

Chapter Two

The World of the Nottingham Settlement:

Ireland and America during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

To understand how the Nottingham Settlement became a community requires understanding the world in which its pioneering generation lived. Members' decisions anchored their foundation in experiences of previous generations and contemporary events encountered by the members themselves. This chapter provides an overview of the world of the Settlement's pioneering members by exploring the European and American experience before the mid-1750s when they migrated to central North Carolina.

The Nottingham Settlement shared a common heritage of immigration and religion as experienced by the eighteenth-century Scots-Irish immigrant, although little is known about the beginnings of the Nottingham Settlement. Today, its conception and formation are shrouded in unsubstantiated tradition and conjecture. While local and family historians continue to disseminate a similar story of the Settlement's origins in the Nottingham Presbyterian Church in Cecil County, Maryland, no charter or compact has been located.¹ Eli W. Caruthers's 1842 biography of the Settlement's first official church

¹ Herald F. Stout, *The Clan Finley* (Dover, Oh.: Eagle Press, 1956), 25–26; Samuel M. Rankin, *A History of Buffalo Presbyterian Church* (Greensboro, N.C.: Jos. J. Stone & Co, [1934]), 14–15; and George Johnston, *History of Cecil County, Maryland*, 1881; repr. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967, 145–46. Stout claims that George Finley (1723–1802), brother of Samuel Finley (1715–1766) who ministered at the Nottingham Presbyterian Church, Cecil Co., Md., from 1744–1761, went “at the behest of the Nottingham Company of Cecil [C]o., Md., . . . on an exploration survey to purchase 21,121 acres at the headwaters of the Cape Fear River, N.C.” Whether from oral family tradition or written documentation, one cannot discern the validity of this statement as Finley does not cite a source to support it. Rankin, in his quintessential history of the Settlement's church, perpetuates the Nottingham Colony's story, stating that members were part of “a company organized and formed in the bounds of the old Nottingham Presbyterian Church at Rising Sun [Cecil County], Md.” which “sent out agents and had surveyed and secured rights . . . to thirty-three plots” near the North Buffalo and Reedy Fork Creeks. Rankin does not cite any sources to support his statements. Prior to 1715, the proprietors of Pennsylvania took advantage of the internal religious and political struggles of the English Revolution faced by Maryland's colonial government and its

minister, David Caldwell, represents the oldest account of the Settlement.² Caruthers, a minister to the Buffalo Presbyterian Church and a personal acquaintance of Caldwell, provides a brief description of those who formed the “Nottingham Company.” Caruthers confirms not only the Settlement’s status as Scots-Irish, but also identifies its colonial American origin in southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland; the reasons for its members leaving Pennsylvania/Maryland; and their religious adherence to Old-Side Presbyterianism.³

The Scots-Irish before Immigration to Colonial America

Before moving to the Susquehanna Valley region of southern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland, most members of the Nottingham Settlement, their families or their near ancestors (parents, grandparents or great-grandparents) lived in either Ireland or Scotland.⁴ The designation of Scots-Irish (for those of Scottish heritage living in Ireland) did not exist until the era of Britain’s Jacobean kings in the early 1600s, when James VI/I (1603–1625), the Stuart king-made-heir to Elizabeth I’s throne, instituted the voluntary relocating or “planting” of his countrymen (both Scots and English) in the northern third of Ireland to control the native Irish in the province of Ulster and subdue rebellion against British rule. This formal colonization program became known as the Irish Plantation of

Catholic landlord Lord Baltimore and granted land to Protestants looking for acreage in the region just south of the original Pennsylvania-Maryland line (known as the “Nottingham Lots”), essentially annexing a small section of Maryland into Lancaster County. The establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line officially placed this section of land under Maryland’s jurisdiction in 1768.

² E. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.* (Greensborough, N.C.: Swaim & Sherwood, 1842), 24. Caruthers maintains that much of Caldwell’s personal information came from “the recollections of his [Caldwell’s] family, and of the most aged people in his congregation.”(9)

³ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

⁴ See appendix A.

IRELAND

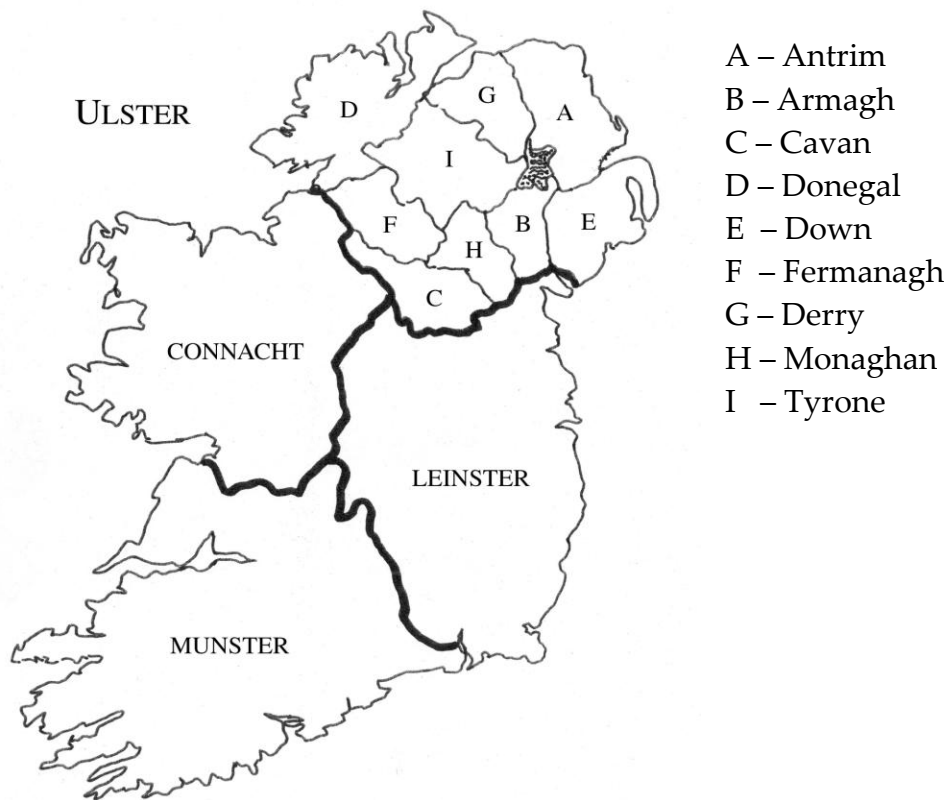


Figure 2. The Counties of Ulster, Ireland. (Drawing by Wendy L. Adams with assistance by Rachel M. Popma.)

Ulster. To distinguish these settlers from the native Irish, historians sometimes referred to those born or living in northern Ireland at this time as “Ulster Scots” or more currently “Ulster Presbyterians.” By encouraging the migration of the industrious, but poor, Protestant Lowland Scots—more specifically, those from the Border-Southwest region of Scotland—to Northern Ireland, James VI/I hoped to not only stifle the Irish rebels, but also use the Scots to develop the land and generate income for England.⁵ Many of these

⁵ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625–1760* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 19. Modern scholars and historians gravitate toward

migrating Protestant Scots embraced a national church that favored presbyterianism over the king's preference for a church governed by episcopacy and the monarchy's divine-right to rule.⁶ Although fundamentally at odds with the king, the religious fervor of these immigrants bolstered the venture's purpose by creating stronger anti-Catholic ground support for the now (Anglican) Protestant monarchy.

