## A GLOBAL CLAN

Angela McCarthy Editor

**Tauris Academic Studies** 

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The Gaelic Society's Choir, Dunedin, New Zealand, 1899 (Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago, New Zealand, AG-542/7).

## A GLOBAL CLAN

Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities Since the Eighteenth Century

> Edited by Angela McCarthy

Tauris Academic Studies LONDON • NEW YORK

Published in 2006 by Tauris Academic Studies, an imprint of I.B.Tauris and Co. Ltd

6 Salem Road London W2 4BU 175 Fifth Avenue New York NY 10010

www.ibtauris.com

In the United States of America and Canada distributed by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of St. Martin's Press 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010

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International Library of Historical Studies ISBN 1 84511 067 6 EAN 978 1 84511 067 3

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library A full CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress catalog card: available

Printed and bound in Great Britain by T J International Ltd, from cameraready copy supplied by the editor

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Angela McCarthy has published several articles on modern Irish and Scottish migration and is the author of *Irish Migrants in New Zealand*, 1840-1937: 'The Desired Haven' (2005). She has held posts at the University of Aberdeen and Victoria University of Wellington and in 2006 will join the History Department at the University of Hull. Angela is currently completing a major study of Irish and Scottish migration in the twentieth century, to be published by Manchester University Press.

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#### **PREFACE**

The idea for this book emerged from two quarters. First, Don MacRaild and Enda Delaney had conceived a volume focused on Irish networks and identities for which I was a contributor. Second, during a diaspora workshop that I organized in January 2003 during my time as Research Fellow at the AHRB Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen, the propensity of Scots participating in similar practices over time and space was abundantly apparent. Yet analyzing networks and identities from the perspective of individuals involved in the process of migration remained relatively rare, and the blending of these conceptual and methodological approaches struck me as a promising combination.

I am grateful to those scholars who readily agreed to contribute to this collection, and am appreciative of their ongoing willingness to address many queries and suggestions raised throughout the editorial process. I am sure they all join with me in warmly thanking Professors David Fitzpatrick and John M. MacKenzie, both of whom generously supported this book from its inception, and also T. M. Devine for his comments on preliminary drafts of the chapters.

The volume was completed during my tenure as J. D. Stout Research Fellow in New Zealand Studies at the Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, where a lively atmosphere was inspiring.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Hocken Library, Dunedin, New Zealand, for generously making the wonderful frontispiece image available for reproduction, and the awesome team at I.B.Tauris for believing in this book and bringing it to fruition.

Angela McCarthy Wellington

### **EDITORIAL NOTES**

Contributors were asked to supply, where possible, the names and locations of writers and recipients of letters.

The reproduction of the spelling and grammar contained in the original sources remains unaltered throughout (unless individual contributors have specified otherwise), though sentence and paragraph breaks have been incorporated. Editorial excisions have been kept to a minimum but are as follows:

Authentic oddities: reminiscinces

Clarification: both Pat and he [Robert] are anxious

Illegible words: [word illegible]
Illegible words with suggestion: [?missing]

Words deleted or omitted: [erased: to] [omitted: to]

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

### Personal Testimonies and Scottish Migration

### Angela McCarthy

Many accounts of Scottish migration have focused on broad explanations derived predominantly from analyses of demographic data and official sources. Such approaches have largely been concerned with documenting who went, in what numbers, and why. Briefly, while Scots were mobile in the medieval period, it was only after 1600 that they became increasingly migratory. Estimates put Scottish migration between 1600 and 1650 at approximately 85,000-115,000. This outflow was predominantly directed towards Europe (especially Poland), Ireland (particularly Ulster), and England. Unlike other Scottish migrations to Europe, which were heavily military oriented, those going to Ireland had rough gender parity, more families, and less mercenary involvement.

