

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

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Fall 2023

Canadian actor R. H. Thomson named Scot of the Year 2023

We are delighted to announce that the internationally acclaimed actor, R. H. Thomson (Robert Holmes Thomson CM), will be this year's recipient of the Scottish Studies Society's Annual Scot of the Year Award. We invite you and your friends and family to attend the presentation which will take place on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at the Arts & Letters Club in Toronto.

R. H. Thomson's career in Canadian television, film, and on stage spans five decades and he has received numerous awards for his contributions to the arts, and to war veterans. He has won a Genie Award, two Gemini Awards, a Dora Award and a Canadian Screen Award, as well as the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement. He is a passionate advocate for arts and culture in Canada and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2010.

Thomson is making his debut as an author with his book *By the Ghost Light* which will be published on October 31st. It is a personal look at the wonder of youth, the power of art,

and how the First and Second World Wars forever changed his family. According to Thomson, the memoir is intended as a call-to-action in challenging the way we approach our history. In recent years, Thomson has also established *The World Remembers*, an ambitious international project to individually name each of the millions killed in the First World War.

The event will be a magnificent evening of fine food, music and dance with a Scots-Canadian flavour in the historic environment of the Arts & Letters Club, designated a National Historic Site of Canada in 2007.

We do hope you will be able to join us for this memorable evening, the proceeds of which will go to support the Scottish Studies Foundation, a registered Canadian charity established to raise awareness of the Scottish heritage in Canada through education at the university level.

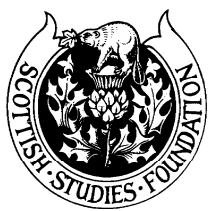
Reservations for individual guests or for



R. H. Thomson in the role of Matthew Cuthbert in the CBC production "Anne with an E."

tables of 8 or 10 can be made either by telephone, mail or online at www.scottishstudies.com.

If you are ordering tables, please let us know the names of your guests. In the case of individual orders, if you wish to be seated with specific people, or are informally forming a table please let us know in advance. Also, please advise of any dietary concerns that need to be taken into account. The contact person is Maggie McEwan at 905-301-5475 or email magmcewan@gmail.com.



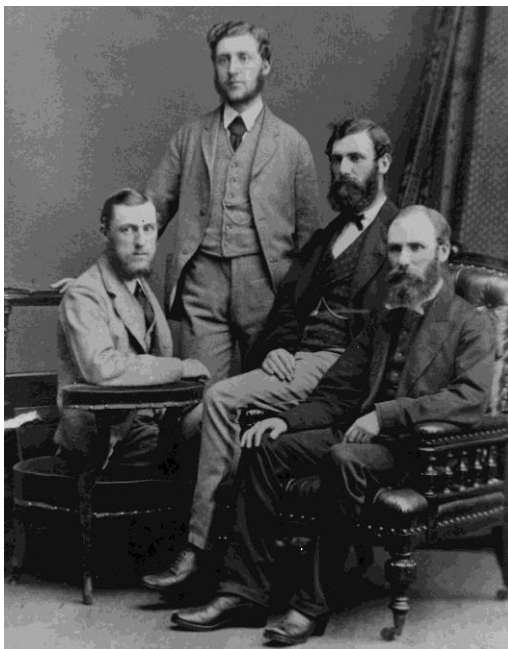
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This photo shows George, Sam, Willie and the Rev. John, the four Thomson brothers who came to Canada around the mid 1870s. A few years after that, they brought their parents out to join them. George (bearded and a bit doleful on the chair on photo-left) is R. H. Thomson's great grandfather who was born on September 13, 1848, in Glasgow, Scotland and died on October 14, 1918, in Toronto. Before moving to Glasgow, the Thomsons had lived in Ayrshire and R. H. recalls that on a family visit to Scotland, a "Mrs Brown" took them to see the small stone croft where she said the Thomsons had lived for four hundred years. Myth or fact, he's not sure, but remembers being an amazed 12 year old.