In the decades following James VI/I's death, the Plantation of Ulster endured mercurial and sometimes violent changes in Britain's government, such as the English revolt against and subsequent execution of pro-Catholic Charles I (1625–1649); the rule of a Puritan Parliament during the Interregnum (1649–1660); the monarchy's eventual return to limited power with the restoration of an Anglican Charles II (1660–1685); James II's (1685–1688) attempt to reestablish Catholicism as Britain's official religion; and the Glorious Revolution which finally established a limited Anglican monarchy.

Throughout this period, the English-backed Irish government worked to limit the

using the term "Scots-Irish" instead of Scotch-Irish. Therefore, I will refer to people who claim a heritage from northern Ireland as "Scots-Irish." The Lowlands of Scotland refers to the region south of a line between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Protestants who held no allegiance to the clan system prominent in the Catholic Highlands in the north generally inhabited this region. The "Border-Southwest" refers to those counties situated in the southwestern region of Scotland.

⁶ Gordon Menzies, ed., *In Search of Scotland* (Lanham, Md.: Roberts Rinehart, 2001), 138; Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958, 27; and D. K. Sanford, Thomas Thomson and Allan Cunningham, *The Popular Encyclopedia*, Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1841, I:303–4. Knox's brand of Presbyterianism came to Scotland not as a Reformation movement unique to the Scots, but as a Protestant movement formed in mainland Europe. Its basic foundations relied heavily on John Calvin's style of local church leadership, which consisted of "four types of church officers: pastors, teacher, elders, and deacons." (Loetscher, *Brief History*, 23). Out of this premise grew the "presbyterian" form of church government developed by the Huguenots in France. Presbyterian Churches as a collective were governed by the various assemblies of their members. These assemblies existed on levels matching their purpose. The first level was the local church congregation (also known as a session), which was governed by a minister and (ruling) elders. Then, the individual sessions located within a geographical area formed the presbytery, which consisted of representatives from each session (a minister and one elder). It was the presbytery's job to censure the ministers within its realm. On the third level was the synod, which consisted of the presbyteries within a prescribed region. The synod met no more than twice a year as a "court of review" over the presbyteries. (The synod, like the presbyteries, consisted of each session's minister and a representative elder.) Lastly, the general assembly, consisting of "delegates from presbytery, university and royal burgh in Scotland," met annually and acted as the supreme ecclesiastical body of the Scottish Church or "Kirk."

religious and civil activities of those in Ireland who chose not to affiliate with the established Church of Ireland. In short, an allegiance to Presbyterianism hindered the desires of transplanted Scots to establish a peaceful community and develop an economically profitable existence in Ireland.

In 1689 the succession of Mary II (1689–1694), James II’s Protestant daughter, and her Protestant husband and co-regent, William III of Orange (1689–1702), brought the Scots hope for greater religious tolerance and a more stable future in Ulster. William’s journey to Ireland in 1690 to fight his father-in-law at the Battle of the Boyne established expectations of relaxed religious restrictions that permitted improved economic opportunities and holding of civil positions by those not affiliated with the Church of Ireland.⁷ William, who leaned toward presbyterian religious practices, granted the Ulster Presbyterians a “tolerated, dissenter status” along with some financial support from the government. Political stability brought the promise of personal economic growth as manifested in the burgeoning linen trade.⁸ With the reign of Queen Anne and her successor George I in the early 1700s, the Ulster Presbyterians’ short-lived peaceful co-existence with the established church faded. Although the Act of Toleration granted dissenters the right to worship outside of the Church of Ireland, remnants of the previous Test Act still demanded submission to the established Church for legitimate marriages and as the basis for holding public office.⁹ Again, the strongly Presbyterian Scots found

⁷ Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, 68–69.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 138–140.

that in Ulster opportunities to practice religion and to prosper economically were restricted.¹⁰

For the Ulster Presbyterians, this venture of establishing themselves in the north of Ireland came with high risks. Before migrating to Ulster, Covenanters (those who supported a Presbyterian Church of Scotland as it existed prior to James VI/I's ascendancy to the English throne) lost landholdings and the ability to support themselves. Economic conditions deteriorated as crops failed and overpopulation taxed the farmable land.¹¹ Migrating to Ulster afforded Presbyterian Scots prospects of survival along with possible financial prosperity, religious autonomy and less restrictive English governance. Their personal investments in farming and urban endeavors not only aided in their survival in Ireland, but facilitated the creation of the qualities typically attributed to this ethnic group. Rather than accept defeat and return to the life left behind in the Borders-Southwest of Scotland, they persevered in Ireland. The need for personal and financial security led to a willingness to fight for survival, as demonstrated in their determination to survive the Irish Massacre in 1641 (when pro-Catholic, native Irish attacked Presbyterian settlements) as well as their military support of William of Orange during the Battle of the Boyne.¹² During the last half of the seventeenth century, the Scots in Ulster attempted to increase their personal prosperity and social status and flourished in an atmosphere of relative religious freedom—all achievements to be repeated after some of them migrated in the eighteenth century.

¹⁰ Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 30–32.

¹¹ T. C. Smout, N. C. Landsman and T. M. Devine, “Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800*, edited by Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 86.

¹² *Ibid.*, 80. Scots maintained a reputation for their “willingness to combine the sword with the ploughshare.” Communities on both sides of the Atlantic sought and welcomed these “fighting farmer[s]” for military and security purposes.

The Nottingham Settlement families were primarily Scots from Ulster to which any of their surnames attest. The surnames of Settlement families—both those considered the pioneering generation and those who arrived within the decades immediately following—confirm the modern tradition that many of the pioneering families originated from Ulster or retained a Scottish heritage. Of the families who purchased the initial thirty land grants, family historians believe four of the men (Thomas and Robert Donnell, and Adam and Robert Mitchell) emigrated from an unknown county in Ulster, although James, Robert and Thomas McCuiston supposedly arrived from County Derry (a county in Ulster).¹³ A specific location in Ulster for the progenitors of American-born John Cunningham and Samuel Scott cannot be ascertained, while Robert Thompson’s father, John Thomson/Thompson (a Presbyterian minister in Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina) lived in County Armagh before migrating to America in the early eighteenth century.¹⁴ Some, such as James Barr and John Blair, came directly from Scotland; and John McKnight’s great-grandfather arrived from Scotland sometime in the mid-seventeenth century.

Because emigration documentation for Settlement families is limited and migration stories are steeped in family lore, proving a prior connection among these families or their ancestors in either Ulster or Scotland is unlikely. However, I have established a geographical region where others with similar surnames lived (from 1650 to

¹³ Refer to the biographies located in appendix A for immigration information for those listed here. Birthplace information for John McClintock, Robert McCuiston, and Robert Rankin is unknown at this time.