The following century saw Scottish migration gradually redirected from Europe to the New World, though Ulster remained of utmost significance in the early decades. Mobility to America, though, increased significantly. Whereas prior to 1700 only about 6,000 Scots went to American shores, in the century thereafter around up to 150,000 sought settlement there.<sup>5</sup> This was a socially inclusive outflow composed of the gentry, servants, and unemployed.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it was an outflow balanced by age and sex that was twice as likely as their English counterparts to move in family groups, and comprised a higher proportion of children.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, Scots in India and the Caribbean during the century were young single men (echoing the pattern in Europe the previous century). In the Caribbean, Scots were typically transient planters, merchants, colonial officials, attorneys, doctors, overseers, and tradesmen, while in India they were usually the sons of the landed gentry or mercantile families.<sup>8</sup> Their potential to reap massive returns was, however, balanced by huge mortality rates.<sup>9</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century the number of Scots migrating increased substantially. Between 1825 and 1938, for instance, an estimated 2.33 million Scots sought non-European destinations.<sup>10</sup> The outflow was part of a broader European movement which saw approximately 60 million people leave for overseas shores between 1815 and 1930.<sup>11</sup> It was also

during this period that the Scottish influx to Canada took shape. Australia and New Zealand were likewise important destinations. Migration during the century was clearly paradoxical for several reasons: Scots left during a time of urban industrial expansion; they were predominantly skilled migrants leaving urban districts; and there was a counter flow of Irish migrants into Scotland.<sup>12</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century until 1930 Scotland usually ranked third, behind both Ireland and Norway, among European countries exporting migrants. In certain periods, such as 1901-10 and 1913, Scotland was second only to Italy, while between 1921-30 the exodus from Scotland was proportionately greater than other European countries. Indeed, the interwar years witnessed a departure of almost half a million Scots. A further half a million left in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### Use of Testimonies

Although the broad sweep of Scottish migration provides an important context, by and large the experiences of those involved in the processes of relocation and settlement have been astonishingly neglected. This volume is an initial step in remedying that dearth. It does so by deploying personal testimonies, such as letters, interviews, and memoirs, to present a vivid and engaging picture of Scottish migration across time and space. Such material has only been sporadically utilized in the past to explore notions of individual movement, while recent syntheses have deployed such sources for colour and drama. <sup>16</sup> Current forays in the field of twentieth-century Scottish migration have, however, shown ways in which these sources can be approached. <sup>17</sup>

The value of such source material has most profitably been used for other migrant groups. Personal letters, in particular, have been most extensively utilized with the English, Irish, German, and Dutch all receiving critical attention. Such works succinctly summarize the uses and functions of personal letters. For David Fitzpatrick, the eminent historian of Ireland who examined Irish-Australian correspondence, letters were 'a cultural institution' and involved consolatory, functional, and manipulative applications. More recently, David Gerber has suggested new pathways for examining the emigrant letter. In an overview of approaches to the emigrant letter, Gerber proposed the usefulness of gender and modernization perspectives in exploring concepts of the self. Gerber has also looked at the modification and maintenance of significant relationships through the exchange of letters and the ways this sustained a 'culture of emigration'. It is just such themes that he returns to in his chapter for this collection.

Scholarly concerns about the methodology of utilizing personal letters are naturally warranted.<sup>22</sup> Whether the information contained in correspondence is trustworthy and the extent to which letters are representative of migrant groupings as a whole have been issues of particular concern. Letters, for instance, are composed by the literate and those who wish to communicate. Yet the random and haphazard endurance and acquisition of letters means that those that have survived are exceptional and therefore unlikely to be representative of either migrants or letter-writers. Methodological concerns surrounding the authenticity, editing, and presentation of transcripts are also important. In this volume, contributors have drawn on both published and unpublished materials and careful distinctions between the two are necessary. In their respective chapters, contributors have also pointed out drawbacks with the various materials deployed. As Andrew Mackillop indicates, relying on letters alone can provide a false impression of Scots as 'excessively clannish'. Tom Brooking, meanwhile, suggests that letters tell us about the general migrant experience, rather than what was particularly Scottish about it. The latter, he suggests in this volume, is only discernible through Presbyterianism, happenings in Scotland, and comparisons between origin and destination.

Despite such concerns, the major benefit of emigrant correspondence is in illuminating quite vividly and emotionally the varied migration experiences of individuals. Indeed, the benefits of personal letters in studies of migration are immeasurable. They often provide a two-way perspective even though many preserved sequences contain correspondence sent in just one direction. Indeed, being an intimate, conversational means of communication, correspondents actively sought responses from recipients. Depending on the recipient, however, tone and content could vary. In addition, letter writers decided what information they would disclose and, despite their private nature, letters could be read aloud.

