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**THE LOWLAND CLEARANCES OF SCOTLAND:  
A STUDY OF THE TRANSITION OF SPACE AND PLACE**

by

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts In Historical Resources Management in the Department of History

Idaho State University

Spring 2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

Lowland Scotland underwent massive, sweeping changes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Scottish Enlightenment produced new knowledge and introduced systems of standardization that were favorable to improvement of the land. Enclosing the land resulted in the removal of cottars and others from the land. Landlords preferred single tenancies managed by dedicated capitalist-based farmers. Some, seeing the potential of the landless to further increase profits, built planned villages and attracted small industry. The author contends that the cottars' place was lost during the transition from a landed peasant society to a landless working class society; and that through the lens of space and place one can better understand these marginalized peoples.

## INTRODUCTION

Scotland underwent a dramatic social change during the mid-eighteenth century. The enclosure movement, or the Clearances, transformed Scotland from a backward, subsistence-based agrarian practice to one of the world's leading agricultural producers. From 1760 to 1830, the lairds of Scotland sought out enlightened improvers to oversee revolutionary changes to their estates. The changes wrought by the Lowland Clearances of Scotland illuminate the transitional period of a landed peasant society becoming a landless working class society. The peasants' place, in both a geographic and a social sense, was removed for capitalistic space.

This thesis will examine the Lowland Clearances, highlighting the roles of the State, the Scottish peasant society and the landlords in this transition which instituted Scotland's Industrial Revolution. There are not enough written personal statements by the cottars to provide an account of how they felt during the transition between working the land and becoming wage laborers. Instead, the study of space and place can provide a better understanding of these marginalized people.<sup>1</sup> By looking from the top down and studying the links between the cottars and the leading factors behind the Lowland Clearances, we can understand who the cottars were as historical actors. Through the lens of space and place one can bring a new dynamic to the research of the Lowland

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<sup>1</sup> See Peter Aitchison and Andrew Cassell, *The Lowland Clearances: Scotland's Silent Revolution, 1760-1830* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003) and T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010). It is important to note that studies on the Lowland Clearances are relatively new and are spearheaded by T.M. Devine. One is hard pressed not to rely on his research along with T.C. Smout and I.H. Adams in order to understand the complexities revolving around the Lowland Clearances.

Clearances and of the cottars. Space and place give a sense of importance at every level and create a new understanding of the cottars who were relegated to a powerless position and erased from Scottish society. Space and place help explain historic change and provide understanding as to what was lost or changed over time. This approach is not only useful for the study of the Lowland Clearances but can be a model for other studies where primary sources are lacking and the voice of the voiceless cannot be read.

This study could have been performed in many countries, but I chose Scotland because the cottars left few to no records, which provides a unique challenge when trying to understand what happened during the “silent revolution.” I also chose Scotland because it provides a perfect opportunity to employ the study of space and place. This transition from a landed peasant society to a working class paradigm will be examined via the study of the relationship between the landlords and the state and how this relationship led to the clearances which, in turn, transformed how the cottars lived and worked in their place, socially and physically, under a growing capitalistic space. Many landlords were indifferent to the fact that the space they purchased, designated, and changed was a place, the place of the cottars.

Space and Place are somewhat ambiguous terms. Yi-Fu Tuan, a geographic philosopher, writes of place saying, “the infant's place is the crib; the child's place is the playroom; the social distance between the chairman of the board and myself is as evident in the places we sit at the banquet table as in the places we domicile.” The cottar’s place in society follows this example exactly, as did his landlord’s.<sup>2</sup> Place, in this context, is a

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2 Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective." *Philosophy in Geography*. Ed. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub., 1979), 408.



spatial reflection of society. The cottars understood their place in society by the land they worked and the cottages they domiciled, by the harvest they kept and gave as rent, and by the allowances granted to them, such as the right to the commons. By highlighting these spatial connections, the author will trace the place of the cottars.