¹⁴ John G. Herndon, “The Reverend John Thomson,” *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 21 (March 1943): 56; and John G. Herndon, “The Reverend John Thomson,” *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 20 (March, June, September 1942):117. Although family historians recognize Robert Thompson as the son named “Roger,” Robert’s relationship to John Thomson/Thompson, the Presbyterian minister, has not been confirmed definitively at this time. The lack of extant probate records for either man limits the ability to verify this supposed relationship.

1750), and I speculate acquaintance based on general proximity. From information compiled from published transcripts and abstracts of probate records located in Ireland (table 2.1), I have found that a majority of the Settlement families probably came from the northern counties of Antrim, Derry, and Donegal in Ulster.

TABLE 2.1 Surnames Found in the Province of Ulster, Ireland, 1600 to 1750

SURNAMES	SETTLEMENT TRACT NUMBERS	FOUND IN ULSTER
BARR	[not specified in grant]	not found
BLAIR	No. 25	Counties Derry and Donegal
CALDWELL	No. 25	County Derry
CUNNINGHAM	[not specified in grants]	Counties Derry & Monaghan
DENNY	not applicable	not found
DONNELL	No. 30	County Derry
FINLEY	not applicable	Counties Derry & Tyrone
LACKEY/LEAKEY	No. 1	County Derry
McCLINTOCK	No. 13 & 17	County Derry
McCUISTON/McQUISTON	No. 12, 23, 25 & 28	not found
McKNIGHT/McNITT	No. 6	not found
MITCHELL	No. 7 & 26	Counties Antrim & Derry
NICKS	[not specified in grant]	not found
RANKIN	No. 8 & 9	County Derry
SCOTT	No. 14 & 15	County Derry
THOMPSON	No. 18 & 29	County Derry

Source: Thomas M. Blagg, ed., *Indexes to Irish Wills*, Vol. 5 (London: Phillimore & Co., 1920); P. Beryl Eustace, ed., *Registry of Deeds Dublin: Abstract of Wills, Vol. I, 1708–1745* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1956); and Secretary of State Record Group, Granville Proprietary Land Office: Land Entries, Warrants, and Plats of Survey, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh (NCDAH) (referred to as “Granville Grants”).

Note: The list contains surnames of those recognized as owners of the original thirty Nottingham Settlement tracts in North Carolina. Additional surnames belong to others of the Settlement’s pioneering generation. Because the sample list includes both original landowners and others of the pioneering generation, table 2.1 reflects the fact that more than one of the Settlement’s pioneering generation owned a particular tract (tract No. 25, for example). The names and locations are taken from published transcriptions and abstracts of late seventeenth- to mid eighteenth-century probate records located in Ireland.

The Scots-Irish Immigrant Experience in Colonial Pennsylvania

Approximately one hundred years following the initial establishment of the Ulster Plantation, the continuing deterioration of economic conditions in the form of a “poor harvest, slumping linen sales, and rising rents and tithes” and the unstable religious conditions in Ulster pushed these transplanted Scots and their children to look for new opportunities and a better life in the New World in the early eighteenth century.¹⁵ The first major wave of Scots-Irish immigrants (or “Scotch-Irish,” as the Ulster Presbyterians later became known in America) began in the late 1710s and peaked in 1729.¹⁶ While those emigrating from Ireland to colonial America landed at ports all along the eastern seaboard, an estimated 10,418 Northern Irish landed in the Delaware Valley (at New Castle, Delaware, and Philadelphia, for example) between 1730 and 1760.¹⁷ Many subsequently migrated further west into Pennsylvania (and Maryland) or south into the backcountry. One in five Ulster Presbyterian men and women paid their passages by indenturing themselves to the ship’s captain or agents who then sold their indentures to previously arrived colonists as short-term servants.¹⁸ The remaining four out of five Ulster immigrants heading to America appear to have had sufficient wherewithal to venture forth without the need to indenture themselves.

¹⁵ Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689–1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 65–97; R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718–1775* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1966), 19–47; and Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginning of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 171.

¹⁷ Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers*, 169, 172–75. Estimated amount calculated from numbers provided in the second column of Wokeck’s table 4 (172–73). Located south of Philadelphia on the Delaware River, the port at New Castle was a popular destination for Irish immigrants. In a footnote, Wokeck suggests that one of the reasons Irish immigrants favored disembarking in New Castle was in order to “circumvent the 20s duty imposed on servants landed in Philadelphia.” (174).

¹⁸ Griffin, *People with No Name*, 93.

