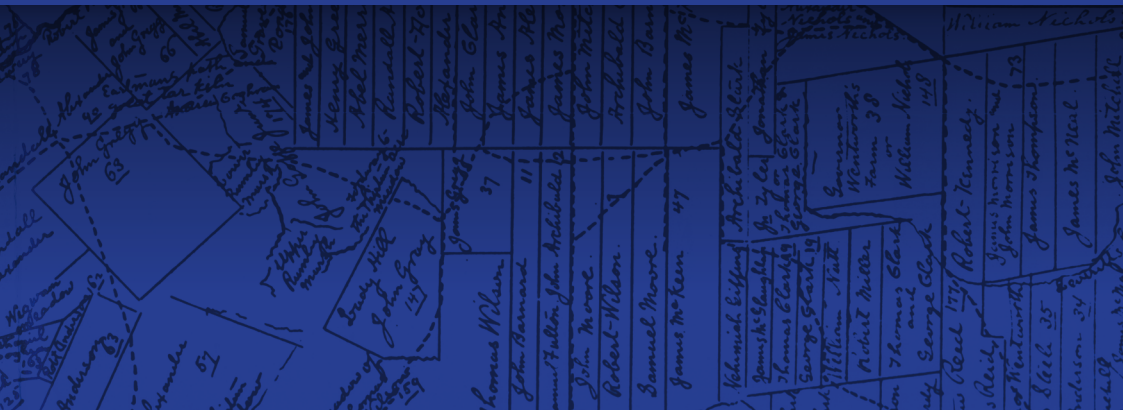




THE AMERICAN DREAM

Emigration from the **Causeway Coast**
and **Glens** to the **USA**



The American Dream

This booklet has been developed as part of Causeway Coast and Glens Museum Services' response to the 250th anniversary of the signing of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. It explores the historic and ongoing connections between the Causeway Coast and Glens area and the United States of America through the impact of some of the people who chased the American Dream and crossed the Atlantic in search of opportunity. Every family in Ulster will have their own American connections; these are just a few. We would like to express our special thanks to Linde Lunney and William Roulston for their support with this project.

It should be noted that historical records tend to focus on the experience and impact of male immigrants to America despite the fact that their female counterparts undertook the same journeys and faced the same challenges. That bias is reflected in these accounts.

Irish in the Americas before America

The transatlantic connection between Ireland and the Americas goes back to the 16th century, with small numbers of Irish soldiers joining the Spanish garrison in Florida in the 1560s and Irish colonists taking part in the European settlement of Brazil, Newfoundland and Virginia.

The first widespread movement of people from Ireland to the Americas followed Oliver Cromwell's Irish campaign (1649-1653) which saw thousands of Irish Catholics forcibly transported to the Caribbean to labour on the plantations of the new English colonies.

The political and religious disruption in Ireland that followed, exacerbated by the Williamite War at the end of the century, saw many dissenting protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland lose their power, rights, and freedom of religion. In 1718, large numbers of Presbyterians left Co. Londonderry to build new lives for themselves in the American colonies.

One of these groups was led by Rev. James McGregor (1677-1729) of Aghadowey. Before leaving for America, he delivered a sermon in which he declared they were leaving Ulster "to avoid oppression and cruel bondage, to shun persecution and designed ruin - and to have the opportunity of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience and the rules of His inspired Word."

In 1719, McGregor and his congregation received a grant of 100 square miles on the frontier at Nutfield, New Hampshire - later renamed Londonderry. Each settler was allotted 120 acres, and brought with them their traditions, education, and their skills spinning and weaving linen. In Londonderry, New Hampshire, they would produce high quality linen reminiscent of the fine 'Colerains' linen. By 1723 they were well established with a meeting house and schoolhouse.

Despite prejudice against them from many English colonists, by the end of the 18th century, large numbers of Irish immigrants had established themselves in the English colonies of North America. As late as 1772, Rev. William Martin (1729-c.1807) - a man from Ballyspallen near Limavady, and the first Irish-born Reformed Presbyterian minister - led five shiploads of his congregation to the Carolinas. Leaving behind social and economic pressures in Ireland, Martin and other Ulster settlers were at the forefront of the movement towards American independence.



Plan of the Nutfield settlement. Sam Henry collection, Coleraine Museum.

Nocturnal (night dial) used in maritime navigation, dating to 1781. Ballymoney Museum collection.



