

viz - Dornoch, Lairg, Rogart, Clyne, and Durness. All who came from these two northern shires spoke the Gaelic language, and all were either members or adherents of the church of Scotland.

The early settlers of Scotland began to arrive in the year 1800, and they continued to come during the next twenty years or more. Much of the land in and around Scotsburn was taken up and occupied.

Previous to the disastrous battle of Culloden Moor, April 16, 1746, there was little, if any, emigration from either the Highlands or the Western Islands of Scotland. After that time conditions were so different in these parts of the United Kingdom that people began to leave their native land in large numbers and seek homes for themselves in different parts of the world.

In the year 1748, the Clan or Feudal System, under which the Celtic population of Scotland had lived for more than a thousand years, was destroyed by an Act of the British Parliament, and according to that Act every clansman was required to take an oath that he would not have in his possession "any gun, sword, pistol, or arms whatsoever; and that he would never use tartan plaid or any part of the Highland garb."

This Act and Oath created intense dissatisfaction among the Highlanders and Islanders of Scotland. So much so that thousands of them left their glens (valleys) and straths rather than take that oath. A large number of these Gaelic speaking Highlanders went to North Carolina in the year 1760. Others went to western New York and to Ohio at about the same time.

In 1779 the ship "Hector" landed over two hundred Highlanders in Boston, Mass and one hundred and eighty-nine of these Highlanders landed in Pictou Harbour in 1773.

The Earl of Selkirk in 1803 sent out three shiploads of Sutherlandshire people to his estate on Prince Edward Island, and in 1811 several hundred more Highlanders were sent to the Red River, in the heart of Canada, by the way of Hudson's Bay.

Gaelic speaking emigrants, from Iverness-shire, Scotland, began to arrive



on the west coast of Cape Breton Island, as early as 1792, and the Scottish Highlanders and Islanders continued to come to Cape Breton during the next fifty years. It has been estimated that not less than 20,000 Gaelic speaking people were landed on the shores of Cape Breton Island between 1792 and 1844.

"In 1745, every strath and glen in Argyleshire, Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, and Sutherlandshire were well filled with an honest, brave, contented population. By 1825 nearly everyone of these straths and glens were denuded of its human inhabitants and in possession of horned cattle, sheep, and deer."

The condition of things was more especially true of Sutherlandshire, from which the original settlers of Scotsburn came in so large a number. In that fine shire, strath after strath was forcibly cleared of its inhabitants in order to make room for sheep. The price of wool and mutton had increased to a remarkable extent during the French Revolutionary Wars between 1793 and 1815. The proprietors of the land discovered that they could make more money by turning their lands into sheep grazings than by leasing them to crofters, or small farmers. Therefore, they proceeded to turn the crofters out, and to turn the sheep into the straths and glens in their place.

These "Evictions" were given in a most cruel and unmerciful manner. The Rev. Donald Sage, who was the parish minister of Stratnaver, left a very graphic description of what he saw with his own eyes, and in his own parish in 1819. In his "Reminiscences" he tells us that there were about 300 cottages and 1600 souls in the valley of the Naver at the time these evictions took place. Summons of ejectment were served upon every tenant in the strath, about a fortnight previous to the day upon which it was determined, by the Duchess of Sutherland, to clear the strath of its inhabitants. At an early hour on the appointed day, the officer with his legal officials and constables, began his cruel work at one end of the strath and kept on until they had finished at the other. To quote Mr. Sage, "Their plan of operations was to clear the cottages of their inmates giving them about half an hour to pack up, carry off their furniture, and then to set fire to the cottages. To this plan they ruthlessly adhered without the slightest regard to any obstacle that might arise while carrying it into execution."