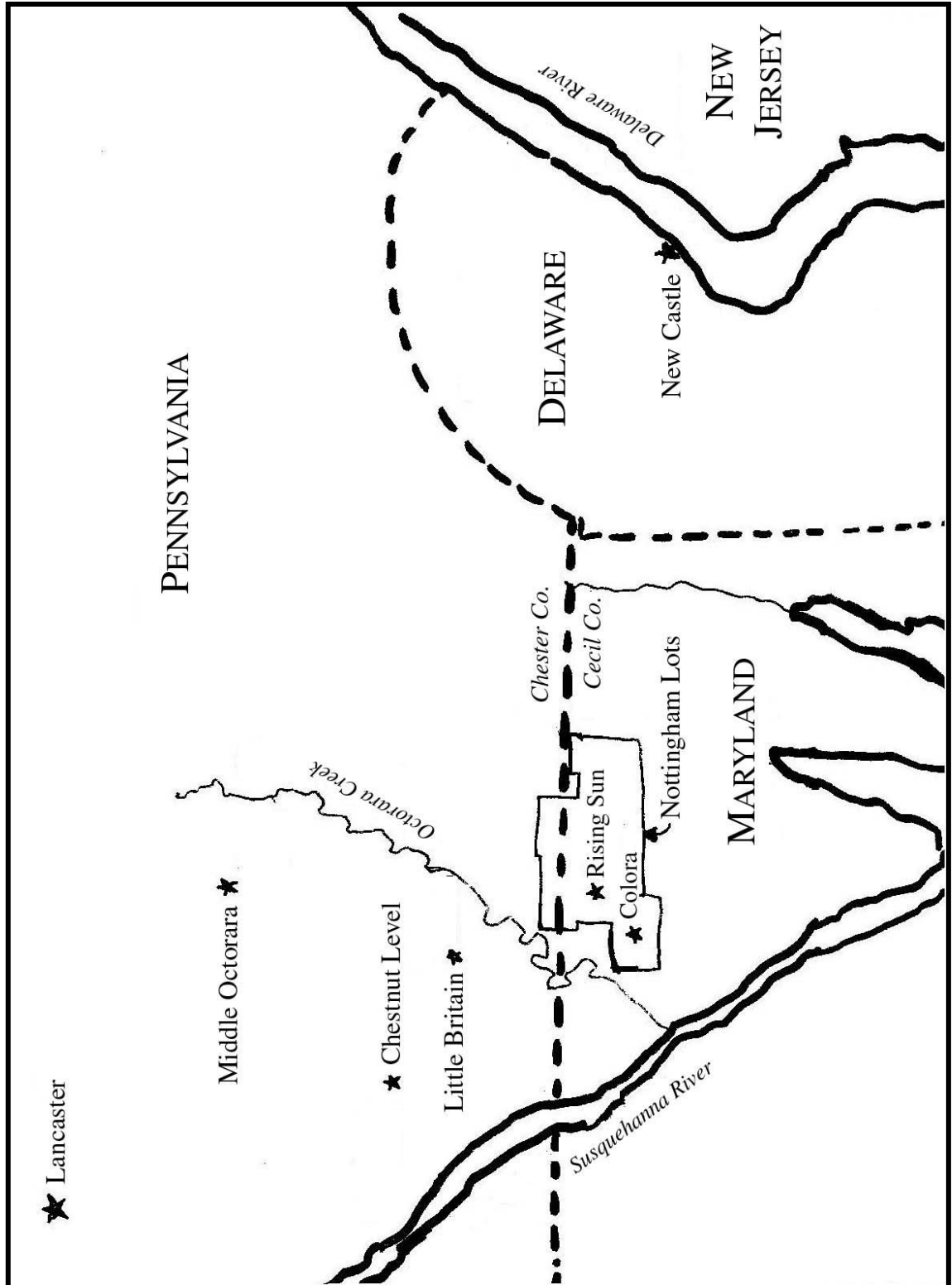


Figure 3. Southeastern Pennsylvania in early 1700s. (Drawing by Wendy L. Adams with assistance by Rachel M. Popma. Based on map produced by George M. Reese attached to the back inside cover of the 1967 reprint of George Johnston's *History of Cecil County, Maryland*, 1881.)

Early eighteenth-century Scots-Irish immigrants first settled within Chester County.¹⁹ The increasing number of immigrants to Pennsylvania's southeastern counties and the growing scarcity of land in the region encouraged Scots-Irish settlers (as well as German-speakers) to move west and south within the colony along the disputed boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland.²⁰ Settlers spread further west into what became Lancaster and Dauphin Counties and then continued across the Susquehanna River into present-day York, Adams, Cumberland and Franklin Counties. The flood of newcomers settling along Pennsylvania's frontier caused conflicts with the Native Americans who had agreed previously to peaceful land negotiations. By the time of the French and Indian War (1754–1763), Scots-Irish settlers had tired of the Quaker government's failure to protect its inhabitants. The French and Indian War itself exacerbated these feelings as Pennsylvania's Scots-Irish frontiersmen and their families soon found themselves defending not only their own farms, but also the colony itself.²¹

Just before the hostilities of the French and Indian War, the families associated with the Nottingham Settlement also participated in the acquisition of land. Although a number of the Settlement's pioneering generation did not own land in Lancaster County prior to 1750, four of the men show up in land conveyance records in both Pennsylvania

¹⁹ Dunaway, *Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, 50–59.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 58–59; and James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 64–69. Dunaway claims that the reason so few Scots-Irish settlements remained in Pennsylvania's York and Adams Counties (west of the Susquehanna River) is due to the actions taken by the provincial authorities over the ill will between the colony's German-speaking and Scots-Irish settlers. He states that in 1743, "the Penns instructed their agents . . . to sell no lands to the Scotch-Irish throughout this region [York and Adams Counties], but to make them generous offers of removal to the Cumberland Valley, farther to the westward." (58). Lemon, on the other hand, maintains that scarcity and cost of land in southeastern Pennsylvania provoked settlers to migrate to the backcountry.

²¹ Dunaway, *Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, 119, 145–48. The predominantly Presbyterian immigrants from Ulster originally headed to the Quaker colony because of its reputation for religious tolerance. In return, Pennsylvania's colonial government, seeing a need for settlers willing to defend its coastal counties against possible attack by Native Americans, welcomed this "self-assertive and combative" people. (119)

and Maryland. Samuel Scott inherited acreage in Drumore Township (later known as Little Britain Township) from his parents, William (died 1743) and Martha Scott (died 1746).²² In 1752, James and Robert McCuiston both held land warrants for acreage in Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, west of Lancaster County.²³ John McKnight inherited from his father land in Cecil County, Maryland, part of which he sold in 1745.²⁴ Landowners in the vicinity bearing similar surnames point to possible connections to those without recorded title to land (table 2.2).

As in Ulster, the Presbyterian Church played a significant role in the Scots-Irish life in America, and Presbyterian congregations became numerous in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware. “Ulster Presbyterianism was conservative, a pristine Calvinism characterized by an emphasis on individual discipline ... maintained by group surveillance.”²⁵ In colonial America, the Presbyterian Church’s session (elected clergy) governed not only spiritual life but also community life. In the absence of a government in the wilderness west of Chester County, the local presbytery assumed the role of judge in civil matters such as libel, property rights and sexual immorality.²⁶

The Nottingham Settlement attracted immigrants from Ulster at a time of religious unrest. The 1730s in America saw growing discontent within Protestant denominations. The Great Awakening, a religious revival focused on emotional experience and expression of one’s faith, swept throughout the colonies. A decade later, this movement divided the American Presbyterian Church into two camps—those who

²² Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Will Book, A:112.

²³ Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-17, Records of the Land Office, Warrant Registers, 1733–1957.

²⁴ Cecil County, Maryland, Record of Deed, 6:480–481.

²⁵ Joseph E. Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania: a History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976), 121.

²⁶ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 293.

TABLE 2.2 Surnames Found in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Northern Maryland, 1700 to 1760.

SURNAMES	FOUND IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA	FOUND IN CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND
BARR	Yes	Yes
BLAIR	Yes	not found
CALDWELL	Yes	Yes
CUNNINGHAM	Yes	Yes
DENNY	Yes	Yes
DONNELL	Yes	Yes
FINLEY	Yes	Yes
LACKEY/LEAKEY	Yes	Yes
McCLINTOCK	not found	Yes
McCUISTON/McQUISTON	Yes	not found
McKNIGHT/McNITT	Yes	Yes
MITCHELL	Yes	Yes
NICKS	not found	not found
RANKIN	Yes	Yes
SCOTT	Yes	Yes
THOMPSON	Yes	Yes

Source: Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-17, Records of the Land Office, Warrant Registers, 1733–1957; Maryland State Archives, Cecil County Court Land Records, volumes 3 (1716–1723)–volume 9 (1758–1762), MD LandRec.net.