John Carwitham engraving (c.1730), depicting Boston harbour. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The Journey to Independence

The Seven Years War (1756 to 1763) was fought between the powers of Europe in theatres around the world. In North America, Britain and France vied over control of their colonies in what became known as the French and Indian War. The war was decided in favour of Britain, assisted, especially in the early stages, by militia regiments recruited from among the American colonists.



American and French soldiers of the revolution painted by Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger (c.1775-1783). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

In the decades that followed, Britain imposed new taxes on the American colonies to recover war costs. Tensions between the British crown and its American subjects escalated, leading to the Boston Massacre in 1770, and ultimately to the outbreak of the American Revolution, or American War of Independence. A number of influential Ulstermen involved

in the fight for independence had roots in the Causeway Coast and Glens area including two of the 56 signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

While less well represented in the historical sources, women and girls were also numbered among the Irish migrants to the colonies and underwent their own trials and hardships during the war. Women like Nancy Green and Mary Johnston from Ballymoney, or Jane Campell who grew up by the Giant's Causeway, were left to run family farms amid the possibility of punitive British raids. They also faced the constant threat of physical and sexual violence, or capture by Native American forces allied to the Crown.



Depiction of British soldiers trying to fraternise with colonial women during the American Revolution. *Harper's Weekly* vol. 62, January 1881. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Matthew Thornton (1714-1803)

Possibly born in the north of Co. Antrim or Co. Londonderry, Matthew Thornton's family immigrated to Maine in 1716. Thornton established a medical practice in Londonderry, New Hampshire and, in 1745, was appointed the surgeon of the New Hampshire militia.



Matthew Thornton. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Thornton sat on the New Hampshire Provincial Assembly from 1758 to 1762. He served as the first president of the newly formed Provincial Congress in 1775, and later as speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives. He was elected to the Continental Congress late, and only arrived in Philadelphia in November 1776, after the debates on independence had occurred. Along with several other latecomers, he added his signature to the Declaration of Independence four months after the formal signing in July.

After the war, Thornton continued in public life, serving as a judge, and sitting as a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives.

Thomas McKean (1734-1817)

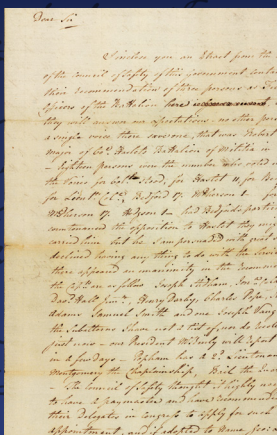
Thomas McKean was the son of William McKean, a Ballymoney farmer and innkeeper who settled in Pennsylvania around 1720. Trained as a lawyer, he was appointed deputy attorney general for Sussex County in 1756 and later served as a judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the Lower Counties on the Delaware.

He sat as a member of the General Assembly of the Lower Counties from 1762-1776. McKean represented the Lower Counties at the Continental Congress in 1774-76 during which time he was a signatory on the Declaration of Independence. He temporarily served as the President of Delaware in 1777, and represented the state at the Continental Congress from 1778 until 1782 (serving as president of the congress in 1781). From 1799-1808 he served as the governor of Pennsylvania.



Thomas McKean. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Emigration from the Causeway Coast and Glens to the USA



Letter from Thomas McKean recommending John Haslet be appointed as colonel of the Delaware Regiment, 1776. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Col. Rev. John Haslet (c.1727–1777)

Born in Burnfoot and educated in Glasgow, John Haslet became the Presbyterian minister of Ballykelly, before migrating to the American colonies in 1757. He served as a captain in the Pennsylvania militia during the French and Indian War, settling in Delaware in 1764.

Following the outbreak of the American Revolution, Haslet was commissioned as colonel of the 1st Delaware Regiment of the Continental Army, taking part in the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Trenton and Princeton. On the 3rd January 1777, Haslet was shot and killed while rallying troops at the battle of Princeton.

Col. William Preston (1729–1783)

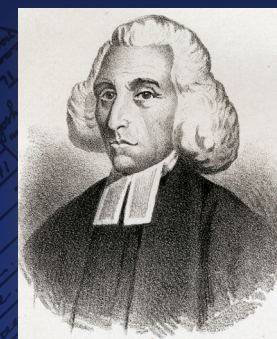
Born in Limavady, William Preston emigrated with his family to Virginia in 1738. In 1752, Preston began surveying new lands purchased from Native Americans and, at the onset of the French and Indian War, was commissioned as the captain of a ranger company operating on the frontier. Alongside his command of rangers, he was also responsible for the construction of Fort William and the command of various Virginia militia units, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1759.

