United Irishmen which included Black and Wylie. Like others on the list, according to Maurice Bric, Wylie and Black ‘were familiar in Jeffersonian networks.’ An anti-radical observer identified John Black as a leader of the American Society of United Irishmen. Both émigrés denied the allegations. Despite their denials to the contrary, asserted David A. Wilson, ‘both men were clearly supporters of the movement.’ William Cobbett, then a Philadelphia-based scourge of Jacobins, was keenly aware of the young licentiates and their association with the University of Pennsylvania; Black and Wylie, he sneered, were ‘singular names’ for democrats. Wylie received particular attention because of his ‘violent and daring’ statements.<sup>15</sup>

Wylie and Black received a joint call from the Reformed Presbyterian societies in western Pennsylvania in 1800. Wylie declined, Black accepted,

and was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of the Pittsburgh area congregation (referred to as the Ohio congregation) in December 1800, shortly after a meeting in Pittsburgh of the Reformed Presbytery, the first west of the Alleghenies. (Wylie's ordination had taken place on 25 June 1800 in Ryegate, Vermont.)<sup>16</sup> In September 1801, Pittsburgh's democratic-republican newspaper *Tree of Liberty* reported that John Black married Betsey Watson, with the service conducted by 'the Rev. Mr Wiley.'<sup>17</sup> The following April, the same newspaper reported that Black had reciprocated, officiating at the marriage of his sister-in-law, Margaret Watson, and good friend Samuel Wylie.<sup>18</sup> In 1802 both Black and Wylie officiated at the first communion enjoyed by Covenanters in western Pennsylvania since the reorganization of the Reformed Presbytery. It was probably during this five-day sacramental occasion, in the 'Forks of the Yough', that Wylie preached 'The Two Sons of Oil.'<sup>19</sup>

This sermon, soon published as a pamphlet, offered a critique of American constitutionalism from a traditional Covenanter perspective. Wylie accepted that the seventeenth-century covenants were not binding on immigrants and their descendants in the United States as they were on posterity in the British Isles. Instead, he challenged the theoretical bases of monarchism and republicanism, arguing that sovereignty derives neither from regal assent nor from the will of the people, but instead from God. Constitutions therefore ought to conform to the will of God. The United States Constitution, and the various state constitutions, failed this test. Immigrant Covenanters in good conscience could not swear an oath of allegiance to American government.<sup>20</sup>

The pamphlet provoked considerable discussion in areas which had received heavy Irish Presbyterian immigration. At least two western Pennsylvania writers joined the debate before Congressman William Findley, himself an Irish immigrant of Covenanter background, wrote his massive critique, *Reflections on 'the Two Sons of Oil'*. One author, an acquaintance of Findley whom the Congressman called 'an intelligent farmer', published a small pamphlet as a rejoinder to Wylie under the name 'Plough-Boy.' A Seceder minister in western Pennsylvania likewise entered the fray with his own pamphlet.<sup>21</sup> Findley offered a robust defense of American institutions, based on a lifetime's involvement in Presbyterian controversies, civil government and partisan politics. (The two antagonists were both members of Philadelphia's Hibernian Society. Findley's *Observations* appeared on a list of publications authored by society members. Wylie served at one time as the society's chaplain.<sup>22</sup>)

This very public disagreement was a vital debate which helped clarify and shape Covenanter theology and American political philosophy. Findley, a founder of the Associate Reformed Church, paid homage to the

Covenanting tradition as a cherished historical moment, but drew more broadly upon Reformation principles to privilege the sanctity of private conscience from the encroachment of human authority. His willingness to put aside the strictures of the covenants allowed him to posit a pan-Presbyterian unity. Indeed, his trajectory paralleled that of mainstream Presbyterianism. Eschewing Old World concerns allowed the transformation of a church established by immigrants of Ulster origin into an American institution.

Through Wylie's manifesto, the immigrant Covenanters could lay claim to a logically argued means of naturalizing their historic dissent against the British Constitution.<sup>23</sup> Wylie cleaved closely to the Covenanting tradition in proposing a dissent from the United States government that could be regarded as an application of the Solemn League and Covenant to American conditions. In self-conscious identification with that radical tradition, the Reformed Presbyterian Church developed a moral critique of American constitutionalism, particularly with regards to slavery, and advocated righteous dissent.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church, in fact, was remarkable in its opposition to slavery. In 1800, without a dissenting voice, the Presbytery ruled that 'no slaveholder should be allowed the communion of the Church.' Backing up this decision, McKinney and Wylie were sent to South Carolina with the message 'that the Covenanters there must either emancipate their slaves or be refused the communion of the Church.'<sup>24</sup>

The influence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church became amplified through its presence in the ethnically cohesive communities of Irish Presbyterians, by its reach among immigrants who had been Covenanters or inclined to listen to Covenanting preaching in the old country, and the recognition Reformed Presbyterians achieved in their American homes. The Blair family from the parish of Donegore, County Antrim, sought out Black upon their arrival in Pennsylvania in 1802, for advice and direction. Matthew Williams, originally from Ballymena, emigrated with his parents in 1794; the family settled in Westmoreland County and joined the Associate Reformed Church. Hearing the preaching of John Black, however, convinced Williams to become a Covenanter and study for the ministry. Similarly, Gilbert McMaster, born in Saintfield, County Down in 1778 had emigrated with his parents in 1791. Trained as a physician, he was convinced by Reverends Alexander McLeod and Samuel Brown Wylie to enter the ministry; he was ordained in 1808. Further, it has been estimated that at least seven of the children born to Irish Covenanters who came to the United States in the late eighteenth century became ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, mentored by the Irish-born ministers John Black, Thomas Donnelly and Samuel Brown Wylie.<sup>25</sup>

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When Alexander McLeod was ordained in 1800, he was the only one of the nine Reformed Presbyterian ministers in America not Irish-born – and four of the eight Irish-born ministers had had some connection with the social and political tumult of the 1790s. The influence of the men suspected of involvement in the United Irishmen within their denomination was considerable, and amplified in the denomination's role in shaping the wider Irish Presbyterian community.

- 1 Adam Loughridge, *The Covenanters in Ireland, A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland* (Belfast, 1984), p. 23.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp 24, 27.
- 3 William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Associate, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterian Pulpit* (New York, 1869), p. 1; Samuel Brown Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod, D.D., New York* (New York, 1840), p. 25; Wylie, letter of 11 Jan. 1849 in Sprague, *Annals of the American Associate, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterian Pulpit*, p. 5; Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod*, pp 20–21; William Melancthon Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2007 [reprint of 1888 original publication]), p. 601.
- 4 Sprague, *Annals of the American Associate, Associate Reformed and Reformed Presbyterian Pulpit*, p. 6; McBride, *Scripture Politics*, pp 102–03; Loughridge, *Covenanters in Ireland*, p. 45; Miller, 'Presbyterianism and "Modernization"', p. 80. Here again the characterization in Sprague is from the pen of Samuel Brown Wylie.
- 5 McBride, *Scripture Politics*, pp 102–03; Loughridge, *Covenanters in Ireland*, p. 47; Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir', p. 119.
- 6 Samuel Brown Wylie, 'Memoir of the late Rev. Dr Black', typescript, Papers of the McClelland Family, 1821–1977, Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, MSS #66, Box 1, Folder 3, pp 15–16 (page numbers refer to the original manuscript).
- 7 Letter to T Waters [sic], Papers of the McClelland Family, 1821–1977, Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, MSS #66, Box 1, Folder 3. Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod*, pp 20–21.
- 8 'Memoir of the late Rev. Dr Black', pp 16–17; Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary Library, *Reformed Presbyterian*, vol. 9, 1845/6, p. 166, in conjunction with *A Name Index of Obituaries: Appearing in the Publications of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Part I, 1837–1862* (privately published, n.d.), Richard L. McDonald, compiler; *History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania* (Newark, OH, 1880), p. 213; Frank C. Harper, *Pittsburgh of today, its resources and people* (New York, 1831), vol. 3, p. 296; William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4 (New York, 1859), pp 8–9; *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1889), p. 321; Boyd Crumrine (ed.), *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania: with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 716.
- 9 Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod*, pp 30–31, 31; David Melville Carson, 'A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America to 1871', PhD, University of Pennsylvania (1964), p. 64.
- 10 Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod*, pp 48, 50–51. Both Black and Wylie had found work as teachers. Some six weeks after arriving in Philadelphia, Black 'obtained a small school in the township of Cheltenham, about ten miles north of Philadelphia.' After about three months he rejoined Wylie as a tutor at the University of Pennsylvania (Wylie, 'Memoir of the late Rev. Dr Black', p. 18).

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- 11 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 4, pp 8–9; *History of Indiana County*, p. 213; Crumrine, *History of Washington County*, p. 716.
- 12 Wylie, 'Memoir of the late Rev. Dr Black', p. 18; University of Pennsylvania Archives website, 'University of Pennsylvania, 1830: Reverend Samuel Brown Wylie, Professor of Ancient Languages' ([www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/1830/facwylie.html](http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/1830/facwylie.html)). In *United Irishmen, United States*, Wilson writes that at the University of Pennsylvania Wylie and Black 'by their fellow United Irishman and old friend Robert Patterson (p. 99).' This seems quite unlikely as Patterson immigrated prior to the Revolutionary War, as did his brother, Rev. Joseph Patterson.
- 13 MHS, David Bailie Warden Papers, Ms 871, Roll I, Samuel B. Wylie to Warden, 15 Nov. 1809.
- 14 Wylie, 'Memoir of the late Rev. Dr Black', pp 17–18; Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 653–4.
- 15 Maurice J. Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America* (Dublin, 2008), pp 227–8; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, pp 44, 99. Among the Reformed Presbyterians who emigrated due to a connection with the 1798 Rebellion was John Dalzell of Oneida County, NY. He was described as 'the last of an old family of Scotch Covenanters that had established itself in County Down, near Belfast. His sympathies had been with the Irish rebellion of 1798, and becoming an active participant, he was compelled to emigrate hastily to America.' A daughter later married a County Down-born elder of Pittsburgh's First Presbyterian Church. (Scovell, *Centennial Celebration*, p. 208.)
- 16 Reid W. Stewart, 'A History of the Covenanter Churches in Northern Westmoreland County, PA' in *Brookland Covenanter (Reformed Presbyterian) Church History* (Tarentum, PA, 2000), pp 41–2. Wylie, 'Memoir of the late Rev Dr Black', p. 20.
- 17 *Tree of Liberty*, 26 Sept. 1801.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 10 April 1802.
- 19 Stewart, *Seceders in Ireland*, pp 42–3. Lewis Clark Walkinshaw, *Annals of Southwestern Pennsylvania*, vol. 3. (New York, 1939), p. 35. The 'Forks of the Yough' is the territory between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers near their confluence in southeastern Allegheny and southwestern Westmoreland counties.
- 20 Samuel B. Wylie, *The Two Sons of Oil; or, The Faithful Witness for Magistracy and Ministry upon a Scriptural Basis* (Pottstown, PA, 1995).
- 21 William Findley, *Observations on 'the Two Sons of Oil'* (Pittsburgh, 1812), p. iv; James Duncan, *A Treatise on Civil Government and the Extent of the Civil Powers respecting Religion, to which were added some strictures on a late publication, entitled, 'The Two Sons of Oil'*. Duncan later authored a denunciation of American slavery.
- 22 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 25, 406, 546.
- 23 In 1804 the Reformed Presbytery asked Alexander McLeod to prepare a statement of beliefs, based on the Covenanters' view of history. Completed in 1806 and published in 1807, *Reformation Principles Exhibited* affirmed Wylie's argument in *Two Sons of Oil* that the logic of dissent from the British Constitution required dissent from the American government as well.
- 24 Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 79–80; Carson, 'History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church', pp 192–3.
- 25 *History of Allegheny county, Pennsylvania*, p. 321; Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 616–17, 716–17; Rankin Sherling, 'Selective remembrance: Scottish sensibilities and forgotten Irish contributions to reformed Presbyterianism in America' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 11:2 (June 2013), p. 164. Donnelly, who was born near Donegal town, had immigrated in 1791. The existence of family networks is evident in the case of the extended family of Samuel Brown Wylie; he had family in south-western Pennsylvania; an older half-brother, Adam, a farmer in Upper Buffalo Township, Washington County, had emigrated in the 1780s. A son of Adam would become a Presbyterian minister.

## 20

## Exiles in Washington County, Pennsylvania

Peter Gilmore

Washington County, located in the south-western quadrant of Pennsylvania, was at the turn of the nineteenth century the most populous county in the region and was already home to numerous settlers who were Presbyterians of Irish origin. Studying individual immigrants who applied to become naturalized United States citizens in the Common Pleas Court of Washington County, Pennsylvania, and who arrived in Washington County between 1796 and approximately 1808 helps illumine this discussion.

While the absolute numbers of immigrants seeking naturalization in the Washington County courts in the early nineteenth century were low – a database constructed by the present author contains little more than 100 names – the immigrants seeking naturalization overwhelmingly came from Ireland. In 1802, for example, seventy immigrants became naturalized citizens. Of these, fifty or 83% were listed as Irish-born. Of the eight (11%) for whom no place of birth was listed, many, if not all, were likely of Irish origin. The four individuals recorded as having been born in France, England and Great Britain comprised just 6% of the total. Most of these Irish-born immigrants had surnames which appear to have been of Scottish origin.<sup>1</sup>

Quite obviously, those who took part in the naturalization process do not represent the totality of Irish-born immigrants who arrived in Washington County at the time of political crisis in Ulster or in the years immediately following. The names of the cousins both named William Gibson do not appear in court records, most likely because their religious beliefs as Reformed Presbyterians would not have inclined them to become citizens. A number of immigrants who arrived in Washington County shortly after the 1798 Rebellion did not become citizens until many years later. Robert Lattimore, who apparently arrived in Washington County in 1799, did not become a citizen until 1819. At this stage, their reasons can only be guessed at; the personal and political crises engendered by the 1812 war between the United States and the United Kingdom (during which Irish immigrants would have been viewed as hostile aliens) or an emphasis on democratic political values may have influenced decisions to become citizens.

No naturalization records have been found prior to the May 1802 Term of the Court of Common Pleas. The presence of high-profile Irish republicans such as Thomas Ledlie Birch and James Mountain (both discussed above) and the prevalence of names of Scottish origin tend to suggest that the Irish-born individuals seeking naturalization were both Presbyterians and somehow motivated to leave Ireland as a result of rebellion and political crisis.

The identity of those individuals who served as sponsors of applicants tends to conform to tendencies noted elsewhere in this publication: alliances among various cohorts of immigrants, the operation of networks of friends and family and the close identification between Irish immigrants believed to have connections with the United Irishmen and Democratic-Republican political leaders and operatives in the United States. John Wilson served as a sponsor for four candidates for citizenship. This is likely the John Wilson, native of Coleraine, who emigrated in June 1786 with his wife, Catherine Cunningham, father, Marcus Wilson, and entire extended family.<sup>2</sup> This may also be the John Wilson chosen by the supporters of Thomas Ledlie Birch as a commissioner of the Washington congregation to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. One notes, by way of another example, the number of men named Thompson immigrating within a few years of one another, and the role played by Robert Thompson in acting as a sponsor for an individual with the same name – possibly a nephew or cousin.

Evidence for the existence of political networks is quite significant: the ability of the exiles of 1798 to exercise influence on the United States politics and government rested the personal interaction between immigrants and political leaders. David Hamilton, a politically influential landowner for whom a voting district was named, was recorded as the sponsor of four new citizens. (A determined radical at the time of the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 in western Pennsylvania, Hamilton was a leader of the Mingo democratic club, an organization whose formal name – the Society of United Freemen – suggests a connection to contemporary Irish politics.)<sup>3</sup> Absalom Baird, a doctor, was prominent in Washington County politics. Baird was an early supporter of Thomas Ledlie Birch in his bid to become minister to Washington's Presbyterian congregation.<sup>4</sup> Joseph Pentecost, a lawyer, was a leading Washington County Democratic-Republicans. William Clarke had resided in Canonsburg, a Chartiers valley market town, for several years prior to its erection as a borough in 1802. A sponsor of several naturalized citizens, Clarke served on the first borough council and as the town's postmaster. (Reynolds Neill, among those sponsored by Clarke, was a Canonsburg merchant.) Andrew Monroe, another sponsor, was the first clerk of the Canonsburg market, a tavern-keeper, and an ordained elder in the Associate Presbyterian Church.<sup>5</sup>

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The list of immigrants seeking naturalization in Washington County begins to give some clarity to the remark by Thomas Ledlie Birch that he chose the town of Washington and environs as residence and site of his American ministry because, 'there was a number of my old hearers and neighbors from Ireland.'<sup>6</sup> Among the tradesmen in Washington at the turn of the nineteenth century were Abraham Latimore, a newly naturalized citizen who served as a sponsor to others; the mason John Keady, who filed his intention to become a citizen in November 1801; the cabinet-maker John Wilson, an immigrant and sponsor of new immigrants; as well as Alexander Lyttle, cabinet-maker, and Robert Anderson, silversmith, who were closely associated with Birch's ministry in Washington. The clerks John McCluney and Thomas Thompson, both Irish immigrants naturalized in 1802, could also be found in Washington at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Robert and Hamilton Bell in 1802 protested the refusal of the Ohio Presbytery to allow Birch to administer the Lord's Supper on behalf of Birch's congregation. Hamilton Bell became a naturalized citizen in 1805.<sup>8</sup>

Whether high in the councils of the Society of United Irishmen, an ordinary oath-swearing member of the ranks, or an unaffiliated critic of existing political and social circumstances, an ultimately untold number of Ulster's Presbyterians became associated with revolutionary currents in the final years of the eighteenth century. Many so involved – or so accused – took exile in the new United States. And whether personally known to Thomas Jefferson or a distant admirer, whether well-known preachers or scholars, lawyers or farmers or artisans, the Presbyterian exiles of the 1790s and early 1800s transformed their new homes (as they themselves were undoubtedly transformed), shaping and reshaping the politics and religion of America.

- 1 Law Library of the Courts of Washington County, Mary Lou Scott (ed.), 'Naturalizations from Circuit Court Proceedings, Washington County, Pennsylvania, 1795 to 1841' (unpublished MS).
- 2 Boyd Crumrine (ed.), *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania: with biographical sketches of many of its pioneers and prominent men* (Philadelphia, 1882), p. 482.
- 3 Russell J. Ferguson. *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics* (Pittsburgh, 1938), p. 127.
- 4 Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, p. 133; Thomas Ledlie Birch, *Seemingly Experimental Religion* (Washington, PA, 1806), p. 67.
- 5 Crumrine, *History of Washington County*, p. 601.
- 6 Birch, *Seemingly Experimental Religion*, p. 31.
- 7 Crumrine, *History of Washington County*, pp 490–92.
- 8 Birch, *Seemingly Experimental Religion*, pp 80–81.



## Directory of exiles from Ulster

William Roulston and Trevor Parkhill

Presented here are short biographical sketches and brief notices of individuals from Ulster who are known to have left for the United States between *c.* 1794 and *c.* 1810 for political reasons. Also included are those who are believed to have emigrated and others who might have emigrated though conclusive proof of this has not been found. These sketches and notices, which still represent only a portion of the total numbers of political emigrants from Ulster in this period, are designed to complement the longer studies in this volume. Though a few of those listed here were members of the mainly Catholic Defenders, the great majority can be considered United Irish exiles. In terms of qualifying as a United Irish exile, following on from David A. Wilson, this has been understood in broad terms to encompass not only those who were sworn members of the organisation, but also those who sympathised with its aims and objectives and who were compelled to leave for the United States.<sup>1</sup>

It has not been possible to identify with certainty the religious affiliation of all those listed here, but there seems little doubt that the majority were Presbyterians of one form or another, including Non-Subscribers and Covenanters (Reformed Presbyterians). Others were Anglican, Catholic and even Quaker and where this is known it has been indicated in the biographical sketch. Many of those listed below left in the years 1797–1800, in the periods before and after the rising itself. A few left prior to 1797 and a number after 1800. James Witherspoon, for example, was involved in the United Irishmen in the 1790s, fought at the Battle of Ballynahinch, became involved in the plotting for Emmet's rebellion in 1803 and was allowed to transport himself and his family to America in 1804. James Bones, who took part in the rising in County Antrim in 1798, did not move to America until 1810, though is still considered to be a United Irish émigré.

For most of those whom we can trace to America, only a limited amount of information about their subsequent lives can be recovered. Some of the individuals highlighted below are worthy of more detailed studies, such as the members of the Caldwell family and indeed a fine biography of Samuel Neilson has been published recently.<sup>2</sup> A few other individuals of importance have been included here though they fall outside the designation of a United Irish exile. Rev. Francis Pringle of Gilnahirk, for instance, left in the aftermath of the rising, but on account of hostility towards him from members of his

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congregation due to his loyalism. Robert Simms was implored by his fellow United Irishmen to come to America, but never did so. He is included here as someone who provided an important link between the exiles and their homeland. Similarly, the committed Presbyterian William Tennent when faced with the prospect of banishment instead chose to remain in Ireland and continued to be active in public life in early nineteenth-century Belfast. Apparently a native of Waterford, John Magrath is included as a reminder that not all Presbyterian exiles in America were from Ulster.

There are some notes of caution with regard to the information presented below. First of all, as acknowledged already, we cannot be certain that all those banished from Ireland, or who declared an intention to leave the island, actually made it to the United States. In some cases we have references to men entering into recognisances to go to America, but the trail runs cold before there is documented evidence of them arriving in the New World. There are also the challenges of trying to make sense of the available and often limited evidence and of being sure that the documentation uncovered does in fact refer to the individual being researched, rather than a namesake. In some cases, the identification of an individual as a United Irish exile is based on family tradition or a biographical sketch written many years afterwards. While the claims made in these sources cannot be dismissed completely, they do need to be approached with care. Undoubtedly, some errors have crept into the findings presented below and it will certainly be the case that new information will come to light that will provide fresh insights into some of those highlighted as well illuminating further aspects of their lives.

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### **Adair, William**

Adair was a Presbyterian probationer, resident at Cattogs, near Comber, County Down, who took an active part at the Battle of Saintfield. In May 1799 he travelled to America on the *Peggy* that had been chartered by John Caldwell jun. (q.v.).<sup>3</sup>

### **Adrain, Robert**

Robert Adrian was born in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, in 1775, the eldest of five children, all of whom were orphaned by the time Robert was fifteen. He took a leading role in the 1798 Rebellion, leading a company of United Irishmen at the Battle of Antrim on 7 June. Six days later, at the Battle of Saintfield, he was seriously wounded, but recovered. With his wife and daughter he escaped to the United States (though not immediately, as his daughter is known to have been born in Ireland in 1799). Once

established, he became a schoolmaster and then graduated to teaching mathematics, initially at Queen's College (later Rutgers University). By 1828 he had been appointed vice-provost of the University of Pennsylvania (though he resigned from this post because of an apparent failure to control his classes). From this basis he would go on to become one of the most influential figures to work in the field of mathematics in the United States, though as David Doyle points out, his innovative researches and 'demonstrations of the exponential law of error' went largely unnoticed by contemporary European scholars. His most significant work was published in 1809. Known as 'the method of least squares', it would in time become an internationally recognised description of a method for reducing errors in observation. Adrain also calculated the mean diameter of the earth. In 1810, he was awarded an honorary MA by Queen's College and in 1818 received an honorary LLD from Columbia College. One of his seven children, Garnett Adrain (1815–78), became a Congressman for New Jersey. Robert Adrain died on his farm in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on 19 August 1843. Regrettably, his papers are believed to have been destroyed after the historian studying them died in 1945.<sup>4</sup>

### **Alexander, John**

Alexander was a schoolmaster from Broughshane, County Antrim, who was one of the United Irish commanders in the rebellion and escaped to America.<sup>5</sup>

### **Alexander, Samuel**

Born at Ballyboe in County Donegal, Samuel Alexander moved to Newtowncunningham in the same county after his marriage to Margaret Thomson. He was appointed a sheriff's deputy in Donegal and was described as having something of the 'pluck of a game cock'. He joined the United Irishmen and drilled 150 men at the 'Laird's Lea'. He left for Philadelphia, riding to Derry on his own horse during daytime and at a moderate pace so as not to excite attention. Less than a year and a half after arriving in America he died of yellow fever.<sup>6</sup>

### **Arnold, John**

Born near Magherally, County Down, and educated in Scotland, Arnold was licensed by the Belfast Presbytery in 1779 and ordained minister of First Ballybay Presbyterian Church, County Monaghan, on 18 December 1782. Described as a 'United Irishman in the most strict sense of the term', Arnold was informed on for addressing a nocturnal meeting. His escape is part of local folklore with one account describing how, in fleeing from the authorities, he hid up to his chin in a pool of water. In July 1797 the American press reported the arrival in New York of Rev. John Arnold, along

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with a number of others who had been 'obliged to flee the country for espousing the popular cause'. Arnold died in America on 26 December 1801. After he left for America, two of his children were cared for by their uncle Joseph Nelson who had a bleach-green at Crieve. Arnold's son William later had a bleach green at Crieve, possibly one he had inherited from the Nelsons.<sup>7</sup>

**Bailey, William**

A native of County Down, Bailey was a captain in the East India Company. Afterwards settling in England, he was a member of the London Corresponding Society and of the United Britons. At the beginning of 1798 he visited Ireland with two prominent United Irishmen, Benjamin Binns and Rev. James Coigley, to promise support for a rising from English radicals. In the aftermath of the Rebellion he went initially to France and then to America. In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, referred to Bailey, who practised law in that city, as being 'among our most intimate connections'.<sup>8</sup>

**Barry, William**

In August 1798, William Barry, a weaver from Killyfaddy, Magherafelt, County Londonderry, had been forced along with many others in that district, and without any charges being made against him, to enter into a recognisance to quit the kingdom. In October Barry sailed from Belfast on the *Pallas* with John Caldwell jun. (q.v.) and others, but the voyage ended when the ship was forced to put in at Cork for essential repairs. In a subsequent petition to Lord Cornwallis, endorsed 24 April 1799, Barry claimed that he was now in great distress, had lost everything, and no longer had the means to leave Ireland. He pointed out that many others in his neighbourhood who had entered into recognisances had since been pardoned.<sup>9</sup>

**Bashford, Thomas Gunning**

A Belfast shopkeeper, Bashford was one of the more belligerent United Irishmen in Ulster. On the eve of the rising, he denounced the Ulster Executive for refusing to prepare for insurrection, accusing its members of betrayal. Proclaimed in the Fugitive Act of 1798, he escaped to America. In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, refers to Bashford as having recently gone to St Jago de Cuba, though was expected back soon.<sup>10</sup>

**Bell, Thomas**

A United Irishman from County Tyrone, Bell emigrated to America and made a new home in Amelia County, Virginia, in 1798, where he operated as a merchant. In 1800, he married a local woman; she died a few months

later. In an effort to take his mind off his grief, Bell journeyed north on business, but only a few weeks after his return he died of fever, aged 22.<sup>11</sup>

**Birch, Thomas Ledlie** – see biography in Chapter 10.

**Bishop, Thomas and William**

Of Ballymorran, Killinchy parish, County Down, Thomas and William Bishop, presumably brothers, were court-martialled at Downpatrick on 10 July 1798. Both pleaded guilty and entered into recognisances to transport themselves for life to America. It was reported on 14 November 1798 that they were still out on bail.<sup>12</sup>

**Black, John**

The son of John and Margaret (McKibbin) Black, John Black was born in Bracknamuckley, near Portglenone, in what was then Ahoghill parish, County Antrim. After graduating from Glasgow University in 1790, he returned to Ireland and began to teach and undertake theological studies. He joined his minister, Rev. William Gibson (q.v.), and a number of others in emigrating to America in 1797, arriving in Philadelphia in October of that year – ‘an exile for liberty’ in the words of a fellow Covenanter. There he taught classics, both privately and in association with the College (later University) of Pennsylvania. In December 1798, he was named as a member of the Society of United Irishmen in Philadelphia, though he denied this. Black resumed his theological studies and in June 1799 was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery and assigned to work in western Pennsylvania. There, in December 1800, he was ordained pastor of the Ohio congregation, focused on Pittsburgh, which comprised all of the groups of Covenanters west of the Alleghenies. Subsequent to the division of this congregation into three sections, he concentrated on the newly-formed congregation based in and around Pittsburgh. In 1820, he became Professor of Latin and Greek in the Western University of Pennsylvania, while continuing to be pastor of his congregation, a position he held until his death. Among his published works was *Slavery Contrary to the Bible* (1839). He died in 1849.<sup>13</sup> For more on him see Chapter 19.

