

1991

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Recommended Citation

Montgomery, Michael (1991) "The Anglicization of Scots in Seventeenth-Century Ulster," *Studies in Scottish Literature*: Vol. 26: Iss. 1.

Available at: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/vol26/iss1/6>

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Michael Montgomery

The Anglicization of Scots in Seventeenth-Century Ulster

The first decade of the seventeenth century was a pivotal time for the history of Scotland and for the Scots language.¹ The king's removal to London in 1603 to become James I signified the advent of a new political era for Scotland, but it represented also the culmination of a half-century of pressure from England on the culture and language of Scotland. The influence of Southern British English on written Scots had come about for a number of reasons; Templeton cites the popularity of English literature, the dissemination of the Bible in English, and the policies of printers.² This process of Anglicization, this loss of autonomy for the Scots language in which a range of orthographic and grammatical features of written Scots were lost in favor of their English counterparts, seems to have become irreversible in the early seventeenth century. Aitken says that for public writing "after 1610, except for a few legal texts and one or two comic or satiric *tours de force*, all Scots writings in prose, whether printed in Scotland or, as often, in London, are in what can only be called English—with an occasional Scots locution only

¹This paper relies heavily on the work of Philip Robinson. The author is not only indebted to him for identifying appropriate documents and outlining the historical context for analyzing them but also for his generous advice and assistance. Thanks are also expressed to Jack Aitken and Caroline Macafee for their comments and bibliographical assistance.

²Janet M. Templeton, "Scots: an Outline History," *Lowland Scots: Papers Presented to an Edinburgh Conference* (Edinburgh, 1975), p. 7.

every dozen pages or so"³ According to Templeton, "during the 17th century, plenty of Scots was still being written, in diaries and memoirs, household accounts, the records of the smaller burghs and kirk-sessions,"⁴ but even in these types of writings Anglicization was well under way and moving toward completion by the middle decades of the century,⁵ although there is a good deal of evidence that in national and public records the shift to English was not completed until around the middle of the eighteenth century.⁶ It must be emphasized, however, that the *speech* "of all Scotsmen continued fully Scots into the seventeenth century."⁷

Though a good deal has been written about how Mainland Scots, at least written Scots, gradually shifted toward Southern British English, the linguistic results of another important early seventeenth-century event in the history of Scotland had received no attention until recently, with the publication of a pioneering essay by Philip Robinson, about which more will be said directly. What happened in the first decade of the seventeenth century is that Scots became an exported language—not a colonial language exactly, but the language of a sizable group of Scots folk beyond Scottish shores.

For a variety of reasons not pertinent for our immediate purposes, Scottish settlers mainly from Southwestern counties like Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, and Wigtownshire began migrating to Ulster in the so-called "King James Plantation" in 1610. Although Scots had moved back and forth across the channel to Ulster for centuries and there were families like the MacDonnells who had holdings on both sides of the water, the opening of lands in the province in an official plantation program led to the migration and settlement of a significant number of Scots and Englishmen onto land previously held by the native Irish. Estimates are that intermittent waves of settlers built the non-Irish population in Ulster, the vast majority of these

³A. J. Aitken, "A History of Scots," *Concise Scots Dictionary*, ed. Mairi Robinson *et al.* (Aberdeen, 1985), p. xi.

⁴Templeton, p. 8.

⁵Amy J. Devitt, *Standardizing Written English: Diffusion in the Case of Scotland 1520-1659*, (Cambridge, 1989).

⁶Lilian E. C. MacQueen, "The Last Stages of the Older Literary Language of Scotland," Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh University (1957).

⁷Aitken, p. xi.

being Scots, to around one hundred thousand by 1640,⁸ with the main settlements of Scots in Northern County Antrim, Northeastern County Down, and Eastern County Donegal, as is shown by the shaded areas on the accompanying map.