Note: The list contains the surnames of those recognized as owners of the original thirty Nottingham Settlement tracts in North Carolina. Additional surnames belong to others of the pioneering generation. The list is based on names recorded as either warrantees or patentees on land conveyance records for Chester, Cumberland, and Lancaster Counties in Pennsylvania and land conveyance records in Cecil County, Maryland, during the eighteenth century.

held to more conservative and traditional viewpoints, with their emphasis on holy living (referred to as the “Old Side”) and those who embraced a conversion experience and the “new evangelical attitudes and methods” which included an emotional expression of religious beliefs and practices (known as the “New Side”).²⁷ Where the Old Side relied upon the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Scotland for leadership in its practices, the New Side relinquished its dependence on Europe. For a brief time, presbyteries within the Mid-Atlantic colonies chose sides—Philadelphia with the “Old Side;” New York and New Castle with the “New Side.” Bitter dissension within and between presbyteries

²⁷ Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, 166. Apparently, this “New Side/Old Side” argument was an extension of a similar one experienced in the 1720s and 1730s in Ulster. See Griffin’s chapter “‘Satan’s Sieve’: Crisis and Community in Ulster” in *The People with No Name* for further explanation.

created in some Presbyterians a yearning to leave their current residences and build new congregations.²⁸

The Presbyterian congregations located in the region associated with the pioneering generation of the Nottingham Settlement were not exempt from this division. Within Lancaster County, the Presbytery of Donegal (established 1732) encompassed a number of congregations: Donegal, Paxton, Pequea, Middle Octoraro, Chestnut Level, Little Britain, and Leacock.²⁹ Although originally under the auspices of the Presbytery of New Castle (Delaware), the congregation at Nottingham (then considered a part of Lancaster County and now situated in Colora, Cecil County, Maryland) shared many of the same ministers as those associated with the Donegal Presbytery due to this congregation's proximity to the Donegal Presbytery congregations and the shortage of trained ministers in the colonies. A large number of these ministers embraced the views of the New Side, while some of the congregations resisted this change in practice and remained with the Old Side. In the case of the Nottingham (Maryland) congregation, the difference of opinion led to the congregation splitting into two separate churches in 1741—East Nottingham with the Old Side and West Nottingham with the New Side.³⁰

Life in Colonial Rowan County, North Carolina

By the middle of the eighteenth century, both first- and second-generation immigrants found themselves considering “greener pastures” in the southern

²⁸ Leyburn, *Scotch-Irish*, 277–81; and Robert Hamlin Stone, *A History of Orange Presbytery, 1770–1970* (Greensboro, N.C.: Robert Hamlin Stone, 1970), 4.

²⁹ Griffin, *People with No Name*, 116. For further information on the history of these congregations, refer to H. M. J. Klein, ed., *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1924), II: 775–796; and Ross I. Morrison, Sr., *Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Morgantown, Pa.: Masthof Press, 2004).

³⁰ Samuel A. Gayley, *A Historical Sketch of the Lower West Nottingham Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Alfred Martien, 1865), 24.

backcountry. The desire to own land, the lack of available real estate in Pennsylvania and soaring land prices prompted them to look to the untamed and seemingly vast acreage of colonial North Carolina to the south.³¹



Figure 4. The Great Wagon Road. (Drawing by Wendy L. Adams with assistance by Rachel M. Popma. Based on map found in Parke Rouse, *The Great Wagon Road: from Philadelphia to the South* (1973; repr., Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 2004), map insert.)

³¹ Lemon, *Best Poor Man's Country*, 65–69.

Beginning in 1744, settlers from Pennsylvania traveled into the southern backcountry on what was essentially a well-worn Indian trail known to European Americans as the Great Wagon Road. Stretching along the eastern flank of the Appalachian Mountains (e.g., the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains) from Philadelphia to Georgia, the road arrived in the central (Piedmont) area of colonial North Carolina.³² (figure 4) By the early 1750s, the Scots-Irish had joined German-speaking Moravians, English Quakers and others in the move south from Pennsylvania.³³

The North Carolina Piedmont must have looked like Eden to these newcomers. This region “differ[ed] in its shape . . . its climate and its plant and animal life.”³⁴ Unlike the Carolina coast, the Piedmont was tillable and fertile—especially the land around the streams which formed the headwaters of the colony’s major rivers.³⁵ For example, the land through which the North and South Buffalo Creeks and the Reedy Fork Creek flowed, where many of the Nottingham Settlement owned acreage, sloped. The soil was well drained with “a sandy clay loam, clay, and clay loam subsoil.”³⁶ Not surprisingly, the land nearest the creek beds themselves was nearly level and a flood plain.³⁷ Modern geologists consider this sloping land to have “moderate potential for crops, low potential for most urban uses, and moderate potential for woodland,” while the flood plains have a

³² Rouse, *The Great Wagon Road*, vii, 4–5.

³³ Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 67.

³⁴ Rouse, *Great Wagon Road*, 5.

³⁵ W. Neil Franklin, “Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 3 (1926): 552.

³⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Guilford County, North Carolina* (N.p., 1977), 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

“low to high potential for crops, low potential for most urban uses, and very high potential for woodland.”³⁸

Wooded areas contained “hardwoods, spruce and white pine.”³⁹ Abundant wildlife, such as the now extinct woods buffalo (a smaller version of those found on the Plains), roamed throughout.⁴⁰ Much of the land was still sparsely inhabited by Europeans and Native Americans were being pushed out. In 1752 Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg, a Moravian whose congregation settled several miles west of the Nottingham Settlement, remarked on the vanishing population of Native Americans in central and eastern North Carolina.⁴¹ The near absence of Native Americans in this area of North Carolina allowed European settlers access to land and natural resources without fear of competition or reprisal.

During the mid-1700s, much of the land in central North Carolina, which included both Tidewater and Piedmont regions, belonged to John, Lord Carteret. The original Carolina grant from Charles II encompassed all of the land south of Virginia and north of Florida, from the Atlantic shore to the Pacific Ocean. Because of its size, Charles II (in 1663 and 1665) had divided Carolina into eight shares and entrusted them to eight Lords Proprietor. Some sixty years later, all but Carteret had relinquished their claims to their

³⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Guilford County, North Carolina* (N.p., 1977), 5, 7.

³⁹ Rouse, *Great Wagon Road*, 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5–6; Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: the Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 11; and “The Spanenburg Diary,” September 15, 1752, in Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (1922, repr. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1968), I:36.

property. Lord Carteret received full ownership of his claim in 1744, by which time he had inherited the title of Earl Granville.⁴²

Settlers purchased land from Granville by finding a plot of unclaimed land and then filing an application that described its location and acreage. Granville's agents verified the land's availability, filed the application and issued a survey warrant.⁴³ After the survey's completion, either Granville's agents or the governor's secretary prepared a plat and written description of the property (called a patent) and issued the patent to the purchaser once all fees were paid. As owner of the land, Granville received the quitrents (or annual land tax of three shillings sterling per hundred acres purchased) collected from the purchasers of land grants (in the case of the Nottingham Settlement, a grant equaled 640 acres or one mile square).⁴⁴ Granville hired land agents in America to collect the rents.⁴⁵

Granville's proprietorship (approximately 26,000 acres by 1774) through secondary and tertiary parties created complications which only exacerbated events on

⁴² Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 28–29; Thornton W. Mitchell, "The Granville District and Its Land Records," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 70 (1993), 103–129; and Margaret M. Hofmann, *Colony of North Carolina 1735–1764: Abstracts of Land Patents, v.I* (Weldon, N.C.: Roanoke News Co., 1982), [iii–iv].

⁴³ Lord Granville's Office Entry Books, 1750–51, Secretary of State, Land Office, Lord Granville's Land Office, NCDAH. On March 5, 1750, six men asked Granville's agent to survey thirty 640-acre tracts "on the Waters of the South fork of Saxapahaw River, & the Waters of Buffalo" in Rowan (Guilford) County (then known as Anson County). These men were probably the agents sent ahead to procure land for the Settlement (as mentioned in Rankin's *A History of Buffalo Presbyterian Church*). The fact that several of the men requested more tracts surveyed than they claimed in or after 1753 supports this supposition. Thomas Donnell requested twelve tracts but claimed only two; Robert Rankin requested six tracts but claimed only one; Robert McCuiston requested three tracts but claimed none of these 640-acre tracts; William McClintock requested five tracts but does not appear to have claimed any of them himself; and Thomas McCuiston only claimed one of the two tracts he requested surveyed. The only exception was John Cunningham, who requested two tracts which he then claimed.