In regards to land, place grows from successive generations living on and interacting with the land. Over this time, space is replaced by place as the area takes on aspects of human signatures.<sup>3</sup> Place is *created* by human interactions over time. Place defines space and gives space importance. Place roots people and allows a sense of progression as changes to space are made by those who make it their place. Space, on the other hand, is not created but understood through our interacting with it. This is what the cottars had and lost. Generation after generation of cottars worked the land, used the commons, built and repaired their homes, had children, all of which created their place.

Place plays a much more important role than space because place, as meant here, signifies both ones position in society and a specific spatial location. Space on the other hand is all encompassing. We are all, right now occupying space. Space allows place to come into being: place is created by human interactions over time. Place defines space and gives space importance. The cottars place is twofold in this context, where he or she lived, worked, built and harvested and where he or she fell on the societal ladder. Their geographic place mirrored their societal place.

It is important to understand the methodology of how space and place created the framework for this study. Using an abstract idea that space and place could, in a sense, create what was missing, namely the lack of primary sources, is the bedrock of this

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3 Ibid, 409.

framework. The creation of what is missing is achieved by stressing the importance of place with the understanding that every human being occupied a place and, therefore, constituted a historical actor whose life said something about that time period. Therefore, place creates an outline of a people that left few to no records. This outline can then be traced and connected to both geographic space and societal place. The cottars were spatially connected to the commons, to the fields, to the landlords via rent, to the market via production and so on. These connections create the broader picture and give context to the Lowland Clearances.

Space and place create the lens of this study. Through this lens we can better glean how total and complete the lowland clearances were to the ancestral peoples such as the cottars. The use of space and place is necessary and validates the study of other historians researching the Clearances by synthesizing their perspectives within an abstract but physical framework. This framework is constructed by the application of historical research and the idea of how place played a larger than reported role. The cottars place must begin with the land they occupied for generations.

Land reform and improvement dominated discussion about agriculture and land ownership from the middle eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Improvement created the Scotland of today. Rural settlements were removed during enclosure or rebuilt to house the landless cottars and other peasants. Industrial centers grew and promoted the migration from farm to city. The Lowland Clearances are a momentous historical event that has been understudied; attention is traditionally focused on the romanticism of the Highland Clearances, the latter being a symbol of injustice.

The Lowland Clearances took place before the brutal evictions in the Highlands.

This was due, in part, to the geographic proximity of the Lowlands to England. Lowland Scotland was readily available to entertain English experiences when it came to land reform and modernization. Certain Scots, such as Sir John Sinclair and John Cockburn, promoted capitalistic agriculture. Both men invested in their own estates and were vocal about the importance of agricultural improvement. Men like these helped transform Lowland Scotland. The traditional ways of the cottars were completely exterminated, showing how far reaching and completely agricultural improvement penetrated the social fabric of Lowland Scotland. There are few to no records from the cottars themselves or their thoughts on their transition. However, by using space and place to cast a light on these shapeless, voiceless individuals, a portrait outline, a shadow, as it were, is created to better understand who these people were and what happened to them.

Unlike the Highland Clearances, where the goal was forced depopulation, Lowland Clearances instituted the transition from a rural social dynamic to an urban social dynamic. That is not to say that depopulation did not exist in the Lowlands. On the contrary, peasants were cleared from the land in droves. The removal of the cottars provided a new vast supply of labor. The cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, unlike the large settlements in the Highlands, welcomed this new supply of cheap labor.

It is important to note that the enclosure movement, like the English agricultural revolution, was a long process. For England, the enclosure movement lasted for over four hundred years, starting before the Tudor enclosures and ending in the early twentieth century. Scotland's enclosure movement advanced at a much faster pace, starting in the mid eighteenth century and reaching its height in the mid nineteenth century. In both cases, enclosure ran parallel to the agricultural revolution. Scottish landlords were more

willing to enclose because of English successes and the new economic model to which they adhered.