What do we know about the language of these Scottish settlers in Ulster? Until very recently, almost nothing. As far as most histories of the Scots language are concerned, they passed completely from view, and comments, much less any discussion, on the historical development of Ulster Scots are exceedingly hard to find.⁹ For example, although William Grant in his introduction to the *Scottish National Dictionary* identifies Ulster as one of the three areas of Scottish speech—the other two being the Lowlands and the Northern islands, he makes only a single statement about Ulster Scots in the course of an otherwise greatly detailed thirty-three-page essay on the development and geography of the language. The statement is simply that, "Ulster Scots is in the main a variant of wm. [west mid] Scots."¹⁰ If we consult accounts of the language situation in Ireland for discussion of Ulster Scots, we find that they usually focus entirely on the long-term rivalry of English and Irish Gaelic and ignore the contact situation between English and Scots in Ulster.¹¹

We know the Scottish settlers spoke Scots. For one, they were mainly rural folk in the seventeenth century who must have escaped the stronger Anglicizing forces of urban life. More tellingly, Ulster Scots is still spoken today in the areas these people settled, and we know a good deal about twentieth-century Ulster Scots speech from a number of linguistic studies by Robert Gregg, John Braidwood, and others and the work of the *Linguistic*

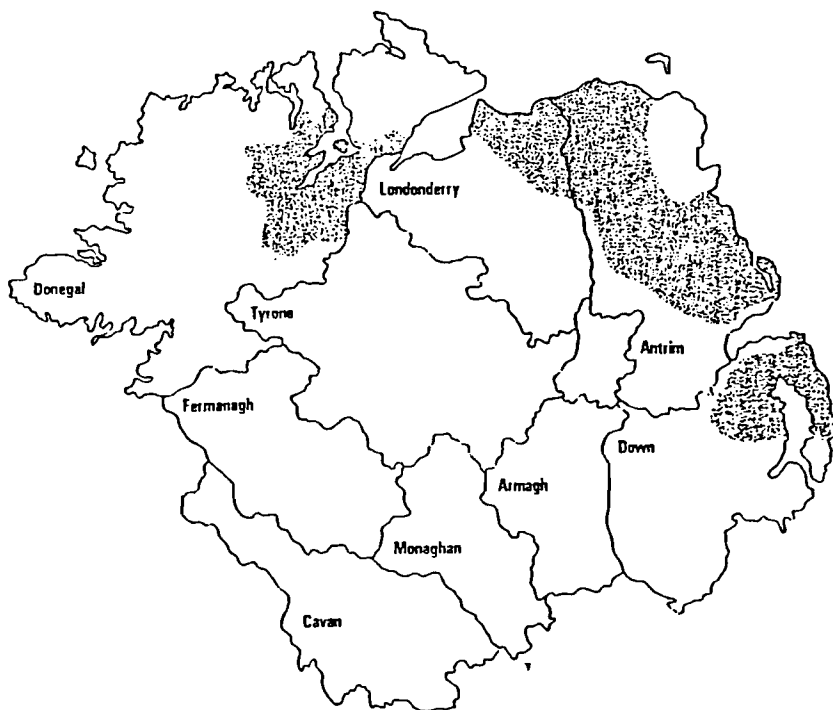
⁸James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: a Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1962), p. 111.

⁹The term "Ulster Scots" is used in this paper to refer to the Scots language spoken in Ulster but does not necessarily imply that in the seventeenth century Ulster Scots differed from Mainland Scots. Because there was continuing contact and frequent interchange between Ulster and Lowland Scotland throughout the century, it is difficult to specify the beginning point of Ulster Scots.

¹⁰William Grant, "Introduction," *Scottish National Dictionary*, Volume 1 (Edinburgh, 1931), p. xli.

¹¹Jeffrey Kallen, "The English Language in Ireland," *Cambridge History of the English Language*, ed. Robert W. Burchfield, Vol. 5 (Cambridge, forthcoming) is something of an exception to this.

The Nine Counties of Ulster



Language in the British Isles, ed. Peter Trudgill
Cambridge University Press, 1984 (with permission)

Atlas of Scotland.¹² But did they write anything in Scots in earlier centuries, and if they did, for how long was Scots a written medium in Ulster? Can we document the evolution of written Scots in Ulster and does this reflect the same gravitation toward English found in Mainland Scots?