**Boner, Samuel**

Boner was one of those imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>14</sup>

**Bones, James**

The sons of John Bones, a successful farmer in Duneane parish near Randalstown, County Antrim, James and Samuel Bones became involved

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in the United Irishmen and took part in the march on Ballymena in June 1798. Following the rebellion, James was captured, but escaped with one story naming Jamaica as his place of refuge. Afterwards he returned to Ireland and settled on land at Ballyportery in Loughguile parish, County Antrim, owned by his father-in-law, John Adams; here he farmed and bleached linen. In 1810, following the death of John Adams, James Bones moved his family to Winnsboro in South Carolina, to where his sister and her husband Andrew Crawford (q.v.) had settled in the mid 1790s. Katharine Brown, who has looked in detail at the Bones family, has called them 'late Rebellion emigrants'. James' brother Samuel also moved to South Carolina, as did his youngest brother William, who became a successful merchant in Charleston, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia. James Bones died on 27 December 1841 in his 75th year and was buried in Summerville Cemetery, Augusta. The inscription on his tombstone reads:

He was a native of County Antrim, Ireland, and emigrated with his family to the United States in the year 1810. He took an active part in the unsuccessful struggle for the independence of his native land in the year 1798. Preserving through life the character of an honest man, he bade adieu to this world in the confident hope of a happy immortality.<sup>15</sup>

### **Boorman, John**

Boorman, from Rasharkin, County Antrim, was arrested and sent to Belfast charged with being a member of the mainly Catholic Defenders. On 22 August 1799, George Bristow of Culmore, Ballymoney, wrote to Castlereagh on Boorman's behalf, recommending that he be allowed to emigrate to America.<sup>16</sup>

### **Boyd, Adam**

Adam Boyd of Ballynahinch was arrested on 14 June 1798 and was court-martialled in Downpatrick on 10 July. The charges against him included threatening people to join the rebels and appearing to have a command in the rebellion. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, but this was suspended when Boyd offered to provide evidence on others involved in the insurrection. He was transferred to Newgate gaol, Dublin, in March 1799. In a petition of 5 December 1799, Boyd requested that he be released so that he could emigrate to America. A week later he wrote to Castlereagh seeking clemency. What became of him is not clear.<sup>17</sup>

### **Boyd, John**

On 10 October 1798, General Nugent wrote to Castlereagh to inform him that Boyd, a prisoner in Carrickfergus gaol, County Antrim, was to be

released so that he could emigrate to America; he was in poor health and was no longer considered to be dangerous.<sup>18</sup>

### **Bryson, Andrew, sen., Andrew jun. and David**

One of the most remarkable, from many, extraordinary case histories arising from the exodus to the United States of Ulster Presbyterians in the wake of the rebellion was that of the Bryson family. Born into a family from Renfrewshire that had settled in Ulster in the early seventeenth century, Andrew Bryson sen. farmed land in Ballysallagh, County Down. There were no fewer than three Presbyterian ministers named Bryson in counties Antrim and Down in the 1790s. Andrew sen. appears to have been involved in the Society of United Irishmen from its early days – Tone records meeting him during his visit to Belfast in July 1792. He was arrested for treasonable activity in May 1797 and was one of the United Irishmen allowed to leave the country for America.<sup>19</sup>

Andrew jun. had also joined the ranks of the United Irishmen and was caught up, to some extent or other, in the rebellion. Bryson was court-martialled in September 1798, found guilty and, with comrades, sentenced to enlist in a British army regiment for a period of years. Imprisoned on a prison ship in Belfast Lough, then forced to march in mid-winter to New Geneva in County Waterford, and then sent to serve in the army in French Martinique, famous for its ‘pestiferous atmosphere’ and a cripplingly high mortality rate from fever. Quite incredibly, the resourceful Bryson managed to escape from this near-death situation and to find his way to New York City by late 1799 or early 1800.<sup>20</sup> There he joined his father, Andrew sen. and his brother David who had joined many other rebels and their families who had fled the post-rebellion carnage by taking ship direct for the United States.

Andrew Bryson jun., quite remarkably, managed to record all this account of his adventures in a long letter home from New York to his sister. It is held in PRONI and provides a vivid first-hand account of the trials and tribulations Bryson faced with some initiative and fortitude, enduring the plagues and fevers of his time in the West Indies and then turning mere survival into escape and eventual safety. The diary does not unfortunately convey much about his career on arrival and it is clear that he had died by 1806, possibly from a recurrence of the yellow fever that had infected him almost as soon as he arrived in Martinique. In New York the Brysons established a family firm and his brother David became involved to a considerable extent in the politics of the Irish community in the city. He was ‘many times an officer of the Hibernian Provident Society, affiliated with the Clintonian faction of the New York Republicans’. His son, also Andrew, went on to become a rear-admiral in the US Navy, having fought for the Union in the American Civil War.<sup>21</sup>

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**Caldwell, John jun. and Richard**

John Caldwell jun. was born on 3 May 1769 on his father's prosperous Harmony Hill farm near Ballymoney, County Antrim. Kerby Miller contends that 'the American revolution made young Caldwell a convert to the ideas of liberty that also enthused his parents and many other Antrim Presbyterians'. He was apprenticed in Belfast to Samuel Brown who traded extensively with American ports, contacts that Caldwell used first when he established his own Belfast business and then in the wake of the 1798 rebellion. He had been in the 1790s a committed member of the United Irishmen, but had resigned his commission before the rebellion, though his younger brother Richard commanded the north Antrim rebels, bringing destruction to the Harmony Hill house and mills. John Caldwell was arrested and, on hearing that Richard had been condemned to death for his activities, expected the same fate. A deal was struck with the Crown that if the entire family would go into American exile they would be spared. The initial attempt by John Caldwell jun. to sail to America on the *Pallas* in October 1798 had to be abandoned after the ship was forced to put in at Cork for essential repairs. However, a further attempt in May 1799 aboard the *Peggy* was successful.<sup>22</sup>

In his long letter of 18 October 1802 to Robert Simms, a former United Irishman who corresponded with a number of radicals who had migrated, particularly to New York, Caldwell makes clear how the family had established themselves in their new world. He also comments on how other immigrants were coping:

The Scotch farmer or labourer on his arrival in a Transatlantic town, calls on his countrymen, advises with them, goes back to the country and becomes a farmer and is of course a respectable member of society. I wish I could say so much for our countrymen ... : the United States do undoubtedly promise much to emigrants of every description provided they are industrious and well conducted but no country under heaven throws more obstacles in the way of an idle and dissolute man procuring a livelihood.<sup>23</sup>

John married the daughter of a County Waterford clergyman in 1803 and for a time his renewed business enterprise paid dividends. Partly, though not entirely, they started to become unstuck when his brother Richard, who had embarked on a quest of revenge against the British government and enlisted in a New York militia regiment, died of exposure at Lake Champlain in the War of 1812. Nonetheless, John, in spite of his financial setbacks, remained active in New York's Irish-American society, serving as first treasurer and then vice-president of the city's Friendly Sons of St Patrick.



Miller notes that 'in 1843, when the American repeal association, dedicated to the abolition of the Act of Union ... held its second national convention in Manhattan, the Irish-American repealers, overwhelmingly Catholic, honoured the elderly Presbyterian as one of the last surviving United Irish exiles'. He died in 1850.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Caldwell, Robert (Robin)**

Caldwell was from Coleraine, or its vicinity, in County Londonderry. He married Elizabeth Snell and they had six children. On account of his involvement in seditious activities, he was forced to flee to America in 1798. He settled in Burke County, North Carolina, where he was joined by the rest of his family in 1800, and where he died in 1837 in his 88th year.<sup>25</sup>

#### **Caldwell, [-]**

Rev. William Wilson, who was ordained minister of First Limavady Presbyterian Church in 1797, married a Miss Caldwell of Glenkeen, and through her obtained possession of a farm that had belonged to her brother, who had been forced to flee the country during the 1798 period.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Campbell, Neal**

From Coalisland, County Tyrone, Campbell was a Catholic refugee of 1798. He settled at Youngstown, Ohio, and wrote home in 1819 about his experiences of farming his own land 'under the wide-spreading shade of The tree of genuine liberty'.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Campbell, Billy – see McKeever, Billy**

**Chambers, John** – see biography in Chapter 13.

#### **Clandennin, Alexander**

A Chandler from Newtownards, County Down, Clandennin was among those court-martialled in his home town in the wake of the rebellion. He was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but released in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Clark, Alexander**

Alexander Clark was a watch and clockmaker in Belfast who was arrested in April 1797 on a charge of treason and sent to Dublin. On 18 June 1798 it was reported that Clark, having recently been liberated from gaol in Dublin, had been taken into custody in Newry and brought to Belfast where he was lodged in the New Inns, which had been converted into a temporary prison. In September 1798 he was listed among those who had refused the

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terms granted by the government to the 'State Prisoners' in Dublin. Clark was reported to have entered into recognisances on 28 June 1799 to immediately transport himself to America. Either he or a namesake is said to have made pikes for the rebellion at Beath's place, Ringneal, Tullynakill parish, on the western shore of Strangford Lough in County Down.<sup>29</sup>

### **Clokey, Joseph**

Through hard work Joseph Clokey (1754–1826) rose from being a shoemaker to a successful leather merchant in Ballynahinch, County Down. He was involved in the revived Volunteers in the 1790s and became a prominent United Irishman, reputedly turning the cellar of his business premises into an armoury. However, when, in early June 1798, some were proposing him for the leadership of the movement it was claimed by others that he was 'not a warm enough man in the cause'. His son, also named Joseph, was executed for his part in the rebellion – specifically, it is said, for refusing to reveal the hiding place of his father. Joseph senior, however, was allowed to transport himself to America and in October 1798 his property in Ballynahinch was advertised for sale. He arrived in America in March 1799 and settled initially in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, to where his brother James had previously emigrated, and there married, as his second wife, Mary Sawyer, the widow of William Sawyer. Later he moved to Washington County, Pennsylvania. His son, Rev. Dr Joseph Clokey (1801–84), became a prominent minister in the United Presbyterian Church. Andrew Clokey and William Clokey (or McClookey), who were also court-martialled in the aftermath of the rebellion and subsequently made their way to America, were probably near relatives of Joseph Clokey.<sup>30</sup>

### **Connell, James**

Identified as a Presbyterian probationer from Garvagh, County Londonderry, James Connell escaped to America after the rebellion.<sup>31</sup>

### **Crawford, Andrew**

Married to Jane, daughter of John Bones of Duneane parish, County Antrim, Andrew Crawford and his wife moved (apparently from Castledawson, County Londonderry) to Winnsboro, South Carolina, around 1795. A family tradition has him leaving Ireland for political reasons, possibly to do with the United Irishmen.<sup>32</sup>

### **Crombie, Joseph**

Crombie was the son of Rev. Dr James Crombie, the Perthshire-born minister of First Presbyterian Church, Belfast. He was a known United Irishman and was arrested after the rebellion. Martha McTier wrote to

General Nugent on his behalf, asking that he be allowed to emigrate to America rather than face execution. While being transferred with other prisoners to Donaghadee, County Down, Crombie made his escape – ‘or was allowed to escape’ – and travelled to the United States.<sup>33</sup>

### **Cruse, Thomas**

Cruse (or Cruise) was a Belfast wine merchant, Volunteer and United Irishman. He may be the same as the Thomas Cruse, son of Isaac Cruse and Ann McCullough, who was baptised in the old Corporation Church (Church of Ireland) in Belfast on 21 December 1762. Thomas was involved in the Belfast Reading Society and the Poor House, and in 1789 subscribed to *The Patriot Soldier: or Irish Volunteer*, a poem possibly by Samuel Neilson (q.v.). In 1791, he married Ann Hamilton. Described rather dismissively as ‘a weak-minded bigot’ and ‘insane on the subject of General Philanthropy and harmless on every other subject’, he was arrested after the rebellion and accepted the terms offered to the prisoners in Belfast that had been granted by the government to the ‘State Prisoners’ in Dublin. In September 1798 it was noted that he had been released on bail after entering into a recognisance to transport himself from Ireland within three months. His business premises in North Street were taken over by a William McClean in November 1798.

Cruse arrived in America with his family in 1799 and settled in Alexandria, Virginia (then part of the District of Columbia). Cruse continued to work in the drinks business in his new home. In 1801, he and William Billingham founded the Potomac Brewing Company, though in 1805 he and John Fitzgerald bought out Billingham and in 1806 they put the brewery up for sale along with a wharf on West Point. In 1815, Cruse built a much admired house in North Fairfax Street. By the end of the 1820s, however, he had moved to Baltimore where a business, Cruse & Wilson, grocers and produce merchants was established in Franklin Street. Wilson was presumably the Thomas Wilson who had married Cruse’s daughter Mary. He had at least two other daughters – Anne, who married John Power, and Eliza, who married Robert Clayton of Philadelphia in 1824.

While living in Alexandria, Cruse’s proximity to Washington DC provided him with occasional opportunities to mix with those in positions of government. He was also quite prepared to write to leading politicians with particular requests. For example, on 20 February 1806, he wrote to the then Secretary of State, James Madison, on behalf of his brother-in-law, James Hamilton of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, concerning the office of Chief Judge of the District of Columbia. Cruse recommended Hamilton for this position arguing that he was a man ‘whose principals & talents must be

known from his appointment of district Attorney in Pennsylvania'. Cruse must have written a similar letter to Thomas Jefferson for on 27 February Hamilton wrote to the President to apologize for the 'friendly but imprudent Zeal of Mr. Cruse of Alexandria' and explain that his brother-in-law had written 'entirely without my privity or Knowledge'. Hamilton concluded that Cruse's actions 'can only be excused from a consideration of his commercial Habits, which caused him to overlook its Indelicacy in the case of a Judicial Appointment.'

Twenty-three of Cruse's letters to Hamilton are in Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, and cover the period 1810–13. The correspondence is concerned primarily with business affairs, dividends from investments and some family matters. In a letter of 2 January 1810 Cruse wrote about a levee he had attended at the White House and noted that 'Mr Madison appears to be bending under the weight & cares of office'. A few weeks later Cruse expressed his concerns about democracy and government in his adopted country as well as fears that the bridge in which he and Hamilton had invested was under threat because of ice across the river in Alexandria. In February 1811 Cruse provided Hamilton with a description of the new French minister whom he had encountered on his way to Washington. In March 1813 he wrote about his worries over the impact of the blockade of Virginia's rivers and Chesapeake Bay. Some more of Cruse's letters can be found in the Wilson Papers in the Maryland Historical Society. These include letters to his wife and daughters, concerning such matters as religion, family history, and the War of 1812.

In America Cruse continued to be involved in various causes including the anti-slavery movement. In 1830, he announced that he was prepared to purchase the freedom of female slaves aged between 14 and 20 and sought contributions to help him with this. His focus on freeing females of this age was to bring to an end the birth of slaves in Baltimore. Six weeks later, however, he was forced to admit that his scheme had been a failure for not one slave had been freed in that time. Cruse died at the home of his son-in-law, John Power, in Baltimore on 26 June 1832 in his seventieth year. A death notice published in the *Belfast Newsletter* noted that he had been a 'much respected member of the late Belfast Blue Volunteer Company, and left this town with his family for America, in the year 1799'. Nearly half a century after his death he was remembered as 'an Irish patriot, who emigrated to America to escape the vengeance of the British Government, in consequence of his efforts for the freedom of his native land.'<sup>34</sup>

### **Cuming, George**

George Cuming (also spelled Cumming) was one of several medical practitioners who played an active role in the agitation of the United

Irishmen prior to the rebellion in 1798. His ancestry can be traced to Drumbo parish and before that to Ballylisbredan in Dundonald parish, County Down. There is some question about where he was born. Kerby Miller writes, 'born about 1768 in Newry, Co. Down'.<sup>35</sup> This appears to be more reliable than the version that says he was born in North Carolina c. 1771 and returned to County Down, apparently to claim an inheritance. He married and had several children and is also known to have attended the University of Edinburgh where he studied medicine. He was a subscriber to John Corry's book of poetry, *Odes and Elegies, Descriptive & Sentimental*, published in Newry in 1797, when he was listed as an apothecary in Kildare.

Cuming was arrested on 12 March 1798 at the same time as Thomas Addis Emmet and other leading members of the revolutionary movement and indeed appears in the 'Black Book of the Rebellion' containing the list of leading United Irishmen. On 19 October 1798 Cuming wrote to Lord Castlereagh from Kilmainham gaol explaining that in his present situation he did not have the means to cover the cost of a voyage to America. He suggested that if the government chartered a vessel he would happily leave the country on it, though in the absence of such a course of action he would prefer to sail on the *Draper* than remain in prison. He also suggested that if he was released on bail he would be able to raise enough money for the journey abroad. His hope was being able to go to New York and there continue in his profession as a doctor.<sup>36</sup> Eventually, along with a number of other leading United Irishmen, he was sent to Fort George in Scotland. Released in 1802, he went first (as a number did) to Hamburg, and thence to New York where he resumed his medical practice.

Cuming retained a strong interest in Ireland and was a regular correspondent with a former United Irishman in Belfast, Robert Simms. He wrote to Simms as late as 1817 with the news that 'Since I last wrote I have been appointed City Inspector in consequence of our republican ascendancy in the city produced, I think, by the successful termination of the last war ...'. He became a leading republican voice and was aligned with the party's Clintonian faction. He became a member of the city's Friendly Sons of St Patrick. In 1827, he chaired a meeting at Tammany Hall that resolved to erect the marble monument in memory of Thomas Addis Emmet, with Cuming himself contributing \$200 towards the costs. As well commenting regularly on political affairs relating to the involvement of former United Irishmen in the city, Cuming also maintained an interest in the Presbyterian Church. His *Oration Delivered on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1810 in the Presbyterian Church in East Rutger Street before the following societies: Tammany; Taylors; Hatters; Hibernian; Provident; Masons; Shipwrights; Carpenters and Columban by Dr Cuming*, was published. He died in 1830.<sup>37</sup>

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### **Curry, William**

A leader of the United Irishmen in Islandmagee, County Antrim, William Curry of Ballycronan took part in the rebellion and was one of those for whom a reward of 50 guineas was offered. It has been suggested that he escaped to America and subsequently returned to Ireland.<sup>38</sup>

### **Cust, John**

On 7 January 1807, Marcus Gage of Bellarena, County Londonderry, wrote to Charles William Stewart in Dublin on behalf of John Cust from Magilligan (the parish in which Bellarena is located), who had been banished to America. Gage pointed out, 'He was sent out in the year 1798, but I have every reason to believe he had never been active in the United business, and many persons much deeper implicated in the business have got pardons.' Gage went on to explain that Cust, who had lived on what had been the Anglican bishop of Derry's estate, had 'respectable connections' in Ireland who were anxious for him to return. Cust had been tried at the same time as James Long (q.v.) and John Moore (q.v.) and all three had originally been sentenced to transportation to Australia.<sup>39</sup>

### **Cuthbert, Joseph**

Born *c.* 1762, Cuthbert was a Belfast tailor and member of the Volunteers who went on to become one of the most active members of the United Irishmen and was regarded as a key figure in efforts to develop alliances with the mainly Catholic Defenders and with the United Scotsmen. In April 1793 he stood trial on a charge of having tried to suborn a soldier in the 55th Regiment by giving him an extract from a seditious tract. Found guilty, he was made to stand in the pillory in Belfast for an hour while surrounded by soldiers from that regiment before being taken to Carrickfergus gaol to serve a year-long sentence. After his release he may have been part of an 'assassination squad' in Ulster that eliminated informers and in August 1796 he was arrested for the attempted murder of a sergeant who was acting as an informer. Acquitted of this, he was rearrested in November 1796 and charged with high treason.

On 1 February 1798, while incarcerated in Kilmainham gaol, he petitioned the authorities complaining that he had been a prisoner for nearly fifteen months. In that time his health had declined and he had been forced to sell off his house and furniture in Belfast leaving his wife and children in poverty. On 14 October 1798 he wrote to Castlereagh asking for two months' liberty in order to settle his affairs before going into exile in America; as his losses were so great, he asked the authorities to pay his passage. He was not released at this time and in the spring of 1799, was one of the State Prisoners sent to Fort George in Scotland. In July 1801 it was

reported that his wife would soon be joining him there. After his release he emigrated to New York where he again took up the tools of his trade. In October 1802 he was described by John Caldwell jun. as ‘industrious, attends to his business, & does not interfere with Policticks, he has got already a good trade & I hope he will be able to keep it’.<sup>40</sup>

### **Darragh, William**

Darragh was among those court-martialled at Newtownards, County Down, where he was permitted to transport himself and his family to America.<sup>41</sup>

### **Develin, Charles**

Develin was one of the men imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>42</sup>

### **Dickey, John**

A shopkeeper in Crumlin, County Antrim, Dickey occupied a senior position in the United Irishmen and was active in training men for rebellion and in securing weaponry for them. However, he was probably one of the United Irish colonels who expressed reluctance to rise on 7 June 1798. His brother James, an attorney, was an impulsive and somewhat bloodthirsty individual who played an important role in the rebellion in County Antrim; following the rebellion he went on the run, but was captured and executed in Belfast with his head placed on a spike over the market-house. For his own role in the rebellion, John Dickey was arrested and court-martialled. In September 1798, he was listed among those who had refused the terms granted by the government to the ‘State Prisoners’ in Dublin. In a letter of 26 December of that year Luke Teeling wrote, ‘Poor John Dickey is on the list for foreign service, but he is manly and firm.’ Dickey was sent to the West Indies, but managed to escape and made it to America.<sup>43</sup>

### **Dobbin, George**

Dobbin, a Presbyterian from County Armagh, was one of those who fled to America as a result of General Lake’s repressive measures against the United Irishmen in 1797. In 1871, his son, George Washington Dobbin wrote that ‘in the exciting transactions’ of the day he had taken ‘an active part as a United Irishman’. Dobbin settled in Baltimore and was naturalized in 1805. With William Pechin, a leading Democratic-Republican in Baltimore, and Thomas Murphy, who was from County Cork, he published the *Baltimore American* newspaper; in addition, Dobbin and Murphy were printers of a range of books, including a number of Catholic works. Dobbin died of a ‘pulmonary complaint’ in December 1811 aged 37, leaving a wife

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and three children; he was interred in Glendy Burying Ground, which had been opened by Second Presbyterian Church, Baltimore. His widow Catherine (née Bose), who was still alive in 1874, was allowed to continue to benefit from Dobbin's share in the newspaper and in time his son, Robert A. Dobbin, joined the firm as a partner.<sup>44</sup>

### Dougan, Peter

Dougan was among those court-martialled at Newtownards, County Down, in the aftermath of the rebellion. He was permitted to transport himself and his family to America.<sup>45</sup>

### Douglas, George

Douglas was the publisher and editor of the *Londonderry Journal*, which first appeared on 3 July 1772. He had gained experience in the print trade in Dublin and made clear in his opening editorial that he was a Protestant. Though he had no known involvement with the United Irishmen, he is included here as someone who became gradually disillusioned with the political situation in Ireland, which eventually led him to emigrate to Philadelphia in the summer of 1796, later moving to Baltimore. In both places he continued to be involved in publishing and was in regular contact with United Irish exiles. In 1803, he became the first secretary of the Benevolent Hibernian Society in Baltimore. He died in 1828.<sup>46</sup>

### Douglas, Paul

From Parkgate in County Antrim, Douglas had been involved in the Hearts of Steel, a movement of agrarian protest active in the early 1770s. He fought at the Battle of Antrim, afterwards making his escape, killing two soldiers in the process. Douglas then fled to America. The story is told that a Major Siddons took a liking to Douglas's wife and suggested to her that if she slept with him it would be safe for her husband to return home. Douglas was able to return to Parkgate, but afterwards he and his wife emigrated to America.<sup>47</sup>

### Duke, John

In June 1798 Duke led the Hoggstown United Irishmen into Donaghadee, County Down, but the force dispersed on reports, proved bogus, that the Fencibles were approaching. It has been suggested that Duke may have orchestrated the entire episode to evade his responsibilities as leader. Charged with having behaved as a 'traitor and rebel', Duke was court-martialled at Newtownards on 16 July 1798. He was found guilty and sentenced to be transported for life. On 10 November of that year it was reported that he had entered into recognisances to go to America and was then imprisoned in Belfast.<sup>48</sup>



**Dunn, [-]**

The treasurer of the United Irishmen in Belfast, Dunn escaped to America during General Lake's crackdown on United Irish activity in Ulster in 1797, taking with him £1,000 of the society's funds.<sup>49</sup>

**Ferguson, Henry**

Ferguson was a farmer from Ballyrogan, near Newtownards, County Down, and during the rebellion marched with the United Irishmen from Newtownards to Saintfield and on to Ballynahinch. He was court-martialled at Newtownards on 19 July 1798 for having acted as a 'traitor and rebel', and for attempting to 'excite treason and rebellion'. Found guilty, he was sentenced to transportation for life to New South Wales. However, on 10 November 1798 it was reported that he had entered into recognisances and sailed for America; apparently permission to do so had been granted following a private interview with Lord Londonderry.<sup>50</sup>

**Finlay, James**

Said to have been a man who had trained to become a Presbyterian minister, though without going forward for ordination, Finlay was among those court-martialled at Newtownards, County Down, for his involvement in the rebellion. He was permitted to transport himself and his family to America. He settled in New York for a number of years before returning, without permission, to Ireland and his home at Cotton, between Bangor and Donaghadee. It seems his presence there was ignored, but in 1803 he was drawn into the plans for Emmet's rebellion. Arrested, he spent two years in prison, but his case never came to trial, after which he lived quietly on his farm until his death in 1811.<sup>51</sup>

**Frazer, Richard**

From Ravarra in County Down, Frazer was a leading figure in the rebellion, and held the rank of colonel in the United Irishmen. In the wake of the rebellion he was one of those for whom a reward of 50 guineas was offered. He was transported to Prussia, though it has been suggested that he may have escaped to America.<sup>52</sup>

**Gallagher, John**

In a biographical note concerning his grandson, John N. Gallagher, a publisher in Philadelphia, John Gallagher, from Londonderry, is said to have fled to America in 1798 to 'save his life'.<sup>53</sup>

**Gibson, William**

The son of Robert and Susannah (McWhirr) Gibson, William Gibson was born near Knockbracken, County Down. His parents were members of the Presbyterian Church, but he joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church at an early age. Graduating from Glasgow University in 1775, he pursued theological studies in Edinburgh before being licensed by the Reformed Presbytery in Ireland in 1781. In 1787, he was ordained pastor of the Antrim congregation (comprising the twin charges of Cullybackey and Kellswater). Of his time there it has been said:

His labors were signally blessed by the gathering of a large congregation, and in his fidelity to truth, and the doctrine of Christ's Headship over the Church, he rendered himself obnoxious to a tyrannical government. His ardent love for personal liberty left him to encourage those associations formed in Ireland to throw off the British yoke.<sup>54</sup>

He himself claimed that he had never been a member of the United Irishmen. When a civil magistrate demanded that he take the oath of allegiance, which as a Covenanter he could not do, Gibson left for America, arriving in Philadelphia in October 1797. At Philadelphia in May 1798, along with a fellow exile, Rev. James McKinney (q.v.) and a number of ruling elders, he constituted the Reformed Presbytery of America. In July 1799 he was installed as pastor of the congregation at Ryegate in Vermont. In October 1817 he became minister of the congregation at Canonsburgh, Washington County, Pennsylvania, resigning due to 'the infirmities of age' in 1826. Subsequently, however, he ministered in Paterson, New Jersey, for a number of years. In 1836, he preached in New York City, taking over from his son who was in ill-health. There he died in 1838.<sup>55</sup> For more on him, see Chapter 19.