⁴⁴ Robert J. Cain, ed., *Records of the Executive Council, 1735–1754* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1988), xxvii; Mitchell, "Granville District;" and W.N. Watt, *The Granville District* (N.p.: W. N. Watt, 1992), 51. Cain states "the size of individual land grants . . . usually was under 500 acres, and a substantial majority of all grantees received only one grant." (xxvii). Conversely, Mitchell reports Granville directed that grants be "no larger than 640 or 700 acres." (111).

⁴⁵ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 29.

the eve of the Revolution. His agents failed to forward gathered quitrents to Granville in England. Instead, the agents took advantage of their position, “charging exorbitant fees for entries and surveys.”⁴⁶ Although Granville mandated that his agents issue patents no more than twelve months after survey, delays occurred frequently. In addition, one of Granville’s agents, Henry McCulloh, an absentee land speculator who held acreage granted by the King, contested some of Granville’s sales to settlers.⁴⁷

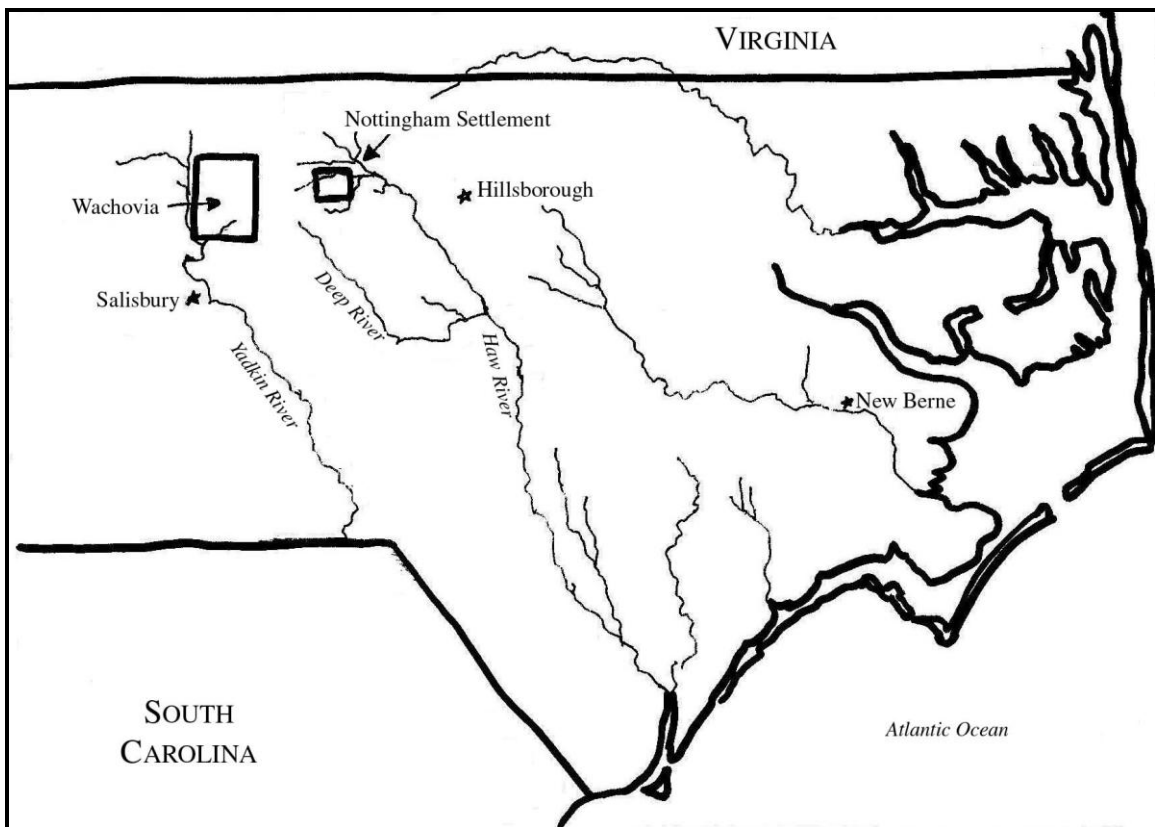


Figure 5. Depiction of Colonial North Carolina (after 1760). (Drawing by Wendy L. Adams with assistance by Rachel M. Popma. Based on Bew and Lodge’s, “A New and Accurate Map of North Carolina, and Part of South Carolina with the Field of Battle between Earl Cornwallis and General Gates” (1780), North Carolina Maps, www.dc.lib.unc.edu (accessed January 5, 2009).)

⁴⁶ Mitchell, “Granville District,” 114.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 113; and Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 34–37.

The population of the North Carolina Colony in 1755 has been estimated as 84,599, including both whites and blacks.⁴⁸ Increasing numbers of settlers in North Carolina's Piedmont led to the creation of new counties. In 1749, Anson County encompassed most of the Piedmont region. In 1753, the colonial government divided Anson County into several more counties, one of which was Rowan County. Although towns such as Salisbury (established in 1755 as the county seat of Rowan County), approximately fifty-two miles to the southwest, the Moravian community of Wachovia approximately twenty-nine miles to the west, and Hillsborough (incorporated in 1759) in Orange County approximately forty-two miles to the east provided the nearest opportunities for trade, Nottingham Settlement members lived in a rural setting away from any town.⁴⁹ The Carolina backcountry's limited infrastructure offered Settlement members access to these trading places. Roads and bridges, albeit primitive, became more plentiful after 1764 when the legislature enabled local courts to establish and maintain them through taxation or mandatory work parties.⁵⁰

Settlers engaged primarily in farming, raising both livestock—cattle and hogs that roamed throughout the countryside—and crops, such as peas, beans, “Indian” corn (or

⁴⁸ Cain, *Records of the Executive Council*, xii.

⁴⁹ Robert W. Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747–1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 150, 154; and Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 17; Alexander R. Stoesen, *Guilford County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1993), 2–7; and MapQuest (<http://www.mapquest.com>). Alexander R. Stoesen, in the opening chapter of *Guilford County*, states that Guilford “was quiet, isolated, and with a population so scattered that no town existed” before 1785, when county commissioners named the land around the first courthouse “Martinville” and established the first county seat. (2, 6) Greensboro replaced Martinville as the county seat when the “new” courthouse opened in 1809. (7) Mileage between Settlement (present-day Greensboro) and Salisbury, Winston-Salem (Wachovia) and Hillsborough based on driving directions acquired from MapQuest.