This paper presents a quantitative look at how Ulster Scots, an exported variety of the Scots language, evolved in the crucial period of the first third of the seventeenth century. Other studies have explored the loss during this period of a range of orthographic and grammatical features of written Scots in favor of their English counterparts.¹³ For five types of texts (national public records, official correspondence, private correspondence, religious treatises, and private records) and across a one hundred forty-year time span (1520-1659), Devitt examines the use of five linguistic features (the present participial ending, the negative element, the indefinite article, the preterit inflection, and the relative clause marker) for which a Scots form competed with an English form. More will be said about these linguistic features later, and illustrations will be provided.

But until the recent publication of Robinson's essay, "The Scots Language in Seventeenth-Century Ulster" in *Ulster Folklife*, an essay which surveys how the Scots language was used in "letters, wills, indentures and leases written in Ulster between the late sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century," almost nothing was known about the early period of Ulster Scots.¹⁴ The present paper builds on Robinson's essay by providing quantitative detail and compares findings to those of Devitt's study. It seeks to answer three research questions:

- 1) What is the evidence for Ulster Scots in the seventeenth century?
- 2) Did Ulster Scots become Anglicized in the same manner and at the same time as Mainland Scots?
- 3) Are there factors other than chronology that affect variation between Scots and English forms?

¹²Robert J. Gregg, *The Scotch-Irish Dialect Boundaries in the Province of Ulster* (Ottawa, 1985); John Briadwood, *The Ulster Dialect Lexicon* (Belfast, 1969); J. Y. Mather and H. H. Speitel, eds., *The Linguistic Atlas of Scotland, Scots Section*, 3 vols. (Hamden, CT, 1975-86).

¹³Devitt, *op. cit.*; MacQueen, *op. cit.*; Anneli Meurman-Solin, "Variation by Text-Type in the Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots," paper read at the Sixth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, Helsinki, 1990. In Scotland the term "Anglicization" has been preferred to "standardization" because of the prevailing view that a shift from one standard (Scots) to another (English) took place.

¹⁴Philip Robinson, "The Scots Language in Seventeenth-Century Ulster," *Ulster Folklife*, 35 (1989), 86-99.

Robinson's 1989 essay is an overview, focusing largely on the orthographic features of early Ulster Scots; he does not discriminate the type of feature anglicized first or the order of features anglicized. A historical geographer by profession and the author of an earlier study of the Ulster plantation,¹⁵ Robinson draws on types of documents, mostly unpublished, that linguists have been unaware of and provides a useful list of documents exhibiting Ulster Scots (of which there are really quite few) and a characterization of the writers of such documents:

Most of the Scottish undertakers that received larger land grants in Ulster were from families enjoying the personal patronage and favour of James I. Although these undertakers were a tiny minority among the artisans, tenant farmers and farm labourers that made up most of the Scottish immigrants, it was only they that were generally literate. Consequently almost all of the written evidence of the use of Scots (and English) in Ulster during the early seventeenth century was generated by this upper social group. It is clear that by the middle of the century all landowners, of whatever origin, wrote in the standard contemporary English of the day. The best Scots writings from the earlier decades came from the pens of those older Scots gentry who had been educated in Scotland well before 1600, and particularly when they were corresponding within the family circle.¹⁶

Personal efforts of this writer, including consultation with a number of historians and archival work in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the National Library of Ireland, and Trinity College, Dublin, confirms how little of the extant material from the seventeenth century was written in Ulster Scots. In answer to our first research question, it seems clear that the evidence for Ulster Scots in that century is quite limited and scattered. Public and private records, especially legal documents, from the earliest point in the plantation were with very few exceptions exclusively in English. But because we cannot document the progressive shift from Scots to English in these types of documents, we cannot necessarily conclude that we have evidence for the Anglicization of the language here, at least in answering our second research question. It is most likely that English was the sole administrative language of the plantation from the beginning.

¹⁵Philip Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster: British Settlement in an Irish Landscape, 1600-1670* (Dublin, 1984).

¹⁶Robinson, "The Scots Language in Seventeenth-Century Ulster," p. 87.

Data Source

To address directly the second research question of whether Ulster Scots become Anglicized in the same manner and at the same time as Mainland Scots, what we need to do is to examine in detail the patterning of Scots variants in private correspondence, which constitutes the largest amount of writing in Ulster Scots, in particular, one set of data, the Duntreath letters.