**Gilmore, Peter**

A labourer from Ballyhurley (probably Ballyherly, Ardquin parish), County Down, Gilmore turned out for the United Irishmen in the Upper Ards in 1798. He removed the green flag from the pikestaff on top of Inishargy House, symbolically marking the end of the United Irish encampment there. He was court-martialled at Newtownards on 3 September for having acted as a 'traitor and rebel' and for attempting to 'excite treason and rebellion'. Found guilty, he was sentenced to serve abroad for fourteen years. Later this sentence was increased to life abroad. On 10 November 1798 it was reported that he had entered into recognisances and sailed for America.<sup>56</sup>

**Glendy, John**

His career is looked at in detail in Chapter 7. The following announcement of his death appeared in the *Belfast Newsletter* in April 1833:

At Philadelphia, in Oct. last, at an advanced age, the Rev. JOHN GLENDY, D.D. for upwards of twenty years Minister of the Congregation of Maghera, county Derry, and latterly of the city of Baltimore, in the United States. In the unfortunate distraction of 1798, he was obliged to leave his native country. He was first settled in America as Minister of Staunton, in Virginia, and afterwards removed to Baltimore. In the country of his adoption, he was highly esteemed by all classes, and could number amongst his friends and admirers, the late President Jefferson, with whom he became early acquainted, and who, till the close of life, uniformly treated him with kindness and attention. He was, for several years, one of the Ministers appointed to preach before Congress. His remains were conveyed to Baltimore, and attended to the grave by a large number not only of the members of the Congregation with which he had been for upwards of thirty years usefully connected, but by a large concourse of the most respectable inhabitants of that city.<sup>57</sup>

**Gordon, Francis Henry**

The son of the agent for the Price estate at Saintfield, County Down, Gordon was a member of Rev. Thomas Ledlie Birch's (q.v.) congregation. He was also related to Rev. Arthur McMahan, the Presbyterian minister of Holywood who fled to France in 1797 for his United Irish activities. During the rebellion, Gordon fought for the United Irishmen at both Saintfield and Ballynahinch, commanding the artillery in the latter battle. Afterwards captured, he would probably have been executed had he not provided evidence against a number of United Irish leaders, including his own minister. He was allowed to emigrate to the United States; a few years after arriving he drowned accidentally in Lake Ontario.<sup>58</sup>

**Gowan, Jonathan**

A malster from Ballyquintin, Ballyphilip parish, County Down, Gowan was court-martialled at Newtownards on 3 September 1798 for having acted as a 'traitor and rebel' and for attempting to 'excite treason and rebellion'. Found guilty, he was sentenced to serve abroad for fourteen years. Later this sentence was increased to life abroad. On 10 November 1798 it was reported that he had entered into recognisances and sailed for America.<sup>59</sup>

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**Gray, Edward**

From Camnish, near Dungiven in County Londonderry, Gray was the son of Rev. Francis Gray, minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Bovevagh in the Roe Valley. He emigrated to America in 1796 at the age of 20. Questions have been raised about the timing of his departure and whether this was due to an association with the United Irishmen. No evidence to prove this has been forthcoming, but the possibility remains. Gray had a profitable career in America, initially settling in Philadelphia before moving to Baltimore where he was a successful industrialist. He died in 1856.<sup>60</sup>

**Gray, James**

Gray was born in Corvoam, County Monaghan, on Christmas Day 1770, attended the University of Glasgow, and was licensed to preach by the Burgher (Secession) Presbytery of Monaghan in 1796. He emigrated the following year and it has been suggested that this was due to an association with the United Irishmen. The Associate Reformed Presbytery of Washington in upper New York State ordained Gray in 1797. He moved to Philadelphia in 1803, and the following year accepted a call as minister to the 'Old Scots Presbyterian Church', the Associate Reformed congregation on Spruce Street. He launched a classical academy in partnership with the Reformed Presbyterian minister and United Irishman, Samuel Brown Wylie (q.v.). In 1813, he became a member of Philadelphia's Hibernian Society. Subsequently, he moved to Baltimore and established a successful school. He died in 1824, not long after moving to Gettysburg.<sup>61</sup>

**Greer, William**

From Wellbrook, near Cookstown in County Tyrone, Greer was arrested in June 1798 for attending an illegal meeting, and thus breaking a curfew, and for a seditious outburst. It was also alleged that in 1796 he had been guilty of administering illegal oaths. Greer might easily have been transported to Australia, but for the intervention of 'wealthy and respectable relations' and other prominent gentlemen who secured for him bail on condition that he transport himself to America for seven years.<sup>62</sup>

**Guy, Robert**

Married to Nancy, sister of Rev. John Glendy (q.v.), Guy is supposed to have been a United Irishman who had been under pressure to leave Ireland. In 1804, Glendy succeeded in bringing over several members of his wider family to Staunton, Virginia, among them his brother-in-law, Robert Guy, and his family.<sup>63</sup>

**Hamill, John**

The Hamill family of Rooskey, near Newbliss, County Monaghan, belonged to Stonebridge Presbyterian Church, the members of which were described in 1792 as 'old stiff Presbyterians, who incline much to Paine's principles'. In May 1797 a local landlord, Alexander Ker of Newbliss, reported that Hugh Hamill, who was believed to be 'a principal agitator in the county', had 'headed several hundreds of men for this week past who have gone about the country under the pretence of setting potatoes and have carried white flags, singing republican songs.' On the other hand, Ker believed that Hugh's brother John did 'not take an active part' in the United Irishmen. However, other accounts give John a greater prominence, noting that he recruited Presbyterians to the movement and was alleged to have sworn in the entire troop of the Newbliss Yeomanry Cavalry. According to family tradition, after being informed on, John escaped through a bog and made his way to Derry, from where he sailed to America. On the other hand, there is a record of him as a prisoner in Monaghan gaol before the summer assizes of 1797, though he does not seem to have stood trial and may have been released with instructions that he should leave Ireland.<sup>64</sup>

**Hamilton, James**

Hamilton was one of those imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>65</sup>

**Hardy, Christopher**

Hardy was a successful saddler and machine inventor and a freeman of the city of Londonderry. On 30 June 1797 Thomas Patterson, a corporal in the Tipperary Militia, confessed that Hardy had administered the oath of the United Irishmen to him. George Hill, the MP for Londonderry, was aghast for he had regarded Hardy as a friend. At that time Hardy was in Dublin to receive £1,200 from the government for saddle contracts and Hill sent orders for his arrest there. In the meantime, one of Hardy's associates, Joseph Orr, went to the saddler's house and burned his papers before absconding to France. On 10 July 1797 Hill wrote to Edward Cooke, an under-secretary in the Dublin administration, with the suggestion that Hardy should be allowed to go to America if he gave information on where arms had been hidden in Londonderry. In November 1798 Hardy's name was removed from the roll of freemen of the city.<sup>66</sup>

**Harper, James**

From Mallusk in County Antrim, Harper was ordained minister of the Secession congregation at Knockcloughrim in 1771. He was accused of

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sympathising with the United Irishmen and the Rebellion, and was arrested and court-martialled, though his guilt could not be proved. Subsequently, he emigrated to America and acted as stated supply of Abingdon, Beaver Creek, Silver Springs and Forks of Holestone, Virginia, from 1799 until his death in September 1802. It was said that a fellow minister 'could tell incidents in the tragic life of the Rev. Mr Harper that would make a novel'. For more on him see Chapter 18. His son William had also been implicated in the rebellion and had fled to America, resulting in his 'extensive properties' being confiscated.<sup>67</sup>

### **Henderson, Robert**

From Ballynahinch, County Down, Henderson had at one point left Ireland due to his associations with the United Irishmen and was believed to have gone to America. He returned to County Down and was arrested for administering illegal oaths, but, as Pharis Martin jun. of Hillsborough reported to Lord Downshire on 8 April 1797, he was liberated.<sup>68</sup>

### **Heron, William**

A clockmaker in Newtownards, County Down, Heron was among those court-martialled in that town in the aftermath of the rebellion. He was sentenced to life transportation, but in the end he was permitted to transport himself and his family to America. It is recorded that General Nugent provided Heron with a pass to allow him to travel to Liverpool from where he would sail for America. It is also known that in October 1798 Heron sailed on the *Pallas* with John Caldwell jun. and others, but after the ship was forced to put in at Cork for essential repairs, he returned north and was arrested at Donaghadee, where he had gone seeking a ship to Scotland, and was taken to Mount Stewart. On 27 March 1799 Nugent wrote that Heron was about to embark for the United States. What happened next is not entirely clear and it is possible that he never made it to America for one account has him dying in Liverpool in 1800.<sup>69</sup>

**Hoge, Thomas** – see biography in Chapter 12.

### **Horner, John**

A brother of Rev. Dr James Horner, Presbyterian minister of the congregation of Mary's Abbey in Dublin, John Horner was from Carnet near Limavady, County Londonderry. When a quantity of weaponry was discovered in his house in June 1798, it was burned by government troops. After a number of fortunate escapes, he made his way successfully to America.<sup>70</sup>

**Huey, James**

Related to the Caldwells (q.v.) by marriage, Huey was a woollen draper and United Irishman in Ballymoney, County Antrim, who provided information to the government in 1798. He and his wife emigrated to America on board the same ship as Richard Caldwell and initially settled in Maryland, before moving to New York where they were well cared for. On a journey to visit the Caldwells at Salisbury Mills, they drowned when the vessel on which they were travelling capsized. John Caldwell jun. recollected: 'It was said poor Huey might have saved himself, but his wife clasped him in her arms in their little state-room, when he declared he would never leave her. The surviving passengers thought they might both have been saved had she been less nervous and more collected.'<sup>71</sup>

**Hughes, John**

A bookseller in Bridge Street, Belfast, Hughes is said to have been apprenticed to the editor of the *Belfast Newsletter* and there is a suggestion that he had run away to sea during the American Revolutionary War to avoid the unhappiness of family life. He joined the United Irishmen in 1793 and took the new oath in 1796, becoming a colonel in the County Down military wing. He was arrested in Newry in October 1797, after which he became an informer. He was declared bankrupt in August 1798. It is said that when he ceased to be of any further value to the authorities he was packed off to Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>72</sup>

**Hull, James** – see biography in Chapter 16.

**Hunter, James**

There are what would appear to be conflicting accounts of the involvement of James Hunter of Gallaugh, near Glenarm, County Antrim, in the rebellion and his subsequent fate. According to one story, Hunter provided shelter for Bob Major, as a result of which his house was burned. Afterwards he escaped to Norway, but returned home and then he and his sons emigrated to America. Another account states that Hunter escaped through his burning house when about to be hanged as a rebel and made his way to Ballygally where local Presbyterian ministers were attempting to arrange transportation to Scotland; here he was arrested.<sup>73</sup>

**Jackson, Henry**

Born into one of the leading linen families in County Monaghan, Henry Jackson was a Presbyterian from Ballybay who went on to become a successful ironmonger in Dublin. Already involved with radical politics, he

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joined the United Irishmen, becoming active in procuring weaponry, and in March 1798 was arrested at the home of his son-in-law Oliver Bond.<sup>74</sup> He was given permission to go into exile in America by Rufus King, the American minister to Britain, and after his release in late September 1799 he set sail on the *Martha Bland* with his wife, younger son and an unmarried daughter, arriving at Norfolk, Virginia, in December 1799. Jackson was a wealthy man and was able to bring significant financial assets to America. Somewhat rashly, however, he bought a farm in an isolated district and endured considerable tedium as a consequence.<sup>75</sup> On 28 December 1801 William Adamson wrote to Thomas Jefferson on Jackson's behalf, of which the following is an extract.<sup>76</sup>

Since I had the pleasure of seeing thee at Washington City, I have visited my friend Henry Jackson, & spent a week with him at Carlisle, in this state;—I strongly recommended him to make choice of the Federal City as a place of residence, rather than the place he now lives at, where his family are not happy; & pointed out to him Scott's House wch. thou mention'd to me:—he has agree'd to go & view it, and I wish he may purchase it, as certainly both he & his family wd. be happier there than they can possibly be amongst a set of inveterate aristocratic Hornets, with which they are now surrounded!—in this case I thought it unnecessary to send thee a Copy of Rufus Kings Letr. to him, consenting to his coming out to this Country, by wch. he was liberated from the Dungeons of an Irish Bastile, where he, with many other virtuous & respectable characters were detain'd, some for many months, & others for years, at the instance of Rufus King, as Minister from the United States at the British Court, in consequence of which, most of those worthy men, still remain immured in the cells of Irish, English, & Scotch prisons, to the amount of a considerable number:—to my friend Jackson alone he condescended to grant his plenipotentiary Licence to cross the Atlantic, & breathe the air of a free Country; & that, after he suffer'd near two years imprisonment!

A copy of the letter of 28 August 1799 that King had provided to Jackson permitting him to travel to America was later, in 1803, sent to Jefferson. Though the letter had sanctioned Jackson's journey to America, it also starkly revealed King's hostility towards not only the leaders of the United Irishmen, but Irish immigrants in general, whom he viewed as 'indigent and illiterate, who, entertaining an attachment to freedom, are unable easily to appreciate those salutary restraints, without which it degenerates into anarchy'.<sup>77</sup>

Jackson's discontent with his new situation was also reported in John Caldwell's letter to Robert Simms of October 1802:



In such a situation as I have described my friend Henry Jackson might have been happy but in his present place [of] abode he has to combat the prepossession of his family in favor of their native Country & to lead a life of inactivity in as much as farming cannot be so congenial to his long settled habits & ways of thinking ...<sup>78</sup>

In June 1807 it was reported that Jackson had sold his farm and was intending to return to Ireland. In May 1811 John Chambers wrote from New York to Simms in Belfast informing him: 'The Emigrants from every part of Ireland, are pouring in here, in unexampled number – but I am disappointed in not seeing the return of our old friend Henry Jackson, who left this three years ago, with a determination to return in a few months.' Jackson did, however, return to America and lived in Baltimore with his daughter Eleanor, the widow of Oliver Bond. He died in Baltimore on 30 June 1817.<sup>79</sup>

### **Jackson, James**

Variouly described as a doctor, surgeon and apothecary from Newtownards, County Down, Jackson was a prominent figure in the town and district from the early 1780s onwards, acting as secretary of the Newtownards Light Dragoons. In the autumn of 1787 he married Miss Bell Black of Tullandoney, Dromore. Drawn into the United Irishmen, in 1796, he was suspected of being involved in the attempted assassination of Rev. John Cleland, Lord Londonderry's agent and a magistrate. He played a leading role in the 'Committee of Public Safety' established in Newtownards in June 1798, apparently compelling other leading residents to support it. He was tried for treason in Newtownards and sentenced to stand for three days on the pillory, six months' imprisonment in Downpatrick, and to find security for his future good behaviour. Subsequently, he was one of those who were ordered to 'return, surrender and abide by their trials, under pain of their property being confiscated'. In October 1798, Jackson sailed on the *Pallas* with John Caldwell jun. and others, but the voyage was aborted when the vessel was forced to stop at Cork for repairs. On 27 March 1799, General Nugent wrote that Jackson deserved no favour from the government. His life beyond this point is uncertain. When his daughter Mary married Joseph Major of Downpatrick in December 1814 she was described as a child of 'the late Dr Jackson of Newtownards'.<sup>80</sup>

### **Johnston, Samuel**

Samuel Johnston, from Ballymacbrenan, County Down, was a prisoner in Downpatrick gaol in April 1799 due to treasonable offences who petitioned the authorities for permission to transport himself to America.<sup>81</sup>

**Johnston, Samuel Shannon**

Johnston was the son of Thomas Johnston and Margaret Shannon, who were appointed porter and housekeeper of Down County Infirmary in 1767. Johnston himself was apothecary in this institution from 1773. He was later a surgeon in English Street, Downpatrick, and acted as such for the Seaforde and Kilmore Yeomanry at the Battle of Ballynahinch. However, he was suspected of sympathy with the United Irishmen. In 1800, he emigrated with his family to the USA in the ship *Pauline*. After his death in 1802 his widow Frances (née Cummine) and children returned to her home village of Killough, County Down.<sup>82</sup> In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, made the following comments about Johnston:

Doctor Johnston formerly of Downpatrick was an eminent Practitioner, he was much encouraged to make this the place of his settlement, but previous to his coming here, he had made an engagement with Mr Richard formerly of the Antrim Militia to visit & make a trail of the Genesee Country – they there settled in the most beautiful spot you can imagine – Bailey Town, on the West Bank of Lake Seneca, between that Lake and Lake Cayuga, 360 miles from this place, but notwithstanding the Doctors being a firm man & of strong mind, he had not within himself sufficient resources against crisis & being deprived of Society, the pursuit of his Distilling business & other avocations of his Industry could not make up for the void he felt in his breast & he litterally became a victim to despair & died a Martyr to his own obstinacy in refusing the advise of his friends in a settlement in this place.<sup>83</sup>

**Kean (or Kane), Thomas**

In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, included Thomas Kean in his list of 'Belfast People here'.<sup>84</sup> He is said to have been the brother of William Kean (q.v.), but was possibly confused with him.

**Kean (or Kane), William**

A former employee of the *Northern Star*, Kane was reported to be Henry Munro's aide at the Battle of Ballynahinch. He was captured and imprisoned, but escaped and made his way to America. He settled in Philadelphia where he was visited by Samuel Neilson (q.v.) in 1803 who was seeking advice about setting up an evening newspaper.<sup>85</sup>

**Kempe, James**

James Kempe is said to have been a native of Castlefinn, County Donegal and to have fled Ireland as a result of his association with the United Irishmen. However, another source states that he was born in Virginia. He was Captain of the Adams Troop of the Mississippi Dragoons in the War of 1812. He died at Natchez in 1819.<sup>86</sup>

**Kennedy, Arthur**

Kennedy fought at the Battle of Antrim, and afterwards fled to his uncle's house in James Street, Belfast, where he was hidden in a coal cellar under the stairs. He made his escape to New York where he died aged 25. A monument was erected to his memory which bore the words, 'To the handsome young Irishman'.<sup>87</sup>

**Kennedy, Samuel**

Kennedy was a compositor on the *Northern Star*. Later he became a newspaper proprietor in Baltimore, where in 1803 he attempted to discredit a rival editor, himself an Irishman, as an informer in Ulster and British agent in America.<sup>88</sup>

**King, [-]**

Rev. John Tennant, in a letter to his son Robert of 6 November 1801, made mention of Attorney Martin's brother-in-law Mr King 'who, I believe, was tried in Newtown [Newtownlimavady] for the old fault, now in America'.<sup>89</sup> Though it is not entirely clear what Tennant meant by this, it seems possible that King, whose forename has not been discovered, had left for America for political reasons.

**Ledlie, Joseph**

The Ledlie family of Carnan and Ballygonny was prominent in the linen industry in the Coagh area straddling the boundary between counties Londonderry and Tyrone. George Ledlie was a leading linen draper who was politically active in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In 1793, he was chosen as a delegate for County Tyrone at the national convention organised by the Volunteers in Dungannon, while in late 1799 he publically signified his support for the proposed legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. George married Margaret Crawford and their eldest son, and second of at least nine children, was Joseph, who was born around 1777 (in a lease of August 1792 Joseph's age was given as fifteen). In 1796, Joseph married Margaret Ekin of nearby Ruskey; their home was Flood Lodge, Ballygonny. Local tradition held that Joseph was a very active member of the United

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Irishmen and even had iron bars placed on the first floor windows of his house in order to protect it from raids by government troops.