Haverings

P.B. Grant

For children, few words exert a more powerful pull than “Free Candy,” and no occasion presents them with a better opportunity for getting their greasy hands on the stuff than Halloween. Drawn drooling from the farthest reaches of the known world, the creatures converge on our homes every October 31st in concerted raids that end only when every house has been ransacked. As a father of three, I’ve been reluctantly roped in as a chaperone to these annual revels in my Nova Scotian neighbourhood. I’ve tried every excuse to avoid it, to no avail: when it comes to candy, nothing gets in their way. Terrible weather is no impediment. I have an abiding memory of my daughter, seven or eight years old at the time, blithely walking through a raging rainstorm, angel wings askew, telling me to get a move on. “Stand Fast,” indeed.

Do I sound bitter? Not at all, though I confess to being bemused by how easily we adults surrender the loot. When I was a boy in Scotland in the ’60s and ’70s (a stormy world for a tender soul to navigate), you had to earn those sweets: a song or dance was required — a joke, at the very least. It was understood by both parties that a transaction was taking place, a quid pro quo: no treat without a trick. These days, most children simply hold out their bottomless bags and mouth the tag line (some, in fact, say nothing at all, but we won’t talk about them). Any request for a song or dance is met with frowns and/or rude gestures, so, well, I don’t make a song and dance about it.

Behind the masks and the merch, Halloween feeds our perpetual fascination for the supernatural and the uncanny, for all things that fall outside rational explanation. Despite my grumpiness at being dragged along on Halloween, I fell under the spell of the supernatural at a very young age. Stories, movies, glow-in-the-dark models: I couldn’t get enough. I’m still an avid reader of the genre, and even teach a course on the subject. Walter de la Mare, M.R. James and Algernon Blackwood are three of my favourites, but Scotland is not without its major talents in this field: there is memorable work by Burns, Scott, Hogg, RLS, and John Buchan, amongst others (this Halloween, I’ll be giving a Zoom talk on Buchan’s contributions to the genre, so look out for that). All of these authors are adept at arousing fear, which, as American horror scribe H.P. Lovecraft states, is “the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind.” They tap into a simple truth: that many of us actually enjoy being scared. As to why this is the

case, several theories have been advanced, but it’s not my place to say: best talk to your therapist.

In Scotland, evil spirits of all kinds are canopied under the word “bogles,” meaning, basically, anything otherworldly that summons dread — demons, monsters, exes. Our writers and storytellers have gotten much mileage out of bogles — so much so, that it would be fair to ask if a passion for such is in the Scottish DNA. If so, it might have something to do with our haunted landscape, from its rainswept glens to its secretive wynds; with our rich and colourful folklore, which is full of devilish encounters and dodgy bargains; with the oppressive role that religion has taken in many Scottish lives, with its promises of eternal damnation and everlasting salvation. It might also, perhaps, reflect the sympathy some of us feel for poor, tormented souls condemned to roam forever in the desolate wastes of time — but let’s keep Greenock Morton out of this.

I leave you to ponder such questions on the Scottish character while I psych myself up for another night of moonlit roaming. I’m sure to be pressed into service again this year, so please spare a thought for me as I set out once more into the Nova Scotian night, unfortified by drink, with three sugar-hungry demons to keep my inner ones company.



News from the Centre for Scottish Studies

This report includes a synopsis of the Foundation’s philanthropic impact on Scottish Studies students at the University of Guelph this past academic year (2022/2023).

Thanks to the generous support of our membership, the Scottish Studies Foundation has made a \$50,000 donation to support an undergraduate History Co-op Position in Scottish Studies for the next five years. This is a first for the University and will allow a student to be paid as they work alongside University staff on research and other projects pertaining to Scottish Studies in the History Department.

This is a unique and important learning opportunity for students. The work will be designed to enhance students’ development, deepen their training in outreach and

knowledge mobilization, and highlight their extraordinary capacities as scholars to the wider community as they continue to learn valuable, transferable technical and intellectual skills. Experiential learning like this continues to be a vital pillar of higher education and we look forward to sharing details of the first co-op student after they complete their term in the Winter 2024 semester.

We are also pleased to include the following letters of thanks from Scottish Studies students who received our support this past year.



First, we received the following letter from PhD candidate Brenna Clark (above) who was the recipient of the Duncan Campbell Memorial Travel Grant (\$1,000 travel grant) and the Frank Watson Travel Scholarship (\$3,500 travel grant):

Dear Scottish Studies Foundation,

This spring I had the privilege of travelling to Scotland for a month-long research trip that took me from Edinburgh to Shetland and back again. This trip marked not only my first-time conducting research in Scotland’s archives, but also my first-time setting foot in the country on which both my Master’s and PhD programs have centered.