These personal letters are part of the Sir Archibald Edmonstone of Duntreath, Baronet, manuscript collection, a set of documents dating from 1288 to 1829 and published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1909.¹⁷ Some of these letters were written between members of the Edmonstone household of Duntreath, Stirlingshire, Scotland, and relatives and associates who had settled in Ballymena, County Antrim, Ireland. William Edmonstone, the eldest son of Sir James Edmonstone of Duntreath, was among the early settlers in the Ulster plantation. But most letters analyzed here were between Archibald Edmonstone of Ballymena and other noblemen prominent in the development of the Ulster plantation, including Hamilton, Montgomery, and MacDonnell. For this analysis, the forty-five private letters written between 1609-31 are used.¹⁸ Some of these are quite informal, discussing intimate family details, while others are relatively formal and deal with business and political matters. Two letters from this collection are provided in the appendix to this paper. Although the Duntreath letters represent less data than we would want for completely definitive statements, they provide by far the largest and best set of material so far identified.

Features Examined

I shall consider seven features, each of which involves in the main the competition between a Scots variant and an English one (e.g., Scots QUHICH vs. English WHICH); other variants, which occur only marginally (e.g. VHILK) are ignored in this analysis. Some of these features are strictly matters of orthographic convention (e.g., QUHICH/WHICH), others involve choice of grammatical form (e.g., plural verbal S concord), and others are a

¹⁷Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of Sir Archibald Edmonstone of Duntreath, Baronet. Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, Vol. 5 (London, 1909).

¹⁸Unfortunately, despite nine letters dated 1631, there is an abrupt break in the published collection after that point and no other letters from Ulster appear.

combination of both. The first five features are the same as those analyzed by Devitt 1989.¹⁹

Preterit/Past Participle Endings: Scots -IT vs. English -ED

- 1) Bot his Lordship hes ADVERTEISIT me that he nicht nocht . . .
- 2) Worthy and WELLBELOVITT soun, I have RECEAVIT your letter.

Form of Negative: Scots NOCHT vs. English NOT

- 3) I persave your Lordship hes NOCHT gotin my lettir . . .
- 4) it can NOCHT be udervayis . . .

Form of Indefinite Article: Scots ANE vs. English A

- 5) he deiit of ANE flux.
- 6) So hoiping ye will except this as ANE resonable excuse . . .

Form of Present Participle: Scots -AND vs. English -ING

- 7) I protest befor God he wes the man LEVAND that I wald faynest haif had weill,

Form of the Relative Pronoun: Scots QUH- vs. English WH-

- 8) I haif spoikin lykwayis with the tutour of Callender, QUHA hes schawin me your luiffing care, QUHILK ye haif takin anent the place of bureall,

Subject-Verb Concord with Plural Noun Subjects: Scots -S vs. English \emptyset

- 9) This I man confes in respect as materis HES fallin out sensyne wes my greatest folie.
- 10) I have this day reseved letters from Scotland quhich URGIS me to go over with (127)

Form of Plural Demonstratives: Scots THIR/THAY vs. English THESE/THOSE

- 11) to prejuge his Lordship of THAY thingis or uthir moveabillis
- 12) thankis for your effectuall gudewill and dealing in THIR materis,

To facilitate a chronological view of the Duntreath letters, we divide the forty-five documents into three almost-equal subsets based on chronology and present the analysis of six of the features identified above in Tables 1 through 6 (i.e., all but the form of the present participle, for which the Scots variant occurred in the early data at too low a rate (4%) to warrant further analysis).

¹⁹The features analyzed here are chosen for comparison to Devitt's results and because they have been shown in past studies to have shifted from Scots to English in the period under consideration. A number of other features of Ulster Scots, both grammatical and orthographic, would be equally profitable to investigate.

The preponderance of documents (thirty of the forty-five) date from the last five years (1627-31) of the twenty-three-year period, making it more difficult to gauge the gradualness of shifts that appear to occur. Even so, we will find interesting evidence for rapid shifts in these few years.