In addition to tradition, there is also the statement of Andrew Newton of Coagh, a magistrate, of 7 August 1797 in which he wrote, 'A very young man of respectable connections, whose name is Joseph Ledlie, a resident in this neighbourhood, was last night taken up for being deeply concerned with the infernal class of traitors called United Irishmen.' Newton, in fact, had been the guardian of Ledlie's wife who had been left distraught by her husband's arrest. Ledlie would appear to have secured a pardon. However, he, or at least a namesake, has also been identified as one of the 'high-placed informers' in south County Londonderry who supplied information to George Hill, the MP for the city of Londonderry. In June 1803 Ledlie and his family – possibly accompanied by his brother-in-law, James Ekin – set sail from Newry, arriving in New York nearly two months later. They then travelled overland to the Pittsburgh area. For a time he may have farmed, but, as Joseph Laidlie, he is listed in Pittsburgh's first directory, published in 1815, as a teacher on Fourth Street. He seems to have died in early 1819.<sup>90</sup>

### Long, James

James Long was a United Irishman from Magilligan, County Londonderry. He had been tried at the same time as John Cust (q.v.) and John Moore (q.v.) and all three had originally been sentenced to transportation to Australia. In a letter of 1798 Lord Castlereagh recommended that a sentence of transportation be commuted to banishment to America in the case of James Long. On 24 August 1809 he wrote from Philadelphia to Thomas Jefferson setting out the circumstances which led to his move to the United States and his experiences there.<sup>91</sup> The text of the letter is reproduced below:

Sir

I Take the Liberty of Writing to you if it is posable in your Power to Befriend me I Hope you Will as I am in a Disalut setiation at present I Was Born in the North of Ireland in the year 1770 My Father Having a larg farem after I Got My schooling I was Set to Hard Work I Continued at that to about twenty six years of age then the uniting Buisness Began I was apointed a Capten of a Compney of the united men in 1798 I was Taken into Costady and three More tried By a Cort Marchel and Centsed to Death But by the Cleamency of the Commanding offecer We Wear sent a Bout 60 Miles to Head quarters and Deteaned six Weeks then got off to america I stead onely a quarter of a year Hear to I started Back thinkeng to Get it settled But it Was out of My power I Had to Conceal My self four Months to I Got off again I Contined Hear about six years then Got Liberty to

Go Back and settle What Little was acoming to Me I Got them settled  
and Left Ireland the tenth of May Was a year With about three  
Hundred Guines With Me I thought as I was Bred to no kind of  
Buisness I would Join farming and started to settel on the ohio River  
I tryed in Different pleasis to settel But Could not Content My self  
I went Rown By Neworlans and Landed Hear the 26th of February  
Last Holland Gin Was so High that I thought I woud Make Good  
Gin out of Wry Whiskey so I Bought a still and I Had about fifteen  
Gallans off When the Candle Caught the steem of the Licker aflshed  
Round Me Liek Gun powder and set my Clothes a Fire and Borne  
My Legs and armes the skin of My Hands is so tender that I Cant  
Doe aney Work as yet I am very oneasy How I will Come through the  
World the Little Money I have It me soon Go from Me and God He  
onely knows What I me Do If you Would Get Me a small Commision  
in the standing Arney I never Would forget your kindness to Me  
Your Cincer friend

James Long

### **Lowry, Alexander**

Lowry lived at Linen Hill, Katesbridge, County Down, and served as a captain in the Ballyronney Volunteers. He became a leading figure in the United Irishmen and served as the organisation's treasurer in County Down. In 1796, he was a member of the United Irish National Executive. During General Lake's crackdown on the United Irishmen, Lowry escaped to France in June 1797 and later sailed for America. Apparently through Castlereagh's intervention, around 1806 he was he was allowed to return to Ireland. On his voyage home his ship was driven into a port in Norway, where he married. He brought his wife to Ireland, but died a few years afterwards.<sup>92</sup>

### **Lowry, William**

Lowry was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>93</sup>

### **Lyle, Peter and William**

The Lyle brothers were from Orble, near Dervock, in County Antrim, and were active in the United Irishmen in north Antrim. They escaped to America in the wake of the rebellion – Peter Lyle was a companion of John Nevin (q.v.) in their evasion of the authorities.<sup>94</sup>

### **Lynn, James**

According to his obituary, James Lynn (or Linn), who died in 1856 aged 100, was a native of County Antrim who took part in the rebellion,

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apparently being present at the battle of 'Waxford [sic] Bridge'. He afterwards emigrated to the United States and settled in Jackson's Creek, Fairfield County, South Carolina. In 1833, he moved to Chester District where he farmed until age and infirmity forced him to retire; he spent his final years with his daughter, Mrs Mary Ralph. He is supposed to have been buried in a Covenanter cemetery.<sup>95</sup>

### **Magrath, John**

A refugee of 1798 who settled in Charleston and became one of its prominent citizens, Magrath can probably be identified with the man of that name who, as a native of Waterford, was naturalized in South Carolina on 13 November 1807. He may have been a connection of Edward Magrath, an architect from Dublin who practised in Charleston in the early 1800s and died there in 1811. In 1812, John Magrath married Maria Montgomery Gordon. Magrath was a Presbyterian – he was a seat-holder in the First (Scots) Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Charleston – though whether his religious affiliation dated to before or after his emigration is not certain (and was possibly connected with his marriage). In 1830, he was on the organising committee of the states' rights celebration in Charleston and proposed the toast to the memory of George Washington: 'Like Cincinnatus of old, his country drew his services from the pleasures of rural life: May the country of his protection differ from that of the Roman Patriot, in nothing, except a continued perpetuity.' He was active in the St Patrick's Benevolent Society and was a captain of the Irish Volunteers, a local militia unit with a mainly Catholic membership. Both Magrath (d. 1856) and his wife (d. 1859) are buried in the First (Scots) Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Charleston. His son, A. G. Magrath, who would be the last Civil War governor of South Carolina, grew up listening to tales of sacrifice in Ireland and was prominent in various Irish associations, including the Friends of Irish Independence which supported the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848.<sup>96</sup>

### **Mason, Patrick**

From County Down, Mason was court-martialled on 24 July 1798 on a charge of robbery. Sentenced to transportation for life, he was subsequently allowed to transport himself to America.<sup>97</sup>

### **McAdam, Thomas**

McAdam was one of those who accompanied the Reformed Presbyterian minister, Rev. William Gibson (q.v.), to America, arriving in Philadelphia in October 1797. Since Gibson and others in his party had left for politico-religious reasons, it is possible that McAdam had joined them on similar

grounds. In December 1798, McAdam, who was working as a teacher, was named as a member of the Society of United Irishmen in Philadelphia.<sup>98</sup>

### **McAlpin, James**

According to family tradition, James McAlpin, whose place of residence has been given as possibly either counties Down or Tyrone or even Belfast, took part in the rebellion, as a result of which he had to leave Ireland. However, as he did not depart for America until 1811 one cannot be certain that he truly qualifies as a United Irish exile. His son, David Hunter McAlpin, became a leading industrialist in New York City, owning the D. H. McAlpin Tobacco Company.<sup>99</sup>

### **McCalla, Samuel**

According to nineteenth-century accounts, Samuel McCalla took part in the rebellion and afterwards was given the choice of seven years' military service or transportation from Ireland. He chose the latter and, after spending some time in the West Indies, had settled in Newberry County, South Carolina, by 1801. He worked as a stonemason and a bricklayer before becoming a hatter. He was naturalized in 1808. It was not until late 1817 that he was reunited with his wife Mary (or Mary Ann) and son Robert when they sailed from Belfast to Charleston. Samuel was described in a later account as 'a man of fine intellect, of good education, and qualified in every respect to become a leader'. He was a ruling elder in the Associate Reformed Church at Cannon Creek and a justice of the peace for Newberry; in 1823 he was appointed one of the managers of elections in that district. By that time was suffering from repeated fever attacks and he died in September 1824; he was buried in Cannon Creek. Shortly afterwards Robert McCalla applied for naturalization; in his petition he stated that he was aged 26 and had been born in Newtownards, County Down. At the same time Ann McCalla, presumably Samuel's wife Mary Ann, also applied for naturalization; she stated that she was aged 46 and had been born in Donaghadee, County Down. Robert McCalla later moved to Georgia and then to Tennessee.<sup>100</sup>

### **McClelland, William**

From Portmuck in Islandmagee, County Antrim, McClelland was a local leader of the United Irishmen during the rebellion and was one of the rebels for whom a reward of 50 guineas was offered. He escaped to America, but subsequently returned to Islandmagee where he became a lieutenant in the Yeomanry. He was also an improving farmer and a promoter of the Portmuck pier and harbour built by the Irish Fisheries Board in 1829. He is also reputed to have been an active smuggler. He has been identified as

the William McClelland who was vice-president of the United Irish and Scotch Benevolent Society founded in Albany in 1803. He died in 1859.<sup>101</sup>

### **McClintock, William**

McClintock was a successful haberdasher in Londonderry. He may have been the William McClintock who was a captain in the Derry Light Dragoons formed in 1780. He was certainly one of the 56 'steady friends of merit', a group of Londonderry merchants and businessmen, who presented three silver cups to the newspaper publisher George Douglas (q.v.) prior to his departure from Ireland in the summer of 1796. For his involvement in a plot to capture Derry for the United Irishmen, McClintock was charged with treason and lodged in the city's gaol, along with Robert Moore (q.v.), in June 1797. The two men spent only two months in prison. The lawyer John Philpott Curran was brought in specially to represent them and he argued that Moore and McClintock were not aware that it was treasonable to take the United Irish obligation and were ready to take the oath of allegiance. The charges were dropped and the two men took the oath of allegiance. McClintock subsequently left for America.<sup>102</sup>

### **McClure, John**

On 10 October 1798 General Nugent wrote to Castlereagh to inform him that McClure (or McClune), a prisoner in Carrickfergus gaol, was to be released so that he could emigrate to America; he was in poor health and was no longer considered to be dangerous.<sup>103</sup>

### **McClurg, Joseph**

A pioneer of the iron industry in Pittsburgh, Joseph McClurg was originally from Coleraine, County Londonderry. It has been said of him that he was 'filled with that love of liberty and progress which was just then awaking in the hearts of men, and he became one of the ardent and active patriots of his time and country' and that his active role in the United Irishmen resulted in his decision to flee to America. Later his wife and children were able to join him, but the yellow fever then raging resulted in his decision to move from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. He named his home there 'Liberty Hall'. McClurg promoted the naturalization of immigrants and at a Fourth of July celebration in 1802 he offered the toast, 'The Irish emigrants, may they all become citizens and become true republicans.' From the mid 1810s McClurg and his son Alexander were active in the Erin Benevolent Society, a charitable and philanthropic organisation that reached out to both Protestant and Catholic immigrants from Ireland, though seems to have been a mainly Presbyterian body. Joseph McClurg died in 1825.<sup>104</sup>



**McConaghy, John**

In a letter written in 1896 John McConaghy of Eastbrook, Lawrence Co., Pennsylvania, described how his great-uncle, John McConaghy, a native of Ardmore, Drumachose parish, County Londonderry, had to flee to America on account of his involvement in the United Irishmen. Accompanying him were his wife and two sons, Daniel and Hugh; he was described as a 'man of transcendent ability'.<sup>105</sup>

**McCracken, Francis**

A brother of the better known Henry Joy McCracken, Francis also became involved in the Volunteer movement and later the United Irishmen. He does not seem to have taken part in the rebellion, but in July 1798 he left for America where he remained for around two years. During this time he associated with other exiles. He was back in Ireland by the autumn of 1800. He was opposed to the insurrection of 1803 and tried to persuade Thomas Russell from becoming involved. Around this time he assumed responsibility for the family's rope-works and sailcloth factory. He and his sister Mary Ann shared a home in Belfast. He died in 1842.<sup>106</sup>

**McCreery, John**

A mason from Ballymanister (Ballyminetra, Bangor parish), County Down, McCreery was court-martialled at Newtownards on 21 July 1798 for having acted as a 'traitor and rebel' and for attempting to 'excite treason and rebellion'. During the insurrection, he had allegedly told a neighbour 'that it was liberty or death ... that he was going in pursuit of liberty'. Found guilty, he was sentenced to 14 years' transportation to New South Wales. However, on account of his large family – he had a wife and eleven children – the court issued a plea to General Nugent to allow McCreery to transport himself and his family to America. He was still in Belfast on 14 November 1798.<sup>107</sup>

**McCreery, John**

Possibly from County Tyrone or County Donegal, McCreery was a United Irish exile who had settled in Petersburg, Virginia, before the end of 1797 when he was advertising dry goods lately imported from Europe for sale. His wife Mary's brother-in-law was George Magee, a successful merchant in Petersburg who came from Killygordon in the Finn valley of County Donegal. In 1804, McCreery was a member of the committee that planned the Fourth of July celebrations in Petersburg. He wrote numerous pieces of music, including 'The American Star', once regarded as a rival to the 'Star Spangled Banner', and, according to one writer, was 'a scholar and poet of genius'. When the Juvenile Sons of Erin held their St Patrick's Day celebration in New York in 1811 one of the toasts was to John McCreery:

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'May his persevering exertions to secure from oblivion the relics of our national music continue to procure him that applause he justly merits.' A song composed by McCreery celebrating the American contribution to the War of 1812 was sung by him at the Fourth of July celebration in Petersburg in 1815. McCreery worked with John Daly Burk to produce a volume of Irish airs with American lyrics. This was published in 1824 as *A selection from the ancient music of Ireland, arranged for the flute or violin, some of the most admired melodies, adapted to American poetry. Chiefly composed by John McCreery to which is prefixed historical and critical observation on ancient Irish music*. McCreery died in 1825.<sup>108</sup>

**McHinch, Robert**

In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, referred to Robert 'M:Hinch' as a man 'making money and adding Respect to our National character, he is worthy of honorable mention'. Apart from this mention, in a letter which refers to many other United Irish exiles, no other evidence to confirm his involvement in the United Irishmen has been discovered. A Robert McHinch was a watch-maker in North Street, Belfast, at the end of the eighteenth century. He may be the Robert McHinch, merchant in New York, who died of a liver complaint in October 1804 in his 31st year, leaving a widow, Rebecca.<sup>109</sup>

**McKeever (alias Campbell), Billy**

From Upperlands, near Maghera, County Londonderry, McKeever was one of the leading United Irishman west of the Bann and was considered 'the most active man in the region of Londonderry'. In May 1796 he was present when William Orr administered the United Irish oath in Antrim to two soldiers of the Fife Fencibles, an action that was later to be one of the chief charges against Orr and which led to his execution in 1797. For administering United Irish oaths himself, McKeever was arrested and stood trial at Derry in September 1797. However, he was acquitted after his accuser failed to give convincing testimony in court. He remained active in the United Irishmen, representing County Londonderry at provincial meetings in the spring of 1798. He was the leader of the rebels at Maghera, though was said to have been the first to take flight when word came of government troops heading their way. He escaped to America, though what became of him after this is not known.<sup>110</sup>

**McKenna, Bernard**

Bernard McKenna was a Catholic from County Tyrone who fled to America, probably because of his involvement in the United Irishmen or Defenders

(or perhaps both). Prior to his departure he resided in Aughnacloy, Carnteel parish, on the boundary with County Monaghan. The date of his flight, 7 May 1797, coincided with the arrest of two McKennas in north Monaghan for subversive activities (they were executed on 17 May). Bernard may have been related to them and feared a similar fate. He travelled hurriedly to Derry, wary of being observed by the Yeomanry, and arrived exhausted and starving. After securing a passage he set out for Moville in Inishowen where he waited for nearly a month before his ship set sail for New Castle, Delaware. On the voyage out his vessel was detained briefly by a French warship. A brother, James, who had lived in the parish of Clonfeacle, seems to have accompanied him, but they separated on their arrival in America.

Bernard immediately travelled north to New York City, soon afterwards moving out to Hempstead township in Queen's County (now Nassau County), Long Island where he began to teach. Though he considered himself not fully qualified for such a profession, he studied hard to improve his knowledge of a variety of different subjects and was eventually appointed to a very good school (possibly Oyster Bay Academy) where he earned \$300 a year. He married a woman (identified as Phoebe Doty) who, though left an orphan at a young age, was financially independent, having inherited a fortune from her parents. She was a Quaker, but their marriage ceremony was conducted by a Catholic priest; subsequently, she converted to Catholicism. A farm was acquired at Mosquito Cove and here the couple lived happily for nearly five years, producing two daughters, before the death of Mrs McKenna in February 1808. McKenna himself had a near death experience at this time, but recovered and was able to resume teaching. However, a few days later a party of Quakers, angry at his wife's Catholicism, expelled him from the school.

Unable to continue living 'among such an uncultivated generation', he moved to New York City and began teaching in the Catholic Free School, though he resigned after just one year because he found teaching so many pupils exhausting. Meanwhile, an individual from New York had claimed his farm and it was only after a lengthy and costly legal process that it was recovered by McKenna. In October 1810 he was visited by his brother, the first time that they had seen each other since they had parted company in Delaware in 1797; through all this time James had not sent for his family to join him in Pennsylvania, something which infuriated Bernard. James had made a 'pretty good fortune', and served as the sub-sheriff of Chester County, before resigning to join the US army, which Bernard suspected was to avoid his family in case they did move to America.

On 15 September 1811 McKenna wrote to Rev. Henry Conwell in Dungannon setting out in some detail the events of his departure and his life in America over the previous fourteen years. Despite the many

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difficulties and sorrow that he had experienced, he still considered America to be 'a land of peace and plenty' and a 'happy asylum for the banished children of oppression'. However, he does not seem to have associated with United Irish exiles in New York. He continued to teach for a few more years before his death in New York City on 17 February 1814 at the age of 60. In his will he left instructions that his daughters should be raised in the Catholic faith.<sup>111</sup>

**McKinney, James**

A native of Cookstown, County Tyrone, or Kilrea, County Londonderry (the sources disagree), McKinney had been ordained a Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) minister in 1783 and served a widely scattered congregation in north Antrim. He organised a Volunteer company at Dervock in 1792. In 1793, he preached a sermon on the 'Rights of God' as a direct challenge to the prevailing humanistic philosophy of the 'rights of man'. This was denounced by the authorities as treasonable and McKinney was forced to flee to America to escape arrest. He was described by a fellow Reformed Presbyterian minister and exile, Rev. Samuel Brown Wylie (q.v.), as 'a most ardent Patriot and Republican, having no sympathy with British domination and Irish vassalage.' In 1800, McKinney was one of the ministers appointed to take the ruling of Presbytery that 'no slaveholder should be allowed the communion of the Church' to Covenanters in South Carolina. He resigned from his previous charge at Duanesburgh, New York, on 4 April 1802, and accepted a call to the congregation of Rocky Creek, Chester District, South Carolina. However, he died just a few months later and was buried in the old graveyard at Rocky Creek.<sup>112</sup>

**McKittrick, James**

From Newtownards, County Down, James McKittrick was among those court-martialled at Newtownards for his part in the rebellion. He was possibly the 'McKitterick' who ordered Archibald Davidson of Drumkirk to guard the bridge at Newtownards on 11 June 1798. At his trial he was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. He went into exile in America and seems to have spent some time in New York with his in-laws, the Brysons (q.v.), before returning to Newtownards where he opened a draper's shop. He continued to support liberal causes and was a subscriber to Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association. He died on 2 August 1848 and is commemorated on a headstone in Bangor Abbey churchyard.<sup>113</sup>

**McNiece, John** – see biography in Chapter 15.

**McPolin (or McPoland), Daniel**

From near Rostrevor, County Down, McPolin, a mason, was accused of being a United Irishman and was court-martialled at Newry on 10 July 1798 and sentenced to transportation for life. Subsequently, he left for America. His brother Hugh was also tried and convicted on the same charge and accompanied him to America.<sup>114</sup>

**Miles, John**

A schoolmaster in Moneyrea, County Down as well as a Presbyterian probationer, John Miles appears in the 'Black Book of the Rebellion' as a 'Colonel Commander' and a 'confidential messenger' who carried news on behalf of Henry Joy McCracken. He took part in the rebellion and was arrested after the Battle of Ballynahinch. In September 1798, he was listed among those who had refused the terms granted by the government to the 'State Prisoners' in Dublin and a few months later he signed the petition that was presented by a number of prisoners to the Lord Lieutenant on 31 January 1799 complaining that they had been maligned in parliament and in the press. Subsequently, he was released and departed for America. At the Synod of June 1799 the Bangor Presbytery reported that Miles, along with James Hull (q.v.) and David Bailie Warden (q.v.), 'having been charged with being concerned in the insurrection of June 1798 & not having stood their trials, but as they understand having sailed for America, are not to be considered as probationers under their care.'<sup>115</sup>

**Milliken, Israel**

Israel Milliken was a book-keeper in Belfast who was involved in the Volunteer movement and later became active in the United Irishmen. He was one of a number of figures in the organisation in Belfast to be arrested and imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol in the spring of 1797, where he remained for at least two-and-a-half years. During this time several petitions were sent by him or by others on his behalf seeking his release. In January 1798 his former employer, Sampson Clarke, a hatter, wrote to the authorities on Milliken's behalf pointing out that the prisoner wished to go to America. It seems that Milliken did not emigrate to America on his release – or if he did he spent only a short period there – for he was a prominent citizen of Belfast in the early nineteenth century, founding, in 1805, the first public baths in the town. Milliken provided information to the historian of the United Irishmen, R. R. Madden, who called him 'a man, whose honesty and truthfulness have a sort of proverbial currency in Belfast'. He died at the age of 86 on 9 January 1857 and was buried in Shankill graveyard.<sup>116</sup>

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**Molyneaux, Samuel**

From the townland of British in Killead parish, County Antrim, Molyneaux was a farmer who emigrated to America and died of typhus fever at Mountpleasant, Kentucky, on 7 August 1823 at the age of 63; his wife died two days before him. He is commemorated on a headstone in Oxford Cemetery, Butler County, Ohio. Molyneaux's obituary was published in the local press in Ulster and it was noted that he had been one of the Volunteers of 1782 and was 'an enthusiastic friend of freedom, and this was the chief cause of his emigrating to a land of liberty.' While it is possible that his departure from Ireland was due to an association with the United Irishmen, no conclusive evidence for this has been found.<sup>117</sup>

**Moore, John**

John Moore from Limavady (or at least the Limavady area), County Londonderry, was sentenced to transportation to Australia for alleged involvement in the United Irishmen. Petitions on his behalf were sent by 'an old resident of Newtown Limavady' to Castlereagh on 24 July 1798 and to Lady Louisa Conolly by his parents, both of whom were over 60 years old. In the first the author wrote, 'America, My Lord, we request for his destination', and raised the issue of the expense of sending him to Botany Bay. The fact that two others tried at the same time, James Long (q.v.) and John Cust (q.v.), had had their sentence of transportation commuted to banishment to America was highlighted as a reason for extending the same to Moore.<sup>118</sup>

**Moore, Robert**

A County Antrim colonel in the United Irishmen, Moore left for America not long after attending a meeting of the organisation's military commanders in Ulster in June 1797 where it was decided that an insurrection would not occur until news had been received of a French invasion. He has been identified as the Robert Moore who was involved, along with James Reynolds and others, in a minor riot outside the Catholic church in Philadelphia when they were collecting signatures for a petition to Congress against the Alien Acts (though for a namesake who may have been the individual in question, see below).<sup>119</sup>

**Moore, Robert**

Moore was a successful ironmonger in Bishop Street, Londonderry. He had been a Volunteer officer at the Dungannon convention of 1782, was chairman and treasurer of the poor house and infirmary in Derry, and was a founding member of Derry's chamber of commerce. A Presbyterian, he represented his congregation (First Derry) at Synod. He was one of the 56

‘steady friends of merit’, a group of Derry merchants and businessmen who presented three silver cups to the newspaper publisher George Douglas (q.v.) prior to his departure from Ireland in the summer of 1796. In the 1790s Moore became an important figure in the provincial leadership of the United Irishmen. For his involvement in a plot to capture Derry for the United Irishmen, he was charged with treason and lodged in Derry gaol, along with William McClintock (q.v.) in June 1797. The two men spent only two months in prison. Brought in especially to represent them, the lawyer John Philpott Curran argued that Moore and McClintock were not aware that it was treasonable to take the United Irish obligation and were ready to take the oath of allegiance. The charges were dropped and the two men took the oath of allegiance.

Moore remained a figure of suspicion, however, and in early 1798 he decided to leave for America, eventually sailing in September of that year. Contrary to family tradition that he departed from Derry hidden in a barrel, it seems that his preparations for emigration had been planned carefully. In February 1799, he (or a namesake – possibly the above Robert Moore) was accused, along with James Reynolds and others, of starting a riot outside the Catholic church in Philadelphia. He settled in Baltimore where, in 1803, he was a member of the original committee of the city’s Benevolent Hibernian Society. He died in Baltimore in June 1807 in his 55th year; with him at the end were his old friend from Derry, George Douglas (q.v.), and fellow United Irish émigré, Rev. John Glendy (q.v.). News of Moore’s death was carried in newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, though it was only in America that any allusion was made to the circumstances that had led to his departure from Ireland, as the following excerpt indicates: ‘Mr Robert Moore, a native of Ireland, and one of her exiled sons, who suffered in the cause of freedom and humanity – this cause he maintained with all the order of a patriot till his last breath.’<sup>120</sup>

### **Moore, Thomas**

From Coleraine, County Londonderry, Thomas Moore, was married to the cousin of the Blythe sisters who emigrated to America following the death of their mother in 1794. (In 1801, Hannah Blythe married Patrick Kerr Rogers (q.v.)) It was said that Moore, a merchant in Philadelphia, had left Ulster on account of his associations with the United Irishmen.<sup>121</sup>

### **Moore, Tristram**

Moore was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America. Possibly Moore failed to carry out his promise for a

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Tristram Moore from (County?) Derry was sent to Australia as a convict at the beginning of the 1800s.<sup>122</sup>

**Moore, [-]**

In trying to evade capture in the aftermath of the rebellion, John Nevin (q.v.) and Peter Lyle (q.v.) were provided with shelter in Buckna, County Antrim, by a man named Moore. He betrayed them to the authorities, though they managed to escape. As a consequence, Moore was seized by a party of 'hazel whippers' who gave him a lash for every mile he had ridden to inform on Nevin and Lyle. Afterwards he emigrated to America.<sup>123</sup>

**Neilson, John** – see biography in Chapter 6.

**Neilson, Samuel**

Born in Ballyrone, County Down, in 1761, where his father Alexander was a Presbyterian minister, Samuel Neilson made his fortune (reputed to be £8,000, a considerable sum) as a woollen draper in Belfast. His first association with later eighteenth-century radical movements was with the Irish Volunteers in the 1780s. He is credited with suggesting to his friend Henry Joy McCracken in 1791 the idea of a society of Irishmen to work for parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. His contribution to the United Irish cause, particularly in his editorship of their newspaper, the *Northern Star*, was highly significant. His radical nature is suggested by Wolfe Tone who, in his diaries, refers to him as 'the Jacobin'.<sup>124</sup>

It may have been this tendency that persuaded the Crown to arrest him in September 1796. He was later transferred to Kilmainham gaol and remained here until his release in January 1798 without ever facing trial. He remained a key figure in the United Irishmen and was rearrested in Dublin in May 1798. In July of that year he brokered the Kilmainham treaty which allowed imprisoned United Irishmen to escape execution so long as they provided information to the government. Later that year he sought two months' liberation to settle his affairs before going into exile in America. He was ultimately sent, however, with twelve others of the United Irishmen intelligentsia, to serve three years in Fort George in Scotland from March 1799. Ever resourceful, he sold his daily allowance of port to fellow prisoners and was allowed to have his son William join him and continue his education in the classics.<sup>125</sup>

Neilson favoured exile in the United States upon his release in 1802. In a letter to his wife he explained 'I will of course prefer going to a country where liberty and property appear to be best secured by a mild government, emanating from the public will – such a country is America'. However,



before departing Neilson ignored at great peril the conditions of his release and returned to Ireland for a last (as it turned out) glimpse of his wife and family, a covert escapade in which he was assisted by James (Jemmy) Hope, the Templepatrick weaver and United Irishman. He tried to re-establish himself as a journalist in the United States, but succumbed to an attack of yellow fever and died in Poughkeepsie, New York State, in August 1803 before he could exert his influence as either a Presbyterian or liberal thinker. His headstone records his efforts for Irish freedom and finishes with the ringing claim, 'Here lies the remains of Samuel Neilson who departed this life the 28th of August 1803, aged 44. If the memory of a man who discharged all the duties of a husband, a father and a persecuted patriot can claim a tear, here is the tribute due'.<sup>126</sup> A recent biography of him, titled *The Belfast Jacobin*, has been written by Kenneth Dawson.

### **Nevin, John**

John Nevin was one of three brothers, sons of James Nevin of Kilmoyle in Ballyrashane parish, County Antrim (though very close to the boundary with County Londonderry), who were prominent farmers and linen manufacturers. The Nevins belonged to the Secession congregation in Ballyrashane (later to be known as Ballywatt). John was one of the leading figures in the United Irishmen in north Antrim, joining the organisation in 1795 and becoming a captain of the men from Ballyrashane. In 1797, he was described by a local magistrate as 'one of the richest countrymen in this neighbourhood'. During the rebellion he led his men to Ballymena, but when the rising began to collapse he and Peter Lyle (q.v.) took refuge with one Moore (q.v.) of Buckna who betrayed them, though they were able to escape. Nevin was then smuggled through Coleraine in a barrel to Magilligan and thence to America. He is said to have landed at Charleston and from there made his way to Knoxville, Tennessee, where he established himself as an Indian trader.