My doctoral work explores the late medieval economic networks of the Northern Isles to better understand the uniqueness and hybridity that characterized the social and cultural identity of Orcadians and Shetlanders.

I began my trip in Edinburgh, spending two weeks combing through documents at the National Records of Scotland that included shipping lists, receipts, and customs accounts to identify the trading patterns of these insular communities. I then embarked on the ferry at Aberdeen, bound first for Orkney and then Shetland, where I spent another ten days poring over charters, dispositions, and trading accounts in the archives at both Kirkwall and Lerwick. My off-hours were

devoted to seeing the many sights I encountered everywhere in Scotland, from Arthur's Seat and Edinburgh Castle to the ruined Earl's Palace at Kirkwall and Lerwick's rugged coastlines.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Foundation's donors, whose contributions made it possible for me to undertake the research that I hope will become my life's work. Your support of the Centre for Scottish Studies and my research travel through the Duncan Campbell Memorial Travel Grant and the Frank Watson Travel Scholarship has made all the difference—your generosity has allowed me to fully connect with a place and people whose history comprises the focus of my research, as well as a part of my own heritage. Your support for my work has been invaluable.

Thank you.
Brenna Clark

The second letter is from Georgia Bradley, BA Honours (History and Art History major). Georgia is the recipient of the Scottish Studies Foundation Scholarship (\$4,000 scholarship):

Dear Scottish Studies Foundation,
My name is Georgia Bradley, and I am graduating from the University of Guelph with a Bachelors of Honours Arts, specializing in History and Art History. When I was seven my family and I moved from England, where I was born, to live in Canada. This resulted in a growing interest in the history of the British Isles.

I am especially interested in Scottish History due to my family on my mother's side originating from Scotland. I began taking Scottish History classes to learn more about my heritage, as its history was largely unknown to me, and the more I learnt, the more interested I became on the topic.

Receiving the Scottish Studies Foundation Scholarship this past winter term was a very pleasant surprise. I have always found the winter semesters more difficult and receiving the scholarship brightened my mood and gave me the push that I needed to finish the term.

After I graduate, I will be going forward to pursue a Master's Degree in Library Sciences, but before entering into that journey I have decided to take the next year off of school to partake in some much needed downtime.

Many thanks,
Georgia Bradley

(We were unable to include a photo of Georgia.)



Finally we received the following letter from PhD candidate Grant Schreiber (above) who is the recipient of the Edward Stewart Scholarship (\$5,000 scholarship), the Frank Watson Travel Scholarship (\$3,500 travel grant) and the Ted Cowan Scholarship (\$500 travel grant):

Dear Scottish Studies Foundation,

On my recent research trip I had the incredible experience of visiting seven archives in four cities, including two in Aberdeen and one in Edinburgh. I had the opportunity to handle many unique documents that will build my understanding of how the Reformation affected social services in cities. Among the highlights were letters from Mary Queen of Scots and James VI, an illustrated charter from Henry VII, and an enormous scroll establishing Marischal College (which was later merged into the University of Aberdeen). This research trip was the cornerstone of my dissertation and would not have been possible without the generosity of the Scottish Studies Foundation – thank you.

Sincerely,
Grant Schreiber



The University of Guelph's Centre for Scottish Studies and the Scottish Studies Foundation's joint exhibit at the Fergus Highland Games August 11-13. On duty: Dave Thompson, Robert Smart, and Professor Cathryn Spence's family.

Community outreach remains important for the Centre and this summer Professor Kevin James and three PhD students attended the Cambridge Scottish Festival on Saturday, July 15, and the students gave short talks on their research in the Heritage Tent located at the end of the Avenue of the Clans. In August the Centre joined forces with the Foundation at the Fergus Highland Games with Prof. Cathryn Spence on duty on Saturday, August 12, and MA graduate student Andrew Northey on duty the following day. This year the Honoured Chieftain for the games was Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran, Chief of Clan Fergusson, and a special tour of the University Library's Scottish Studies collection was arranged for him on Thursday, August 10.



Andrew Northey and SSF Treasurer David Thompson at the Fergus Games

Looking forward, a full program of academic events has been planned for the fall. This will essentially be a mini series of travel themed history lectures held via Zoom and will include presenters from England, Iceland and the USA.

