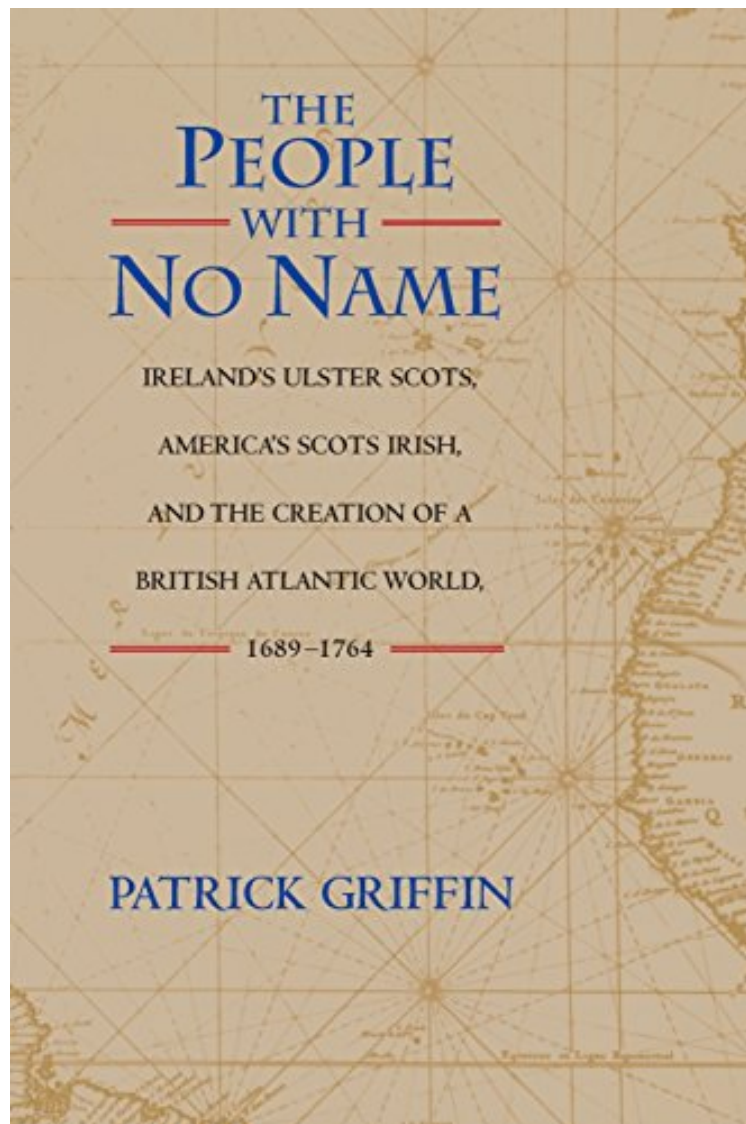


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Patrick Griffin

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Patrick Griffin : The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764.:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. didn't work for me...By C. KollarsI was looking for a book that would describe the Scots-Irish from beginning to end, and that might even provide some insight into a) why their culture was the way it was, b) why most other Colonists thought of them as "scum", and c) how their culture contributed to the broader "American" culture. I was looking for something somewhat similar to James G. Leyburn's classic "The Scotch-Irish: A Social History", but more recent than half a century ago, with additional information, and hopefully with some penetrating insights. It turned out this was most definitely NOT that book. In fact, after sampling several tens of pages at the beginning, middle, and end of the book, I gave up, not even finishing it. (I do not understand either the popularity of this book or the many very positive editorial reviews ..._I_ certainly didn't "get it".) For starters, the dates 1689-1764 in the title are neither the beginning nor the end of the Scots-Irish, nor are they the generally accepted beginning and end of the Scots-Irish mass migration to America. I assume they signify something, but I never figured out just what that was; to me those dates just seem rather arbitrary. The fact that the Scots-Irish originated on the "border" between England and Scotland and were encouraged to move as part of the unification of those two kingdoms, is occasionally alluded to but is never explicitly stated, even though that fact seems to me to be a pretty important part of the story.) It's as if an experienced academic historian dived very deeply into the Scots-Irish of a certain period, intending to produce a scholarly book, but at the last minute wrote a "popular" book instead. The result is more a line-by-line rumination on the imagined scholarly book he wished he'd written, than a book about the Scots-Irish themselves. (Or to try to express the same thought but from a very different viewpoint, non-specialist readers will get the strong impression of being "lost in the weeds".) Furthermore, this book is not very well written. Uncommon terms (for example "Old Side" and "New Side", or "latitudinarianism") are suddenly used without definition or explanation. The logic of what caused what, or why seemingly separate subjects are treated together, is so hard to follow that I suspect that it often simply doesn't exist. And my attempt to tease out the structure by locating the "topic sentence" in each paragraph failed miserably: some "paragraphs" are about more than one thing, some are internally contradictory, and some have no cohesion at all. I was particularly intrigued by two aspects of the (long) title: why emphasize "no name" when several different perfectly clear names are in common use in various locations? and does "creation of a British atlantic world" mean that somehow the Scots-Irish contributed to a significant identity shift that encompassed both the Old and New Worlds? Both mysteries were quickly solved. At the time, the Scots-Irish themselves rejected all the names that are now commonly applied to them as misleadingly inaccurate (and even demeaning). But they never suggested a better name. So from their own internal perspective -which doesn't really matter much anyway- they were the "people with no name". The neologism has absolutely nothing to do with what anyone else called them, then or now. And at the time, as events drove a shift from separate English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish identities to a single British identity, something similar was happening in the Colonies (albeit for somewhat different reasons). The shift from "English" to "British" had very little impact on the Scots-Irish, and conversely their migration had very little impact on the shift. (Whatever impact the Scots-Irish did have on that identity shift was entirely in Ireland, and grew out of their intimate involvement in the revolutionary religious wars contested by Catholics and Protestants.) One particular topic I did find teasingly interesting, a whole topic area that was "new" to me and that seemed quite significant: Several comments that were mainly about other topics also suggested there was some sort of significant separation between the "elite" Ulstermen and the "rank and file". Most of the elite were called "churchmen", and they owned most of the land. The rank and file were almost universally renters, and for some reason they were excluded from full political participation in their own affairs. Unfortunately neither the situation nor how it developed was ever the central focus, and so was never described or explained in any detail. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Solid-but-Timid Ethnographic Study By Frank Bellizzi Griffin begins by explaining that between 1718 and 1775, over 100,000 people migrated from the Irish province of Ulster to the American colonies. Once in America, these people typically did not take up residence in towns along the east coast. Instead, they settled in the deep woods of Pennsylvania--a colony known for its religious tolerance--and cleared land along what was then the western frontier. Although their ancestors had moved to Ireland from Scotland, they were not identified as Scottish. And though they had recently come from Ireland, neither were they Irish. They were sometimes called Scots Irish, though they did not call themselves that. What they did call themselves was northern dissenters, a name that made sense in Ireland, but not in America. This book, *The People with No Name*, tells their often sad and difficult story from the end of the Glorious Revolution to the end of the Seven Years' War. Along the way, Griffin indicates how their experience both reflected and contributed to the development of what he terms "a British Atlantic world." It does not appear that Griffin anywhere specifies a thesis for his book. And, although his six chapters normally follow a chronological sequence, other than what I've already identified, Griffin does not appear to be building a case. So, this book is what might be called an ethnographic history, a description of a people group. What follows are some of the points I picked up and some of the thoughts that occurred to me as I read it. 1. Throughout, Griffin highlights the status of the Ulster Presbyterians as second-class citizens in (or from) Ireland, which was itself a second-class kingdom. Once in America, they were sometimes exploited. 2. I was impressed at how the development of linen production and trade was so important to the survival and relative prosperity of the Ulster Presbyterians. 3. Griffin describes how that after the Glorious Revolution, Britain reinforced its dominance over Ireland, with Parliament making laws that

controlled Irish trade. Some Irish leaders pushed back. For example, in *Drapier's Letters*, Jonathan Swift said that Britain rewarded Ireland for loyalty by giving her "the Privilege of being governed by laws to which we do not consent" (p.18). No one who grew up in the U.S. can hear such anti-British rhetoric without thinking of the American Revolution.⁴ Griffin mentions that the churches in Ulster began to have once- or twice-a-year regional communion gatherings, with people coming from as far away as 40 miles in order to attend. These gatherings would sometimes number as many as 4000 people. Clearly, this practice was part of the matrix for the future religious camp meetings in America.⁵ In Chapter Four, the author says that, eventually, the Ulster immigrants to Pennsylvania established churches and presbyteries, and mandated subscription to the Westminster Confession. Griffin's point is that, in the same way that subscription to the Confession lent stability to Presbyterians in Ulster, unsettled by the rapid improvement in their socio-economic status, the same religious move was taken in order to provide stability to immigrants to America who had since their arrival faced poverty, violence, and social chaos. This sort of sociological analysis, according to which environmental factors provide the telling clue, do not always convince me. It's not that the connection is necessarily false. But it seems far from proven in this case. So what was really good about Griffin's book? Its strongest, best aspect is that it relates the story of a significant but easily-lost people. And, the book takes into account a wide range of historical factors such as geography, agriculture, monetary policy, industry and international trade, shipping, religion, war, and class. What I didn't like so much was that the author seemed tentative and non-committal when it came to some of the questions his story naturally raises. For example, was the negative reputation of the Scots Irish deserved? Or was it an inaccurate stereotype? Also, to what extent and in what ways does the history of Ireland, and particularly Ulster, provide part of the backdrop for the American Revolution? Griffin's book teases the reader when it comes to questions like that. But the author apparently does not want to tackle them.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good view of the early Colonial Pennsylvania Frontier and the struggles of Irish Immigrants By Ken Russell Griffin provides us with a sweeping picture of the harsh challenges faced by the largely poor Irish immigrants to Pennsylvania. Only the trials that they faced in Ireland could have led them to jump from the frying pan into the fire, as life along the Frontier West of Philadelphia in the mid 1700's was a life of subsistence just on the edge of a stable economy. While these Presbyterian settlers faced harsh living conditions, they continued to make an effort to hold to their more organized congregational religious heritage, as they managed to eventually help establish growing communities along the Pennsylvania Frontier. Griffin helps bring as much focus as possible to a people who left sparse documentation of their lives and aspirations outside scarce Church and Civil records, contributing to a better understanding of a nearly invisible, but vital part of American Colonial heritage.