The smallness of this set of data makes it especially possible that the patterning found in individual letters might distort the general figures for a given period. In an effort to keep this in perspective, the tabular presentations include not only counts of individual tokens but a three-way count of letters as well that indicates the number of letters in each time period with only Scots variants, with mixed Scots and English variants, and with only English variants. The latter count equalizes letters regardless of their number of tokens, identifying the ratio of letters in which the Scots variants occur. This latter calculation shows how widely—rather than how deeply—Scots features were used, since letters vary greatly in length and in the number of tokens for each feature.

Findings

Tables 1-6 present the breakdown of data for six of the seven features identified above, all those identified earlier except the present participle. Each table presents the number and percentage of occurrence of each feature for the three subsets of data divided by chronology and also the number and percentage of letters showing any incidence of Scots variants.

For the preterite/past participle ending in the Duntreath letters, we see from Table 1 that the Scots variant -IT declines across the three time periods in both relative frequency from 59.2 to 41.2 to 29.1 percent and in incidence in individual letters from 61.5 to 42.9 to 20.0. In the short time between the second and third periods, a significant decline is shown and overall the data show a steady progression.

Table 1: Patterning of Preterit/Past Participle Endings

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
-IT	45	21	23
All Preterites/Past Participles	76	51	79
% of Forms with -IT	59.2	41.2	29.1
No. Letters with only -IT	7	4	2
No. Letters with both -IT and -ED	1	2	1
No. Letters with only -ED	5	8	12
% of Letters with -IT	61.5	42.9	20.0

The patterning of variation between Scots NOCHT and English NOT does not appear to follow so neat a pattern, if we examine Table 2. Although its incidence in individual letters decreases across the periods, its relative frequency increases between periods two and three. The key here is that all thirteen occurrences of NOCHT come from a single letter, the exact effects of which will be examined a little later.

Table 2: Patterning of Negative Element

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
NOCHT	9	3	13
NOCHT + NOT	26	18	37
% of NOCHT	34.6	16.7	35.1
No. Letters with only NOCHT	3	0	1
No. Letters with both NOCHT and NOT	1	2	0
No. Letters with only NOT	9	8	8
% of Letters with NOCHT	30.8	20.0	11.1

Table 3 presents the patterning of indefinite article. Only variation before consonants is considered here (i.e., such uses of the article as ANE UTHER and ANE ANSUERE are viewed as not clearly distinguishable from the English counterpart with AN). Here again with these data there is a nice progression.

Table 3: Patterning of Indefinite Article

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
ANE	13	10	9
ANE + A	23	20	41
% of ANE	56.5	50.0	22.0
No. Letters with only ANE	4	3	3
No. Letters with both ANE and A	1	1	1
No. Letters with only A	4	4	7
% of Letters with ANE	55.6	50.0	36.4

The figures presented in Table 4 on the variation between QUH- and WH- are actually based on more than relative pronouns, in an effort to increase the data to quantify. For instance, interrogative forms such as WHERE and

WHICH are also included. As with most of the data presented earlier, we see a steady decline here in the relative frequency of the Scots variant, whereas its incidence in individual letters remains relatively stable across the three periods.

Table 4: Patterning of Relative Element

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
QUH-	40	22	28
QUH- + WH-	56	41	62
% of QUH-	71.4	53.7	45.2
No. Letters with only QUH-	6	6	5
No. Letters with both QUH- and WH-	0	1	1
No. Letters with only WH-	5	4	7
% of Letters with QUH-	54.5	63.6	46.2

Table 5 is based on only present-tense forms with noun subjects. The well-known Scots pattern of marking plural verbs with *s* if they follow a noun, actually anything other than an adjacent personal pronoun, while not marking a verb following the latter, operates in Ulster Scots as well.²⁰ Thus in Scots *they* would be take the verb *have* and *people* would take *hes*.

Table 5: Patterning of Verbal S with Plural Noun Subjects

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
-S	9	7	5
-S + \emptyset	19	10	25
% of -S	46.3	70.0	20.0
No. Letters with only -S	3	3	2
No. Letters with both -S and -O	1	2	2
No. Letters with only -O	4	1	4
% of Letters with -S	50.0	83.3	50.0

²⁰Michael Montgomery, "Trans-Atlantic Connections Between Varieties of English: the Case of Plural Verbal S," *Journal of English Linguistics*, forthcoming.