Also, the Centre is currently working with our PhD/MA students who travelled this summer for research to showcase a "Research Spotlight" series on our social media to highlight their travels and research.

An Immersive Student Experience

The Student Perspective on the Curation and Installation of the Jacobite Exhibit at the University of Guelph

By Megan Gamble

During the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 semesters, students at the University of Guelph engaged in two distinct yet connected experiential learning opportunities. In the fall semester, class members curated intellectual analyses of Jacobite sources for an upcoming exhibit designed and installed by students during the winter semester. This exhibit titled *Truth or Treason? Sources for the Study of Jacobites* (a title selected by the students), launched on April 3, 2023, and is presently on display at the Exhibit Gallery on the second floor of the McLaughlin Library until March 1, 2024. The Jacobite Collection at the University of Guelph's Archival and Special Collections (ASC) currently comprises over 450 Jacobite and anti-Jacobite works, including Jacobite histories, biographies, fictional accounts, encrypted messages, speeches, sermons, polemics, satires, chapbooks, letters, manuscript materials, and artifacts.

Fall Curation

Class members in the fall semester, led by the Scottish Studies Foundation Chair, Prof. Kevin James, were each responsible for selecting a Jacobite source from the University of Guelph's extensive Jacobite collection. Students provided an individual source analysis and collaborative thematic interpretation for the formal physical exhibit. The class, a mix of undergraduate and graduate history students, worked together



Molly McNeely putting the final touches on a display of Jacobite publications



The "Truth or Treason" Team of Student Curators

throughout the semester, meeting nearly every week to collaborate on original interpretations and joint thematic analyses of their selected sources for the upcoming exhibit. Working with graduate students was a valuable learning opportunity for the undergraduate class members. As an undergraduate student in the class, I felt the course's creative aspect and the hybrid undergraduate-graduate component promoted an advanced academic experience.

Each week, whether during a class seminar or collaborative group work, I had the opportunity to actively participate and collaborate with experts, graduate students, special collections librarians, and archivists. The whole experience helped create a more dynamic and interactive learning environment that I found more engaging and enjoyable than non-experiential courses. The course helped me establish connections beyond my undergraduate cohort with master's students and library staff. Additionally, these connections acquainted me with possible history-related careers and enabled me to develop preliminary skills necessary for such jobs.

The primary goal of the Fall 2022 experiential learning course was to provide intellectual content for the exhibit. The course offered a chance to gain an enriched student experience that expanded beyond the classroom. During this course, I learned accessibility protocols for writing and how to write for a general audience rather than an expert audience—a skill applicable to my professional endeavours. By the end of the semester, my colleagues and I learned how to write accessible, engaging, and original individual document labels and collaborative case labels. Thus, while working closely with colleagues and researchers on the intellectual development of a public exhibit, I honed my abilities in critical analysis and clarity of communication. More familiarly, I exercised my skills of thinking creatively and critically about primary and secondary historical sources to incorporate them effectively in original scholarship. Ultimately, the

intellectual preparations undertaken in the fall by the experiential learning class members ensured a smooth transition to exhibit installation.

Fall Colloquium

At the end of the semester, students presented their research effectively in a public venue to a wide audience at the Scottish Studies Student Research Colloquium. Class members presented their work thematically, and an informal reception followed where students, university faculty, external scholars, and the public could celebrate the remarkable achievements of the students and the upcoming exhibit. The range of themes at the Fall Colloquium showcased how expansive the ASC Jacobite Collection truly is and how collaborative this experience was for students.

The class organized documents thematically into the following categories: Jacobites and gender, early polemical texts, death and executions, military texts, military maps, and commemoration.

The analyses of material in the "Jacobites & Gender" category illuminate how noble and upper-class women were key figures of the Jacobite movement—playing significant roles in the domains of conventional armed war and in the battlefields of politics and public opinion. The items in the "Early Polemical Texts" category exemplify the unique literary forms used to undermine and advocate the Jacobite position during the Hanoverian reign, and the analyses stress the significance of polemical texts in shaping popular and elite perceptions of the movement. The "Death & Executions" category focuses on the execution of Jacobites, in which the overarching theme focuses on the potential of each execution as a dramatic exhibit of extensive scare tactics to deter Jacobite support.