By contrast with the longevity of scholars' use of personal letters in providing an innovative and popular means by which to explore the self-identification of migrants, interviews are a more recent methodological approach adopted by historians in migration studies. Even if the nature of the source means that its application is largely confined to movements in the twentieth century, interviews have proved particularly attractive for studying the process of migration. In part this is because of a shortage of other forms of personal testimony, but it is also due to the desire of scholars to penetrate the lives of 'ordinary' individuals. Yet blossoming fascination with the use of oral history in migration studies has prompted Alistair Thomson's concern as to whether ready recourse to record migrant

stories 'has displaced historians' efforts to unearth other forms of personal testimony'. An 'unexpected byproduct of' an oral history project conducted in Australia, for instance, was the discovery of letters, diaries, and other family sources. Authors in this collection have also endeavoured to supplement the dominant personal testimony. Mackillop, for instance, utilizes wills and business correspondence, while Doug Catterall draws upon a memorial and petition to parliamentary committee. While arguments could be made that such material is personal testimony, these documents, official in character, served a different purpose to other forms of private testimony like letters, diaries, and interviews. Other authors incorporate a range of personal testimonies in their analyses. Thus, Brooking and Eric Richards utilize letters, memoirs, and autobiographies, while Angela McCarthy and Jim Hammerton blend both oral and written sources.

Unlike written migrant material, interviews are mediated by the intervention of an interviewer who typically sets the agenda for discussion, edits the interview, evaluates it and either stores it for posterity or discards it.25 The level of comfort a respondent feels with questions directed towards them also shapes the interview process. Further complications include the reliability and consistency of memory, yet these can be counteracted by recourse to documentary evidence or comparison with other interviews on the same topic. Whether or not the interviewee has a personal agenda in articulating a specific version of events also needs to be considered. Despite such drawbacks, interviews have critical benefits for scholars of migration. They not only enable exploration of aspects of the migration experience through individual stories that would otherwise be lost to scholars, but the longitudinal nature of oral testimony gives it 'a crucial competitive edge' over the contemporary document.<sup>26</sup> By mapping individual accounts over time the consequences of past events can be examined.

Quite apart from their notable differences, letters and oral testimony have similarities. Both, for instance, depend on the selective memory of the correspondent and interviewee, who shape their stories for specific audiences. Letters and interviews also contain silences and evasions. While the correspondent might well choose to ignore penning seemingly unsuitable or sensitive topics for discussion, a deft interviewee can also elect to evade an uncomfortable issue, or avoid supplying relevant, but delicate, data. On the other hand, interviewees are more likely to discuss intimate issues with an empathetic interviewer while correspondents, though perhaps silent about their own affairs, could be forthcoming about personal matters relating to their associates.

#### Testimonies and Themes

Overall, these sources are most beneficial for the penetrating insight they provide into a range of significant themes associated with migration including motives for moving and issues of integration. Such topics arise peripherally in this collection, along with a number of other important issues. Three substantial areas of investigation emerging from these chapters relate to gender, child migration, and return migration, vital aspects requiring greater analysis within studies of migration more generally. What, however, does a focus on Scottish migration reveal?

Several of the chapters are predominantly based on testimonies from Scottish men. In places such as eighteenth-century India and the Caribbean this is not surprising, for the demanding physical environment acted against widespread female settlement. Richards' chapter on the Scots in Australia is also heavily reliant on the sources composed by Scottish men, essentially due to his focus on mercantile and pastoral networks which were male dominated. Whether their womenfolk established network ties, albeit of a different form, readily awaits exploration. Other chapters, however, document the challenging female experience of migration and pose the query of whether migration was a gendered experience. Gerber's exploration of the letters exchanged between Mary Ann Archbald and her childhood friend are especially illuminating in terms of Archbald's seemingly passive role in the relocation. So too is Hammerton's and McCarthy's documentation of the influence of Scottish women in the decision-making process. More systematic and sustained analysis of migration through a gendered lens, however, is required. The extent to which gender relations at home influenced migrants after settlement abroad and vice versa are further major aspects of migration requiring investigation.

Personal testimonies also illuminate themes rarely considered in Scottish migration. While the official relocation of British orphaned children has preoccupied some scholars,<sup>27</sup> few have looked at the bulk of children who migrated with or to their parents. Hammerton's chapter makes an important contribution in this respect, by drawing on the testimony of migrants who left Scotland as children and their resultant ambivalent loyalties. McCarthy also uses the oral testimony of those who went to the United States as children, and reveals that they faced significant challenges, particularly in school settings. Chapters by Gerber and Catterall, meanwhile, provide brief but scintillating insights into the second-generation experience abroad, one of the most neglected topics within the historiography of Scottish migration and studies of migration more generally. We still await, for instance, sustained investigation of the entire

Scottish multigenerational ethnic group in their varied destinations of choice.