With the removal of the cottars, single tenancies became the norm. Land was concentrated into large estates, giving rise to the need for trained surveyors and cartographers. Such estates needed to be managed through rational efficiency. The mapping and planning of estates provided legible instructions on how best to improve the land. It is crucial to understand Scottish cartography and how mapping practices changed prior to and during the Lowland Clearances, which will be discussed further in chapter one. Cartography is key to talking about space and place as it creates material evidence for the changes of space and how those changes affected the place of the cottars.

Lowland Scotland's geography of villages and farmland also changed. To better comprehend the magnitude of the changes made to the space that was Lowland Scotland and to the people who had made that space their place, it is wise to examine Scotland before the clearances. Prior to rational, planned villages, the roads in Lowland Scotland were basic rudimentary pathways.<sup>4</sup> Roads are networks connecting space to places or a place to another place, in certain instances. Before the clearances, roads were not easily traveled and, without good roads, farmers had little incentive and opportunity to connect themselves to the markets.

In line with the primitiveness of the roads prior to the clearances, cottars' farmed land, by methods most Scottish historians agree were inefficient to say the least, in a manner that was very different. Run-rig, a form of farming in strips based on promoting a sense of fairness, was the norm. Eventually, like England to the south, enclosure in

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4. T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People: 1560-1830* (London: Fontana, 1987), 111.

Lowland Scotland introduced the fencing of properties. With the Clearances, the landscape was transformed from an open, communal space to one of separate, private spaces divided by walls. Delineating the land in specific geometric shapes necessitated the removal of the cottars and other peasants from the land. The meager living structures of the cottars were also removed, opening up the land for intensive farming.

Even the way cottars worked the land changed. Before the clearances, farming practices followed the in-field and out-field system. Within these two “fields”, long strips, or rigs, were allocated to the peasantry. This was much like the old English system prior to their agricultural revolution. The in-field consisted of the more fertile land that could be planted year after year, whereas the out-field was the less fertile land used for crops that could grow in marginal soils. The peasants planted their strips systematically and communally.<sup>5</sup> Though the landscape and practices may have been backward, this communal system built on making sure those farming received equal land to farm created a place. This place, or social identity, was shared by four-fifths of all Scots. The sentiment of community and fairness was founded “by intermingling the rigs or parcels of land.” In this way, “a community could ensure that each family received a fair share of the best soil, and that helped underpin the social stability and economic security of the fermtoun.”<sup>6</sup>

Another aspect of the Scottish landscape one must imagine is the commons. In keeping with the open field system, the commons was a communal patch of land anyone could use. In most cases, it consisted of an area where livestock could graze freely. This

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5 Ibid, 114.

6 Peter Aitchison and Andrew Cassell, *The Lowland Clearances: Scotland's Silent Revolution, 1760-1830* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003), 16.

space also succumbed to the clearances. Enclosed, the commons became private property. Space and the peasants' place were transformed for the market, for capitalism. The preceding statement is quite evident, but what is not evident is how place has been overlooked while talking about the Lowland Clearances. Without primary sources from the cottars, one is left to synthesize from surrounding issues, most of which this thesis will address. However, through the use of space and place one can uncover a deeper understanding of the Lowland Clearances and how momentous this period of Scottish history was.

The lowland clearances could not have played out the way they did were it not for the landlords' place in society and their influence in parliament. This interaction, between the landlords and parliament, allowed for the clearances to unfold, which will be discussed in depth in the following chapters. Landlords furnished capital, evicted cottars, enclosed land, and hired men of improvement to carry out the transformations. It is established that "practically all the earliest Improvers were landowners: there was, indeed, no other class on the land with either the capital, the power or the mental horizons to attempt the transformation of local farming from a backward Scottish peasant model to an advanced English commercial one."<sup>7</sup> The landowners were also extremely powerful; this power came from private landownership. Private landownership allowed a spatial connection between the landlord's land and his influence in state affairs. Sir John Sinclair, an ardent improver of rural Scotland, said, "In no country in Europe are the rights of proprietors so well defined and so carefully protected."<sup>8</sup> Only landed gentry could

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7 T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People: 1560-1830* (London: Fontana, 1987), 272.