From 1773–1774 he took part in Lord Dunmore's War against the Shawnee, and during the War of Independence he was active suppressing American loyalists from rising up against the revolution in Virginia. A member of Virginia's House of Burgesses, Preston was involved in the splitting up of Virginia's large territory, including the creation of the Kentucke County which would become the state of Kentucky in 1792. Prestonville, Kentucky, is named in his honour.

Rev. George Duffield (1732–1790)

The son of an immigrant from Ballymoney, George Duffield was born in Pennsylvania. After working as a tutor, he accepted a call to the Presbyterian ministry from the united churches of Carlisle and Big Spring, Pennsylvania, in 1761. He later travelled as a missionary through western Pennsylvania establishing churches, ministering to European settlers and Native Americans. He published an account of his journey: *An Account of a Missionary Tour Through Western Pennsylvania in 1766*.

In 1771 he moved to Philadelphia where he preached in support of American independence. During the revolution, he served as a chaplain to the Pennsylvania militia and as co-chaplain of the Continental Congress. After the war, his church at Pine Street, Pennsylvania became known as the Church of the Patriots.



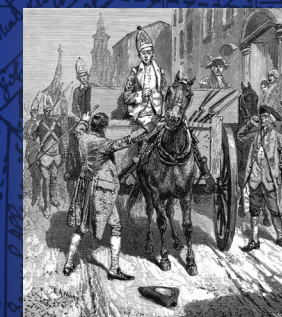
Rev. George Duffield. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Hercules Mulligan (1740–1825)

Born in Coleraine, Hercules Mulligan migrated to New York with his family in 1746. He set himself up as a successful tailor catering to officers in the British army and navy and becoming a trusted part of the ruling establishment, even marrying Elizabeth Sanders, the niece of a British admiral.

However, by 1765, Mulligan had joined the Sons of Liberty, a clandestine organisation opposed to British rule. During the revolution, he acted as a spy, passing information gathered from his wealthy military customers to the revolutionary forces. He was a close personal friend of the statesman and Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton.

Like many of his revolutionary contemporaries, Mulligan was a paradox, fighting for liberty, while also being a slave owner. His African slave, Cato, worked with Mulligan, serving as a courier to pass messages through British lines. After the war, Cato was granted his freedom and Mulligan became a founder member of the New York Manumission Society, established to promote the abolition of slavery.



1876 engraving showing the Sons of Liberty seizing British arms. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

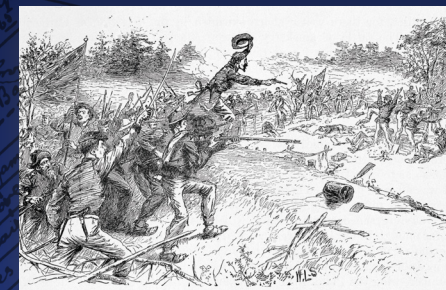
"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ..."

With independence, the new United States of America continued to draw people from the Causeway Coast and Glens area who saw the country as a land of opportunity for people facing economic hardship, social upheaval, and political change.



Cartoon showing an Irish indentured servant in America. *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 14, 16/04/1870.

The Caldwell family from Ballymoney went to New York in exile after one of their sons, Richard, had led a body of rebels during the United Irishmen uprising in 1798. The family were captured by a French privateer during their Atlantic crossing but were released as "the French nation was never so happy as when protecting those who were persecuted by the British." Richard Caldwell would later die during the War of 1812, serving as a captain in the American army.



1887 depiction of the Confederate charge at Chancellorsville, 1863, where Stonewall Jackson was injured by friendly fire. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

By the middle of the 19th century, hundreds of thousands of people had left the island of Ireland in search of opportunity, security, and survival. Although Ulster was less severely affected than other parts of Ireland, the Great Famine, (also known as the Great Hunger) caused widespread distress, particularly among rural populations from 1845 to 1852. For many, emigration was the only viable option despite ongoing discrimination and ill-treatment that many Irish immigrants faced on arrival.