Further, students collaborating on military-related sources proved that military history remains vital to understanding the Jacobites. The students collaborating on the "Military

Texts” case analyzed documents to contextualize individuals' experiences related to military operations between the British Crown and the Jacobites, highlighting how the conflicts affected the everyday lives of those involved. Moreover, students working on the “Military Maps” case showed how maps deepen current understandings of Jacobite military history and provide a critical visual element not present in written descriptions of the battles. Finally, the “Commemoration” category displays an interesting part of Jacobitism—a “post-Jacobite” memorialization, in which a renewed and often romantic perspective of Scottish culture and history emerged.

From key Jacobite figures to post-Jacobite valorization, class members worked cooperatively to ensure the utmost success of the exhibit curation, both collaboratively and individually. Ultimately, the fall course enriched class members' learning experiences and provided them with real-world skills and experiences. We invite you to visit McLaughlin Library on campus and see the results of our work!

Winter Design, Installation, and Promotion

The participants of the Winter 2023 experiential portion of the Jacobite exhibit, led by Special Collections Librarian Melissa McAfee, were responsible for exhibit curation. Students in this course participated in fabricating, installing, designing, promoting, and organizing the exhibit's launch. Class members were also tasked with creating an online exhibit based on the contents of the physical exhibit.

The course began with students being introduced to the materials through reading source analyses from the fall course to become familiarized with the selected items from the collection. Then, the class split into two teams: a promotional team and a design and installation team. Amy Moffat, a third-year history student, shared her experience as a promotional team member. Amy expressed that her big takeaway was making a promotional video and liaising with experts in the field. She was able to build connections and work in a media studio where she learned a new skill set in technology and media-related tasks. Additionally, the promotional team planned the logistics of the launch, whereby they quickly learned project management skills. Ultimately, non-experiential courses do not provide a chance to manage a project, and Amy believes that seeing a project through from start to finish is highly rewarding and sets you apart as a history student. She has taken numerous experiential learning courses and shares that she feels “you are producing a product that goes beyond the classroom,”

which is a highly advantageous experience. Because of the real-world skills students develop in experiential learning courses, Amy feels confident to enter the workforce after graduation.

Additionally, Amy enjoyed the creative process of the experiential learning course, as during typical history courses, these may be suppressed. Class members could design their path through the course and manage a project over which they dictated creative command. Additionally, students learned real-world skills related to archival processes, archival codes of ethics, data accessibility protocols, public speaking, and project management. Overall, the student experience in the winter semester was indispensable, as students developed skills in project management, exercised their creative muscles, and made connections in the field that expanded beyond the University of Guelph. Students learned about professional standards and preservation, including how to work with rare books and manuscripts. They gained knowledge on the design, fabrication, and installation of a physical exhibit of rare books and manuscripts. They also acquired practical knowledge and skills on online exhibit creation, how to promote and launch an exhibit, and most importantly, project collaboration with peers, academics, and others. The skills learned in the fall and winter experiential courses, using rare items held in our remarkable Scottish collections, will undeniably place those of us who participated in exhibit development and installation at an advantage when we are ready to enter the workforce.

The Launch

On April 3rd, 2023, the University of Guelph's ASC hosted the exhibit launch after many months of curation, design, installation, and promotion: *Truth or Treason? Sources for the Study of Jacobites*. The launch was very well attended, with 70 in-person and 50 online attendees. Kevin James provided welcoming remarks and an introduction to the exhibit, where he spoke of incredibly high regard for the students of his Fall 2022 experiential learning class and all others who aided exhibit curation. Then, fall class member Dylan Parry-Lai, a Master of Arts student, spoke about his unique student perspective on curating the exhibit and working in such a collaborative matter with peers—he believed it was an invaluable course, providing a hands-on experience that is often uncommon for history students. Subsequently, Amy Moffat, the aforementioned Winter 2023 class member, shared her experience designing and promoting the exhibit. The student consensus was that class members in both classes appreciated the unique collaborative aspect

of the experiential learning course and admired the physical outcome. Also, the launch draw included a featured talk by Prof. Leith Davis of Simon Fraser University on *Female Rebels: Gender in the 1745-46 Jacobite Rising*.