More than 100,000 Ulster Presbyterians of Scottish origin migrated to the American colonies in the six decades prior to the American Revolution, the largest movement of any group from the British Isles to British North America in the eighteenth century. Drawing on a vast store of archival materials, *The People with No Name* is the first book to tell this fascinating story in its full, transatlantic context. It explores how these people--whom one visitor to their Pennsylvania enclaves referred to as "a spurious race of mortals known by the appellation Scotch-Irish"--drew upon both Old and New World experiences to adapt to staggering religious, economic, and cultural change. In remarkably crisp, lucid prose, Patrick Griffin uncovers the ways in which migrants from Ulster--and thousands like them--forged new identities and how they conceived the wider transatlantic community. The book moves from a vivid depiction of Ulster and its Presbyterian community in and after the Glorious Revolution to a brilliant account of religion and identity in early modern Ireland. Griffin then deftly weaves together religion and economics in the origins of the transatlantic migration, and examines how this traumatic and enlivening experience shaped patterns of settlement and adaptation in colonial America. In the American side of his story, he breaks new critical ground for our understanding of colonial identity formation and of the place of the frontier in a larger empire. *The People with No Name* will be indispensable reading for anyone interested in transatlantic history, American Colonial history, and the history of Irish and British migration.

"This highly recommended monograph is based on broad and deep archival research on both sides of the ocean and is written in a clear, lively style that quotes abundantly from contemporary sources."--Stanley H. Palmer, *History* "A good analysis of one of the several disaffected and displaced groups that occupied the margins of the colonial world."--Choice "In part, Griffin's book is so successful because he understands that the historian of any diaspora has a dual responsibility: to the homeland and to the new land. Privileging either of these distorts the picture. . . . Griffin's fine book will stand as a fundamental building block of Ulster Scots and of Scots-Irish historical study."--Donald Harman Akenson, *American Historical* "A welcome contribution to a field with a small but growing literature."--H. Tyler Blethen, *William and Mary Quarterly* "An excellent study of interest not only to students of Britain, Ireland, and colonial America, but also to those seeking to understand the eighteenth-century British Empire as a whole."--K. David Milobar, *International History* "There is much new in Griffin's study. . . . His accomplishment derives in part from an ability to discuss identity formation in a jargon-free story at once engaging and profound."--Warren R. Hofstra, *Journal of American History* From the Inside Flap "A masterful reconstruction of the experiences of the Scots

Irish migrants who transformed the culture of the eighteenth-century colonial frontier. Drawing creatively on research materials in Ireland and America, Griffin shows how these extraordinarily resilient people made sense of an expanding commercial world and managed to accommodate to rapidly changing social conditions without compromising their own hard-earned identity."--T.H. Breen, Northwestern University "This is a first-rate and timely piece of scholarship, offering a compelling new vision of transatlantic history and an equally compelling analysis of the intricacies of identity and culture in the colonial Atlantic world. It may well be the best sustained study of the 'Ulster Scot' in the Atlantic world that has been written in a generation."--Kevin Kenny, Boston College "A significant contribution to the field. Certainly, every scholar who does research in Irish and/or Scots Irish history will want to read this book, as will many specialists in immigration history. Griffin's book will also be a valuable complement to the burgeoning study of transatlantic or the 'new' British history, and will attract specialists in 18th century Irish (especially Ulster) history as well."--Kerby Miller, University of Missouri at Columbia

From the Back Cover "A masterful reconstruction of the experiences of the Scots Irish migrants who transformed the culture of the eighteenth-century colonial frontier. Drawing creatively on research materials in Ireland and America, Griffin shows how these extraordinarily resilient people made sense of an expanding commercial world and managed to accommodate to rapidly changing social conditions without compromising their own hard-earned identity."--T.H. Breen, Northwestern University "This is a first-rate and timely piece of scholarship, offering a compelling new vision of transatlantic history and an equally compelling analysis of the intricacies of identity and culture in the colonial Atlantic world. It may well be the best sustained study of the 'Ulster Scot' in the Atlantic world that has been written in a generation."--Kevin Kenny, Boston College "A significant contribution to the field. Certainly, every scholar who does research in Irish and/or Scots Irish history will want to read this book, as will many specialists in immigration history. Griffin's book will also be a valuable complement to the burgeoning study of transatlantic or the 'new' British history, and will attract specialists in 18th century Irish (especially Ulster) history as well."--Kerby Miller, University of Missouri at Columbia