The outbreak of the American Civil War (1861-1865), driven by disputes around the abolition of slavery and states' rights, led to political divisions back in Ulster, mostly along class lines. Many among the gentry were sympathetic with the Confederate cause, while the working class were more likely to support the Union.

Leading figures on both sides of the conflict could claim Ulster ancestry – the Confederate general, Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson's great grandfather may have been from Coleraine – while thousands of Irish-born Americans, including many from Ulster, enlisted in both the Union and Confederate armies and asserted their place in the national identity.

Soldiers outside the slave pen, Alexandria, Va. (c.1861). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



2296

Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (1800–1842)

Jane Johnston's father, John Johnston, was born in Portrush. In 1790 he sailed for Quebec where he became a fur trader working for Todd, McGill & Company. In this capacity he met and married Oshaguscodawaqua, daughter of the chief of the La Pointe Ojibway. Their eldest daughter was Obah-dahm-wawn-gezzhago-quay (Woman of the Green Prairie), also known as Jane.



Jane Johnston Schoolcraft. Courtesy of the digital collection, Bentley Historical Library; Bentley Image Bank.

Jane was born in Sault Ste. Marie in what is now the state of Michigan. Around the age of 15 she began writing poetry in English and Ojibwe, as well as English versions of Ojibwe stories, songs, and other traditionally oral texts. She is thought to be the first known Native American female writer and possibly the first Native American literary writer.

In 1823, Jane married the explorer and ethnologist, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, who had been appointed as a federal agent to the region. He published his own accounts of the indigenous peoples, especially the Ojibwe, which drew on Jane's family stories, and would later inspire Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem "The Song of Hiawatha."

Dr John Young (fl.1860s)

Dr John Young, was born in Kilraughts. After emigrating to America, he became actively involved in politics, campaigning for the Republican Party in Indiana during the 1860 presidential election. When Abraham Lincoln was elected, Young's loyalty and effectiveness was rewarded and he was appointed United States Consul in Belfast, a post he held from 1861 to 1865.

Throughout the American Civil War, Young provided detailed reports on Ulster reactions to and opinions of US events. His diplomatic reports highlighted the presence of pro-Confederate sympathies in Ulster and raised concerns about blockade runners and commerce raiders departing Irish ports. Notably, he documented shipments of gunpowder leaving Belfast that he feared were destined for Confederate forces. Young also worked to counter pro-Confederate narratives in the Ulster press, attempting to influence public opinion in favour of the Union.

Cardinal John McCloskey (1810–1885)

John McCloskey's parents were from Dungiven. They emigrated to New York in 1808 where McCloskey was born. While recovering from a serious injury in 1827, he decided to enter the seminary. McCloskey was ordained in 1834, becoming the first Manhattan-born man to enter the priesthood.

He was appointed coadjutor bishop of New York at the age of just 34. McCloskey was named the first bishop of the newly created Diocese of Albany in 1847 where the congregation was largely made up of poor Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Hunger. He was appointed Archbishop of New York in 1864 where he established 88 new parishes and completed the construction of St Patrick's Cathedral. In 1875, McCloskey was made the first American cardinal.



Cardinal John McCloskey. Courtesy of the American National Portrait Gallery.

Rev. William King (1812–1895)



Rev. William King (1867). Courtesy of the McCord Stewart Museum, Montreal.

Despite substantial offers to purchase them from him, King transported his slaves to Canada and granted them their freedom. In 1849, he developed the Elgin Settlement (also known as the Buxton Mission), on 9,000 acres in southern Ontario as a settlement for former slaves. As one terminus of the Underground Railroad, the settlement attracted approximately 1,000 fugitive slaves fleeing the United States over the next decade.

By 1864 the settlement included a church, two steam-powered mills, general stores, shops, a blacksmiths and integrated school catering to both black settlers and the local white population. The formal mission closed in 1865 following the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery in the United States. In 1873, the settlement wound up with many of the younger settlers returning as free people to the USA.

William King was born in Limavady (then known as Newton-Limavady). After studying classics in Coleraine and Glasgow, he and his parents emigrated to Ohio. In November 1835, King moved to Louisiana, working as a teacher for the children of plantation owners, and later as headteacher at Mathews Academy.

After marrying Mary Phares, the daughter of a plantation owner, he found himself the owner of slaves for the first time. He travelled to Scotland in 1843 to train as a Presbyterian minister and, during that time, lost his son, wife and daughter to disease in quick succession. He returned to North America as a missionary and was working in Toronto when his father-in-law died, leaving King his plantation and all of its slaves.