A surviving letter to his brother James back in Ireland is dated 10 April 1804. In it Nevin reflects on his improved circumstances: 'here I enjoy Equal Right and Priveledges of the Governor and I am an Equal Companion of our first rank whilst you must Pour out your Purse to Landlords and whiper ins'. He was also full of praise for the government of the United States: 'we are Now in this Country Under a Real Republican government and the Best in the World'. While Nevin expressed his hope that he would be able to return to Ireland, he never did so, dying at Knoxville on 19 May 1806. In his will he left his property to his siblings 'who suffered persecution with me in Ireland for my political opinions'. His relatives commissioned a set of earthenware jugs with the inscription:

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To the memory of John Nevin of Killmoyle, who was by the Foes of Reform Banish'd from his Native home in June 1798. He lived in the state of exile 7 years, 11 months, 8 days & departed this life in Knoxfield [sic], Tennisee ye 19th of May 1806. Much lamented by all his Friends Acquaintances & Friends to their Country.<sup>127</sup>

**Nevin, Robert**

Nevin was among those court-martialled at Newtownards in the aftermath of the rebellion. He was permitted to transport himself to America.<sup>128</sup>

**Nixon, Jacob**

Nixon was an apothecary who first appears in 1775 when he married Mary Edwards, near Cootehill, County Cavan, perhaps suggestive of his own area of origin. He developed his skills in Dublin over a number of years before moving to Lisburn in early 1785 and opening a shop in Bridge Street where he offered 'a fresh and general assortment of drugs, which may be relied on to be the very best quality'. Over a year later, in June 1786, he announced that he had relocated to Bridge Street, Belfast. In December 1793 the death of his wife as the result of a fever was announced; she was described as 'a woman of the amiable dispositions'. Nixon became a prominent figure in the United Irishmen and was arrested in April 1797 and incarcerated in Kilmainham gaol. At one point he complained that he was confined with five others in the smallest room in the prison. Nixon was released in March 1798, though he remained a figure of suspicion. In early September he was named among those who were ordered to 'return, surrender, and abide by their trials, under pain of their property being confiscated'. Nixon, however, was in serious financial difficulties by this time and in that same month his household goods and the fixtures of his apothecary's shop were seized for arrears of rent and put up for auction, while his house and shop were advertised for letting.

Nixon joined many other United Irishmen in departing for America where he continued to work as a medical practitioner. In *Simmons's Norfolk Directory* of 1801 he appears as a 'physician, surgeon and man-midwife' at 125 Main Street, Norfolk, Virginia. On 15 August of that year he wrote to Thomas Jefferson seeking assistance:

As a total stranger to you an apology is necessary, for intruding with this letter, this I hope you will excuse when I mention I am an Irish Exile. Henry Jackson who probably has the happiness of your acquaintance, formerly of Dublin is my freind, & formerly in Coercisien with me.—I have been bred a Surgeon, If you will, so as its not disagreeable to you, to allow me, either, in Army, or Navy, the same situation I will not do less than render much service.

In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, included 'Nixon the apothecary' in his list of 'Belfast People here', though he noted that Nixon had 'gone to Savannah'.<sup>129</sup>

### **Orr, James**

The most acclaimed of the 'weaver poets' of Ulster, James Orr was born in Ballycarry, County Antrim, in 1770. He wrote poetry pseudonymously for the *Northern Star*, became involved in the United Irishmen and took part in the rebellion in County Antrim. He is credited with working to prevent his fellow east Antrim rebels from committing atrocities. He was one of the men for whom a reward of 50 guineas was offered, but he evaded the authorities and escaped to America. It has been suggested that Orr's departure for America may have been prompted by his parents' disapproval of his actions as well as his participation in the rebellion. Of his time in America very little is known. He seems to have resided in the Philadelphia area and it is likely that he associated with other United Irish exiles. He continued to write and publish poetry and in one newspaper the editor commended his work in the following terms: 'We understand the present production is by James Orr, an humble weaver from the North of Ireland. We could wish that his writings were better known.' However, not finding America 'the kindred home he expected', his sojourn in the United States was brief and he returned to Ballycarry, probably towards the end of 1799. His 1804 poem 'The Passengers' about a voyage to New Castle, Delaware, drew on his own experience of crossing the Atlantic. Orr died in Ballycarry in 1816. He is the subject of a recent biography by Carol Baraniuk, *James Orr, Poet and Irish Radical*.<sup>130</sup>

### **Orr, John**

From Creavery, near the town of Antrim, John Orr, son of James, fought at the Battle of Antrim and afterwards escaped to America from Islandmagee. His brother William, who was transported to Australia for his involvement in the rebellion, noted in his diary: 'July 15th 1798 Brother escapes to America'. John Orr had returned to the family farm by 1806 and was living there openly with his mother. He died there in 1840.<sup>131</sup>

### **Parks, John**

An attorney from Ballymoney, County Antrim, John Parks was a founding member of the north Antrim United Irishmen. A curious item from this period is a lease from Parks to General Lake, the man who oversaw the repressive measures against the United Irishmen in 1797, of a tenement in Ballymoney in March of that year. Parks, who was married to Flora, a sister of John Caldwell jun. (q.v.), joined the Caldwell network in exile in New

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York. There he was taken into the Caldwell family's business, but was not well suited to it. His brother was James Parks (q.v.), also a United Irish exile.<sup>132</sup>

### **Parks, James**

James Parks was a brother of John Parks (q.v.) and like him was a Ballymoney attorney and United Irishman. James Parks emigrated to America in 1802, joining the wider Caldwell network in New York and marrying John Caldwell junior's sister Catherine in 1805. He had been coroner for County Antrim and had spent a year in gaol in Carrickfergus for sending a challenge to Edward Alexander McNaughton, MP and grand juror. He was described by John Caldwell jun. (q.v.) as a 'brave, generous, honest hearted fellow'. He died at Newburgh, New York, on 24 April 1814.<sup>133</sup>

### **Patterson, Francis**

Francis Patterson, the father of Major General Robert Patterson (1792–1881), veteran of the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War and the American Civil War, is said to have been forced to emigrate to the United States due to his involvement in the rebellion. He settled on a farm in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Robert Patterson has been described as a native of Strabane, though Cappagh, County Tyrone, has also been proposed as his place of origin. Interestingly, Robert Patterson named his son Robert Emmet Patterson, presumably in honour of the leader of the 1803 rebellion.<sup>134</sup>

**Porter, Alexander** – see biography in Chapter 17.

### **Potts, George C.**

Born into a family of English origin resident at Clontibret, County Monaghan, in 1775, Potts studied at Glasgow University and was licensed by the Monaghan Presbytery. He joined the United Irishmen and in 1795 attended the French National Convention in Paris as the bearer of an 'important communication'. In 1797, he emigrated to America, preaching for a time in Pennsylvania and Delaware before organising a new congregation in Philadelphia – Fourth Church – of which he was ordained pastor in 1800. He died on 23 September 1838. It was said of his ministry that there was 'nothing remarkable about him as a preacher: but he was a man of kind and social manners, agreeable and easy in conversation; affectionate in his family; laborious in ministerial duty; exemplary in attentions to the sick and dying.'<sup>135</sup> For more on Potts see Chapter 3.

**Pringle, Francis**

Francis Pringle was born in Pathhead, Kirkcaldy, on the east coast of Scotland, in 1747. His father was a manufacturer of linen-ticking in reasonably comfortable circumstances. His family attended the local Associate (Secession) congregation in Pathhead. Francis, the third of nine children, was educated at a grammar school in Kirkcaldy and at the age of 15 became a member of his local congregation. After this he began to study with a view to becoming an Associate minister. He attended the theological hall of the Associate Synod in Alloa and, at the age of 20, having completed this course, was licensed to preach by the Associate Presbytery of Kirkcaldy. Soon afterwards he was sent to Ireland to supply the vacant Secession congregation of Gilnahirk. Pringle proved to be popular with the Seceders of Gilnahirk and in August 1772 he was ordained minister of the congregation by the Associate Presbytery of Belfast. He maintained his links with Kirkcaldy, marrying, in 1775, Margaret Black, daughter of a merchant there. Pringle was an able preacher and during his ministry his congregation grew significantly. In 1787, a new meeting house was built to replace the existing thatched building. He was a supporter of the missionary societies that had been established in London and Edinburgh. His sermon at the opening of the Associate Synod of Ireland in Belfast on 12 July 1796 was published as *The Gospel Ministry, an Ordinance of Christ, and the Duty of Ministers and People*.

In the 1790s many members of Gilnahirk were caught up in the revolutionary fervour of the time, joining, or at least sympathising with, the United Irishmen. Pringle, however, was opposed to this movement, placing him in a difficult situation. One Sunday night a group of men came to his house and requested that he give them his gun. Pringle responded by stating that he had no gun and was a man of peace and that the weapons of his warfare were spiritual. He followed this by admonishing those present that they were engaged in an act of treason against the government and were at risk of ending up on the gallows. The men took this surprisingly well and thanked him for his well-meant advice before going on their way. Not so well received was Pringle's criticism of those members of his congregation who had taken both the oath of the United Irishmen and the oath of allegiance and then claimed that the latter was not binding on them as it had been imposed against their will. Pringle considered this perjury and told them so.

As a result, a serious rift developed between him and a large section of his congregation. In the circumstances, disciplining the malcontents seemed impossible, while adopting a neutral position would not work either. Pringle was also concerned for his family, especially his sons who were approaching manhood and who were most likely to be influenced by what was going on

around them. He, therefore, resolved, reluctantly, to dissolve the pastoral tie that bound him to his congregation. In the autumn of 1798 he and his wife and five sons departed from Gilnahirk, leaving behind their only surviving daughter who had recently married. It was a sad farewell after 26 years of ministry during which many firm friendships had been built up. Pringle was determined to emigrate to America, but before doing so took his family back to Scotland where they remained until the following summer. During this time he preached in the vacant congregations of the Associate Church there.

In August 1799 Pringle, his wife and his four younger sons (his eldest was about to attend Edinburgh University) set sail for America, arriving safely seven weeks later. It seems that his desire had been to go to Nova Scotia, but not finding a ship sailing directly there from Scotland had instead sailed to New York with the intention of travelling on from there as soon as possible. However, an outbreak of yellow fever meant that no ship sailed from New York to Nova Scotia that season. Accepting an invitation from the local Associate Presbytery to remain in New York, Pringle supplied its vacant congregations. In May 1800 Pringle was received as a member of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania and in August 1802 he was installed as minister of Carlisle where he remained until his retirement in May 1832. He then moved to New York to live with his only surviving son, though he continued to preach regularly. He died in New York on 2 November 1833.<sup>136</sup>

When Pringle departed from Gilnahirk he left behind him a deeply divided congregation. The 'loyalist party', who would have sympathised with Pringle's stance, seceded and formed a new congregation, initially meeting, it seems, at Lisnabreeny, and then, from 1801, at Granshaw, the name by which it became known. Among Pringle's supporters was Francis Boyle (or Boal), the weaver poet. He wrote an 'Epistle to the Reverend Francis Pringle' expressing his respect for the minister and his regret at his departure.<sup>137</sup>

### **Queery, John**

Queery (also referred to as Queeny), from Belfast, was one of the two associates of Henry Joy McCracken – the other being Gawen Watt (q.v.) – who joined the United Irish leader on his cross-country journey from Slemish to Derriaghy, by way of Collin and Roughfort. Subsequently, while crossing the Commons of Carrickfergus, McCracken was recognised by a party of Yeomen and the three men were arrested. Queery was court-martialled at Carrickfergus and sentenced to transportation for life, but eventually he was allowed to transport himself to America.<sup>138</sup>

**Quinn, John**

A member of the Newtown committee, John Quinn of Newtownards, County Down, was sentenced to 14 years' transportation for his part in the rebellion. He was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America. In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, included the Quinns of Newtownards in his list of 'Belfast People here'.<sup>139</sup>

**Rabb, John**

John Rabb was the secretary of the First Belfast Volunteer Company, a member of the Belfast Reading Society and was involved from an early stage in the United Irishmen. He was one of the proprietors of the *Northern Star* and became its printer after just a few issues. In May 1794 the owners of the *Northern Star* were tried in Dublin for having published 'certain false, wicked, malicious, scandalous and seditious libel, of and concerning the government, state and constitution of this kingdom of Ireland.' Rabb was the particular target of the prosecution for he was the printer and was always present in the newspaper's office. The jury found him guilty after a deliberation lasting only five minutes, but he was granted bail. That evening William Tennent (q.v.) wrote, 'Our Trial lasted all this day. We were all acquitted except J. Rabb on a point of law. Rabb was then tried as printer and publisher and found guilty!!! I think he ought to stay out of the way until we see what is best to be done.' Rabb, however, decided to flee the country and escaped to South Carolina. When Wolfe Tone visited Philadelphia in August 1795 he met Rabb and found him 'very friendly'.<sup>140</sup>

**Reilly, John**

Born in 1780 in Ballybay, County Monaghan, Reilly was one of those who accompanied the Reformed Presbyterian minister, Rev. William Gibson (q.v.) to America in October 1797. Since Gibson and others in the party had left for politico-religious reasons, it is possible that Reilly had joined them on similar grounds. In December 1798, he was named as a member of the Society of United Irishmen in Philadelphia. He studied to be a teacher, a profession he followed in Darby and Frankford, near Philadelphia. He later undertook theological studies under Rev. Samuel Brown Wylie (q.v.) and was ordained in February 1813, following which he was sent as a missionary to South Carolina. In October 1813 he became the pastor of congregations in Chester and Fairfield districts in South Carolina, remaining as such until his death in 1820. It was said of him that he was 'bold to speak against the evils of Church and State, and denounced with special severity the practice of holding slaves as chattels'.<sup>141</sup>

**Reynolds, James**

The son of James McReynolds, a miller in Cloghog, Clonoe parish, County Tyrone, Reynolds, an Anglican, studied medicine in Edinburgh and initially practised as a doctor at Stewartstown. During this period he was master of a Masonic lodge in Cookstown and was active in the Volunteers. He was imprisoned in Kilmainham gaol in 1793 for refusing to give evidence before a House of Lords committee investigating disturbances. He subsequently became heavily involved in the United Irishmen in Dublin, serving as chairman of the Dublin society for a period. He left for America in May 1794 on board the *Swift* to evade arrest in the wake of the apprehension of a spy with whom he had consorted. On the voyage he hanged the king in effigy. He settled in Philadelphia where he associated with other radicals. Accused of starting a riot outside St Mary's Catholic Church in Philadelphia in 1799, he was acquitted of attempted murder for drawing his gun on this occasion. He continued to practise medicine and was on the staff of the Philadelphia General Hospital. He died on 25 May 1808.<sup>142</sup>

**Rodgers, William**

According to family legend, William Rodgers came to the United States in the company of Rev. John Black (q.v.) due to his own involvement with the United Irishmen. See Chapter 19.

**Rogers, Patrick Kerr**

Patrick Kerr Rogers was a scion of the Rogers family of Edergole, near Omagh, County Tyrone. His parents, Robert Rogers and Sarah Kerr, had married *c.* 1774 and Patrick was born in 1776, the eldest of their 12 children. His parents were members of the Presbyterian Church and it is recorded that when the meeting house they attended was being reconstructed Robert Rogers 'rebuilt and furnished anew the large central pew in it, which he had inherited.' Patrick was educated in a local school and possibly received a Classical education with a private tutor at the home of a relative. Deciding not to go into the Presbyterian ministry, Patrick joined a counting-house in Dublin. He is said to have become involved in radical politics and wrote a number of newspaper articles that were critical of the government. Concerned that his actions could lead to his arrest, his friends urged him to leave Ireland and with the assistance of a kinsman he sailed from Londonderry to the United States. Although some accounts state that Rogers arrived in August 1798 after a passage of 84 days, according to his own petition for naturalization, dated 20 March 1804, Rogers arrived in America before 18 June 1798. In 1799, he was appointed a tutor in the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and around the same time he began to study medicine. On 2 January 1801 he married Hannah Blythe;



the ceremony was conducted by the United Irish exile Rev. George C. Potts (q.v.). Miss Blythe was the daughter of James Blythe, who had retained his anonymity as the founder and publisher of the *Londonderry Journal*. He died in 1787 and his widow in 1794, after which the Hannah and her sisters emigrated to America.

In 1802, Rogers presented his thesis, *An Investigation of the Properties of the Liriodendron Tulipifera, Or Poplar-Tree*, to the Medical Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. This was printed subsequently and on the title page Rogers was described as 'Formerly of Ireland; now of Philadelphia' and it was noted that he was an 'Honorary Member of the Philadelphia Medical and Chemical Societies'. The volume was dedicated to George Rogers MD of Newtownstewart, County Tyrone, 'in grateful testimony of the obligations I owe him as the kind friend, the affectionate relative and the attentive counsellor of my youth'. For most of the next decade he practised medicine in Philadelphia. However, he was absent from Philadelphia for nearly a year when he returned to Ireland in order to settle some matters following the death of his father in 1803. Between 1808 and 1811 he gave lectures in chemistry and natural philosophy, some of which, as he later told Thomas Jefferson, were 'attended throughout, (no doubt for amusement, or from courteous and friendly motives) by the director of the mint [County Down-born Robert Patterson] and several of the professors of the University of Pennsylv<sup>a</sup>'.

In 1812, Rogers moved to Baltimore where he continued to work as a doctor and also kept an apothecary's shop. Four years later he was appointed the physician of the city's Hibernian Society. In 1819, he applied for a professorship at the University of Virginia, even going so far as to solicit the support of Jefferson but was unsuccessful. However, in the same year he was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics at the College of William and Mary. Primarily with his students in mind, he wrote *An Introduction to the Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* in 1822. In January 1824 Rogers sent a copy of this book to Jefferson, justifying its need and commenting: 'A professor who loves the science which he teaches will be fond of treating it in a manner as a favourite child, by dressing it according to his own fancy, and by presenting it in that attitude, which he supposes may most effectually secure to it, at first sight an approving glance, as a kind sentiment.' Rogers died at Ellicott's Mills, Maryland, on 1 August 1828. His wife Hannah had died in the summer of 1820. Their four surviving sons – James Blythe, William Barton, Henry Darwin, and Robert Empie – all had very successful careers in academia and had a profound influence on scientific studies in the United States. William Barton Rogers was the founder, in 1861, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.<sup>143</sup>

### **Rowan, Archibald Hamilton**

The preface to Archibald Hamilton Rowan's autobiography says that 'Had Mr Rowan wished to make a romance of his history, he had abundant materials'. Born in London in 1751, the son of James Hamilton of Killyleagh Castle, County Down, after education at Westminster School and Cambridge he lived for three years in France (where he was presented to Marie Antoinette) and then travelled to America, serving as private secretary to the governor of South Carolina. On his return to Ireland in the mid-1780s he was active in the Volunteer movement and was a founding member of the Northern Whig Club in Belfast. He joined and became president of the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin and was brought to trial in January 1794 for distributing seditious material entitled, 'Citizen Soldiers, to Arms!' Imprisoned in Newgate gaol, he escaped by disguising himself and bribing a gaoler. He fled, initially to France and then, having narrowly avoided execution as a spy, having been interrogated and then let off by none other than Robespierre, to the United States. There he met up again and corresponded with Wolfe Tone and supported the plans to persuade the French to intervene in Ireland.<sup>144</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the 1798 Rebellion, he served as a useful point of contact for many of the United Irish followers who were forced to take refuge in the United States. He was then given permission to move to Europe where he met up with his wife and family (they had ten children) and settled for a time in Hamburg. In 1802, he petitioned the British government and in 1803 received a pardon and permission to return to his County Down estate on the understanding that he was no longer dangerous and that he foreswore political activity.<sup>145</sup> Nonetheless, he continued to support liberal causes, in particular Catholic emancipation and never lost his 'have a go' approach, even going so far as to challenge Sir Robert Peel to a duel in 1825 for referring to him as a tainted traitor. He embodied the more idiosyncratic element of the United Irishmen, but there is little doubt that his presence in the United States, and the regard in which he was held there, served to expedite the arrival and settlement there of fellow radicals. He died in 1834.

### **Sampson, William**

William Sampson was one of a number of influential United Irishmen who, following the 1798 Rebellion, eventually migrated to and settled in New York and who continued to exert an influence on American affairs. As a lawyer, he contributed to the establishment of seminal instances of case law and jurisprudence which had strong libertarian principles, commensurate with those advocated by the Society of United Irishmen. Foremost amongst these was his defence of Father Anthony Kohlmann, the Roman Catholic priest who, in 1813, refused to divulge to a court of law confidential

information told to him in the confessional box by a felon charged with the theft of a series of trinkets. Generally referred to as 'The Catholic Question in America', Sampson used the case to establish the citizen's unassailable right to religious freedom no matter what religion they profess.

Born in Londonderry in 1764 into an Anglican family, Sampson became one of the most eloquent, in both the written and the spoken word, of the United Irish intelligentsia. He was one of a number of United Irish leaders arrested in March 1798, news that filled Wolfe Tone, then in France, with dismay.<sup>146</sup> Forced to leave Ireland in the autumn of that year, having been sent initially to Portugal, he and his wife continued to petition the Crown authorities unavailingly for permission to return to Ireland. He stayed in Paris until late 1801 and moved to Hamburg, where he joined a number of United Irishmen. He was permitted to leave Hamburg for England. Still denied admittance to Ireland, he sailed to America, landing in New York in July 1806.

Sampson's wife and young family joined him in New York. R. R. Madden wrote, 'He was permitted to settle in New York, and attained in a short time a higher rank at the American Bar than he could probably have reached in Ireland',<sup>147</sup> an observation that might well be applicable to a number of the United Irishmen who found their way to and settled in the United States. Commenting on his first Fourth of July display in the city Sampson commented, 'All the militia and volunteer corps were paraded ... then came the Tammany society and the Hibernian provident society, instituted by Irish immigrants for purposes of Charity and chiefly to provide such poor countrymen as arrive from their native country ... There are many Belfast men in it & old acquaintances and some old clients of mine'.<sup>148</sup> His daughter Catherine married William, the son of the acknowledged leader of the United Irishmen, Theobald Wolfe Tone. William had moved to America with his mother Matilda, Tone's widow, following her marriage to James Wilson in Paris. William Tone published his father's memoirs in 1826, illustrated by an image of his father provided by Catherine Sampson. All three (William and Catherine Sampson and William Tone) along with Matilda, Wolfe Tone's widow, are interred in the same plot at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

### **Scott, James**

A commander of the Bangor rebels, James Scott of Ballymacconnell took an active part in the insurrection, at one point seizing two swivel guns from a vessel in Bangor harbour and removing them to Newtownards. Later he fought in the Battle of Ballynahinch. Scott has been identified by Durey as an exile, but no information has been discovered about his life outside of Ireland.<sup>149</sup>

**Service, John**

Service was among those imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but he was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>150</sup>

**Shaw, David**

According to Rev. Thomas Ledlie Birch (q.v.), David Shaw of Saintfield, County Down, was a 'grocer, spirit dealer, leather merchant, woollen draper, and cotton manufacturer'. He was also the local agent for the *Northern Star*. Shaw was a leading United Irishman in this district for which he was arrested in April 1797, though later released. He was involved actively in the plans for insurrection and was one of the United Irish colonels for County Down. One deponent later claimed that 'David Shaw told said men that he was appointed their Colonel ... he desired them to be every man in readiness with at least three days provision of bread and beef'. In addition, he organised training in military manoeuvres. A few nights before the outbreak of the rebellion, Rev. William Steel Dickson called with Shaw, 'where I got some excellent cold beef and drank one tumbler of punch.' In the wake of the rebellion Shaw's house and stores were burned by government troops. He himself was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but in September 1798 it was reported that he had provided security to transport himself to America. He did not leave immediately and spent some time settling his affairs though he seems to have run into difficulties with this. When Shaw announced that he would sell by public auction his interest in a freehold tenement in Saintfield and a field in Drummaconnell a David Shaw of Downpatrick advertised in the press that he had a claim on these premises to the amount of £410 and was ready to defend this.<sup>151</sup>

**Shaw, John**

A member of the Society of Friends, John Shaw, the son of Jonas Shaw, was an innkeeper in Lisburn, County Antrim. In 1793, he acquired a lease of part of Dreemore in the parish of Killyman from Viscount Northland for the purpose of erecting a linen factory. It has been suggested that he may have been the first to introduce the cause of the United Irishmen to County Tyrone. Described as a 'tall, portly, hard featured, [and] pockmarked', Shaw's business as a cloth merchant provided him with the cover to travel across the countryside, even as far south as County Waterford, promoting the radical cause. In March 1796 a Robert Carlisle from County Tyrone was stopped by two armed men who forced him to take the oath of the United Irishmen. Shortly afterwards, Carlisle met Shaw at a fair and recognised him as one of the men who had threatened him. Further enquiries revealed that

Shaw and his associate had 'command of bushels of money' and had been paying those they had sworn into the United Irishmen.

Arrested and imprisoned in Newgate gaol in Dublin, Shaw was portrayed in the *Northern Star* as a 'persecuted Quaker' who had been attempting to oppose the spread of Orangeism. By November of that year he had been transferred to Omagh gaol from where he complained about the conditions of his incarceration. The leading barrister and United Irishman, William Sampson, was brought in to defend him and eventually Shaw was released on bail. He remained a figure of suspicion and in April 1797 a warrant was issued for his arrest on a charge of treasonable practices. According to Durey, Shaw later emigrated to New York where he ended up heavily in debt. However, as John Shaw of Dreemore, he continued to appear in records for County Tyrone: in 1804 he was described as being bankrupt, while in 1816 those interested in purchasing the farm of Ivy Lodge were to make their proposals to him.<sup>152</sup>

#### **Shaw, William**

From Saintfield, County Down, in August 1798 Shaw was court-martialled and sentenced to serve abroad for life. He was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America.<sup>153</sup>

#### **Shields, Daniel**

From Ahoghill in County Antrim, Shields and his brother David are said to have taken a leading part in the rebellion, as a result of which they fled to America. It is claimed that that Daniel possessed land in the vicinity of what is now City Hall Park in New York City, while David later went to Australia. Subsequently, Daniel returned to Ahoghill and died there in 1826 as the result of an accident.<sup>154</sup>

#### **Sibbet, John**

From Killinchy, County Down, Sibbet was accused of stealing two horses from the stables of a Mr Gordon (possibly of Florida Manor). Forced to enlist in the army, he ended up in the West Indies along with Andrew Bryson jun. (q.v.). He managed to escape and made his way to Philadelphia.<sup>155</sup>

**Simpson, James** – see biography in Chapter 9.

#### **Simpson, William**

From Ballycrum, County Londonderry, Simpson was a leading figure in the United Irishmen in the Limavady area. Imprisoned in Belfast for several

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months in 1798, he was eventually permitted to emigrate to America. In March 1799 several local gentlemen unsuccessfully petitioned to allow him to stay in Ireland, claiming that he had used his influence as an officer in the United Irishmen to prevent a rising in his district. Possibly he had returned to Ireland by July 1804 when he was appointed the executor to a will.<sup>156</sup>

### Simms, Robert

Robert Simms (1763–1845) performed an influential role in keeping up a flow of information and letters with fellow Presbyterians and United Irishmen who took refuge in the United States in the wake of the failed rebellion of 1798 and the release of many of them from Fort George. Simms himself, and his brother William, had served three years of rather gentlemanly servitude there and opted to return to Belfast, on the condition that he took no further part in radical politics. His family owned a paper mill in Ballyclare, County Antrim and this was one of the many business interests, developed while he was engaged with the Society of United Irishmen in the 1790s, to which he returned in 1802. He had been one of the prime movers in the Society of the United Irishmen in Belfast in 1791 and continued to play a role that would eventually lead to his arrest. He was one of those who accompanied Tone, prior to the latter's departure for America, to McArt's Fort on Cavehill, overlooking Belfast, where, Tone recorded, 'Russell, Neilson, Simms, McCracken and one or two more of us ... took a solemn obligation ... never to desist in our efforts until we had subverted the authority of England over our country and asserted her independence'. Released before the rebellion, and appointed to lead the County Antrim attack in 1798, for reasons that have never been fully explained he forfeited his role which was taken over by Henry Joy McCracken, with whom he and Samuel Neilson (q.v.) had been imprisoned.

