



“The good Bargains of your lands in that Country Doe greatly encourage me”

**David Lindsey, near Desertmartin, County Londonderry, Ireland
 Letter to Thomas or Andrew Fleming in “Pennsillvena,” 19 March 1758**

David Lindsey, a Scots-Irish Presbyterian in northern Ireland, emigrated some time after writing this letter to join the thousands of Scots-Irish colonists in Pennsylvania. He died in Kentucky in 1814.

March y^e 19th 1758

D^r Cusen:

Dear Cousin

I had upertunity of reading your letter that was sent to your fatherinlaw, which gave me great satisfaction to here you were all in good health and fortun'd so well as to be possessed in so good a bargain of lands. We are all in good health at present I bless God for all his mercies and y^r uncle David is helthy and harty and do all join in our love and Compliments to you and your families and enquiring friends. I expected an account oftener from you, only times being troublesome in that country with wars that we were assured that you were all ded or killed The good Bargains of your lands in that Country Doe greatly encourage me to pluck up my spirits and make Redie for the Journey, for we are now oppressed with our lands set at 8s per acre and other improvements, Cutting our land in two acre parts and Quicking and only two years time for doing it all — ye<a> we Cannot stand more. I expected a letter from you more oftener, or that Cusen W^m Fleming would come over before this time, but these things does not Discourage me to goe only we Depend on y^e for Derections in the goods fitting to take to that place. I had disappointment of 20s worth of Lining Cloth y^t I sold, and had James Hoskins bond for the money. The merchant ran away, and I had great truble in getting my money, so that <it> was deleavered. Brother John Fleming is dead and brother James Lindsey is married again to one Hoskins and his son Robert has service to his uncle James Martin and desires to know if he will redeem him if he goes over there. He is a good favour and is willing to work for his passage till its paid.

y^r: your

“times . . .
troublesome”:
French and
Indian War

Quicking:
planting a
quickset
(hedge)

y^e: ye, i.e., you

y^t: that

Your Cusen<s> in Desert martin is all in health. Cusen Mary <desires> to let you know all my father’s family is in helth and joins in y^r love to y^e. My father is very far spent and I expect to see him buried before I leave the place. Your father and my uncle Andrew is but tender in helth. Sarah Ricketts desires to be remembered in her love to her sister Nelly and other friends. Our living is dear in this place. I conclude with my love to you and all friends there. I am yours till death.

y^r: their

dear: expensive

–David Lindsey

National Humanities Center, 2008: nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds. In *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815*, eds. Kerby A. Miller, et al. (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 28-30, 53-55; permission pending. Map: Anthony Findley, *The World on Mercator’s Projection*, London, 1798, detail. University of Alabama Library, Rucker Agee Map Collection; permission pending. Complete image credits at nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/imagecredits.htm.

“I once took a notion that I would leave my people and depart for the New Island”

An tOileán Úr — The New Island

by an unknown poet, mid to late 1700s¹

Now a traditional folk song in Northern Ireland, this poem displays the reluctance of native Irish Catholics to emigrate at a time when many Scots-Irish Protestants in northern Ireland, descended from lowland Scots, were leaving by the thousands for America.

Rinne mé smaointiughadh in mo intinn is lean mé dó go cinnte
Go n-éalóchainn ómo mhuintir anon un Oileáin Úir;
D’iarr mise in mo impidhe ar an Árd Rígh bhí ós mo chionn-sa
Le mo shábháil as gach chontabhairt go gcríochnóchainn mo
shiubhal.

Shioubhail mé fiche míle, is ní chasadh orm Críostaidhe,
Capall, bó, no caora a dhéanfadh ingheilt ar an fhéar;
Acht coilte dlútha is gleanntan, is búirtheach bheithidhigh
alltan,
Fir is mná gan snáithe ortha a chasfá fá do mhéar.

Tharlaidh isteach I dtoigh mé is casadh orm daoine
D’fhiostraig said cár b’as mé nó an tír ‘nár tógadh mé;
Labhair mé leobhtha I mBéarla gur tógadh mé in-Éirinn
Ar láimhle Loch Éirne I gcoillidh Lios na Raoch.

Bhí sean-bhean ins a’ chlúdaigh, agus í ‘na suidhe go ságach;
D’éirigh sí go lúthmhar agus chraith sí lion-sa lámh;
“Mo sheacht n-anamh fear do thíre, dá bhfaca mé ‘riamh de
dhaoibh,
Gur tógadh mise i n-Éirinn i mBaile Lios Béil’ Átha.

“Is iomdha lá breagh pleisiúrdha a chaith mé thall i n-Éirinn
Ar láimh le Loch Éirne i gcoillidh Lios na Raoch;
O Breatain go Beinn Éadaor chan fheicfeá-sa a léithid
Nó ó Chorcaigh I n-a dhiaidh sin go Lios Béil’ Átha.”

Nuair a chonnaic mé na daoine is annsin a rinne mé smaointe
Gur mhéannair dá mbéinn i n-Éirinn is mé sínte faoi chlar;
Nó sin an áir a bhfuighfuinn aos óg bheadh laghach aoidhinn
Chaitheadh liom-sa oidhche agus páirt mhór de’n lá.

I once took a notion that I would leave my people and depart for the New Island,² and so I did. As I left I prayed the High King of Heaven to preserve me through all dangers to the end of my journey.

Once there I walked twenty miles and never met a Christian³ — No, nor even a horse or a cow or a sheep grazing on the meadow. There was nothing but dense woods and deep glens resounding with the roar of wild beasts, and the people wore no more clothes than would amount to a thread twisted between the fingers.

Then I chanced upon a house, and the people there asked me where I came from and in what country I had been reared. We spoke in English, and I answered that I had been brought up in Ireland — in the wood of Lisreagh, beside Lough Erne.

No sooner had I spoken than an old woman rose from her cozy nook beside the fire and came over to shake my hand. “God bless you of all the people I’ve ever met — for I myself was reared in Lisbellaw.

“Many were the pleasant days I spent in Ireland and beside Lough Erne in the wood of Lisreagh; there’s no other place like it from Wales to the Head of Howth or from Cork to Lisbellaw.”

When I saw these people I made up my mind that I would be happier to live the rest of my life and die in Ireland, for that is where I would find kind and delightful young folk to pass the time with me by day and by night.

¹ Audio presentation of folk song available from Clannad at www.youtube.com/watch?v=87x8R0BjgJk.

² The New Island: the New World, America. As early as the 1490s the term “the New Isle” was current in England as a synonym for the New World. [Miller et al., note, p. 54]

³ Christian: a “civilized” human being (i.e., a European). [Miller et al., note, p. 54]