William Russell (1812–1872)

William Russell was born in Vermont although his grandparents were from Conagher, near Dervock. He ran a wholesale business in Missouri and obtained government contracts to supply the War Department. Seeing an opportunity in the Colorado gold rush, Russell founded a company to transport people and goods to the gold fields.

The company, which became known as the Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company, established the famous Pony Express in 1860, delivering letters between Missouri and California in just ten days. The Pony Express employed hundreds of riders (including young immigrants from North Antrim) ferrying post over a relay system. After only 18 months in business, the development of telegraph lines across the continental United States established a faster and more economical mode of communication and the Pony Express ceased to operate.

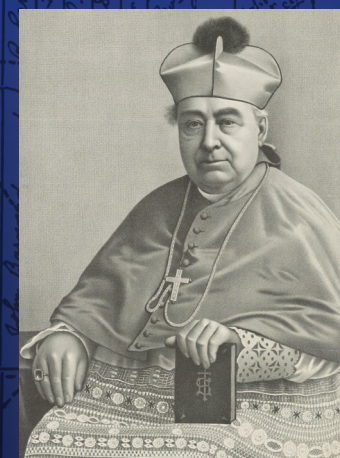


Pony Express rider illustrated for the New York World's Fair, 1939. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Bishop William O'Hara (1816–1899)

Born in Dungiven, William O'Hara emigrated with his family to Philadelphia aged four. In 1834 he decided to join the Catholic priesthood and, after attending the Urban College in Rome, was ordained in 1842. Holding the post of assistant pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Philadelphia from 1843–1856, he was also rector of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in the city and taught moral philosophy. O'Hara was promoted to full pastor of St Patrick's in 1856 and vicar general of the diocese in 1860.

In 1868, O'Hara was appointed the bishop of the newly created diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania, where he served until his death. The Catholic population increased by over 100,000 during his time as bishop, with the construction of 31 new churches, 38 new parochial schools, and appointment of over 100 priests. O'Hara founded St Thomas College in 1888, which became the University of Scranton in 1938.



Bishop William O'Hara (1893). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Rev. David Bell (1818–1890)

Originally from Mosside, Co. Antrim, David Bell came from a Presbyterian family and was educated in Belfast. Initially training and serving as a minister, he was deeply impacted by the Irish Famine and called for major social reforms. He was a leading advocate of tenant rights, helping found the Tenant League, and campaigning for fair rents and security of tenancies.

His growing frustration with the pace of constitutional reform led him towards the nationalist cause and in 1864 he joined the clandestine Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), becoming a member of its executive leadership. Increasing surveillance and repression of IRB members in the 1860s led Bell to leave Ireland for America.

There, he became a prominent member of the Irish-American nationalist community. He co-edited the newspaper *Irish Republic*, in Chicago and New York which combined support for Irish republicanism with advocacy for more progressive American causes including black suffrage, civil rights for formerly enslaved people, and the reconstruction of the South after the civil war. Through his journalism, Bell associated the Irish independence movement with broader struggles for liberty and equality in the United States.



Fenian Demonstration in New York, 1866. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 02/06/1866.

Michael McCoole (1837–1886)

Mike McCoole was either born in Coleraine, or Ballybofey, Co. Donegal, and emigrated to New York with his family around 1845. Reputedly 6 foot 2 inches tall, he developed a reputation as a street fighter and fled to St Louis after becoming involved in a saloon-bar brawl with prominent New York criminals. Working on barges and steamboats between St Louis and New Orleans, he was involved in so many fights and brawls that he became known as the 'champion of the Mississippi'.

His first formal fight as a bare-knuckle boxer was organised in 1858 against Wild Bill Neary, the so-called 'champion of the west', after the two had been involved in another saloon brawl. In 1866 he claimed the American heavyweight championship after knocking out Bill Davis, winning \$2,000 and a championship belt. It is difficult to be entirely accurate because professional boxing was largely illegal at the time, but McCoole could claim to have been the heavyweight champion of America from 1866 to 1873.

Winnings from his fights enabled McCoole to buy his own saloon and several houses in St Louis. However, a failed marriage, murder charges and ensuing bankruptcy saw him return to working on the river. In 1880 he rescued eight people when the steamboat *Florence Meyer* struck a rock off Good Hope Landing. He subsequently contracted an illness which left him partially crippled and he died in poverty.



