



Scots who made their mark on.....



The Americas : 1 James Hay, Earl of Carlisle

Lord Proprietor of Barbados

James Hay (1580-1636) was awarded the above title by King Charles I in July 1627 when he was granted ownership of all the Caribbean Islands over which England held sway. In the Seventeenth Century the British Crown had established the practice of devolving by charter ownership of colonial territory to those in its favour so that the land could be developed by them. The new owners then had feudal rights and could grant ownership of parts of their territories to others though it could all be rescinded by the monarch. This practice gave a very serious financial incentive to settlers to work for their own good and the good of their mother country.



Though sailors from other European nations had landed on Barbados the British were the first to actually colonise it, claiming the territory for James I in 1625 and two years later 80 settlers arrived with a small number of slaves. At this time title was owned by the entrepreneur Sir William Courteen, one of whose ships had "discovered" what he called "Barbadoes" in 1624. When the Earl of Carlisle disputed his actions claiming ownership of all the "Caribbee Islands" between ten and twenty degrees of latitude, King Charles decided to remove Courteen's entitlement in what was called the "Great Barbados Robbery" - Courteen claimed to have lost £44,000 in the deal—and bestow it upon his especially favoured aristo. Carlisle as an absentee landlord put in his own team to imprison Courteen's Governor Captain Powel, to look after matters on his behalf and promote the cultivation and trade of tobacco, cotton and ginger.

Carlisle then in 1630 controversially selected Captain Henry Hawley as Governor of the Island and he tried to redress some of the ill-will felt by the incumbent settlers by offering a measure of democracy with the creation of a House of



Barbuda 1970 depicting Hay's Royal sponsors

Left Barbados 1927 noting Charles 1's connection to the island

Assembly in 1639. This was necessary because whilst Courteen's governance had been benevolent with fair wages paid, Carlisle demanded his placemen drive down living conditions in order to maximise profits from the crops produced. When Carlisle died in 1636 with debts of over £80,000 the island was sold in order to pay them.

So the interesting question is—How did James Hay from Pitcorthie in Fife come into such good favour with the high and mighty at the turn of the Seventeenth Century? Well of course Hay was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, the son of Sir James Hay of Fingask and brought up in great privilege. At the Union of the Crowns in 1603 James VI knighted Hay and made him a gentleman of the bedchamber in his new English court. Hay was then trusted as a royal emissary on many occasions, made a baron for life, had grants, gifts and women—even a bride—lavished on him. In 1615 he was made a member of the House of Lords and in 1622 made 1st Earl of Carlisle and given further important diplomatic duties. On Charles I's accession his influence if anything grew - Hay had helped facilitate the heir apparent's marriage—and Carlisle spent lavishly, becoming an epicurean, notorious for his "double suppers" in which vast arrays of food could be inspected by potential gourmands and then when cold be replaced for consumption by identical hot food. On his death he left hardly any money at all to his son, the Second Earl.

Barbados 1977 showing The Charter Scroll, Charles I with Carlisle and Richard Ligon's 1657 map of the island





Scots who made their mark on.....

The Americas : 2 John Murray , Earl of Dunmore



Governor of New York, Virginia and the Bahamas



Wearing an amazing combination of colours and tartans John Murray (c. 1730-1809) appears on the Bahamas stamp within the illustrated mini-sheet celebrating the Bicentenary of American Independence in a reproduction of this portrait of the Scottish noble by Sir Joshua Reynolds which hangs in the National Gallery, Edinburgh.

There is considerable irony attached to this choice as firstly Murray had chosen the losing side in the Jacobite Wars and was very lucky indeed to be rehabilitated into government circles and then preferred for a series of diplomatic postings in the Americas and secondly he was vehemently opposed to the American cause, fighting tooth and nail to deny it ever happening, unsuccessfully of course.

Murray was born near the Perthshire village of Stanley and as a youth supported the burgeoning Jacobite cause, being one of Prince Charles's entourage, so following the events of 1746 he had a long climb back to favour, as the whole Murray family was put under house arrest. However when he was 20 he was allowed to join the British Army and this began his rehabilitation. He achieved the title of Fourth Earl at the age of 24, after the deaths of both his uncle (John, the second Earl) and father (William, the Third) and became an elected peer in the House of Lords.

