

Highlanders were Pardoned and Sent to America



Battle of Culloden

By Jeannette Holland Austin

The Scottish people had always supported the Stuarts on the throne. As soon as James II and his son were disqualified from taking the throne, the two kingdoms and Scotland became Great Britain with a single act of Parliament. After 1688, those people in England and Scotland who favored the restoration of James II (and the restoration to his son James III) were known as "Jacobites".

They took part in several uprisings, the main revolutionary events occurring in the year of 1715 and 1745. Hence, during the first part of the 18th century, a sizable group of non-juring Episcopalian clergymen in Scotland refused to take the oath of loyalty to the House of Hanover and the result was an uprising.

In 1745, another revolutionary attempt was fired, deemed to be the work of the son of James (Charles Edward Stuart) known as "Bonnie Prince Charles" who sailed for the Highlands and demarked to begin his revolutionary adventure. Macdonald of Boisdale was the first chief to meet the prince and advised Charles to go home. The young Stuart replied "I am come home, Sir." When all of these causes were lost, the British government in 1746) started enacting laws designed to destroy the clans to bring the Highlanders under political supervision. The Disarming Act of 1746 caused that all weapons be taken from the Highlanders and forbade them from rendering military service to their chiefs.

Simultaneously, the Highland Dress Act deprived the clansmen of the highland cloaths (plaid, philebeg or little kilt, trowse, shoulder-belts or anything whatsoever peculiarly belonging to highland garb. Prisoners were taken after the Battle of Culloden and a large number were pardoned, upon the condition of their emigrating to the plantations, after having taken the oath of allegiance.

Thus, for the next several years, began an extensive settlement of large groups of Highlander families in North Carolina along the Cape Fear River. They settled in Campbellton (now Fayetteville) and it was this country which became a refuge for harassed Highlanders.

Robert D. W. Conner, formerly Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission (History of North Carolina, Vol. I) stated that the Highlanders were driven into North Carolina by poverty and agricultural displacement and that they came because "the king offered a pardon to all who would take the oath of allegiance and emigrate." Yet, there are no 18th century documents which cite a settlement of pardoned Highlanders on the Cape Fear River immediately after the Battle of 1745.

Also, British resources fail to reveal that Jacobites were transported to North Carolina or that groups of Highlanders immigrated shortly after Culloden, but they did note that the total number of Jacobite prisoners at

the end of the rebellion was 3,471 and that of this number, 936 were ordered transported to the colonies.