Mike McCoole. *Ring Magazine*, November 1931, 02/06/1866.

William Coulter (1849–1936)



William Coulter's 1906, *Evacuation of San Francisco*, depicting the wake of the San Francisco earthquake.

William Coulter was born in Glenariff. His father was a coast guard captain and two of his brothers were captains in the China Trade; he went to sea as an apprentice seaman at the age of just 13. After seven years at sea, he shattered his ankle in an accident and settled in San Francisco. A self-taught artist, he painted portraits of ships while supporting his activities as a sailmaker.

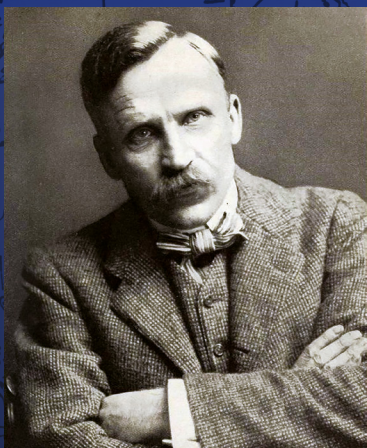
Joining the San Francisco Art Association, Coulter exhibited regularly and then travelled to Europe to study under master marine painters. His work was included in the Best of Californian Art exhibition at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. He went on to work as a harbour illustrator for the *San Francisco Call* newspaper, creating pen and ink drawings of marine traffic. The wartime cargo ship, the *SS William A Coulter*, was named in his memory in 1943.

Samuel McClure (1857–1949)

Born at the Frosses near Cloughmills, Samuel McClure emigrated to Indiana with his mother and siblings in 1866 after the death of his father. He attended Knox College where he served as editor-in-chief of the student newspaper. McClure began working as a cycling instructor for Pope Manufacturing,

the maker of America's first bicycle, and when the company wanted to publish a cycling magazine, *The Wheelman*, McClure jumped at the opportunity to become co-editor, and later became editorial assistant with *The Century Magazine* in New York.

In 1884, McClure established America's first newspaper syndicate, publishing recipes and reviews as well as serialised books by the likes of Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Mark Twain in Sunday newspapers. Between 1893 and 1911, he also published *McClure's Magazine* featuring investigative articles and exposés of wrongdoing in business and politics.



Samuel McClure. *The World's Work*, May 1914.

The Land of Opportunity

In 1897, William McKinley – descended from immigrants from Conagher and a veteran of the American Civil War – was elected President of the United States. His presidency marked the beginning of a more assertive phase of American expansion overseas, particularly in the Pacific. Re-elected in 1901, he was assassinated later that year and succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt.

Before his death, McKinley had been involved in planning the St. Louis World's Fair, held in 1904. The Irish Exhibition at the fair was organised by Francis Joseph Bigger, a Belfast-based solicitor with strong connections to Ballycastle and the Glens of Antrim. Many of the items displayed in the Irish Exhibition were produced by the Irish Home Industries Workshop, established in Ballycastle in 1903 with Bigger's support. Several objects from this collection, now housed in Ballycastle Museum, still bear U.S. customs labels from their exhibition at the 1904 fair.

Irish men and women continued to play a role in developing America. Willie John Pinkerton (1858–1936) emigrated from Ballymoney to Iowa as an indentured labourer in 1880. From 1896–1898 he worked contracts digging particularly dangerous oil wells for Union Oil Co. in California which enabled him to buy land in Ventura County, where he and Catherine Campbell (also from Ballymoney) built their home. One of their sons, Wesley Pinkerton, went on to develop the Pinkerton variety of avocado, known for its high fruit-to-seed ratio and appealing taste.

Limavady man Charles Logue (1858–1919) founded a construction company in Boston which built numerous important buildings including St. Brigid Church and the Fenway Park baseball stadium.



Political cartoon from relating to changes in U.S. colonial policy, published in 1898, the year after McKinley's election. Courtesy Library of Congress.



US Custom's sticker marking objects from the Irish Home Industries exhibited at the 1904 World's Fair. Ballycastle Museum.

The United States Immigration Act of 1924 imposed strict national quotas that drastically reduced immigration from Ireland, marking a sharp decline compared to the previous century. As a result, Irish immigration became more limited and often relied on family connections or special exemptions.