After the insightful keynote speech, a member of the ASC introduced the exhibit and a class member who participated in both classes, Manuel Muncaster, cut the ribbon, commencing the 11-month exhibit. Afterwards, students, staff, friends, family, and others gathered in the exhibit room for the reception to view the exhibit and engage in academic Jacobite discourse with the curators and designers. The tangible aspect of the experiential learning course was gratifying for the students, staff, and faculty involved.

Conclusion

Students enrolled in the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 experiential learning courses received a rich, exciting, and unique student experience. They had the opportunity to create relevance by participating in a real-world experience in which they shared their work with the public. Students' responses in both classes reflected an enhanced approach toward learning, as they were more inclined to participate in an experience with a tangible and valuable outcome. Both experiential learning courses proved an immense opportunity with extremely positive feedback from students, faculty, staff, and university partners.

Above all, the exhibit curation and installation classes gave us a unique opportunity to gain confidence and leadership skills, develop positive professional and practical skills, and engage in a beneficial learning experience in which we collaborated closely with colleagues, faculty, and academics beyond the University of Guelph.



Megan Gamble is a fifth-year undergraduate student at the University of Guelph in the Department of History.

The philanthropic effects of Lady Cathcart

By David Hunter

Always on the lookout for something to write about, my curiosity was triggered when, during one of our recent Zoom Talks, the topic of Saskatchewan's Cathcart Settlers came up. I am originally from Glasgow and so the Cathcart area in that city was familiar to me and after the talk I made a note to look into this Canadian connection with the Cathcart name.

I must admit that I was taken aback by the wording in my first port of call — the online *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* — which used the term “surplus population” to describe the Gaelic-speaking crofters from the Highlands and Outer Hebrides sent to the Saskatchewan prairies during the 1880s thanks to what it called “the philanthropic effects” of Lady Cathcart.

Lady Emily Eliza Steele Gordon Cathcart (née Pringle) was born in 1845. In 1865 she came to own estates in South Uist, Benbecula and Barra in the Hebrides through her first marriage which was to Captain John Gordon of the Cluny estate in Aberdeenshire.

Captain Gordon had inherited these parts of the Hebrides from his father Colonel John Gordon who bought the islands in 1838 from the 18th chief of Clanranald, Reginald George Macdonald, an Eton and Cambridge-educated man who had been banned by his family's trust from visiting his Scottish property, and who was forced to sell due to mounting personal debt.

Colonel John Gordon was the son of Charles Gordon of Braid and Cluny in Aberdeenshire, and became known as “the richest commoner in the northern kingdom.” On the death of his father in 1814, he inherited Cluny Castle and his father's extensive assets to which he added his inheritance of estates and riches from his uncle's six properties in Tobago. Slavery was abolished in the UK in 1833 and slave owners were given generous compensation for the loss of their human “property.” As a result, Gordon's 1,400 slaves earned him nearly £65,000 which would work out to around \$18,000,000 CAD in today's money and enabled him to buy the Hebridean estates which, as a hard-headed businessman, he looked upon simply as a financial investment. This ultimately earned him the reputation of being one of the most hated men in Scottish history. His strategy in order

to maximize his income was to clear tenants off the land to make way for sheep.

After he saw poor returns he was responsible for mass evictions of his Gaelic-speaking tenants. The deteriorating condition of the islanders was described “as a scene of wretchedness” by Reverend Norman Macleod as land for farming was reduced for sheep grazing. “Despicable, nay heart rending. On the beach the whole population of the country seems to be met, gathering the precious cockles for food. I never witnessed such countenances, starvation on many faces” is how the minister described the scene.

A compulsory public meeting in Lochboisdale, South Uist, was held on August 11 1851, after which tenants were forced on board waiting emigration vessels bound for Canada. One account of the meeting summed up the chaos, violence and fear of the night: “One stout Highlander, named Angus Johnstone, resisted with such pith that they had to handcuff him before he could be mastered, but in consequence of the priests' interference his manacles were taken off and (he was) marched between four officers on board the emigrant vessel.” On Barra, attempts were also made to handcuff the evictees. Some managed to run to the hills where they were hunted down by dogs.

A number of families were separated. The evictions were described as “loathsome work” by eyewitness Catherine Macphee, of Iochdar, South Uist. She said: “I have seen big strong men, champions of the countryside, the stalwarts of the world, being bound on Loch Boisdale quay and cast into the ship as would be done to a batch of horses or cattle, the bailiff and the ground officers and the policemen gathered behind them in pursuit.”