8 John Sinclair quoted in T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 42.

partake in the higher echelons of decision making in Scotland. For this reason, we can say that a person's place in Scottish society largely depended upon and was determined by the space that person owned. In the case of Scotland, one can see that space and, in this respect, place, were seen through the lens of property rights and the law of the landlords.

Many landlords were indifferent to the fact that the space with which they were dealing was a place, the place of the cottars. The commons, the small thatched cottages, the marshlands were more than just space to the cottars whose livelihoods depended on these locations. These places were their entire place in the world. The improvements the landlords ordered, destroyed the ancestral ways and places. Though the cottars held very little land and were subject to the landowner, they were attached to the land they worked. As Divine points out, "what is beyond doubt, on the other hand, is that [the cottars] inevitably perpetuated an emotional attachment to the occupation of land."<sup>9</sup>

However, other scholars have argued that the landlords were not instrumental in exercising the clearances. Graeme Whittington said that the role of the landowners was "overrated in discussions of agricultural improvements" and that their contribution was "nominal."<sup>10</sup> Instead, other scholars have argued that it was the tenants who improved the land. Neil Davidson contends that the lords were far too concerned with their societal status to worry about "an ascetic commitment to capital accumulation."<sup>11</sup> Still others

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9 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 105.

10 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 42-43.

11 Neil Davidson, "The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1," *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004), 233.

have stressed the importance of the market and the growing population during the mid to late 1700s. Devine, although he acknowledges these arguments and agrees to a point with them, feels that historians “have also become unduly dismissive of the role of the landlords.”<sup>12</sup> Tenants may have wished to improve the land they worked, but most did not have the same gain, opportunities, means, and influence the landowners did. Again, the landlords took advantage of their spatial relationship with the state to improve their land.

Landowners, around the 1760s and 1770s, began to see their land as an investment opportunity rather than solely as a means of keeping the status quo, as a symbol of status or their place in Scottish society. Motivated by the lure of wealth to be had, the landowners took several steps to improve their land to make more money. Tenants may have worked the land, but it was the landowners who had the capital, both monetarily and politically, to invest in the required improvements.

In this sense, the scale of the improvements reveals the role of the landowners. Landowners knew that they wanted to make more money, they had ideas about how to do that, but the actual task of making the necessary changes was delegated to others the landowners hired. Such a colossal scale of improvement brought with it massive change. Entire farms and farmlands were reorganized, new planned villages were created, and the common ties became land on which regular rotations of crops were grown.<sup>13</sup> The creation of planned villages demonstrates how space was transformed to house labor, that is, the evicted cottars. The cottars would no longer work on the land but in shops—a fundamental transition in both space and place.

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12 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 43.

13 Ibid, 46.



This thesis is divided into five chapters, each taking into account an important factor of the Lowland Clearances and how it links to the cottars, creating the framework of this study. The first, “Who were the Cottars?,” details the lives of the cottars and how place was lost throughout the Lowland Clearances of Scotland. The second chapter, “Mapping Scotland,” explores Scottish cartography in depth, highlighting the changes in map design corresponding to the changes in land management during the period of the enclosures and arguing that mapping Scotland helped the Lowland Clearances unfold. Chapter three, “The Role of England,” explains how the Union of 1707 promoted Scottish trade and created an impetus for enclosure. This chapter also details several parliamentary Acts which encouraged and provided the authority for landowners to carry out improvements on their lands. Chapter four, “The Landlords and the Merchants,” delves into the reasons landowners carried out enclosure. This chapter also examines two arguments for why the Lowland Clearances were “silent;” that is, why no widespread violence took place. The fourth chapter also addresses Glasgow merchants’ contribution to the Clearances, notably how the advent of tobacco trading influenced land management. The final chapter, “The Creation of Planned Villages,” examines the rise of planned villages during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Four main types of villages are presented, two in detail, both of which concern themselves with industry. The landlord, with reference to his paternal role, will also be considered in this chapter. The governing methodological lens through which these factors and questions are engaged remains that of space and place and the cultural implications of each regarding the cottars during the Lowland Clearances.