A further theme linking a number of chapters is that of the return flow, an area of analysis strikingly overlooked in aspects of Scottish migration, though a recent collection has made a necessary and welcome contribution to that area of neglect.<sup>28</sup> This disregard is surprising given that an estimated one-third of Scots returned to their homeland.<sup>29</sup> Qualitative evidence of earlier and later migrant flows shows a conspicuous Scottish disposition for return, even if not always fulfilled. Mackillop and Hamilton, for instance, document the desire for sojourners in India and the Caribbean to return with abundant resources, a wish that rarely met fruition, especially for those in India. John Rose, on the other hand, successfully returned to Britain after a period in the United States, as Catterall outlines. A hankering to return to Scotland also suffused Mary Ann Archbald's correspondence from the United States, though the practical achievement of this desire remained a fantasy. So too is evidence of return migration found in Sarah Gibson's exploration of the Brodies and their connections in Canada. Examples of a yearning to return and actual examples of reverse movement occurring likewise feature in Richards' chapter on the Scots in Australia. While not documented in any depth in the remaining chapters, the propensity among migrants to return to Scotland was presumably substantial throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Another theme, really only alluded to in passing by some contributors, is Scottish perceptions and engagements with indigenous populations and other races. At times, as Mackillop reveals, interaction with South Asians could result in sexual liaisons. Yet practical rather than sentimental motives spurred most relationships Scots maintained with South Asians. Moreover, Mackillop points out how erroneous the assumption is that past oppression of the Scots made them sensitive to other racial groups. This verdict is reiterated by Hamilton in connection with Scottish engagement with slaves in the Caribbean. So too do Scottish perceptions of Australia's indigenous population suggest that Scots indulged 'in the prevailing disdain for the indigenous populations whom they decisively displaced.' In New Zealand, on the other hand, there is evidence that Scots were quick to adapt Maori patterns of engagement with the land. These preliminary remarks reveal the urgent requirement for a systematic exploration of Scottish encounters with and perceptions of indigenous populations throughout all regions of the Scottish Empire. How did Scottish perceptions of indigenous groups differ from those migrants emanating from other areas of Europe? Did Scots perceive themselves as having better relations with indigenous groups than other migrants? To what extent did they permit professional indigines

membership of Scottish lodges and institutions? And how did the prevalence of other racial groups at Scottish rather than English universities influence the perceptions of indigenous people by highly educated Scottish migrants abroad?

Apart from these issues in Scottish migration, *inter alia*, two critical themes in personal testimonies relate to networks and identities. These conceptual aspects are focused upon in this volume in order to give it intellectual and conceptual coherence. They are also explored through the lens of personal sources to provide accounts of what migrants thought, rather than attempt to ascertain their mentalities and experiences through the words of others. In adopting this approach, the idea of a homogeneous community of Scots as derived from popular discourses of identity is challenged. As at home, Scots were marked out by religious, linguistic, cultural, and geographical differences. So too could these networks and identities alter over time. Efforts are also made to establish what was particularly Scottish about migrant networks and identities by making preliminary comparisons with other ethnic groups. This comparison is undertaken as studies that focus on a single ethnic group are susceptible to accusations of exceptionalism and parochialism.

#### Networks

Within studies of migration personal and formal networks are significant areas of analysis. Scholars have indicated that such networks differ in their origins, development, function, and operation. Networks also influence social mobility and the development of economic niches, and their long-term significance is often dependent on geographical concentration.<sup>30</sup> The workings of networks can, of course, be gleaned from numerous sources.

Formal networks, as revealed in this volume, could comprise business contacts, religious connections, and clubs and societies. Such contacts could be charitable or simply an entry into the business and political sphere. Informal networks were predominantly composed of family and friends, who frequently assisted with accommodation, employment, money, and friendship. At times, both informal and formal connections could blend. These various social networks enabled migrants to maintain contact with their homeland through a process scholars have termed 'transnationalism'.<sup>31</sup> The concept also embraces contact between family and friends at various destinations. These connections played important economic, political, and social roles particularly with regard to such issues as remittances, marriage, and citizenship.<sup>32</sup>