On arrival, Gordon's former tenants claimed that promises of work — and even land, in some cases — were non-existent. His promises were worthless. He told tenants he would pay their passage to Quebec where they would be provided with jobs and land. Reluctantly he paid the ship fees only when compelled to by the government but reneged on the guarantees of work and land. So the islanders who left Scotland impoverished found themselves in unfamiliar Canada with nothing.

Colonel John Gordon died a bachelor without legal issue in 1858. Of his illegitimate children, the aforementioned Captain John Gordon, his eldest son and husband of Lady Emily, was the only one to outlive him

He was as cruel as his father in his treatment of the islanders and he, too, left no legitimate heir and so when he died in 1865 Lady Emily inherited everything. She remarried in 1880 and added Cathcart to her list of names, taken from her new husband



Lady Emily Eliza Steele Gordon Cathcart

Sir Reginald Cathcart, the sixth baronet of Cathcart. He was related to Charles Murray, 2nd Earl Cathcart and governor of the Province of Canada from 1846 to 1847

Now, as Lady Cathcart, rather than atoning for the mass evictions initiated by her father-in-law, she continued to play a leading role in the Highland Clearances. She never lived in the Highlands and visited only once.

In 1882 she proposed a settlement of her Gaelic speaking crofters near Moosomin and Wapella, in Saskatchewan — land laid claim to by the Canadian Pacific Railway, the company in which she owned shares.

Meanwhile in Scotland, poverty and hardship became the normal way of life for the islanders as many had been evicted and their livestock seized, but despite this, many wished to remain.

By 1850/1851 almost the entire population of crofters had been evicted from the small island of Vatersay, most of them ending up on the nearby island of Barra. The only remaining residents were Donald MacDonald, the tenant of Vatersay Farm, and his employees. But the crofters never gave up their claims to a life there, and continued to bury their dead on the island.

In 1892 Lady Cathcart was petitioned by 47 of the crofters to permit them to continue using land on Vatersay on which MacDonald allowed them to grow potatoes. When she refused, the crofters continued using the land during the day, returning to Barra at night; but in 1906, 10 of the crofters who became known as the “Vatersay Raiders” took up permanent residence on the island. By 1908, there were 31 families living illegally there and so Cathcart took the leaders (all men) to court, resulting in their imprisonment.

However, her conspicuous absence and willful ignorance of the conditions endured

by her tenants, added to their inheritance of earlier dispossession, prompted popular sympathy resulting in *The Edinburgh Evening News* organizing a relief fund for the raiders' families, and eventually they were released at the request of Lady Cathcart, who paid their fares home.

By this time, having maintained for two years that the government would not buy the island, the Scottish Secretary had come to an agreement with Lady Cathcart over its purchase and Watersay Farm was then divided into crofts, allocated by ballot. So in the end, the raiders were successful and their actions helped fuel the future public debates over land reform in Scotland.

Lady Gordon Cathcart died in Maidstone in Kent in 1932 and in Scotland she is regularly criticized for forcing her tenants to leave for Canada by refusing to release suitable land for farming, with many believing that this was a move to clear Catholic tenants from her lands. Others believe that it was a means of increasing the value of stock she held in the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In Canada, her legacy is more benign, with any credit she has received having more to do with the hard work and determination of her Gaelic-speaking crofters, who built a new life and established a thriving community on the prairies of far-off Canada — just like those described in the following article.

The Crofters from the Western Isles

by Bert McKay
(from *The Western Producer*, 1974)

On June 9, 1883, A. Walsh, commissioner of Dominion lands, informed the minister of the interior that Thomas Bennett, immigration agent at Brandon, Manitoba, was empowered to select lands for the Cathcart settlers in either the Birtle, Man., district, or the Qu'Appelle areas in Saskatchewan. The projected area was 25,000 acres. Lady Cathcart's agents were from the firm of Skene, Edwards and Bilton.

But some crofters had, by that time, already been settled in the St. Andrew's rural district, southwest of Moosomin, Sask.

That first contingent, after 14 days on the Atlantic under almost constant iceberg warnings, arrived at Moosomin around the end of May. They were led by Donald McDiarmid, who had been sent out the previous year to scout land for Lady Cathcart.