The Duntreath letters contain very few plural demonstrative forms. But although scant, we can note from Table 6 with interest that steady progressions do appear for these data.

Table 6: Patterning of Demonstratives

	1609-26	1627-29	1630-31
	15	14	16
	Letters	Letters	Letters
THIR/THAY	5	1	0
All Demonstratives	9	4	5
% of THIR/THAY	55.6	25.0	0
No. Letters with only THIR/THAY	2	1	0
No. Letters with both THESE/THOSE and THIR/THAY	0	0	0
No. Letters with only THESE/THOSE	4	3	3
% of Letters with THIR/THAY	33.3	25.0	0

Analysis

Despite having less data than we would like in some cases, the cumulative evidence of the figures in Tables 1-6 shows convincingly that the process of Anglicization was operating on Ulster Scots. For four of the six features, a steady decline in relative frequency of the Scots variant occurred across the three time periods and for four of the six the same was true in terms of the ratio of numbers of letters in which the Scots variant occurred.

The overall process does mirror what Devitt finds was happening in Scotland. If we compare the figures for personal correspondence from the 1620-1639 time period from her study and compare them with the figures for the same five features in the third period (1630-31) of the Ulster Scots of the Duntreath letters, we have the results in Table 7:²¹

²¹Because of Devitt's decision (p. 102) to report mean percentages of occurrence of Scots variants across the texts she analyzes within each of her categories (regardless of how many tokens occurred in each text), her raw data cannot be reconstructed from her tables in Appendix 5.

Table 7: Comparison of Ulster Scots With Mainland Scots

	Ulster Scots Duntreath Letters		Mainland Scots Devitt Personal Correspondence Data
	1630-31		1620-39
Preterite/Past Participle	23/79	29.1	32
Negative	13/37	35.1	8
Indefinite Article	9/41	22.0	49
Present Participle		0.0	0
Relative	28/62	45.2	32

Figures for preterite/past participle and for present participle are very close to those from Devitt's study.

Table 8: Summary of Scots Variants in 1630-31 Data

	Total		I. Haldane Letter		Other Letters		Devitt Data
	Pret/Past Participle	23/79	29.1	16/16	100.0	7/63	11.1
Negative	13/37	35.1	13/13	100.0	0/24	0.0	8
Indef. Article	9/41	22.0	4/7	57.1	5/34	14.7	49
Relative	28/62	45.2	13/13	100.0	15/49	30.6	32

As we can see under the column "Other Letters," figures for the negative and for the relative clause marker are very close to those from Devitt; Table 8 shows how distorting the figures from a single letter written in 1630 by Isabel Haldane to her son Archibald Edmonstone can be. More important, it indicates that if we factor out this one letter (the only one from Haldane), the process of Anglicization, the decline of use of Scots variants, was quite rapid in Ulster and even farther advanced there than on the Mainland at the time. Distortions like those of the Haldane letter and the additional evidence from Tables 1-6 of little variation between Scots and English within individual letters enables us to answer to our third research question, that there are factors other than chronology that affect variation between Scots and English forms. The age of the writer plays a role, since older individuals would have spent formative years in Scotland rather than Ulster. Perhaps individual style, education or even gender of writer are important as well, but these are beyond the scope of the present study to investigate.

In the written medium the Scots language apparently had a very limited life in Ulster, about the span of a generation. If anything, features of Scots apparently gave way more quickly in Ulster than in Scotland. It isn't very hard to understand why this would have been so. English was not a language emanating from London or another governmental seat of some distance

away, but was the language of the local administration, the language of the bureaucracy of the plantation. Although English speakers were outnumbered by Scots speakers, the administrative requirement of writing in English must have added to the social and religious pressures already operating on Scots (and well known on the Mainland) to intensify the process of Anglicization in Ulster.