His correspondence in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland contains letters from fellow United Irishmen who took up residence in the United States in which they discuss each others' progress and their ideas, particularly John Chambers whose communications continue until the early 1820s. They contain information about the arrival in the United States of other leading United Irishmen, notably Thomas Addis Emmet, who had preferred to go to Europe following their release and later sought refuge in the United States. On a more political level, they are a source in which can be seen the evolution of the political ideas of the United Irishmen, particularly in the direction of the Republican party which took office from 1800. In a letter of 24 May 1811 Chambers advised Simms:

It will undoubtedly gratify you to learn that one of the inhabitants of the Belfast Prison ship, the then Rev. D. B. Warden, has been

promoted by Mr Madison to the office of consul-general of the United States to France. He had been the Secretary to our late Embassy there and for some time Chargé d’Affaires. His appointment now to the consulship has been singularly flattering to[o] having received the unanimous approval of the senate, a circumstance of which we have few examples.<sup>157</sup>

**Sinclair, William** – see biography in Chapter 8.

**Smith, Thomas**

Ordained minister of the Seceders in Ahoghill and Randalstown, County Antrim, in 1780, Smith was implicated in the rebellion and forced to go into exile in America in 1799. There he ministered as a pastor of the Associate Reformed Synod in Pennsylvania. He died at Fermanagh, Pennsylvania, on 12 February 1832. For more on him see Chapter 18.

**Speer, [-]**

On 31 October 1798, John Speer of Savile Lodge, a captain of the Loyal Savile Volunteers in County Tyrone, petitioned the government on behalf of his brother. This brother had gone to Belfast as an apprentice ‘where his principles were corrupted’. He was at that time with the ‘State Prisoners’ in Kilmainham gaol and the expectation was that he would be banished. John asked that his brother would be allowed north to settle his affairs prior to departure.<sup>158</sup>

**Steele, Robert** – see biography in Chapter 11.

**Stevenson, [-]**

On 4 August 1797, George Hill, the MP for Londonderry, informed Edward Cooke, an under-secretary of state in Dublin Castle, that the friends of a prisoner in gaol in Londonderry, one Stevenson, wanted him released so that he could emigrate to America.<sup>159</sup>

**Storey, Thomas**

Along with his brother John, Thomas Storey, scions of the Storey family of Island Lodge, near Antrim, owned a printing business in Belfast. Both were United Irishmen and were accused of undermining the loyalties of the Belfast militia through the rebel songs they published. John Storey was a rebel commander at the Battle of Antrim; he was captured and executed. Thomas Storey was also arrested, but escaped prior to his trial after, having received instructions hidden in a roast goose, hiding in a barrel which was then rolled out of the prison. In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October

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1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, included Thomas 'Storry' in his list of 'Belfast People here'. It is possible that Storey was the man of this name, identified as an Irish immigrant, who captained a ship, *Happy Couple*, from New York to Haiti in October 1803, which was laden with gunpowder and ammunition to assist the Haitians in their war with the French. After 16 or so years in America, Storey returned to Ireland and was granted a pardon. He returned to business in Belfast and Antrim and died in 1827. He was buried in the family plot in Muckamore graveyard, near Antrim; the inscription on the memorial also records the death of his brother John 'for his country' in 1798.<sup>160</sup>

### Swail, Valentine

Possibly an officer in the Volunteers, Dr Valentine Swail of Ballynahinch served under Henry Munro at the Battle of Ballynahinch. Afterwards he hid in the Montalto demesne for several weeks and eventually secured government permission to emigrate with his family to America.<sup>161</sup>

### Tannahill, Joseph

A farmer and United Irishman from Ballymaglave, near Ballynahinch, in County Down, Tannahill was arrested in 1798 and imprisoned in Belfast. In September 1798 he was listed among those who had refused the terms granted by the government to the 'State Prisoners' in Dublin and a few months later he signed the petition that was presented by a number of prisoners to the Lord Lieutenant on 31 January 1799 complaining that they had been maligned in parliament and in the press. He subsequently entered into recognisances to transport himself to America before 25 August 1799. However, it is not clear whether he left for America at this time as he seems to have been implicated in the plans for Emmet's rebellion.<sup>162</sup>

### Tennent, William

The son of Rev. John Tennent, minister at Roseyards Presbyterian Church, County Antrim, for 57 years, William Tennent was perhaps the most demonstrably committed Presbyterian among those United Irishmen who stayed in Ireland following the rebellion. By the time William became a member of the initial Society of United Irishmen he had already proved himself to be a successful business figure in Belfast.<sup>163</sup> Amongst several business exploits he was one of the proprietors of the influential *Northern Star*, the newspaper of the United Irishmen. Considered to have been a member of the Belfast Directory of the United Irishmen, he was arrested in 1798 and interned in Fort George from 1799 in the company of twelve other disciples of the revolutionary movement. Faced with the prospect of banishment to the United States following his release from Fort George, he



signed recognisances that guaranteed his future behaviour and returned to Belfast.<sup>164</sup>

He continued with his successful career in public life, being appointed as a council member of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, as well as serving on public bodies such as the Spring Water Commissioners and the Police Commissioners. He was senior partner in the Belfast Commercial Bank which merged with the Belfast Bank in 1827 to form the Belfast Banking Company. Within six years of his release he also became one of the 20 'managers' named in the Act of 1810 establishing the Belfast Academical Institution and his association with the college was subsequently marked by the annual award of the Tennent Medal. He remained dedicated to the cause of Presbyterianism. He served as Honorary Treasurer in the First Congregation in Rosemary Street from 1817 to 1827; a plaque erected in his memory by his family records that 'he employed the leisure won from an arduous mercantile career in the cultivation of science and letters' and that 'he was moderate in times of public excitement and firm when exposed to the reaction of power'. His papers held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland contain the text of an address given to the Synod in Edinburgh in April 1811 in which he demonstrated his undoubted political abilities. He argued the case for the restoration of the *Regium Donum* all the while contending that non-interference from central government in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church was to remain sacrosanct.<sup>165</sup> He was one of the many citizens of Belfast who succumbed to the cholera epidemic of 1832.

### **Thompson, [-]**

On 4 August 1797, George Hill, the MP for Londonderry, informed Edward Cooke, an under-secretary of state in Dublin Castle, that the friends of a prisoner in gaol in Londonderry, one Thompson, wanted him released so that he could emigrate to America.<sup>166</sup>

### **Townsend, James**

Townsend was a Presbyterian probationer active in the United Irishmen whose places of residence have been recorded as Greyabbey and Knockbracken, County Down. In a letter to Lord Downshire of 27–28 June 1798, George Stephenson referred to him as 'Citizen Townsend' and noted that he had been a schoolmaster near Rev. William Stavely's meeting-house (at Knockbracken). He was said to have been the second-in-command at the Battle of Ballynahinch. On 26 July a number of the residents of Greyabbey parish offered a reward of 50 guineas for his capture. In this notice Townsend is described as 'about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, slender made, has a pale complexion, sandy hair, large red whiskers, sore eyes' and

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last seen dressed in black. He escaped to America, though his fate there, as reported in the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1805, was considered a salutary warning for anyone thinking of further acts of rebellion:

A letter from New York says – Townsend, alias Townsley, *ci-devant* preacher, alias Captain, for whom a reward was offered by the Irish government in 1798, has lately shot himself in Savannah, after spending his own money and that of two orphan children, for whom he had been appointed guardian. He left a note behind stating – “that as he had brought infamy upon his name, by his dissipated and wicked life, no reparation was left for him to make, but that of putting an end to his existence.”<sup>167</sup>

### Todd, Nathaniel

Todd (1774/5–1823) was a medical doctor who joined the United Irishmen and was involved in the 1798 Rebellion. Afterwards, he emigrated to America.<sup>168</sup>

### Wallace, Charles

The only son of Hugh Wallace of the parish of Kilcronaghan, County Londonderry, Wallace was educated at Glasgow University and licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Tyrone. He was found guilty of leading a party of armed men during the rising in Maghera and sentenced to 800 lashes and transportation for life, though this was remitted. He sailed for America in May 1799 on the *Peggy*, the ship that had been chartered by John Caldwell jun. At the Synod of June 1799 the Presbytery of Tyrone reported that Wallace ‘being charged with treason & sedition, got leave to transport himself to America’ and was no longer under its care.<sup>169</sup>

### Wallace, James

Wallace, from Holywood, County Down, was imprisoned on the *Postlethwaite* in Belfast Lough following the rebellion, but was discharged from it in September 1798, having provided security to transport himself to America. He was possibly the same as the James Wallace who was court-martialled on 5 July 1798 for attempting to rob the home of Mr Kennedy of Cultra (a short distance from Holywood) on 10 June and sentenced to transportation for life.<sup>170</sup>

### Wallace, William

In December 1804 William Wallace, a prisoner in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, appealed to the authorities in Dublin for leniency. He claimed that he had been involved in the rebellion in 1798 and afterwards had gone into exile in America. Subsequently, he had returned to Ireland and had become caught up in Emmet’s rebellion in 1803 for which he was arrested.<sup>171</sup>

**Warden, David Bailie** – see biography in Chapter 5.

**Warnick, George**

Warnick (or Warnock) was a Belfast soap boiler with business interests in brewing and malting. Sworn into the United Irishmen in 1796, he allowed two brass cannons of the Belfast Blue Volunteer Company (in 1792 he was appointed to its recruiting committee) to be hidden under his cow-house in North Street. These were discovered on 30 May 1798 and in the following month Warnick was arrested in Newry, where he had sought refuge under an assumed name, and taken to Belfast. Under pressure, he revealed to the authorities where they had been first hidden in 1794, but refused disclose the names of those who had been involved in hiding the cannons. In September 1798 he was listed among those prisoners in Belfast who had accepted the terms granted by the government to the ‘State Prisoners’ in Dublin. In September 1798 there was an announcement of the dissolution of the malting and brewing business of Samuel Gibson, James Johnston, Thomas McKibbin and George Warnick, which operated under the name of Sam. Gibson & Co. The first three were signatories of the notice of the dissolution of the partnership, but the imprisoned Warnick was not. In April 1799 the house in North Street, ‘lately occupied by George Warnick, Soap boiler’ was advertised for letting.<sup>172</sup>

**Watt, Gawen**

Watt, from Belfast, was one of the two associates of Henry Joy McCracken – the other being Queery (q.v.) who joined the United Irish leader on his cross-country journey from Slemish to Derriaghy, by way of Collin and Roughfort. He was subsequently arrested with McCracken and Queery at Carrickfergus. Watt was court-martialled at Carrickfergus and sentenced to transportation for seven years, but eventually was allowed to transport himself to America.<sup>173</sup>

**White, John Campbell** – see biography in Chapter 14.

**White, Hugh**

From Clady in the Grange of Muckamore, County Antrim, Hugh White (d. 1841) was a Presbyterian who became involved in the United Irishman. The letters he wrote in the aftermath of the French expedition to Ireland in late 1796 provide an insight into the mindset of the members of the organisation in Ulster. He was confident, for example, that the French would ‘fight with the Presbyterians if any other would offer to retreat and turn wrong’ and noted that old prophecies predicted that the French would next attempt to land in the north of the island. He observed that religious

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differences had been put to one side now for 'the brogue and bonnet are all United' and believed that the United Irishmen could raise 600,000 men against 100,000 loyalists. Under threat of arrest, White departed from Ulster and settled initially with his younger brother John in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, before moving a short distance to Baden. On 15 March 1801, he wrote to Thomas Jefferson on behalf of the 'Aliens of Beaver County and State of Pennsylvania' in relation to matters relating to citizenship. Jefferson's response to this letter was read at the local Fourth of July celebrations. Later White wrote again to Jefferson seeking his assistance in having his reply published in 'the Aurora or any other Republican paper', adding: 'As Thousands of aliens have arrivd Last year, it Would be highly gratifying that they had a Sincere freind in the presidant of the united States'. Jefferson reply was published in the *Aurora* on 8 June 1802, which identified the recipients as 'a number of Irish Emigrants, resident in Pennsylvania.'<sup>174</sup>

### Wilson, Hugh

Born in Belfast in 1772, Hugh Wilson became a successful banker in Cork. In 1798, he was arrested and brought to Dublin after a letter he had sent to Oliver Bond was discovered when the latter was seized. This letter contained a verse from Scripture which was construed by the authorities as suspicious. In Dublin he was interrogated by Lord Castlereagh, whom he had known as a boy. He was afterwards one of the 'State Prisoners' sent to Fort George in Scotland. Upon his release, he spent some time on the Continent before sailing for America, arriving in Charleston, South Carolina. He established a successful business as a merchant, with trading links stretching from the West Indies to the Baltic. At different times he was based in New Orleans and New York, but he seems not to have stayed anywhere for very long. After his marriage to a Danish woman, he settled on St Croix, one of the Virgin Islands. He continued to visit America on business and on one such trip died at New Haven, Connecticut, on 14 July 1829.<sup>175</sup>

### Wilson, Josias

The minister of the Secession congregation of Dunnymuggy (later Second Donegore) during the period of the rebellion, Wilson had been born in the parish of Ballymore, County Armagh, and studied at Glasgow University. He was ordained minister of Dunnymuggy in 1794, resigning in 1804. In an autobiography begun on New Years' Day 1806, Wilson denied ever having taken the oath of the United Irishmen. However, he did take an oath of secrecy not to inform on them before a magistrate. In October 1807 he and his family sailed for New York. On 1 January 1808, he was installed as pastor of two Associate congregations in York County, Pennsylvania. Though he believed that 'the government of America is far better at present

than the government of Ireland', he regretted leaving Ireland. He died on his farm in York County in September 1812.<sup>176</sup> (See also Chapter 18.)

### **Wilson, Robert**

In his letter to Robert Simms of 18 October 1802, John Caldwell jun., writing from New York, included Robert Wilson in his list of 'Belfast People here', though it is not clear whether Wilson had gone to America because of his associations with the United Irishmen.<sup>177</sup>

### **Wilson, Thomas**

The youngest son of Thomas Wilson of Ballyclare, County Antrim, Wilson studied medicine at Edinburgh University. In the 1780s he was the secretary of the Ards Reform Club and was also a member of the Belfast Reading Society. Described as the 'most erudite' of the Committee of Public Safety set up in Newtownards during the rebellion, Wilson was sentenced to 14 years' transportation for his part in the Rebellion. He was permitted to transport himself to America, sailing in May 1799, though without his family accompanying him. In October 1799 his wife Susan, whom he had married in February 1797, wrote to the authorities on his behalf, pointing out that before the rebellion Wilson has been of good character, but he had been led astray by 'artful and desperate men'. During his imprisonment his behaviour had been exemplary. His departure from America had left her and Wilson's three young children from his first marriage in a difficult situation for they did not have the means to join him. Mrs Wilson requested that her husband be allowed to return home and she assured the authorities that he would provide security for his continued good behaviour. She also enclosed a petition from some of those who had served on the court-martial seeking clemency for Wilson.

Wilson was allowed to return to Ireland and he lived for a time in Donaghadee before moving to Cookstown, County Tyrone, where he died on 17 February 1817. Two days later the following notice was published in the *Belfast Newsletter*:

On Wednesday last, at Cookstown, county Tyrone, Dr Thomas Wilson, a man of singular modesty and worth, who combined in an eminent degree, the character of a gentleman and scholar, with that of a physician. He was educated in the most perfect manner, having had the greatest advantages in his masters: he was initiated in classical knowledge by the late Mathew Garnet at Belfast; he afterwards studied under Smith, Millar, and Reid, at Glasgow; and finally completed his education under Black, Cullen, and Munro, at Edinburgh. The cultivation and purity of his mind endeared him to all that knew him; and his death will be the more lamented on this

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account, that he contracted the fever, of which he died, by infection from a poor man whom he was attending from compassion.<sup>178</sup>

### Witherspoon, James

The story of James Witherspoon provides an example of a Covenanter who took part in the 1798 Rebellion, survived, and was later drawn into the planning of Emmet's failed rebellion of 1803, as a consequence of which he was forced to transport himself and his family to America. According to the family tradition, the Witherspoons had moved from Begardie, near Glasgow, to Knockbracken in 1695. Some six decades later James Witherspoon was born c. 1755. He was a weaver by trade and served as the 'clerk to the covenanted congregation' at Knockbracken. In the 1790s he became involved with the United Irishmen and fought at the Battle of Ballynahinch. In 1803, Witherspoon was drawn into the preparations for the ill-fated rebellion led by Robert Emmet and Thomas Russell. The former librarian of what is now the Linen Hall Library, Russell had returned from exile in Paris to organise the rising in Ulster along with another veteran United Irishman, James Hope. Witherspoon had known Russell for some time and opened his home to him for meetings to plan an insurrection, in addition to actively canvassing for support. So involved was Witherspoon in this scheme that he had also visited Scotland to discover the level of support there for another rebellion in Ireland. Following Russell's arrest, Witherspoon was seized and taken to Dublin as a prisoner. He was later transferred to the gaol in Downpatrick. At the summer assizes held in Downpatrick in 1804 Witherspoon and his son John gave assurances that they would leave Ireland before November of that year. The family sailed from Belfast to New York on the *William and Jane* that autumn. James Witherspoon died in New York in February 1812.<sup>179</sup>

### Wylie, Samuel Brown

The son of Adam and Margaret (Brown) Wylie from Moylarg, near Ballymena, County Antrim, Wylie was educated at Glasgow University, from where he graduated MA in 1797. He taught for a while in Ballymena, before accompanying the Reformed Presbyterian minister, Rev. William Gibson (q.v.), to America in October 1797. As Wylie was later to reflect, those who left had three choices – either go against their consciences by taking the oath of allegiance, take a stand and risk execution, or flee abroad for their own safety. Within a short time of settling in Philadelphia and beginning to teach he had secured an appointment as a tutor in the College (later University) of Pennsylvania. In December 1798, Wylie was named as a member of the Society of United Irishmen in Philadelphia, though he denied this.<sup>180</sup>

In 1799, having undertaken theological studies under Gibson, Wylie was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery, and the following year was ordained *sine titulo*, the first minister to be ordained by the Presbytery. After the Reformed Presbytery ruled that no slave-owner could enjoy the communion of the Church, he and Rev. James McKinney (q.v.) journeyed through the South informing Covenanters of this enactment. In November 1803 he was installed pastor of the congregation of Philadelphia. He also preached regularly in Baltimore. At the founding of the Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1801, he was appointed the Professor. In 1828, he became Professor of Latin and Greek in the University of Pennsylvania, continuing in this role for 17 years. He retired from the pastorate of his congregation in Philadelphia shortly before his death in 1852.<sup>181</sup> See Chapter 19 for more on him.

- 1 Wilson, *United Irishmen. United States*, pp 10–11.
- 2 Kenneth L. Dawson, *The Belfast Jacobin: Samuel Neilson and the United Irishmen* (Newbridge, 2017).
- 3 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 145.
- 4 Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 99, writes: ‘According to one story, he had been shot in the back by his own men after getting into an argument with them in the days before the battle of Saintfield; after the defeat, his friends circulated a rumour that he was dead and smuggled him onto a ship bound for the United States’; David N. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin and Cork, 1981), p. 207.
- 5 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 145.
- 6 Notes by J. J. Elder, c. 1925, in private possession.
- 7 *Fasts of the Irish Presbyterian Church, 1613–1840*, compiled by James McConnell and revised by his son Samuel G. McConnell (Belfast, 1951), p. 189; Lindsay T. Brown, ‘The Presbyterian dilemma: a survey of the Presbyterians and politics in counties Cavan and Monaghan over three hundred years: Part II of a series on the Monaghan Presbyterians’, *Clogher Record*, 15:2 (1995), p. 46; Maurice J. Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-Invention of America, 1760–1800* (Dublin, 2008), p. 242; James H. and Peadar Murnane, *At the Ford of the Birches: The History of Ballybay, its People and Vicinity* (Ballybay, 1999), p. 332.
- 8 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 639 n.44.
- 9 NAI, RP 620/7/80/34.
- 10 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 131–3; The National Archives (London), HO 42/39/115, fos 252–64; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 641–2; *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 105 (1951), p. 208.
- 11 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 206; PRONI, D272/1; *Richmond Examiner*, 14 Oct. 1800.
- 12 Thomas Bartlett, ‘Repressing the rebellion in County Down’ in Myrtle Hill, Brian Turner and Kenneth Dawson (eds.), *The 1798 Rebellion in County Down* (Downpatrick, 1998), p. 196.
- 13 William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 9 (New York, 1869), p. 28; Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia*, p. 227; W. M. Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America* (Baltimore, 1888) pp 440–41.
- 14 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 15 Katharine L. Brown, ‘United Irishmen in the American South’ in David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spencer (eds), *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin, 2006), pp 96–101; <http://theboneshistory.blogspot.co.uk>.

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- 16 NAI, RP 620/7/80/17.
- 17 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 197; NAI, RP 620/7/80/41; Patrick C. Power, *The Courts Martial of 1798–9* (Kilkenny, 1997), p. 170.
- 18 NAI, RP 620/4/29/37.
- 19 Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone. Memoirs, Journals and Political Writings, Compiled and Arranged by William T. Tone, 1826* (Dublin, 1998), p. 132; PRONI, T1454 is a petition from Isabella Bryson, parish of Bangor, County Down, 1807, requesting permission to the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin Castle for her husband to return from New York without fear of arrest in order to settle family affairs: 'Petr therefore ... throws herself on the well known Clemency peculiar to your Excellency's most noble & honourable house presuming to hope that your Excellency will have the goodness to extend your Gracious protection to Petr. & her Husband and permit him to remain in the Country for 18 months or till the intercourse with America as again open that he may have it in his power to dispose of his property and remove his family with him to America.'
- 20 Michael Durey (ed.), *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal. An Epilogue to the 1798 Rebellion* (Cork, 1998) is based on the account of Bryson's remarkable survival and journey, ending in New York. The excellent Introduction provides much useful background information on the involvement of the two Brysons, senior and junior, in the events leading to the rebellion in 1798.
- 21 PRONI, T1373/1; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641 n.57.
- 22 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 632; NAI, RP620/2/8/8 relating to the detention of Richard Caldwell, Harmony Hill, Ballymoney, 'charged with Treason and Rebellion and having a Command in the Rebel army on Saturday the 9th of June 1798 ... The Court having summ'd up the evidence for and against the prisoner found him guilty of all the charges exhibited against him and therefore adjudged him to be hanged in the town of Ballymoney by the neck until dead, his head to be severed from his body and fixed upon a Pike on the Market House in the town of Ballymoney. NB His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant having been pleased to pardon Richard Caldwell on condition of his transporting himself to America ...'.
- 23 PRONI, D1759/3B/4, John Caldwell, New York, to Robert Simms, Belfast, 18 Oct. 1802.
- 24 The lives of the Caldwells have also been studied by David A. Wilson, 'John Caldwell's memoir: a case study in Ulster-American radicalism' in Wilson and Spencer (eds), *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World*, pp 104–27. The memoir in question is entitled 'Particulars of history of a north country Irish family' and a typescript copy is in PRONI (T3541/5/3). See also Eugene Sheridan, 'The Caldwell family: from Ireland to Salisbury Mills' in *Orange County Historical Society Journal*, 30 (2001), pp 26–35.
- 25 *The Heritage of Burke County* (Morganton, NC, 1981), p. 128; pers. comm. Susan Hayes.
- 26 *History of 1st Limavady Presbyterian Church, 1750–2000* (Limavady, 2000) p. 8.
- 27 Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York, 1988), p. 189.
- 28 Kenneth Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798* (Bangor, 1998), p. 110; *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 29 *Belfast Newsletter*, 17–21 April 1797, 18 June 1798; NAI, RP 620/4/29/36; PRONI, D272/14; PRONI, T2794/2.
- 30 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, pp 47–8; *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Oct. 1798; Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', pp 202, 209; *The Pedigree Register* (Sept. 1913), p. 64; *The History of Clark County, Ohio* (Chicago, 1881), pp 806–07; *Commemorative Biographical Record of Washington County* (Chicago, 1893), p. 590; *Harrisburg Telegraph*, 19 June 1880; Katherine Gottschalk, *The Parrish Family Including the Allied Families of Belt, Boyd, Cole and Malone, Clokey ...* (Santa Barbara, CA, 1935), pp 341–2
- 31 R. M. Young, *Ulster in '98* (Belfast, 1893), p. 66.
- 32 Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', p. 98.