⁵⁰ Cain, *Records of the Executive Council*, xxviii–xxx; Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 17; H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Woods, *From Ulster to Carolina: the Migration of the Scotch-Irish to Southwestern North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1998), 42, 44–45; and Hugh T. Lefler and William S. Powell, *Colonial North Carolina: a History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 167, 169.

maize) and wheat.⁵¹ While much of what they produced went toward sustaining the farm family, the sale of cash crops, such as wheat, and cattle supplemented their subsistence.⁵² Although many may equate cash crops in the South with tobacco, much of the tobacco produced in North Carolina for market grew “mostly in Albemarle and the counties near the Virginia line.”⁵³ Therefore, eighteenth-century Piedmont farmers raised small amounts of tobacco primarily for their own use.

Typically, settlers in North Carolina’s Piedmont maintained farming practices similar to those employed throughout the American colonies. First, settlers cleared enough land to build a house and a split rail fence to encompass the land to be planted. To remove large trees, settlers “girdled” each one by removing bark around its base, causing the tree to die.⁵⁴ Settlers then planted crops throughout the cleared area, working the soil with hand-held implements such as hoes, sickles and spades, and employing work animals to draw plows and wagons.⁵⁵

Access to an apparent overabundance of virgin farm land discouraged conservation. Due to the fertile nature of this previously uncultivated soil, settlers rarely needed to fertilize their fields. The present-day practice of crop rotation—varying the crop planted from year to year—was not routinely employed, but rather “crops were . . .

⁵¹ Unlike today, Anglo colonists used the word “corn” as a generic term for any grain harvested. Modern American use of the term refers to what colonial Europeans called “maize” or Indian corn.

⁵² Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 108–118.

⁵³ W. Neil Franklin, “Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 3 (1926): 553.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 547; and Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 106. Franklin states that in 1715 North Carolina’s colonial government set forth standards for fence making in the colony.

⁵⁵ Cornelius O. Cathey, “Agricultural Implements in North Carolina, 1783–1860,” *Agricultural History* 25, no. 3 (1951): 128.

annually planted until the ground cease[d] to produce a sufficient yield.”⁵⁶ Therefore, settlers found themselves continually clearing and planting new acreage.

The crops grown by Piedmont settlers ranged from vegetables and grains consumed by humans to fodder fed to the stock. Settlers grew peas, a variety of beans and corn to supply their diets. In the spring they planted around poles the so-called “bushel bean,” which yielded fruit continually throughout the summer, and harvested beans until the first frost.⁵⁷ They also planted a variety of “garden roots,” such as parsnips, carrots, turnips, potatoes and onions, as well as vegetables regarded as “salads” (cabbage and lettuces).⁵⁸

Potentially, two grain crops could be planted each year due to a mild climate and long growing season. Farmers harvested the first crop, European wheat, by the beginning of June, and then planted the same field with buck-wheat or Indian corn, which they harvested sometime before November, depending on the crop. This second crop fed the livestock, including the horses and poultry.⁵⁹ Crop yields were usually abundant, and settlers rarely experienced crop failures.⁶⁰

Livestock provided the Piedmont settler with both revenue and sustenance. Generally, cattle and hogs roamed freely on the land and fed on vegetation found in the fallow fields and forests. Farmers released cattle and hogs from their pens in the morning and brought them back before nightfall, giving them small amounts of corn and food

⁵⁶ W. Neil Franklin, “Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 3 (1926): 547.

⁵⁷ John Bricknell, *The Natural History of North-Carolina. With an Account of the Trade, Manners, and Customs, of the Christian and Indian Inhabitants. Strange Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Snakes, Insects, Trees, and Plants, &c. Illustrated with Copper Plates* (Dublin, 1743), 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁰ Franklin, “Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina,” 555. Franklin reports that the Indian corn crop failed both in 1758 and 1766.

scraps if available.⁶¹ The North Carolina colonial government required that settlers mark (using a series of ear notches) or brand their livestock and register the mark with the local authorities.⁶² The Rowan County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions from 1753 to 1762 lists a number of such registrations, although the limited number recorded suggests that not every settler complied with the government's request.

When settlers sold their livestock, they drove (on hoof) their cattle or hogs north—much like later western cattle drives. While drovers took cattle as far as Philadelphia markets, settlers also drove hogs into Virginia where the animals were slaughtered, cured and packed into barrels for shipment to the West Indies.⁶³

Farm labor in the Piedmont included not only the settler himself but also his family. When needed, neighbors assisted in “clearing land, building houses, and harvesting crops.”⁶⁴ Occasionally, settlers engaged the labor of orphans, illegitimate children (of Anglo-European heritage), convicts and paupers indentured into limited servitude.⁶⁵ Unlike the larger plantations found near North Carolina's Tidewater region, slave labor constituted little of the work accomplished on Piedmont farms during the mid-eighteenth century.⁶⁶ Whether due to lack of wherewithal needed to acquire and sustain such labor or the limited cash crops grown in the region (which in turn limited the need for a large work force), enslaved persons of African descent made up a small

⁶¹ Franklin, “Agriculture in Colonial North Carolina,” 564; and John Solomon Otto, *The Southern Frontiers, 1607–1860: The Agricultural Evolution of the Colonial and Antebellum South* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 31.

⁶² Otto, *Southern Frontiers*, 31.

⁶³ Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina*, 134–5.

⁶⁴ Otto, *Southern Frontiers*, 56.

⁶⁵ Cain, *Records of the Executive Council*, xli.

⁶⁶ Otto, *Southern Frontiers*, 55.

percentage of the backcountry population.⁶⁷ Although the use of enslaved labor in the Piedmont increased as the colonial period waned, the African-American population did not achieve the same proportion of the population as found in the Tidewater.⁶⁸

The farmer purchased from others what items, food or services he could not produce on site. Skilled tradesmen, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, gunsmiths, millwrights, tanners and weavers, provided services and produced goods to meet the farmers' basic needs.⁶⁹ Many of these tradesmen accompanied others in their community to the backcountry and also purchased farms. The burgeoning town of Salisbury and the Moravian community at Wachovia also provided area farmers with trade goods. These tradesmen and merchants sold both locally produced and imported items. In payment for these skilled services, farmers bartered surplus crops and farm produce.⁷⁰ Although colonial merchants preferred payment in cash rather than barter, most extended credit to farmers because of the scarcity of species.⁷¹

The family structure and domestic practices within colonial North Carolina differed little from other colonies in America. Officially, governor-appointed justices of the peace performed marriages and “a man was required to give bond that there was no lawful impediment to the marriage.”⁷² Farm families included numerous children (on

⁶⁷ Cain, *Records of the Executive Council*, xliii. Cain estimates that enslaved persons of African descent “constituted substantially less than 10 percent of the population” in the Piedmont (xliii).

⁶⁸ Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748–1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 221–2. One hundred two Blacks were listed on the poll tax 1755 list in Rowan County compared with the 1,223 listed in Bertie County in the Albemarle Sound region. The numbers increased by the 1767 tax at which time 719 Blacks lived in Rowan County, while 1,913 Blacks lived in Bertie County.

⁶⁹ Johanna Miller Lewis, *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 2.

⁷⁰ Lewis, *Artisans*, 50–51, 72–73.

⁷¹ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1963), 103.