This paper increases our knowledge of the history of Ulster Scots. Although it disappeared as a written medium in the seventeenth century, the Exported Scots of Ulster remained a vigorous spoken language. The latter formed the basis for a revival at the hands of a school of poets known as the Rhyming Weavers that produced between sixty to seventy volumes of verse between 1750 and 1850.²² It served also as the vehicle for dialogue in much local fiction in the nineteenth century.²³ From its many traces in American dialects, we know that Ulster Scots was brought to American shores by a wave of Ulster emigrants in the eighteenth century.²⁴

The value of the Duntreath letters lies not only in documenting the details of the shift from Scots to English in writing, but also in providing much insight into what the spoken language must have been like and in demonstrating that the Scots language was indeed used in Ulster, albeit in limited contexts, during the Plantation period. If we had no early writing in Ulster Scots, the work of trans-Atlantic reconstruction, of tracing the evolution of vernacular varieties of language from the British Isles such as the speech patterns of Scots who migrated from Ulster to America, would be very much more difficult indeed.

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²²John Hewitt, *Rhyming Weavers* (Belfast, 1974); Ivan Herbison, *Language, Literature, and Cultural Identity: an Ulster-Scots Perspective* (Ballaymena, 1989).

²³J. R. R. Adams, "A Preliminary Checklist of Works Containing Ulster Dialect 1700-1900," *Linen Hall Review*, Vol. 6, no. 3 (1989), 10-12.

²⁴Michael Montgomery, "The Roots of Appalachian English: Scotch-Irish or Southern British?" *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* (1991), pp. 177-91.

Appendix

Sample Letters from Duntreath Collection

Sir Robert Adair of Kinhilt to his brother-in-law, Archibald Edmonstone of Duntreath, 1627, June 2, Ballemenach:

"Rycht worthie and loving brother, my love remembrit. We expectid to have sine yow longe sence. Ye shall wit that their hes bin servants of my Lord Cheichesters heir taking possessione in Gilform to the use of my Lord Cheichester. We have grait naid that ye and we war together to consult in this bussines and sindry other things. We ar mightilie trublit with the sogers monays daylie in this land, and your not agreement with Mr. Houstoune drawis us still in farther inconveniants, as ye will heir at meiting. I have this day reseved letters from Scotland quich urgis me to go over with all the speid I can, quich makes me the desyrus that we all sould be together befor my waygoing. So thinge els to meiting. With my love to your bedfellow and all our frends, I take leve and still remains, your loving brother to my uttermost, Ro. Adair.

John, Fourth Earl of Montrose, to Sir William Livingstone of Kilsyth, 1609, June 4th, Kincardine:

Richt honorabil and luiffin consigne, I dout nocht bot ye haife resaifit my former letter desyryng yowe to be present withe me att the bureall as lykwayis to haif mett me in Dumblane withe my Lord of Wigtoune. Bot his Lordship hes advertesit me that he nicht nocht keip dyett in respeck of sum of his awin effairis, and he wreitt to me that ye ves in Edinburgh for sick occasiounes as I am glaid that ye are insoaschit withe. I haif spoikin lykwayis with the tutour of Callender, quha hes schawin me your luiffing care, quhilk ye haif takin anent the place of bureall, quhairin I heir thair is moir difficultie maid nor I vald haif luikit for, seing I am willing to do thame moir honour in that nor thay ar worthie of. Always it is upone the Earll of Dumbar that I repos, quhas counsall I haif followit as ye knaw in making of it thair. Theirfoir seing I am sua far agaitvart I will ernestlie desyre yowe to be instant withe his Lordship that all difficulties in that may be removit befor I cum, for ye knaw it standis me to my honour, quhair of I am asswrit he will be also cairfull of as myself, as I haif ever found experience of in your pairt, more nor I acknowledg myself able to acquyt. Bot it is nocht with yow that I will use complementis, far your meritis towardis me hes deserwit moir. Always I rest youre dettoure. I mynd, Godwilling, to cum in to the toune on Sunday efternoone, and must be this hamlie with yowe as to desyre yowe to tak the panes to mett me ane myll or tua without the toune be foure houris. My brother, Sir William, vill await upone your dyett. Unto the quhilk tyme referring farder, my lowing dewtie remembrit, will committ yowe to God, resting your verie lowing and assurit consigne to poware. Montrose.