

THE OTHER IRISH:

The Scots-Irish Rascals Who Made America

Karen F. McCarthy, Sterling. 333 pages. \$24.95



Comprehensive works on the Scotch-Irish are few and far between. Since James Leyburn's milestone "Social History," published way back in 1962, there have been few notable exhibits. It is now eight years since Senator James Webb introduced his colorful version of the Scotch-Irish story, *Born Fighting*, a completely different narrative style from the Leyburn landmark, but covering the same cross Atlantic timeline.

Now we have another recently released version of the Scotch-Irish story by a Karen F. McCarthy, which she calls *The Other Irish*. (Both McCarthy and Webb prefer Scots-Irish terminology.)

McCarthy's book is a surprise for a number of reasons. First, she herself is not from the American Scotch-Irish heartland (she was born in Ireland). Second, she is not a north of Ireland product but a graduate from UCD in Dublin and the London School of Journalism. Third, she is not a historian. Finally, she is from the mainline Irish community, who has traditionally written less favorably about the Scotch-Irish.

Karen McCarthy is an accomplished non-fiction filmmaker, journalist and author. Although technically an outsider, she has studied her subject well, spending considerable time in America and interviewing many of her Scotch-Irish subjects in their home setting. Her keen and inquisitive journalistic eye and her skillful interpretation of political events add a considerable richness to the presentation. Sure, there are flaws and weaknesses in places, but they are overwhelmed by the overall quality of the body of work.

How did it all happen for her. In her own words she tells us that her search for "this lost chapter of the Irish Diaspora took me from Dublin to Belfast and into some of the remotest regions of the South. It was a journey on which I discovered the extraordinary contribution these intrepid migrants made to American culture and character.

"I learned why they produced America legends like Davy Crockett, Edgar Allen Poe and Stephen King, why they became Second Amendment traditionalists, politically conservative and devoutly Christian. I discovered what led them to invent country music and America's biggest spectator sport. I also learned what few Europeans understand: why no presidential hopeful seems to be able to win the White House without some help from their Southern enclaves."

It is not all sugar though. She has sections on slavery, moonshiners, the Klan, and the ugly indentured servants business, but there is no finger pointing. Her documentation of the Scotch-Irish contribution to southern culture, everything from music to auto racing, is impressive. If you are looking for the twenty-first century edition of Leyburn, forget about it. This book has its own style and its own major contribution to the Scotch-Irish experience.

Bill McGimpsey

MEMBERS' CORNER



In the last Newsletter we included an excerpt from Society Member **Don Leslie's** presentation at the Symposium in York, South Carolina on the founding of Upper Long Cane Cemetery in South Carolina. On November 27, 2011, a ceremony was held at the cemetery to celebrate it being named to the "National Registry of Historic Places." The local mayor, board member of the Long Cane Cemetery Association, Leslie family members and many prominent town citizens were present. Don sent a picture of the marker that will be a permanent fixture in the cemetery.



Would you like to set up a Scotch-Irish tent at the Highland Games?

Society Member John Steadman explains how.

First, contact your local Highland Games representative and register a couple of months in advance for tent space. The average cost is \$25-\$35 for a 10' x 10' spot. This fee includes two free tickets for each day of the games. The first big expense, the tent, will set you back about \$200. I purchased mine at Sam's Club. The next big expense will be a banner. I decided to use the words 'Ulster Scots - Scotch Irish' with the red hand in the center. The number of colors and the size will determine the price. Anything custom will cost you more.

Bring card tables and a couple of nice table cloths as well as two to three chairs. You want your tent to be inviting to your guests. Snacks are a good idea, I usually bring cookies. You'll want to have a nice selection of books and pamphlets to hand out. Try and judge who truly has an interest in the Scotch-Irish before handing out pamphlets or most of them will end up in the trash can.

In my tent, I put up many flags of interest: flags you would see in Northern Ireland; many American historical flags such as the Betsy Ross and several flags from the War Between the States; the Saint Andrews flag (aka Scotland) and my Scottish tartan flag which is Henderson. (I also will wear a Henderson tartan kilt.) I love flags but you don't have to use flags. Your tent should be a reflection of your interests and your personality.

It's very easy to make a frame for your banner out of PVC which can include holders for two flags on top. Some events do not allow you to use stakes in the ground so you might want to make weights to hold it down ahead of time. Invest in a bunch

Scotch-Irish booth continued on page 12.