In 1937, Mr J. H. Holcomb from St Louis, Missouri, claimed that his maternal grandfather, Mr Bussel, was a wealthy Coleraine landowner who had leased his land to the Coleraine Corporation for a period of 99 years before heading to sea and ultimately settling in the United States. A claim was put before Coleraine Borough Council for ownership of 25 acres of Coleraine, including the land occupied by the town hall. According to Holcomb, the 99 year lease had expired in 1937 and the ownership of the centre of Coleraine had reverted to him. Coleraine's town clerk commented that the claim could not be substantiated.

During and after the Second World War, labour shortages in the United States created renewed demand for workers, but immigration remained tightly controlled. It was not until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that quotas based on national origin were removed, leading to a modest revival of Irish immigration in the 1960s and 1970s.

Martha Craig (1866–1950)

Martha Craig was a journalist, poet and explorer. Born in Gleno, she reputedly lived in Conagher as a child. Craig was a suffragette and member of the Henry Joy McCracken Society, and called for radical land reform in Ireland to combat social injustice.

Working as a journalist, Craig moved to the United States in the 1890s where she met with President McKinley (whose own family were from Conagher) to discuss "Erin's Hopes and Freedoms". In 1902 she moved to Canada and spent some time living with the Garden River First Nation. She is thought to be the first European woman to explore the Canadian province of Labrador which she did with indigenous guides in 1905. She later claimed to have been made a princess by "the Indian chiefs" of Labrador, and lectured in the US, Canada and Europe under the name Princess Ye-wa-ga-no-nee.

Craig's lectures were often pseudo-scientific, based on beliefs of vortexian currents, spiritualism and reincarnation. While given a platform to speak, her theories were not widely accepted and sometimes ridiculed. She later returned to Gleno where she continued to write poetry and even lodged a patent for a new design of dirigible that minimised the danger of explosions.



Martha Craig as Princess Ye-wa-ga-no-nee. *Craig, Legends of the North Land*, c.1910.



1937 postcard showing Coleraine Town Hall and Church Street. Robert Anderson collection, Coleraine Museum.

John Crawford (1867–1950) and David Crawford (1872–1941)

John and David Crawford grew up in Limavady and were members of the congregation of First Dunboe Presbyterian church. In 1886, they emigrated to Bradford, Pennsylvania where David attended business college, going on to work as a salesman for a company supplying oil wells. By 1899, the brothers moved to Parkersburg, West Virginia where they formed the Parkersburg Rig and Reel Company. The successful company became the largest producer of oil well machinery in the United States, and also ran its own wells in several states between 1900 and 1925.

Never forgetting where they came from, the Crawford brothers contributed towards the building costs of the new First Dunboe church and gave the church an annual endowment of £1,000. When it opened in July 1936, David was asked to unveil the inscription in the vestibule, while John switched on the electric lights.

The following year, the brothers donated £500 to Roe Valley Hospital for the purchase of a new ambulance, and a further £500 to the Limavady Reformed Presbyterian Church. Crawford Square in Limavady was named after the brothers in 1949, and the new hall for Limavady Reformed Presbyterian Church was named Crawford Hall in memory of John Crawford in 1957.



First Dunboe Presbyterian Church.

Samuel Robinson (1865–1958)

Samuel Robinson was born in Culcrum and worked in Ballymoney as an apprentice grocer for his uncle, William Megaw, (Megaw would go on to become Chairman of Ballymoney Urban District Council 1888–1920). Robinson emigrated to Philadelphia in 1888 and established his own grocery business in partnership with his former neighbour Robert Crawford.



Robinson & Crawford Store, Philadelphia. Alec Blair collection, Ballymoney Museum.

The company merged with five other grocery chains in 1917 to establish the American Stores Company (also known as ACME), revolutionising the way people shopped. He bought the land surrounding his shops to give customers free parking, arranged items on shelves for browsing, and provided trolleys for shoppers to carry their goods. By 1929, the company had become the largest food retailer in the world, with over 2,600 branches and 15,000 employees.

Robinson paid for the construction of a cottage hospital back in Ballymoney. It opened in 1933 and was named the Robinson Hospital in honour of his parents. He also supported the Assembly's College of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with a donation of £25,000 in 1945.

