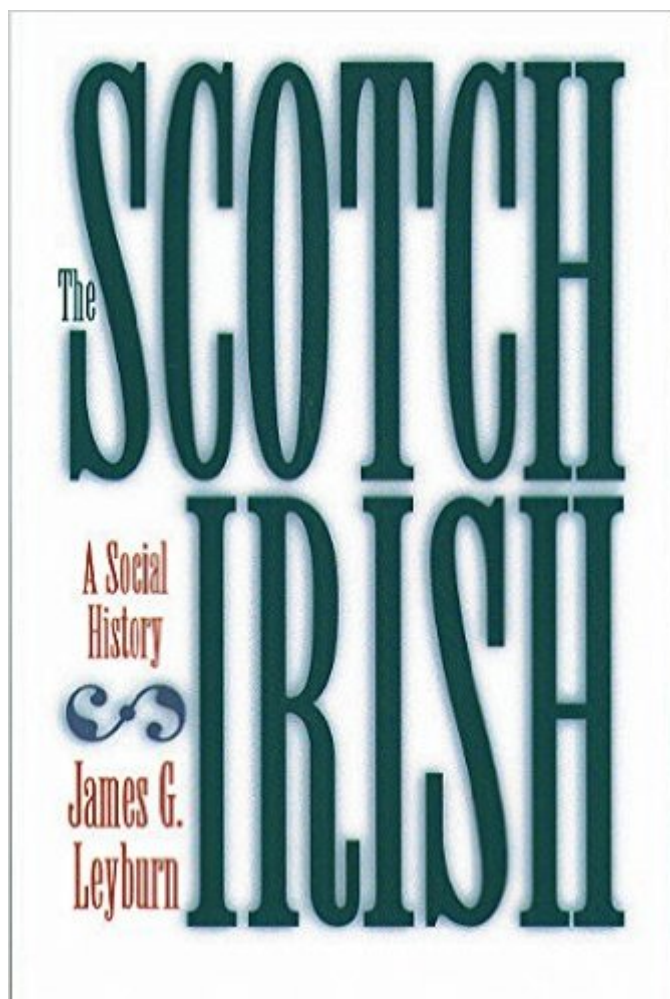


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The Scotch-Irish: A Social History



Synopsis

Dispelling much of what he terms the 'mythology' of the Scotch-Irish, James Leyburn provides an absorbing account of their heritage. He discusses their life in Scotland, when the essentials of their character and culture were shaped; their removal to Northern Ireland and the action of their residence in that region upon their outlook on life; and their successive migrations to America, where they settled especially in the back-country of Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, and then after the Revolutionary War were in the van of pioneers to the west.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Leyburn and the Scots-IrishLeyburn's book (1962) is now "the grand old man" of Scots-Irish historiography, having easily displaced Henry Jones Ford's "The Scotch-Irish in America" (1915) - a book that was the previous generation's best study of the subject. Leyburn was one of the earliest authors to seriously investigate the Scottish background of the Scots-Irish, and did a wonderful job of not overpraising or overly denigrating the Scots-Irish (as a number of previous authors had done). Unfortunately, his book has an important flaw: he did not think very highly of Scots in general, and compared them unfavorably with their more successful (in modern terms) English cousins just about every chance he got. In other words, he did not understand the anthropological concept of culture at all; he was a historian after all, and largely a very good one. However, there is more to understanding the Scots-Irish than documents and written records, as is explained more fully below.Scots-Irish HistoriographyOne of the most interesting aspects in Scots-Irish studies is how

different schools of thought have risen and debated each other over the course of the last century and a half. There are four primary schools of thought. 1) The Ancestor Worshipper historians were the first to investigate the subject and brought a huge amount of forgotten information to the public eye between circa 1850 and today. Their primary limitation was that they believed that every great thing accomplished by Americans - representative government, education, religion, etc - had their origins with Scots-Irish traditions and heritage. These authors included those included in the volumes published by the Scotch-Irish Congresses, Charles Hanna, Ford, Maude Glasgow, W.F.

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