Space and place are important concepts and help us better understand historic

events such as the Lowland Clearances. Through the lens of space and place one can see not only how the Scottish landscape changed but how the social lives of the cottars and other peasants changed as well. The place of the cottars was usurped by the growing trend of capitalistic land tenure. It is clear that the social group of the cottars completely disappeared into the past history of Scotland, but who exactly were these people and what did they contribute to pre-improvement Scotland?

## WHO WERE THE COTTARS?

One may argue that social classes not only make a place in society, they determine the place they occupy in space. The cottars occupied nearly the lowest rung on the social ladder in Scotland during the eighteenth century. Below them were the destitute vagrants and beggars, both peoples without a fixed place, some of whom went from town to town telling stories or giving recent news in order to obtain some food and a spot by a fire. Though low on the social ladder, the cottars were important participants of "the world's oldest civilized society, the peasant economy."<sup>14</sup> Cottars eked out a living by offering their services during times of agricultural need. Usually, these times were during the harvest, or the planting season, or during the summer peat gathering months. Tenant farmers allowed cottars to hold a few acres of land, rarely exceeding five acres, in return for their services. Cottars usually did not pay rent and were not protected by a lease. It was for these two reasons that the cottars were occasionally evicted at a moment's notice without any formal legal proceedings. The cottars place, then, directly corresponded to their social status within a society in rapid economic transition.

Without the protection of a lease, the cottars' place was easily ignored in the eyes of the law. Indeed, a systematic and widespread attack on the cottage system commenced, giving the Clearances their name. John Naismith, writing for Sinclair's *Old Statistical Account*, spoke of the cottars thus: "It is vain to say anything of the ancient cottages of the county, the former nurseries of field labourers; for they may be said to be now no

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14 Frances Gies, and Joseph Gies. *Life in a Medieval Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 7.

more.”<sup>15</sup> Reverend John Cook of Kilmany in Fife pointed out that, “to have a large and easily collected rent is naturally desired by [the proprietor], and this has effected the annihilation of the little tenants scattered over the country.” Cook used the term “little tenants” in reference to the cottars. He explains that the cause and result of said annihilation is extremely important and had serious ramifications. Cook continued: “the healthiest and the purest nursery, of the most vigorous and innocent class of our countrymen, has hence been much depopulated.”<sup>16</sup> Cook highlighted the problem of evicting the cottars because they made up nearly the entire agricultural work force.

Some of the ramifications to which Cook alluded came home in the later eighteenth century as the wage costs of farm labor rose sharply.<sup>17</sup> Tenant farmers, charged with ensuring surpluses, were hard pressed to find labor since the cottars had been forced off the land. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the cottars migrated to the major cities in search of work, emigrated, or found a place in a planned village. This movement left some rural farmers with few options when it came to hiring a work force.<sup>18</sup>

Certain localities, meaningful places that sustained the cottars' lives for generations, are important to look at to get a better idea of the accelerated pace of removal. For example, in the parish of Colmonell in Ayrshire, Reverend James Mochrie

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15 John Naismith, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Clydesdale* (Glasgow: Printed by J. Mundell, 1798), 52-53.

16 Sir John Sinclair, "The Statistical Accounts of Scotland" *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845*, <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Fife/Kilmany/19/430/> (accessed October 5 2014).

17 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 131.