- 33 Jean Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier Letters: 1794–1801*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1999), p. 411 n.126.
- 34 NAI, RP 620/4/29/36; Dawson, *Belfast Jacobin*, p. 13; A. Crothers, 'Banks and Economic Development in Post-Revolutionary Northern Virginia, 1790–1812', *Business History Review*, 73:1 (1999), pp 1–39; Thomas Cruse to James Madison, 20 Feb. 1806, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/99-01-02-0100>); James Hamilton to Thomas Jefferson, 27 Feb. 1806, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-3312>); Garrett Peck, *Capital Beer: A Heady History of Brewing in Washington* (Charleston, SC, 2014); Letters of Thomas Cruse to James Hamilton, 1810–13, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Accession Number 3967 (for an account of how these letters ended up in here see <http://gardnerlibrary.org/journal/letter>); MHS, Wilson Papers, 1790–1952, MS 833; Edith Moore Sprouse, *Colchester Colonial Port on the Potomac* (Fairfax, VA, 1975), p. 176; *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* (Aug. 1830), pp 68–9, (Sept. 1830), pp 86–7; *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 Nov. 1832; *The Biographical Cyclopaedia of Representative Men of Maryland and District of Columbia* (Baltimore, 1879), p. 387.
- 35 Information on family origins provided by Eddy Lowe; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 635 n.14.
- 36 NAI, SPP/340.
- 37 PRONI, T1815/20, George Cuming, New York, to Robert Simms, Belfast, 22 Jan. 1817; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 635 n.14.
- 38 Young, *Ulster in '98*, p. 41; D. H. Akenson, *Between Two Revolutions: Islandmagee, County Antrim, 1798–1920* (Toronto, 1979), p. 20.
- 39 NAI, RP 620/14/202/2, SPP/225.
- 40 *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, April 1793; *Northern Star*, 31 March 1794; PRONI, D607/D/388, D1748/C/1/149; NAI, SPP/99; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 107, 219.
- 41 *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 Aug. 1798.
- 42 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 43 R. H. Foy, *Remembering all the Orrs* (Belfast, 1999), p. 53 n.5; PRONI, T2125/3/6; NAI, RP 620/4/29/36; Charles Hamilton Teeling, *Sequel to Personal Narrative of the "Irish Rebellion" of 1798* (Belfast, 1832), p. 254; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 153.
- 44 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 124; Joseph M. Finotti, *Bibliographia Catholica Americana ... Part I* (New York, 1872), p. 65; *The Shamrock or Hibernian Chronicle*, 7 Dec. 1811. J. Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1874), p. 85. Dobbin junior wrote that his father had come to America in 1798. However, in *The New American Cyclopaedia*, vol. 6 (New York, 1867), p. 529, reference is made to the arrival in Baltimore in 1790 from the north of Ireland of Archibald Dobbin and his sons, Thomas, Archibald, George and Robert. According to this account, Thomas published the first daily newspaper in Baltimore – the *Baltimore Telegraph* – in 1795 and following his death in 1809 this was continued by his brother George and Thomas Murphy as the *American*.
- 45 *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 Aug. 1798.
- 46 Breandán Mac Suibhne, 'Politization and paramilitarism: North-west and south-west Ulster, c.1772–98' in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds), *1798: A Bicentennial Perspective* (Dublin, 2003), p. 243; Mary Pollard (ed.), *A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550–1800* (Oxford, 2000), p. 162; Richard Cargill Cole, *Irish Booksellers and English Writers, 1740–1800* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1986), vol. 1, p. 166; H. A. Williams, *History of the Hibernian Society of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1957), p. 2.
- 47 Young, *Ulster in '98*, p. 41.
- 48 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 58; Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 199.
- 49 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 160; NAI, RP 620/10/121/59.
- 50 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', pp 199–200; Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 95.

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- 51 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 109; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 212.
- 52 PRONI, D714/3/37, /43, /45; Thomas Ledlie Birch, *A Letter from an Irish Emigrant (1799)*, ed. and intro. by Kenneth Robinson (Belfast, 2005), p. 101.
- 53 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, p. 413.
- 54 Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, p. 521.
- 55 *Ibid.*, pp 521–4.
- 56 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 61; Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 207.
- 57 *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 April 1833.
- 58 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 159.
- 59 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 207.
- 60 Mary Wack, 'Edward Gray (1776–1856) of Camnish: pioneering Baltimore industrialist and immigrants' friend', *The Winding Roe*, 8 (2009), pp 30–33.
- 61 Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 9, pp 94–102.
- 62 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 147; NAI, RP 620/3/23/1.
- 63 Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', pp 91–2.
- 64 Brian MacDonald, 'Monaghan in the age of the United Irishmen' in Patrick J. Duffy and Éamonn Ó Ciardha (eds), *Monaghan: History and Society* (Dublin, 2017), pp 426, 434–5, 455 n.86; Brown, 'The Presbyterian dilemma', pp 45–6.
- 65 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 66 NAI, RP 620/31/216, *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 July 1797; Mac Suibhne, 'Politization and paramilitarism', p. 275.
- 67 David Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland* (Belfast, 1950), pp 331–2; George West Diehl, *The Brick Church on Timber Ridge* (Verona, VA, 1975), p. 46.
- 68 PRONI, D607/E/245.
- 69 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, pp 94, 109; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 170; *Belfast Newsletter*, 17 July 1798; NAI, 620/8/85/13. Heron was a clockmaker of some renown: see *The Antiques Journal*, 33 (1978), p. 16; *Hobbies*, 39:12 (1935). On the occasion of their marriage in 1935, the people of Downpatrick presented the Duke and Duchess of Kent with a mahogany grandfather clock made by William Heron (*The Argus*, 25 Jan. 1935). One source has William Heron working in Newtownards from c. 1778 to 1795 [sic] and then in Liverpool until his death in 1800 (<http://mb.nawcc.org/archive/index.php/t-37956.html>).
- 70 T. H. Mullin, *Limavady and the Roe Valley* (Limavady, 1983), p. 48; *Belfast Newsletter*, 26 June 1798.
- 71 Durey, *Transatlantic Rebels*, p. 337 n.127; PRONI, T3058/1; PRONI, T3541/5/3, p. 136.
- 72 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 157–8; Charles Dickson, *Revolt in the North: Antrim and Down in 1798* (Dublin, 1960), pp 165–6.
- 73 Young, *Ulster in '98*, p. 40; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 139.
- 74 W. E. Farrell, 'Andrew Jackson, 7th President of the United States and the Jacksons of Ballybay, 1803–1824', *Clogher Record*, 19:2/3 (2007–08), p. 203.
- 75 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 180.
- 76 William Adamson to Thomas Jefferson, 28 Dec. 1801, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-36-02-0132>).
- 77 Wilson, *United States, United Irishmen*, p. 64.
- 78 PRONI, T1815/2.
- 79 PRONI, T1815/8, /12; Donald Schlegel, *Passengers from Ireland: Lists of Passengers Arriving at American Ports between 1811 and 1817* (Baltimore, 1999), p. 130; another source has him dying at New York on 4 July 1817 (R. R. Madden, *The United Irishmen: Their Lives and Times*, fourth series, second edition (London, 1860), p. 183.
- 80 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, pp 20, 83–4; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 170; *Belfast Newsletter*, 13–17 Aug. 1784, 23–26 Nov. 1784, 20–24 May 1785, 13–16 Nov. 1787, 7 Aug. 1798, 7 Sept. 1798, 16 Dec. 1814; NAI, RP 620/8/85/13.

- 81 NAI, SPP/419.
- 82 R. S. J. Clarke, *A Directory of Ulster Doctors (who qualified before 1901)* (Belfast, 2013), vol. 1, p. 520.
- 83 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 635–6.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Dawson, *Belfast Jacobin*, pp 189, 201; Madden, *The United Irishmen*, fourth series, second edition (1860), p. 140.
- 86 Dunbar Rowland, *Mississippi Territory in the War of 1812* (1921; reprinted Baltimore, 1968), pp 55–6.
- 87 Young, *Ulster in '98*, p. 43.
- 88 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 95, 122–3; David A. Wilson, 'The United Irishmen and the re-invention of Irish America', in Bartlett *et al.*, *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective*, p. 639.
- 89 Mullin, *Limavady and the Roe Valley*, p. 48.
- 90 PRONI, D847/6/5/5; *Belfast Newsletter*, 6–10 Aug. 1773, 29 Jan.–1 Feb. 1793, 6 Dec. 1799; Ledlie Irwin Laughlin, *Joseph Ledlie and William Moody, Early Pittsburgh Residents; Their Background and some of their Descendants* (Pittsburgh, 1961), pp 1–2, 14, 16, 18, 22; Brendan McEvoy, *The United Irishmen in County Tyrone* (Armagh, 1998), pp 59–60; Breandán Mac Suibhne, 'Up not out: why did north-west Ulster not rise in 1798?' in Cathal Póirtéir (ed.), *The Great Irish Rebellion of 1798* (Dublin, 1998), p. 89. In May 1769, George Ledlie and his brother Joshua were involved in a major incident near their home. It was reported in the *Belfast Newsletter* on 16 May that the Ledlie brothers had committed a 'barbarous murder' at the race course at Stughan and had fled from justice. Joshua was described as a man of around six feet in height, 'a bony, slender man, pock-marked and ill-looking'. George was about the same size, 'but more lusty'. Masters of ships were warned against taking them on board. However, it seems that, initially at any rate, the Ledlie brothers had decided that they were not going anywhere. In a notice dated at Ballygonny on 20 May they declared that they had been defending themselves from a large mob seeking retribution on behalf of a 'revengeful villain' who had received 'a box ... on the side of the head' from George Ledlie eight days before the incident. The brothers claimed that they were guilty of no more than 'manslaughter in our own defence' and stated that they were ready to stand trial at the next assizes. In August 1773 George Ledlie announced through the press that he had surrendered himself to the high sheriff of County Tyrone and was now in custody in Omagh gaol awaiting trial on 2 September. It is not entirely clear what happened next.
- 91 PRONI, D272/3: no day or month recorded; NAI, SPP/225; James Long to Thomas Jefferson, 24 Aug. 1809, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-01-02-0366>).
- 92 Samuel McSkimin, *Annals of Ulster [From 1790 to 1798]* (Belfast, 1906) p. 90; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 125. Linen Hill is thought to have been the house featured in William Hincks' 1783 engraving 'Perspective view of a bleach-green taken in the County of Down' (Kathleen Rankin, *Linen Houses of the Bann Valley* (Belfast, 2007), p. 22).
- 93 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 94 A son of Peter Lyle and a son of his brother William are said to have become generals in the United States army, though evidence to support this has not yet been discovered. W. S. Smith, 'Memories of '98', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, second series, 2:2 (1896), pp 88–9.
- 95 Obituary notice of 13 March 1856 from unknown newspaper, though with the comment, 'Fairfield Herald will please copy'; pers. comm. Chris Prince, Whitmire, South Carolina.
- 96 *Proceedings of the state rights celebration, at Charleston, S.C., July 1st, 1830* (Charleston, 1830), p. 46; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=27655582>; David T. Gleeson, 'Smaller differences: "Scotch-Irish" and "Real Irish" in the nineteenth-century American South', *New Hibernia Review*, 10:2 (Summer, 2006), p. 73.
- 97 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 209.
- 98 Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia*, p. 227.

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- 99 Henry Hall, *America's Successful Men of Affairs: The city of New York* (New York, 1895), p. 412; Doris McAlpin Russell, *McAlpin(e) genealogies, 1730–1990: Alexander McAlpin of South Carolina and Georgia and his descendants, plus other McAlpin(e) families of North America* (Baltimore, 1990), p. 603. The death certificate of David Hunter McAlpin listed Scotland as the place of birth of his parents, James and Jane H. McAlpin.
- 100 John Belton O'Neill, *The Annals of Newberry: Historical, Biographical and Anecdotal* (Charleston, 1859), p. 49; John Belton O'Neill, John A. Chapman, *The Annals of Newberry: In Two Parts* (Newberry, 1892), pp 603–04; <http://genealogytrails.com/scar/newberry/biogreggspencemccallatodd.htm>; *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed in December 1823* (Columbia, 1824), p. 136; Newberry County, South Carolina Naturalizations, transcribed and contributed by Edith Greisser, March 2011 ([http://genealogytrails.com/scar/newberry/naturalization5\\_eg.htm](http://genealogytrails.com/scar/newberry/naturalization5_eg.htm)); information provided by John McCalla of Covington, Tennessee.
- 101 Young, *Ulster in '98*, p. 41; Akenson, *Between two revolutions*, pp 11, 19–20; Wilson, *United Irishmen. United States*, p. 158.
- 102 Mac Suibhne, 'Politization and paramilitarism', pp 245, 257, 275.
- 103 NAI, RP 620/4/29/37.
- 104 Thomas Cushing (ed.), *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1889), part 2, pp 295–6; Peter Gilmore and Kerby Miller, 'Searching for "Irish Freedom" – Settling for "Scotch Irish" Respectability: Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1790–1810' in Warren Hofstra (ed.), *Ulster to America: The Scots-Irish Migration Experience, 1680–1730* (Knoxville, 2012), pp 196–8.
- 105 *McConaughy Society of America: Annual Bulletin*, no. 10 (13 April 1979), p. 19; pers. comm. Tami McConahy.
- 106 *DIB*.
- 107 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', pp 190, 200–01; *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 Aug. 1798.
- 108 Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South', pp 93–4; Joseph Isidore Shulim, *John Daly Burk: Irish Revolutionist and American Patriot* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 42; Charles Campbell, *Some materials to serve for a brief memoir of John Daly Burk* (Albany, NY, 1968), p. 44; John D. Crimmins, *St Patrick's Day: its celebration in New York and other American places, 1737–1845* (New York, 1902), p. 166; *Niles' Weekly Register: supplement to volume the ninth* (1815–16), p. 87; *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia ...* (Richmond, 1824), p. 103.
- 109 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 642; *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 134 (2003), p. 203; *Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Aug. 1797, 31 Aug. 1798, 5 Sept. 1800.
- 110 NAI, SOCP/1015/9A; *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 May 1797, 15 Sept. 1797; Foy, *Remembering all the Orrs*, pp 16–7, 32 n.2; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 121–2; Mac Suibhne, 'Up not out', pp 89, 94, 100.
- 111 NLI, MS 2,300, Bernard McKenna to Rev. Henry Conwell, 15 Sept. 1811: the letter is reproduced in Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 419–29; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 183.
- 112 Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 79, 600–04.
- 113 PRONI, D714/3/7; *Belfast Newsletter*, 17 July 1798; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641 n.58; Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, pp 94, 109.
- 114 Bartlett, 'Repressing the rebellion in County Down', p. 209.
- 115 NAI, RP 620/4/29/36; PRONI, D272/23; Harry Allen, *Men of the Ards* (Donaghadee, 2004), pp 154–9, 179, 281, 283, 311; Hugh Thompson, *A History of Moneyrea* (n.d.), p. 7; *Records of the General Synod of Ulster*, vol. 3 (Belfast, 1898), p. 216.
- 116 NAI, SP/219; *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 May 1797; NAI, SPP/30, 1354/379, 1719; R. R. Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, second series, vol. 1 (London, 1843), pp 355–6; *Belfast Mercury*, 10 Jan. 1857.

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- 117 *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 April 1824; *Strabane Morning Post*, 4 May 1824; [www.findagrave.com/memorial/125774640](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/125774640). The author of his brief obituary stated that he had known Molyneux for 15 years.
- 118 NAI, SPP/225; the author of the first petition, possibly James Boyle, though this is not entirely clear, also described himself to Castlereagh as 'an old and early adherent of your grandfather's'.
- 119 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 124–5; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 594 n.37.
- 120 Mac Suibhne, 'Politization and paramilitarism', pp 245, 257, 275; Williams, *History of the Hibernian Society of Baltimore*, p. 2; John Gamble, *Society and manners in early nineteenth-century Ireland*, ed. Breandán Mac Suibhne (Dublin, 2011), p. xxxi; Moore's obituary appeared in the *Baltimore American*, the *Democratic Press*, and the (New York) *Public Advertiser*, among other outlets.
- 121 W. S. W. Ruschenberger, 'A Sketch of the Life of Robert E. Rogers, MD, LLD, with Biographical Notices of His Father and Brothers', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 23:121 (Jan. 1886), pp 104–46; Emma Barton and William T. Sedgwick (eds), *Life and Letters of William Barton Rogers* (Boston, 1897), vol. 1, pp 1–13.
- 122 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798; Anne-Maree Whitaker, *Unfinished Revolution: United Irishmen in New South Wales, 1800–1810* (Darlinghurst, NSW, 1994), pp 131, 149.
- 123 T. H. Mullin, *The Kirk and Parish of Ballyrashane since the Scottish Settlement* (Belfast, 1957), pp 93–4.
- 124 For an excellent biography of Neilson see Dawson, *Belfast Jacobin*. W. A. Maguire (ed.), *Up in Arms! The 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. A Bicentenary Exhibition Catalogue* (Belfast, 1998), pp 91–2; Marianne Elliott, *Wolfe Tone. Prophet of Irish Independence* (Yale and London, 1989), p. 132. Wolfe Tone noted in his diary, 'The people of Belfast set on foot a paper whose object should be ... to inculcate the necessity of union amongst Irishmen of all religions; to support the emancipation of Catholics and ... to erect Ireland into a republic, independent of England. This paper, which they called, very appropriately, the Northern Star, was conducted by my friend Samuel Neilson, who was unanimously chosen editor ...' (Bartlett, *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, p. 58).
- 125 NAI, SPP/245; William Steel Dickson, *A Narrative of the Confinement and Exile of William Steel Dickson* (Dublin, 1812), p. 120
- 126 R. R. Madden *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times*, second series, vol. 1 (London, 1843) pp 289, 336.
- 127 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 603–08; Nevin's letter of 1804, a copy of which is in PRONI (T3727/1) is reproduced in this work; Keith Beattie, 'John Nevin: a Ballymoney rebel in Tennessee', *Tennessee Ancestors*, 16:2 (Aug. 2000), pp 86–93; T. H. Mullin, *Coleraine in Georgian Times* (Belfast, 1977), pp 158–60, 170; PRONI, T3727/1. Two of the jugs are now in Ballymoney Museum along with Nevin's sword.
- 128 *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 Aug. 1798.
- 129 *Belfast Newsletter*, 12–16 May 1775, 1–4 Feb. 1785, 16–20 June 1786, 20–24 Dec. 1793, 7, 25, 28 Sept. 1798; NAI, SPP/36; Jacob Nixon to Thomas Jefferson, 15 Aug. 1801, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-35-02-0071>); Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641.
- 130 *The Country Rhymes of James Orr, the Bard of Ballycarry 1770–1816*, introduced by Philip Robinson (Bangor, 1992), pp xi–xii, xxi; Carol Baraniuk, *James Orr, Poet and Irish Radical* (London and Vermont, 2014); *DIB*.
- 131 Foy, *Remembering all the Orrs*, pp 66, 69, 135.
- 132 PRONI, TSD/1/42, T3541/5/3, p. 132.
- 133 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 640 n.52; PRONI, T3541/5/2, p. 5, T3541/5/3, p. 133.
- 134 Campbell, *History of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick*, pp 497, 499; James Boyd, *History of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827–1927* (Philadelphia, 1929), p. 393. The town

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- of Strabane and parish of Cappagh are around 15 miles apart and both are in the barony of Strabane.
- 135 William Ewing Du Bois, *A Record of the Families of Robert Patterson (the elder): Emigrant from Ireland to America ... Part First* (1847), pp 95–6.
- 136 The above account of the life of Rev. Francis Pringle is principally based on a letter written by Rev. Thomas Goodwillie on 3 Sept. 1862 which was published in Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 9, pp 64–8. Goodwillie based much of his account on information provided to him by Pringle's son in New York and on his own father's correspondence with Pringle and other ministers of the Associate Church.
- 137 Frank Ferguson, *Ulster-Scots Writing. An Anthology* (Dublin, 2008), pp 76–7, 462–3.
- 138 *Old Ballymena* (Ballymena, 1857), pp 45–6; *Belfast Newsletter*, 10, 17 Aug. 1798; McSkimin, *Annals of Ulster*, pp 136–7. In May 1798 a likely relative, Thomas Query, a book-binder in Belfast, was arrested and imprisoned in Carrickfergus gaol on the charge of encouraging a soldier to desert and providing him with clothing to effect this (*Belfast Newsletter*, 14 May 1798).
- 139 Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 95; *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641.
- 140 *Belfast Newsletter*, 18–21 Dec. 1792; John Anderson, *History of the Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge, commonly known as the Linen Hall Library, chiefly taken from the minutes of the Society, and published in connection with the centenary celebration in 1888* (Belfast, 1888), pp 7, 30, 95; PRONI, D1748/D/1/8/5; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 117; Dawson, *Belfast Jacobin*, pp 30, 32, 60–62, 75, 189; Jennifer Orr, *Literary Networks and Dissenting Print Culture in Romantic-Period Ireland* (Basingstoke, 2016), pp 96–7. It is possible that the Rabb that Tone was referring to was a William Rabb who had announced in the *Northern Star* on 4 May 1795 that he was departing from Belfast to establish a commission business in Philadelphia. Tone directed that letters sent to him in Philadelphia should be directed to Messrs Rabb (T. W. Moody, R. B. McDowell, C. J. Woods (ed.), *The Writings of Theobald Wolfe Tone, 1763–98*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1998), pp 2, 14 n.5).
- 141 Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia*, p. 227; Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 653–4.
- 142 Pers. comm. Alister McReynolds; *DIB*.
- 143 W. S. W. Ruschenberger, 'A Sketch of the Life of Robert E. Rogers, MD, LLD, with Biographical Notices of His Father and Brothers', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 23:121 (Jan. 1886), pp 104–46; Patsy Gerstner, *Henry Darwin Rogers, 1808–1866: American Geologist* (2014), p. 1; Emma Barton and William T. Sedgwick (eds), *Life and Letters of William Barton Rogers* (Boston, 1897), vol. 1, pp 1–13; Patrick Kerr Rogers to Thomas Jefferson, 21 May 1819, *Founders Online*, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0419>); Patrick Kerr Rogers to Thomas Jefferson, 14 Jan. 1824, *Founders Online*, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3990>); Thomas Jefferson to Patrick Kerr Rogers, 29 Jan. 1824, *Founders Online*, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4015>). It is tempting to speculate that it was Patrick Kerr Rogers about whom George Hill, the MP for the city of Londonderry, wrote, 'I shall see Mr Rogers safe on board one of the American ships', in a letter to Edward Cooke, an under-secretary in the Dublin administration, on 10 July 1797 (NAI, RP 620/31/216).
- 144 William Hamilton Drummond (ed.), *Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan Esq.* (Dublin, 1840); Sean Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford, 1998), p. 491; Wolfe Tone's observations recorded in his diary, particularly when in France, indicate that Rowan was, for a time, something of a confidante.
- 145 Connolly, *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, p. 491.
- 146 Bartlett, *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, p. 830 contains the entry, 'The English government has arrested the whole committee of United Irishmen ... warrants are likewise issued for

- the arrestation of Edward Fitzgerald, McCormick and Sampson, who have not however yet been found’.
- 147 Madden *The United Irishmen*, second series, vol. 1, p. 301.
- 148 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 616 n.22.
- 149 Trevor McCavery, “A system of terror is completely established”; the 1798 Rebellion in north Down and the Ards’ in Hill *et al.*, *1798 Rebellion in County Down*, p. 91; A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Summer Soldiers: The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down* (Belfast, 1995), p. 219; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 145.
- 150 *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 151 Thomas Ledlie Birch, *Letter from an Irish Emigrant to his Friend in the United States* (New York, 1798), p. 12; PRONI, D714/2/16, D714/3/45; Aiken McClelland, *History of Saintfield and District* (Saintfield, 1971), pp 8–9; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 132; *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 June, 20 Nov. 1797, 21 Sept. 1798, 1 Feb. 1799; Dickson, *Narrative of the Confinement and Exile*, p. 45.
- 152 *Belfast Newsletter*, 24–27 Dec. 1793; PRONI, D235/42, D645/141; NAI, SPP/3; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, pp 122, 210; McEvoy, *United Irishmen in County Tyrone*, pp 16–18, 95; *Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, 26 Aug. 1816.
- 153 Bartlett, ‘Repressing the rebellion in County Down’, p. 208; *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Sept. 1798.
- 154 Robert J. Shields, *Daniel Shields of County Antrim Ireland and his Descendants in America* (New York, 1930), p. 11; pers. comm. Gary Cooley, Bangor, County Down.
- 155 Durey, *Andrew Bryson’s Ordeal*, pp 16, 101.
- 156 Mullin, *Limavady and the Roe Valley*, p. 48.
- 157 George Chambers, *Faces of Change. The Belfast and Northern Ireland Chambers of Commerce and Industry 1783–1983* (Belfast, 1983), p. 91; Bartlett, *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, pp 107–08; PRONI, D1759/3B/8, /9.
- 158 NAI, RP 620/4/29/37. The brother may have been Henry Speer, a merchant in Belfast, arrested in 1797 (*Belfast Newsletter*, 17–21 April 1797).
- 159 NAI, RP 620/32/12.
- 160 NAI, SPP/47; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, p. 60; Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641. For more on the Haitian story see Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (Liverpool, 2012), pp 145–7.
- 161 Brown, ‘United Irishmen in American South’, p. 95; McComb, *Guide to Belfast: the Giant’s Causeway, and the adjoining districts ...* (1861), p. 138. A possible relative was Valentine Swail who in 1792 was leased a farm in Tullycarnett (probably Tullycarnan, Ardglass parish), County Down, by Lord Charles Fitzgerald for the lives of John (aged 13), Valentine (aged 12) and Samuel Swail (aged 7) (PRONI, D749/29).
- 162 Allen, *Men of the Ards*, p. 311; PRONI, D272/14; NAI, RP 620/4/29/36; Helen Landreth, *The Pursuit of Robert Emmet* (Dublin, 1949), p. 396.
- 163 Chambers, *Faces of Change*, p. 99, makes the point that Tennent ‘was destined to become one of the very brightest stars in the galaxy of business talent that shone on Belfast as the eighteenth century merged with the next’.
- 164 NAI, RP 620/10/120/1.
- 165 PRONI, D1748C/1/12/1.
- 166 NAI, RP 620/32/12.
- 167 PRONI, D607/F/283; *Belfast Newsletter*, 27 July 1798, 19 March 1805; Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 100.
- 168 Clarke, *Directory of Ulster Doctors*, vol. 2, p. 1095 (citing Maud Hamill pers. comm.).
- 169 W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow from 1728–1858* (Glasgow, 1913), p. 166; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 148; *Records of the General Synod of Ulster*, vol. 3, p. 217.
- 170 *Belfast Newsletter*, 6 July 1798, 21 Sept. 1798; Bartlett, ‘Repressing the rebellion in County Down’, p. 209.