At the start of the 1770's he served as Governor of the Province of New York and a couple of years later was given the much prized appointment of Royal Governor of Virginia, which he held for five years, though he was allowed to draw his salary until 1783, on the granting of American Independence. Lord Dunmore took this role very seriously and employed thousands of soldiers in quashing an uprising by the indigenous Shawnee Indians, who did not like the governor's expansionist ambitions. So large an undertaking was this that it is now known as Lord Dunmore's War. He was belligerent also within the territory expressing



exasperation with secessionists and "freedom fighters" within its parliament and on three occasions he closed that assembly. For example when, in the Second Virginia Convention elected delegates to the Continental Congress which would prove to be instrumental in drawing up the Americans' claim for Independence Dunmore issued a proclamation forbidding participation, though this proved to be an example of gesture politics only. However, the strength of feeling expressed at the Continental Congress caused Lord Dunmore to demand that all the gunpowder he had control over be locked away. He was now deeply unpopular and a *coup d'état* against him forced his withdrawal to the safety of the British warship *Fowey* riding at anchor in the York River. George Washington's comments on his event which suggested that Lord Dunmore be dispensed with totally must have alarmed him greatly.

Ironically and perhaps hypocritically in November 1775 Dunmore made his Offer of Emancipation in which attempted to involve native Americans ("Red Indians") as well as black slaves to fight for King George against the American revolutionaries. He had some success at first with these "Black Loyalists" (who had been offered their freedom in exchange for their service to the king) but after defeat at the Battle of Great Bridge in early December 1775 he had to withdraw after an outbreak of smallpox had decimated his troops. Dunmore soldiered on but the tide had turned and he sailed back to Britain in mid-Summer 1776. He then served as governor of the Bahamas for ten years from 1787.

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Scots who made their mark on..... *The Americas : 3 Witherspoon & Wilson*



Signatories to the American Declaration of Independence

The Revered **John Witherspoon** signed as a New Jersey delegate to the Continental Congress of 1776 who had helped to draft the Declaration as an inspiring lucid statement of the principles of men in a free nation: "We hold these truths to be self-evident...." He was the only active clergyman to sign.

Witherspoon had been born in the village of Yester, East Lothian in 1723 the son of a minister and graduated from Edinburgh University with degrees in Arts and Divinity. After serving the community of Beith in Ayrshire from 1745 onwards he moved to the Laigh Kirk in Paisley twelve years later, by then a married man with five surviving children.

Having established a reputation as a vehement bastion of righteousness in the West of Scotland he realised the mood was changing against him in Europe and in 1768 accepted the post of President of New Jersey College (which later was to become Princeton University). He became a founder of the American Presbyterian Church, a fiery Popular Party politician, whom Alwyn James in *Other Men's Heroes* compares to the Rev Ian Paisley. Witherspoon very much had a reputation for calling a spade a spade and was one of the "auld lights" whom Burns makes fun of in *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

He served in Congress until 1782 playing important roles in the birth of the new nation and having gone blind, died aged 72 in 1794. (He is also credited with coining the word "Americanism". One of his descendants is the actress Reese Witherspoon).

Another Scots "founding father" was **James Wilson** of Pennsylvania, also a member of the Continental Congress between 1775 to 1787 in which he argued strongly for the rights of the native Americans. Wilson had studied the history of revolutions from Ancient Greek times onwards and his scholarship and intellect were highly regarded.

Wilson, from Carskerdo, near Ceres in Fife, studied at the three ancient universities of central Scotland, though he did not graduate and having emigrated aged 23 in 1765 taught Classics at a college in Philadelphia and also began to study law. (In 1790 he was appointed its first professor of law).

He was called to the bar in 1767, set up a practice in Reading and became a leading lawyer in the ex-pat community of Carlisle in Concord, Massachusetts. This was a great success and made him wealthy. He married in 1771 and with his wife Rachel produced six children. He argued in an influential pamphlet published in 1774 that Britain had no right to pass laws in America because America was not represented in Westminster. He helped to draft the US Constitution and was one of the six original Justices appointed to the Supreme Court by George Washington. Wilson held the post of Advocate General for France in America for four years from 1779.

However, he became involved in land speculation which almost ruined him after the Panic of 1796/7 and he was briefly imprisoned as a debtor in Burlington, New Jersey before escaping to North Carolina in 1797, a year before his death which was caused by a stroke after he had succumbed to a bout of malaria.



In John Trumbull's large canvass entitled *Declaration of Independence* reproduced on the stamps of several countries in 1975/6 to mark the Bicentennial of American Independence John Witherspoon can be located sitting in the right corner and James Wilson is one of the further away figures seated at the table, left of centre.