Some of the settlers spoke only Gaelic and were in need of an English-speaking guide and counsellor as they landed in Canada and

endured that long, weary trip through the wilds of northern Ontario in one of those famous (or infamous) colonist cars. On arrival at Moosomin they were put up in tents until the necessary implements and supplies were rounded up.

Each family was given 100 pounds sterling (about \$500) by Lady Cathcart to cover passage and acquire supplies. After they had established themselves they were to pay back this loan at five percent interest. In 1884, 40 more families came to the Moosomin area, under the same arrangements.

Of the families who came in 1883, nine were Protestant families and five were Roman Catholic. The two creeds lived in harmony, as did the many of the two faiths who came in the following years.

It is indeed surprising to read the ages of those first intrepid souls who left the misty Hebrides for the Western plains. The oldest crofters were 66 and 64 years of age and both lived several active years in the still-Gaelic settlement. The youngest bachelor was 20 years old and there were children of various ages.

The original settlers retained the Gaelic tongue, some learning but little English. The second generation retained some talent with the mother tongue, but the third generation did not pick up the Gaelic and it is seldom heard in the area today.

Donald McDonald was 66 years of age and his wife 64 when they made the long tough journey. Roderick McDonald was 57 and his wife 48; Angus McCormick was 56 and his wife Marion was 55; Lachlan McPherson was 48 and his wife Christy was 30.

Donald McDonald and his wife were 40; John McDonald and his wife were only 30, and William McPherson and his wife a little younger.

Alex McPherson was 32 and his wife Effie was 24; Alex McDonald was 35 and his wee wife was 26. Ewen McKinnon and his sister, Mary, were about 40 years of age, neither of them married.

There were two young bachelors of 20, Donald McKay and Archie McDonald and another single man, John Buchanan, rounded out the group, plus the children

The second group of crofters, in 1884, landed at Quebec and took the train for Owen Sound. They then came by lake steamer, the Algoma, who was making her maiden voyage. So little space had been allowed for the settlers that their agent delayed the sailing of the vessel until better accommodation had been provided. The captain was furious but when word came directly from the government department, the changes were made. It was the only trip that vessel made, the Algoma being lost on her second venture on the lake waters.

When the larger of group of crofters, with many children, arrived at Moosomin in the spring of 1884, they were put up in tents while supplies were arranged. The Land Office was in a half-floored tent, and the store was half frame, half tent.

At last the party, with plodding oxen and carts of supplies, plus some loose livestock, were ready to start for the "Promised Land" 15 miles away. Bits of snow still lingered in the bushes.

There was mud everywhere. The trail was but a faint track and the party stretched back for half a mile. Mr. Hopeby, the land guide, led the way, but went back often to help the loads finding difficulty.

As they reached the top of the deep valley of the Pipestone Creek, the party halted and Mr. Hopeby came hurrying up from the rear. The weary and doubting Scots were looking down from the hill into the valley, which had been burned over by a prairie fire leaving only the blackened slopes and charred remains. It was a heart-chilling sight for those who had never heard of a prairie fire in those mist-shrouded islands of home.

One old Scot, his hands high above his head, said, "We have braved the terrors of the Atlantic and the waste lands of Ontario, in our search for the Promised Land, but behold we come to the Valley of the Shadow of Death... which we shall not cross."

Mr. Hopeby was all but worn out in the several hours it took the crofters to finally believe they must cross the black and ash-filled valley before they could reach the green land that lay just behind the far hill. Finally, when the sun had set on the scene, and hid the bare black hillsides, the group passed across the valley (although it took all night), and the next evening they reached their homesteads, in three tiny settlements which they named St. Andrew's, Benbecula and Iona, all familiar names in Scotland, the three lying within about 15 miles of Moosomin, then the largest town on the newly-laid main line of the C.P.R.

Their early years on those new homesteads were tough indeed, with holes dug in the hillsides made into temporary homes, but life had also been hard on the wind-swept islands of home. These people were accustomed to hard work and hard living, a combination that was to finally establish them soundly in their new homes. They prospered in spite of the frost and hail and, in most cases, raised large families. The children were raised to be grateful for any blessings, to work for the welfare of the colony as well as for their own progress, and followed in the footsteps of their God-fearing, honest and thrifty parents.

Hardy folks, they are, and their motto, translated from the Gaelic, is: "God's will be done; the cure for misfortune is harder work and perseverance."