Florence Taylor Marsh (1895–1968)

Born in Pennsylvania, Florence Taylor was the daughter of Andrew Todd Taylor, a Presbyterian minister originally from Finvoy. She worked as a publicist for the National Woman's Party who were vocal suffragists and instrumental in getting Congress to pass the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote in 1920. Her campaigning demonstrated the collective activism of rank-and-file suffragists to organise demonstrations, maintain public visibility and put pressure on political parties.

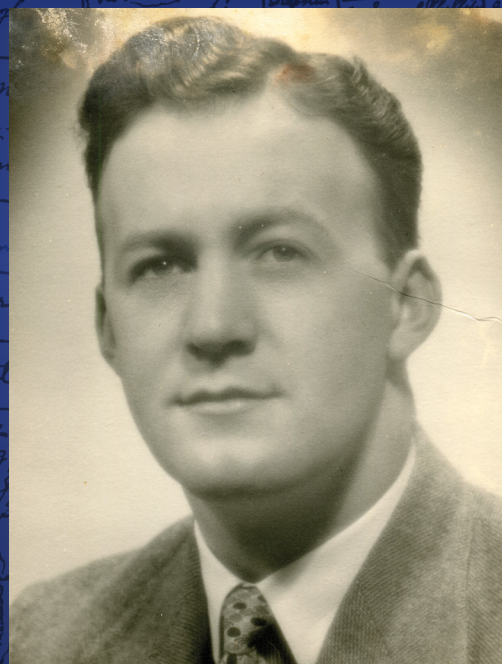


Florence Taylor Marsh, second from the left, picketing the Republican convention, Chicago, June 1920. Courtesy Library of Congress.

In the 1920s she worked as a public information officer for the U.S. Children's Bureau and became a founding member of the Women's National Press Club. Eleanor caused a furore when it was announced that she wasn't adopting her husband's name, and that they were sharing responsibility for bills and household work.

Michael Thomas McCuaig (1928–2000)

Tom McCuaig was born on Rathlin Island and worked as a journalist for the *Coleraine Chronicle*. He left Northern Ireland in 1951, continuing to work as a journalist in New Zealand, Australia and Fiji before settling in California.



Tom McCuaig. Courtesy Anne McCuaig.

He later returned to Ireland where he worked for the *Irish Independent* and then RTÉ radio, before moving to South Africa where he lived until his death. His ashes were returned for burial on Rathlin.

He wrote for the San Gabriel Valley's *Daily Tribune* and was noted for his journalism exposing the exploitation of young women from Northern Ireland who emigrated to America to work as domestic servants. In 1961 McCuaig won the Sigma Delta Chi public services award and a Pulitzer Prize nomination for his series of articles on political corruption in the Californian city of Irwindale. Warned by the police about threats to his life, the Sigma Delta Chi award citation noted that his work was "... largely instrumental in restoring democracy to the people of Irwindale, removing fear and exposing corrupt municipal government."

The Causeway Connection

While direct emigration from the Causeway Coast and Glens to America has slowed since the 20th century, faster modes of transport and communication across the Atlantic ensured that the cultural exchange never stopped and the Causeway connection remains a vibrant part of the American story.



After appearing on Broadway, George Shield's play, *The New Gossoon*, was turned into a movie in 1958, with the title *Sally's Irish Rogue*. Ballymoney Museum.

In the arts, one of the greatest American authors of the 20th century, John Steinbeck (1902-1968), was proud of his Ulster ancestry; his maternal grandfather, Samuel Hamilton had emigrated to the United States from Mulkeeragh, Ballykelly in 1847. The ancestors of actor John Wayne (1897-1979) emigrated to America from Bushmills.

Ballymoney playwright, George Shiels (1881-1949) saw his play *The New Gossoon*, taken to Broadway three times, in 1932, 1934, and 1937. Henry McCullough (1943-2016) from Portstewart was a guitarist, singer and songwriter. Playing with Joe Cocker and the Grease Band, he was the only Irishman to perform at Woodstock in 1969.

Individuals from the Causeway Coast and Glens were fundamental in creating the story of America. From the frontiers to the founding fathers, from soldiers and signatories to abolitionist efforts to retail innovations, immigrants from the Causeway Coast and Glens didn't just follow the American Dream, they helped to shape it.



Henry McCullough. Everett Collection, Inc. / Alamy.

Emigration from the Causeway Coast and Glens to the USA



Museum
Services



USA★NI