⁷² Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 188.

average five to seven) to work the land.⁷³ Settlers built log or frame homes upon their arrival. In the Piedmont, frame houses quickly became the norm along with brick structures near the coast and stone buildings.⁷⁴ By the mid- to late-1700s, settlers (mostly Scots-Irish) constructed “hall-and-parlor” houses consisting of “a large living room-kitchen combination (hall) and a small, private bedroom (parlor).”⁷⁵

The social strata of colonial North Carolina comprised three levels: those who owned large estates, such as the plantations found in the coastal counties; those who owned and worked smaller tracts of land; and those non-landowners, such as farm laborers, squatters, indentured servants and apprentices. Level of wealth as well as education and participation in local government determined social standing in colonial North Carolina.⁷⁶

Although the Anglican Church was the official church for the colony from 1701 until independence, North Carolina law allowed for a modicum of religious toleration. The influx of several dissenting denominations (i.e., the Quakers, Baptists, Moravians and Presbyterians) led to relaxation of the laws governing who could hold public office, perform marriages and be exempt from militia service.⁷⁷ To support the established Church’s existence and activities in North Carolina, the colonial government authorized the levying of a local vestry tax on landowners with fifty acres or more.⁷⁸ Considered a financial burden by those who preferred supporting their own religious bodies, in 1756 the dissenting settlers in Rowan and neighboring Orange Counties (including Nottingham

⁷³ Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 188.

⁷⁴ Alan D. Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1996), 48–50.

⁷⁵ Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina*, 51.

⁷⁶ Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 175–86. For example, the amount of land owned, as well as personal possessions, clothes and the size and type of house, denoted station in society.

⁷⁷ Cain, *Records of the Executive Council*, 1-liv.

⁷⁸ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 107.

Settlement members) sent a signed protest to both the King of England and Lord Granville requesting their exemption “from being obligated to pay towards support of the Clergy of the Established Church.”⁷⁹ (See appendix B.) To further their argument against supporting the Church of England, the petitioners stated that this tax hindered other like-minded dissenters from settling in the region. They also reasoned that the limited number of newcomers lowered the number of men available for the local militia and weakened their defense from any future attacks from the West (i.e., the French and hostile Native Americans).⁸⁰

Colonial North Carolina law stipulated that education be made available through the Anglican Church.⁸¹ The colony also allowed dissenters to provide their own schools.⁸² Upon his arrival in Rowan (Guilford) County, the settlement’s first minister, David Caldwell, established a “log school” at his home similar to the schools he attended in Pennsylvania, both to supplement his meager and erratic income from the Buffalo Presbyterian Church and to educate not only his congregation’s children but also students from within and outside of North Carolina.⁸³

During the 1760s, the British Parliament imposed on the American colonies a series of taxes to pay for the expenses of the French and Indian War. At the same time, settlers in Rowan and neighboring Orange Counties complained of misuse and over-

⁷⁹ English Records, Granville District, Papers from the Marquis of Bath’s Library in Longleat, Warminster, Wilshire, England, 1729–1780. (microfilm) NCDAH (referred to as “English Records”). Included in the lengthy list of signatures were the following Nottingham Settlement members—James Barr, John Cunningham, William Denny, Thomas Donnell, Adam Leakey, John McClintock, James McCuiston, Robert McCuiston, Thomas McCuiston, John McKnight, Adam Mitchell, George Rankin, Robert Rankin, and Robert Thompson.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina*, 70.

⁸² Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 191–212.

⁸³ Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 29–40. Caldwell’s biographer states that many of Caldwell’s former students came “from all the States south of the Potomac” and became “eminent . . . statesmen, lawyers, judges, physicians, and ministers of the gospel.” (30).

taxation by the colonial government.⁸⁴ These complaints included landownership disputes, excessive purchase costs, “absentee speculators,” bureaucratic corruption and fraud, devalued paper money and scarcity of (foreign) currency, and the unfair distribution of the tax burden (i.e., poll and vestry taxes). By the end of the decade, those calling for the regulation of local governmental control (commonly referred to as Regulators) took to the political arena, engaging in “petitions and elections ... [and] forceful popular resistance.”⁸⁵ When peaceful measures failed, riots erupted throughout the backcountry during the late 1760s.⁸⁶

The Regulators’ inability to work out their grievances with the government and Governor William Tryon’s exasperation with the previous decade’s civil unrest culminated in May 1771 at the Battle of Alamance in neighboring Orange County (just east of the Nottingham Settlement).⁸⁷ Upon hearing that a large number of armed, backcountry settlers were headed toward the colonial capitol in New Bern, Tryon moved military forces west toward Hillsborough to intervene. The two forces met along the Alamance Creek. In an effort to elude armed confrontation, a delegation led by Reverend Caldwell entered Tryon’s camp to pursue a peaceful conclusion to the situation. Among

⁸⁴ Orange County lies on the eastern border of what is now Guilford County. The extreme eastern portion of Guilford County was once considered part of “Orange County.”

⁸⁵ Lefler and Powell, *Colonial North Carolina*, 149.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 149, 240–44; Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 27–38, 55–68, 133, 142; and Elizabeth A. Fenn and Peter H. Wood, *Natives & Newcomers: The Way We Lived in North Carolina before 1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 77–91. For further information on the Regulator’s War, see the following: A. Roger Ekirch, “*Poor Carolina*”: *Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); James P. Whittenburg, “Planters, Merchants, and Lawyers: Social Change and the Origins of the North Carolina Regulation,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 34 (1977): 215–38; E. W. Caruthers, *Revolutionary Incidents and Sketches of Characters* (Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1854); and John S. Bassett, “The Regulators of North Carolina (1765–1771),” in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1894* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1895), 141–211.

⁸⁷ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 108, 197–201, 207. The British government appointed William Tryon royal governor of North Carolina in 1765. He stayed in North Carolina until his appointment as governor of the New York Colony in June 1771.

this delegation of three was Robert Thompson, a Nottingham Settlement member. Following Caldwell's return to the Regulators' camp to convey the governor's demands, Tryon ordered the execution of Thompson, who had been detained as a hostage.⁸⁸ Tryon's army won the ensuing skirmish and spent the summer in the Piedmont destroying crops and farms of suspected Regulators as punishment for refusing to acquiesce to the government.⁸⁹ A minor outcome of Tryon's victory over the Regulators was the division of Rowan County in 1771—out of which came Guilford County, the county where the Settlement's pioneering generation lived.

Events of the seventeenth and early to mid-eighteenth centuries influenced and shaped the Nottingham Settlement's pioneering generation before and after their migration to the North Carolina backcountry. The social, religious and political climate of colonial North Carolina during the Settlement's first two decades affected their lives, impacting their decisions and actions. By the early 1770s, the Nottingham Settlement's pioneering generation had lived in Rowan (Guilford) County for nearly twenty years. Many of the purchasers of the initial thirty Granville grants had died before the mid-1770s, and successive generations became more prominent in county records and local histories.⁹⁰ The creation of Guilford County coincided with this shift in public participation as land conveyance and court records increasingly cited second and third generation landowners in place of those who arrived in the 1750s.

⁸⁸ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 199–201.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 203–4.

⁹⁰ Of the twenty-one individuals included in the sample, nine died before the mid-1770s (of these nine, five were initial purchasers of the original Granville grants reserved for the Nottingham Settlement). See appendix A for specific names and death dates.