

The Irish did not Change their Names

Tips By Jeannette Holland Austin



The Irish Sea

From the earliest of immigrants, we find the Irish settlements first to New England, then to the Carolinas, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. During the last century, Maine, New Hampshire, the greater part of Vermont, western Massachusetts, western Pennsylvania, a large portion of Maryland, the western part of Virginia, between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany mountains, into North Carolina, along the French Broad river, to the upper part of South Carolina, and into the territory now forming Tennessee and Kentucky, with a part of the northwest territory, to the north of the Ohio river, and which then belonged to Virginia, was largely, and in some sections was entirely, settled by Irish. The Irish did not change their names before or after leaving Ireland.

The course of settlement can be traced by the surnames of the first settlers and found in Ireland. It might be claimed by some genealogists that certain of these Irish emigrants were of English descent, however, they were Irish by birth. In essence they were the Irish who no longer sympathized with England. Otherwise, they would have remained in the country.

Notwithstanding the severe penalties rendered by the English for "taking up with the Irishy," the fate was the same of its invaders. Yet, over time they yielded to the charms of the Irish women, and their progeny became

often more Irish than those from the original Celtic stock. Also, the descendants of many the Cromwellian soldiers is found in Ireland. These were the people who became bitter and uncompromising foes to English rule in Ireland.

During 1771 and 1773, over twenty-five thousand emigrants left Belfast and other ports in that immediate neighborhood and traveled to the American colonies. They had been evicted from one of the estates of the Marquis of Donegal, in Antrim. They were mostly farmers and manufacturers who converted their property into specie and used the money to transport them abroad.

The Irish people throughout this country sympathized with the cause of the colonies, and immediately after the battle of Bunker Hill thousands among them entered the army. Especially the emigrants from the north of Ireland, who, from their continuous service and discipline, became a mainstay of the organization until the end of the war.