The various contributors to this collection have conceptualized networks in novel ways. Crucially, several essays demonstrate that Scots were not

always reliant on networks, formal or informal. This is most evident in Gerber's exploration of the correspondence of Mary Ann Archbald who deliberately avoided creating and nurturing such linkages. Instead, Archbald sought interaction with native-born Americans descended from other ethnic groups. This was primarily the consequence of her settlement in an area dominated by native-born Americans. While polite in her engagements, Archbald remained unsatisfied, thus generating a quest for solidarity with her old friend in Scotland. This action suggests that some migrants formed networks to fulfil emotional and sentimental rather than practical needs, admittedly not a feature peculiarly Scottish. So too does Richards identify Scots who operated in Australia without the support of such connections. This was predominantly due to the isolated character of their settlement in which they sought to tame unappropriated land. These 'colonial isolates', as Richards terms them, also largely operated outside other non-ethnic networks. Despite this, these migrants maintained contact with their close connections living elsewhere, thus revealing a sense of community despite physical absence.

Other contributors challenge the importance of a sole focus on Scottish networks. In his assessment of Scottish participation in the English East India Company throughout the eighteenth century, Mackillop supports the earlier conceptualization of Alan Karras, that networks were focused on old world goals. Yet Mackillop develops this conceptualization further, his main thrust being that 'Scots in Asia developed cyclical networks and identities that evolved (or revolved) in response to the process of departure, residence abroad, and the prospect of returning home'. Although Scots co-operated with South Asians their networks were predominantly composed of Europeans, mainly because this contact enabled their profits to be conveyed back to their origins. This arose from the constant threat of mortality and the necessity to have their estate administered in the event of death. Relying on other Scots for such practical and financial realities, Mackillop stresses, could be unrealistic and counterproductive. In addition, the placement of kin in diverse locales in India meant Scots could not rely exclusively on these family connections. This, together with the rapid turnover in arrival and departure of staff, meant that Scots did not solely depend on kin and local affiliations.

The maintenance of Scottish networks, however, was not incompatible with contact with other migrant groups. Scots in India, for instance, associated with Indians, Europeans, and Britons. Yet these connections could be discarded more easily than Scottish associations. Local mistresses, for example, were readily expendable. Scots in the Caribbean also worked with other groups and attended English church services. Mary Ann

Archbald likewise engaged more willingly with native-born Americans, though her correspondence contained frequent complaints about them.

Despite these divergent interpretations it is clear that many Scots made their journeys abroad in families or groups. As scholars have established for the eighteenth century, Highland migration took place predominantly in large parties, while Lowlanders moved as individuals or in families or small groups.<sup>33</sup> Most evidence from the testimonies points to the latter flow, highlighting the overall importance of Lowland migration which has typically been neglected in favour of the more emotive flow of Highlanders. The chapters that follow reveal that even when migrants moved as individuals they did so within tight networks of advice and support that drew upon a wider range of connections than those moving as collectives. Young male sojourners in India and the Caribbean, for example, were facilitated before and after their moves by their connections. Yet family migrations were a rarity in both cases, thus sparking the need for substitute networks, comprised of professional attachments. Later movements reveal the importance of family migrations as highlighted in chapters on the Brodies, Mary Ann Archbald, and Scots going to the United States in the twentieth century. Indeed, as McCarthy reveals, many Scottish men sought lodging and employment in the United States before being joined by their family. Yet these family connections extended beyond the usual nuclear family, perhaps because Scots going to the United States had to draw on a broader range of kin contacts due to strict immigration regulations requiring sponsorship. So too does Hammerton reveal the propensity of Scots to migrate in family groups to Australia, a feature which distinguished them from their English and Welsh counterparts.

A distinctive element of Scottish migration, compared with other ethnic groups, is the perception of clanship and clannishness. As Hamilton's investigation of Scottish migrants in the Caribbean illuminates, letters show an ongoing emotional connection to home regions. It was particular areas of origin, rather than an all-encompassing Scotland to which migrants were attached. Kinship and locality, therefore, were substantially stronger than national ties. Whereas these connections could also bind other migrant groups, Hamilton argues that Scots were distinguished by 'near kinship' and that clanship (not being blood related) rather than clannishness (blood related) distinguished the Scots in the Caribbean. In arguing that clanship was remade in the Empire, Hamilton posits that Lowlanders configured themselves in ways similar to Highlanders by maintaining patterns of patronage and support, but without adopting a broader Gaelic culture. In this formulation the patterns of clanship are therefore Scottish-wide but still encompass those who are not strictly blood related.<sup>34</sup>