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- 171 NAI, PPC/3956.
- 172 NAI, RP 620/4/29/36, 620/39/203; *Belfast Newsletter*, 28 Dec. 1792–1 Jan. 1793, 21 Sept. 1798, 19 April 1799; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 158.
- 173 *Old Ballymena*, pp 45–6; *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 Aug. 1798; McSkimin, *Annals of Ulster*, pp 136–7.
- 174 Kevin Whelan, 'Bantry Bay: the wider context' in John A. Murphy (ed.), *The French are in the Bay: The Expedition to Bantry Bay, 1796* (Cork, 1997), p. 110; pers. comm. Karen Booth, Monroe, Wisconsin; letter to Thomas Jefferson from the Aliens of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, 15 March 1801, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-33-02-0251>).
- 175 R. R. Madden, *The United Irishmen, Their Lives and Times* (London, 1846), pp 64–74.
- 176 Richard MacMaster, 'Josias Wilson and the uses of autobiography', unpublished essay.
- 177 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 641.
- 178 Clarke, *Directory of Ulster doctors*, vol. 2, p. 1165; Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798*, p. 95; NAI, RP 620/48/9; *Belfast Newsletter*, 19 Aug. 1817.
- 179 Madden, *The United Irishmen*, third series, vol. 2, pp 218–20.
- 180 Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia*, p. 227.
- 181 Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp 740–43.



## Some concluding observations on the Ulster exiles of '98

William Roulston

This study has identified leading figures from the Presbyterian community in Ulster who went into exile in America on account of their involvement in or sympathies with the United Irishmen, which may have included their participation in the 1798 Rebellion. In general, these men tended to be from middle class backgrounds – successful merchants, large farmers, professionals, and the like – and were educated, with a significant proportion of them Presbyterian ministers and probationers. Figures such as David Bailie Warden and Thomas Ledlie Birch are fairly well known as United Irish exiles and this study has been able to shed new light on them and their activities in the New World. In addition, the careers in the United States of a host of lesser-known – in some cases virtually unknown – figures have been discussed, including those of William Sinclair, James Simpson, John Campbell White, Thomas Hoge, John McNiece, John Neilson, Robert Steele, Alexander Porter and James Hull. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that many of those who sailed for America, among them some who had fairly prominent roles in radical politics and the insurrection, disappear from view and we can only speculate on what became of them.

In terms of the numbers of exiles, it is impossible to be certain how many Presbyterians left Ulster either directly or indirectly as a result of their involvement, alleged or otherwise, in the United Irishmen and 1798 Rebellion. Those discussed in this volume represent only a portion of the total number. Not all exiles, of course, left at the same time or for same reasons. Many left prior to 1798, in particular during the period in 1797 in which repressive measures were taken by the government against the activities of the United Irishmen. Others left in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion or in the following years. While scores of United Irishmen fled across the Atlantic out of fear for their lives, many others accepted banishment, either formally or informally, to the United States. A number of individuals in positions of authority were quite ready to facilitate the departure of those engaged in seditious activities. As George Hill, the MP for the city of Londonderry, explained in a letter of 10 July 1797 to Edward Cooke, an under-secretary in the Dublin administration, 'I have permitted a number of mischievous agents to take themselves off to America,

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particularly since you threatened to recruit the army with them. I think that most of them that were active in this town & neighbourhood will be got rid of in that manner.'

<sup>1</sup>In County Down, in the aftermath of the rebellion, Lord Londonderry and General Nugent were in broad agreement that the best approach was to remove the rebel leaders from the country. Nugent believed that it would be better to 'send as many [of the principal offenders] abroad', either at their own expense or to serve in the army. Local magistrate and agent for the Londonderry estate, Rev. John Cleland, similarly believed that requiring rebel leaders to transport themselves to America was preferable to letting them stay to stir up further trouble. In relation to this approach, Bartlett has observed, 'Accordingly, unlike other areas of Ireland where courts martial were held, a significant number of rebels were permitted, even encouraged, to exile themselves to America in anticipation of conviction, or on foot of it.'<sup>2</sup>

There is no shortage of anecdotal evidence for the departure from Ulster of significant numbers of United Irishmen in the period immediately before and after the rebellion. Rev. Dr William Campbell, a Presbyterian minister in the city of Armagh at the time of the rebellion, wrote that 'Presbyterians went in thousands to America, and if ships had been found, thousands more would have sought a peaceful asylum in that land of liberty – a happy refuge from the despotism of England'.<sup>3</sup> In a memoir written some months after the rebellion, the County Antrim landowner Edward Jones Agnew wrote, '... in my house at Kilwaughter and that of Cousin Shaw [Ballygally castle] the hunted rebels were given shelter and many afforded a safe passage to America.'<sup>4</sup> Contemporary newspapers also provide evidence of the large numbers leaving the province for political reasons. It was reported from Londonderry on 4 September 1798 that:

On Friday last, several persons who had been convicted at different times of acts of treason or sedition, but suffered to transport themselves from his Majesty's dominions for life, were put aboard a King's cutter at the quay, by order of the Major-General the Earl of Cavan, and conveyed to the ship *New York*, bound to America, which lay off Moville. The *New York*, we understand, will proceed on her voyage this day.<sup>5</sup>

The departure of one individual could provide the catalyst for the migration of others. Many exiles attempted to bring over members of their immediate and wider families. In the case of Rev. John Glendy, we can observe the way in which he was able to bring over members of his family in 1804, including his widowed brother William and his children, his sister Nancy, her husband, Robert Guy, and their children, and an unmarried sister, Eleanor.<sup>6</sup>

For various reasons America was the obvious place for the exiles to go. In the first place, those banished were required to relocate themselves to a place not part of the British Empire and not then at war with Britain – the United States fulfilled both of these criteria. The United States and its institutions were admired by the United Irishmen and had provided inspiration for their movement and its objectives. Contemplating life beyond his imprisonment in Fort George, Scotland, Samuel Neilson wrote to his wife in the autumn of 1801, ‘I will of course prefer going to a country where liberty and property appear to be best secured by a mild government, emanating from the public will – such a country is America’.<sup>7</sup> Many of the United Irish exiles already had family members in America and were aware of the opportunities that it offered. Again, to quote Neilson, this time writing to Archibald Hamilton Rowan shortly after his release from prison, ‘I am not afraid of pushing my way through a people who, I may say, have sprung from ourselves.’

For those exiled from Ulster, life in the United States varied considerably. Many United Irish exiles of rural background in Ulster settled into farming in the United States, while those with mercantile backgrounds established new businesses. Tradesmen and professionals, among them a number of medical practitioners, likewise resumed careers that had been interrupted by their flight to America. A high proportion of exiles became educators in a variety of establishments. Many taught in academies, others in more modest teaching establishments, and a few as private tutors, while some, eventually, pursued successful careers in academia, such as Robert Adrain and Patrick Kerr Rogers. Another profession which attracted a significant share of exiles was that of publishing, which provided them with a medium for the continued promulgation of their political views.

Presbyterian ministers form an especially important group within the Ulster exiles and Peter Gilmore has shown in his detailed contributions to this volume the differing experiences of a number of clergymen in the United States. These range from the successful pastorate of Rev. John Glendy in Baltimore – who enjoyed a warm relationship with Thomas Jefferson and who was offered the chaplaincy of both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate (though he turned down both) – to the travails of Rev. Thomas Ledlie Birch in western Pennsylvania. Tracing the careers of those who left Ulster as Presbyterian probationers has been more difficult, though we can point to David Bailie Warden whose life took a remarkable turn when he was invited to accompany the father of the children he was tutoring to Paris, and James Hull who, following a somewhat nomadic existence over a period of years, ended up as the rector of the Episcopal Church in New Orleans. Most of the others, however (with the exception of the Covenanter probationers), disappear from view.

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There is no denying that many, perhaps most, exiles enjoyed their new life in America and adapted well to their changed circumstances. In describing the experiences of Dr John Campbell White, who settled in Baltimore, John Caldwell jun. commented in October 1802:

there is no Man of your acquaintance become a more enthusiastick American than Docter White, he has adopted their ways & manners & admits he never felt real comfort & happiness to the degree he now enjoys – in the land he left – He is held in high estimation & what is extraordinary, by the very violent Political People of both parties.<sup>8</sup>

In the months after his arrival Caldwell himself had reason to be impressed by the political opportunities afforded to ordinary Americans. On arriving in Peekskill in New York State, Caldwell was taken aback to find that the tavern-keeper had recently been elected to the legislature, commenting:

so little did we know of the democratic republican system of our adopted country, which has so essentially built up the happiness and prosperity on the nation, and raised the man of virtue and talent, be he rich, be he poor, to that elevation of society, which his mental acquirements entitled him to enjoy.<sup>9</sup>

It was not long, however, before he began to realise that it was only through hard work that success could be realised. Writing to Robert Simms in October 1802, Caldwell warned that while 'the United States do undoubtedly promise much to Emigrants of every description', it was only 'provided they are Industrious & well conducted' for 'no country under Heaven throws more obstacles in the way of any idle or dissolute man procuring a livelihood.'<sup>10</sup>

The reality for many of the exiles, however, was that America, even with hard graft, did not bring the freedom and prosperity anticipated. A significant number of them died within a few years of arriving in the United States. Samuel Neilson died in August 1803 at Poughkeepsie, New York State, only around nine months after arriving in America. In commenting on the attempts by Dr Samuel Shannon Johnston from Downpatrick to establish himself in the vicinity of Lake Seneca, New York State, John Caldwell junior observed:

... notwithstanding the Doctors being a firm man & of strong mind, he had not within himself sufficient resources against crisis & being deprived of Society, the pursuit of his Distilling business & other avocations of his Industry could not make up for the void he felt in his breast & he litterally became a victim to despair & died a Martyr

to his own obstinacy in refusing the advise of his friends in a settlement in this place.<sup>11</sup>

Others found starting a new life in the United States to be challenging. Dr George Cuming initially struggled after his arrival in New York in 1802. In the summer of 1805, 'finding that my exertions in N. York scarcely suffice to preserve me from difficulties', Cuming considered moving to Natchez in Mississippi Territory.<sup>12</sup> However, he persisted in New York would go on to enjoy a successful career there. In 1816, he was appointed City Inspector of New York with an annual salary of \$1,250. However, he recognized that 'this can only last whilst the city remains Republican'.<sup>13</sup> Unsurprisingly, not everyone derived satisfaction from their livelihood. A successful ironmonger in Ireland, Henry Jackson eschewed business and bought a farm in an isolated district, enduring considerable tedium as a consequence. In October 1802, John Caldwell jun. observed that Jackson had to put up with a family that wished to return to Ireland and a life 'of inactivity in as much as farming cannot be so congenial to his long settled habits & ways of thinking'.<sup>14</sup> While no doubt there were those who regretted their decision to settle in America, others remained positive in the face of adversity. Despite the many difficulties and sorrow that he had experienced over the fourteen years that he had been in the United States, Bernard McKenna could still write in 1811 that he believed America to be 'a land of peace and plenty' and a 'happy asylum for the banished children of oppression'.<sup>15</sup>

It is worth noting that an unquantifiable number of the exiles returned to Ulster, some after only a very short period abroad. Some simply could not feel at home in the United States. They included the poet James Orr from Ballycarry, County Antrim, who fled to America following the rebellion and seems to have lived for a time in the Philadelphia area. However, not finding America 'the kindred home he expected', his sojourn in the United States was brief and he returned home, probably towards the end of 1799. Others had been forced into exile alone and wished to be reunited with their families. Dr Thomas Wilson had been banished to the United States, leaving his wife Susan and three young children in Newtownards. A campaign led by Mrs Wilson to allow him to return home was successful.<sup>16</sup> Most returning exiles seem to have resumed their former professions and trades and lived quietly, though others, such as James McKittrick of Newtownards, continued to support liberal causes.<sup>17</sup> However, not all returnees were able to settle permanently in Ireland. For instance, Andrew Bryson sen. made his way back to County Down in the early 1800s, but, following a change of government and the resumption of power by men actively hostile to the United Irishmen, was forced to return to America in 1806.<sup>18</sup> James Long, formerly of Magilligan seems to have

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travelled back to County Londonderry twice following his banishment in 1798, but each time returned to America.<sup>19</sup>

In America, many of the exiles remained in regular contact with each other. Together they conducted business, worshipped, and socialised. In one of John Caldwell junior's letters from New York to Robert Simms in Belfast he provides news on over a dozen individuals, most of whom seem to have been involved in one way or another in radical activities in the Old World. They included the County Down-born William Bailey, a former captain in the East India Company, who became involved with radicals in England and had visited Ireland in early 1798 to pledge support for an insurrection; following a period in France he had emigrated to New York City, where he practised law. Another was the former Belfast tailor and United Irishman Joseph Cuthbert, who was described by Caldwell as 'industrious ... [and] has got already a good trade'. Others included Thomas Storey and Jacob Nixon from Belfast and the Brysons and Quinns from Newtownards. There was also a sense of collective responsibility for each other. For instance, one of John Campbell White's sons was sent from Baltimore to New York to become a lawyer and was assisted by United Irish exiles there.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, some of the exiles lived in relative isolation from others, often simply because of their geographical isolation. What does seem clear is that for at least some of the exiles religion seems to have mattered little in their continued associations with each other. In other words, their shared political allegiances and ideals mattered more than whether they were Anglican, Presbyterian or Catholic. This certainly comes across in the cosmopolitan setting of New York City, though elsewhere, such as in the rural communities of western Pennsylvania, a shared Presbyterianism was undoubtedly important and unifying factor among the exiles.

With regard to their political outlook, overwhelmingly the United Irish exiles supported Thomas Jefferson and his Democratic-Republican Party, eschewing the Federalists who had displayed considerable antipathy towards recent arrivals from Ireland. In acknowledging that 'Of the majority of ordinary exiles ... we still know nothing', Ian McBride has commented, 'it seems likely that the farmers and artisans who left the highly politicised Ireland of the 1790s must have left their mark on American politics.'<sup>21</sup> In fact, Michael Durey has suggested that as many as 10 per cent of radical exiles from Ireland gave more than simply electoral support to the Republicans, battling Federalism as 'editors, pamphleteers and propagandists'.<sup>22</sup> Jefferson was greatly admired by the Ulster exiles who felt that he understood and sympathised with their cause in Ireland. In their letters to Jefferson, United Irish exiles felt comfortable in drawing attention to their status and background. Writing from Norfolk, Virginia, in 1801, Jacob Nixon, formerly a surgeon and apothecary in Belfast, hoped that intruding on the President's

time would be excused 'when I mention that I am an Irish Exile'.<sup>23</sup> In 1809, James Long appealed to Jefferson for an army commission after being left badly injured and unable to work when the still in his gin distillery exploded; in his letter he was quite open about his involvement in the United Irishmen, court-martial and banishment to America.<sup>24</sup>

Letters home reflected the positive attitude of the exiles towards Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans. From Baltimore Robert Moore wrote to his wife Ann in Derry in March 1801 to express his belief that Jefferson's election would benefit 'not only this country, but my suffering brethren and the persecuted of all nations'.<sup>25</sup> Further west, in April 1804 John Nevin wrote from Knoxville, Tennessee, to his brother James in Kilmoyle, County Antrim, expressing his delight that 'We are now in this country under a real Republickan government and the Best in the World'.<sup>26</sup> In November 1804 John Campbell White wrote to Robert Simms in Belfast that 'the democratick Government with its chief the illustrious Jefferson are daily gaining ground and fixing themselves more securely in the hearts ... of the majority of the American people'.<sup>27</sup> A month later White again wrote to Simms that the United States was 'a young country where civil, religious and political liberty are enjoyed to the fullest extent, and where no more taxes are levied on the Citizens than are barely [-?] to the interests and security of the state'.<sup>28</sup> Praise for Jefferson and his party was also matched by criticism of the Federalists. In September 1805 White provided Robert Simms with a detailed critique of the Federalists and the reasons he could not possibly support them.<sup>29</sup>

A continued hostility towards England and its government is also apparent from the writings of the exiles. Robert Moore rejoiced in the death of the 'Tyrannical, Overbearing and Inhuman William Pitt' and cheered news of Napoleonic victories.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to British imperialism, John Campbell White made the position of the United States clear: 'we want no colonies, no connections but commercial ones with European powers'.<sup>31</sup> In May 1806, at a time of considerable tension between the British and United States governments, over the former's interference in American shipping, John Caldwell jun. was anxious to make sure that Robert Simms was not swayed by what he considered biased reporting in the press:

... the Editor of the Belfast Paper knows nothing of the state of Politicks here, when he talks of a French Party – there is no such Party here and if any predilection to an European Power exists – it is rather in favour of the British; tho the Government cannot tamely submit to aggression from any ...<sup>32</sup>

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At the same time, for many exiles the factionalism they encountered within American politics was a source of despair and disappointment. Within Republican politics itself there were a number of factions and inevitably the exiles found themselves on opposing sides. In January 1816, George Cuming wrote to Robert Simms about the political divisions within the Irish community in New York:

You do not regret more that I do the unhappy divisions that have torn, and still divide the Irish Republicans here. I would have preferred Clinton for many reasons, but Federal Assistance – which he received, should have been spurned because it leads to the degradation of the Irish character – to the establishment of Aristocracy, and finally to Despotism. I have taken my stand – not confided in by the Clintonians, with the exception of Emmet, and a few others, and doubted by the Enrage Madisonians, because I disapproved their violent denunciations. Indeed I had a difficult part to act – recommended by both parties to office, yet the appointment was given by Clintonians who I had opposed, and who then had a majority in the State ‘tho’ not in the City – was I to turn on my benefactors? that I could not do – yet I lost both:– be it so – ‘tis better to have the satisfaction of doing right than servilely bend to either.<sup>33</sup>

It must also be acknowledged that a few exiles made their mark outside of Republican politics. Alexander Porter, for instance, was a leading member of the Whig party in Louisiana, and was extremely hostile to the politics of Andrew Jackson.

Participation in Fourth of July celebrations provided the Ulster exiles with opportunities to declare their loyalty for an approval of the United States and its institutions. The address delivered by Rev. John McNiece on 5 July 1802 (the 4th being a Sunday) at Stephentown, New York, was considered worthy of publication.<sup>34</sup> In the Fourth of July celebrations in 1813 in New York City, held on Monday, 5 July, McNiece played a prominent role in the service held in the Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth Street, to which the various societies in the city had paraded, giving the ‘address to the throne of Grace’ as well as the concluding prayer.<sup>35</sup> In 1804, the exile John McCreery was a member of the committee that planned the Fourth of July celebration in Petersburg, Virginia. McCreery is a fascinating character, a talented writer of musical pieces, including ‘The American Star’, once regarded as a rival to the ‘Star Spangled Banner’, and a man anxious to preserve traditional Irish music for an American audience.<sup>36</sup>

There is considerable evidence that many of the exiles remained in regular, so far the transmission of letters across the Atlantic allowed, contact with family and friends back in Ulster. One of the most important



collections of correspondence is the set of letters that various exiles wrote to Robert Simms in Belfast in the early nineteenth century. John Campbell White wrote from Baltimore in November 1804 to express sorrow that Simms had not yet been able to dispose of his property and leave Ireland 'because I think you will finally determine upon emigration'. White gave the following advice to Simms: 'you must know that a settlement in a new country is attended with many inconveniences, & that a considerable time must lapse before a new settler will find himself at his ease. He must serve a kind of noviate or apprenticeship'. White also believed that 'In my opinion, associations of men cannot afford more [comfort], security & happiness to its people than are enjoyed in the United States.'<sup>37</sup> In other ways, the exiles maintained links with Ireland. From Paris, David Bailie Warden contributed articles to the Belfast Monthly Magazine, the publication of the Belfast Literary society.<sup>38</sup> United Irish exiles also observed with some interest developments in Ireland. In 1822 John Chambers, the former Dublin bookseller, wrote to Robert Simms in Belfast to express his surprise at the Presbyterian address which stated that its members had been 'Planted in the North for the Civilization of a ... refractory province'. For Chambers:

This appears to be very consolatory language indeed to the poor people who were ousted of their houses and property and sent to Hell or Conaught – the language of the successors of a pack of Scotch Beggars, Pedlars after such acts of outrage and wholesale robbery!!! But time seems in some cases to put the seal of right to what should ever be considered as a wrong ...<sup>39</sup>

Many of the exiles were active in Hibernian societies and other bodies that provided assistance for Irish immigrants and maintained an interest in Irish affairs. John Campbell White was the prime mover in the formation of the Benevolent Hibernian Society of Baltimore.<sup>40</sup> In New York City, George Cuming was an officer in the Erin Masonic Lodge and a member of the Friendly Sons of St Patrick, while David Bryson was a prominent member of the Hibernian Provident Society.<sup>41</sup> In Pittsburgh, Joseph McClurg and his son Alexander were active in the Erin Benevolent Society from the mid 1810s. This charitable and philanthropic organisation reached out to both Protestant and Catholic immigrants from Ireland, though seems to have been a mainly Presbyterian body.<sup>42</sup>

Historians have viewed the War of 1812 as having great significance for the United Irish exiles in America. Kevin Whelan has argued that 'The War of 1812 marked the point at which the United Irishmen were absorbed into the American mainstream.'<sup>43</sup> David A. Wilson has observed that: 'The War

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of 1812 allowed them simultaneously to affirm their allegiance to America and to avenge the defeat of the rising of 1798.<sup>44</sup> A week after delivering the oration at the Fourth of July celebrations in St Louis in 1812 the former Presbyterian probationer James Hull acted as secretary at the town meeting held in response to the outbreak of war with Great Britain.<sup>45</sup> The active response of the exiles to the war varied. For example, John Campbell White served on the 'committee of supply' in Baltimore during the War of 1812. Others enlisted in American forces. Richard Caldwell, the younger brother of John Caldwell, received a commission as an officer in the United States army and raised a substantial company of men. However, through a combination of dysentery and exposure he died at Lake Champlain while on what Kerby Miller has called a 'quixotic quest for revenge against the British government'.<sup>46</sup> A song composed celebrating the American contribution to the War of 1812 by John McCreery was sung by him at the Fourth of July celebration in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1815.<sup>47</sup>

The legacy of the 1798 exiles lingered long in America. That their fathers and grandfathers had fought for the United Irishmen was a continued source of pride for many Americans of Irish origin. A few used memorial inscriptions to commemorate the actions of their forebears. For example, the tombstone to James Bones in Summerville Cemetery, Augusta, Georgia, records, 'He took an active part in the unsuccessful struggle for the independence of his native land in the year 1798.' The burgeoning number of county and town histories that appeared from the mid nineteenth century onwards frequently made mention of those who had left Ireland for political reasons in the 1798 period. While the reliability of some of these accounts can be called into question, there is no doubting that support for the cause of the United Irishmen was considered a badge of honour and worth drawing attention to.

In closing, the following extracts from letters written some decades after 1798 serve to illustrate the continued respect that was afforded to the exiles. In 1826 James Richey, an Ulsterman in Kentucky, wrote about the exiles:

The Irish in America are particularly well recvd. and looked upon as patriotic republicans, and if you were to tell an American you had flyd your country or you would have been hung for treason against the Government, they would think ten times more of you and it would be the highest trumpet sounded in your praise.<sup>48</sup>

At the beginning of the American Civil War, Rev. Thomas Smyth, pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston and native of County Antrim, wrote to his son Augustine with advice on how to respond to the call to arms:

... remember that your blood is of that richest patriotic character – Scotch Irish – combining the mingled elements of English, Scotch, and North Irish – the Smyths, the chiefs of the first colony under James – the Magees – and the Stuarts of noble pedigree. Your grandfather Smyth was in early life a soldier; and in middle life a captain of the Irish rebels in the Irish rebellion of 1798, and a prisoner of war who narrowly escaped the same gallows upon which was executed the noble patriot, William Orr, whose execution he witnessed at the hazard of life; and the treason-inspiring card, about whose sacrifice on the altar of tyranny by the hands of perjured witnesses and the connivance of partial justice, was in itself a death warrant to its possessor-he cherished as a sacred memento.

Smyth senior was not one of the United Irish exiles himself, but clearly the part played by his ancestors was a source of some pride. Finally, and with this we will conclude, in 1861, Rev. John N. McLeod, a Reformed Presbyterian minister in New York, in providing biographical information on the exile Rev. John Black, expressed his opinion that:

I have known many individuals, in almost every condition in life, from the simple farmer or artisan to the eminent physician, the eloquent lawyer, and the dignified minister of religion, who had more or less concern in the Irish Insurrection of 1797–98; and I have never known a mean man among them all. Coming to the United States, instinct with the love of liberty, and ardently admiring our republican institutions, they formed a fine and highly useful element in our growing population, and contributed their part to the formation of our national character.<sup>49</sup>

- 1 NAI, RP 620/31/216.
- 2 Thomas Bartlett, 'Clemency and compensation: the treatment of defeated rebels and suffering loyalists after the 1798 rebellion' in Jim Smyth (ed.), *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Union: Ireland in the 1790s* (Cambridge 2000), pp 112–13.
- 3 W. T. Latimer, *Ulster Biographies, Relating Chiefly to the Rebellion of 1798* (Belfast, 1897) p. 109.
- 4 Charles Dickson, *Revolt in the North: Antrim and Down in 1798* (Dublin, 1960), pp 223–4.
- 5 *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 Sept. 1798.
- 6 Katharine L. Brown, 'United Irishmen in the American South' in David A. Wilson and Mark G. Spencer (eds), *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin, 2006), p. 91.
- 7 R. R. Madden *The United Irishmen, their Lives and Times*, second series, vol. 1 (London, 1843), p. 289.
- 8 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, p. 639.
- 9 PRONI, T3541/5/3.
- 10 PRONI, T1815/2.
- 11 Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 635–6.

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- 12 PRONI, T1815/1.
- 13 PRONI, T1815/18
- 14 PRONI, T1815/2.
- 15 NLI, MS 2300, Bernard McKenna to Rev. Henry Conwell, 15 Sept. 1811: the letter is reproduced in Miller, *Irish Immigrants*, pp 419–29.
- 16 NAI, RP 620/48/9
- 17 Kenneth Robinson, *North Down and Ards in 1798* (Bangor, 1998), pp 94, 109.
- 18 Michael Durey (ed.), *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal. An Epilogue to the 1798 Rebellion* (Cork, 1998), p. 16.
- 19 James Long to Thomas Jefferson, 24 Aug. 1809, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-01-02-0366>).
- 20 Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, p. 341, fn. 8.
- 21 Ian McBride, 'Reclaiming the Rebellion: 1798 in 1998', *Irish Historical Studies*, 31:123 (May 1999), pp 405–06.
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