18 Sir John Sinclair, "The Statistical Accounts of Scotland" *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845*, <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ayrshire/Colmonell/2/65/> (accessed October 5 2014).

observed that the “practice of inclosing, together with the increase of rents, has occasioned the dismissal of herds and cottagers; and, of consequence, has materially affected the population of the district.” Mochrie continued with the same train of thought and explained, “twenty years ago there was hardly a tenant who had not one or more of these cottagers on his farm, whereas now there are very few of them in the whole parish.”<sup>19</sup> Mochrie was writing for the *Old Statistical Account* from his point of view. He notes that the clearing of the cottars drastically impacted the population in Colmonell, but he does not say anything about the feelings or attitudes of the cottars. His writing is more practical and follows the outline of questions sent out by Sir John Sinclair.

Other parishes reported the same fate of the cottars. Reverend Thomas Pollock, writing from Kilwinning in Ayrshire, explained the population decrease over the past fifty years. Pollock attributes this decline to three reasons. The first two deal with enclosure and the joining of several small farms into one large farm, which only a select few tenants continued to inhabit. The third reason for the population decline was from the “almost total want of cottagers.” Pollock expressed his concern by reporting “every farm had formerly one or two, or more of these families upon it. The cottages are now, in a great measure, demolished.”<sup>20</sup> Pollock does not simply state that the cottars left but that their dwellings were “demolished.” These words are revealing because they tell readers that something of force was behind the depopulation of Kilwinning.

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19 Sir John Sinclair, "The Statistical Accounts of Scotland" *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845*, <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ayrshire/Colmonell/2/65/> (accessed October 5 2014).

20 Sir John Sinclair, "The Statistical Accounts of Scotland" *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845*, <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ayrshire/Kilwinning/11/159/> (accessed October 5 2014).

There is another factor, other than the lease, to be analyzed in order to comprehend the bigger picture of cottar removal. Knowing more about the commons allows for better visualization of the cottars' situation. Due to their lack of wealth, cottars used the commons in order to supplement their livelihoods. Building materials, fuel from peat and turf, and grazing for small animals all came from the commons. With the division of the commonties and the enclosure of land, the cottars' position in society was severely weakened. Without the life-giving commons, the cottars had few choices left to them if they wished to survive. Their place, what the cottars relied upon and called home, was taken away in order to facilitate improvement.

T.M. Devine notes that the “Highlands have stimulated a veritable scholarly industry but the Lowland Clearances still await sustained investigation.”<sup>21</sup> Devine suggests that a great deal of forgetting took place because of the rapid nature of enclosure in Scotland and because of the brutal forced evictions in the Highlands. History remembers conflict, and the differences between the Highland and Lowland Clearances were like night and day. It has already been established that no massive uprising took place in the Lowlands. The Galloway Levellers' revolt was a local conflict and is remembered as such. The evictions of the cottars was a “clearance by stealth”, accomplished partially due to the lack of protection from a lease and rights to the commons. The Lowland Clearances were quiet and that, therefore, can be assumed to be the main reason such “great social changes have been virtually ignored by scholars until recently.”<sup>22</sup> Therefore, it is important to study the cottars and what they contributed to

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21 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 131.

22 Ibid.

Scotland. How they lived is of equal importance.

Learning about the cottars place and how they lived prior to removal allows one to understand what was lost. Cottars lived in cottages on small family farms they had occupied for generations.<sup>23</sup> These cottages were practical structures, void of most comforts. Eighteenth century writer, George Robertson's *Rural Recollections* described the cottars' homes. If planned beforehand, the entire structure the cottars called home could be built in a single day. Most cottages consisted of walls made of stone; the stones were taken from the commons in many cases. The walls were only five feet high, and the building itself was a mere twelve feet long. Many cottages did not even include a chimney for the fire. The smoke drifted from the center hearth out open windows or through a small hole in the ceiling, leaving the cottage smoky.<sup>24</sup>

Robertson painted a bleak picture with his recollection of cottar housing. The structures would be considered uninhabitable by current standards. Housing for the cottars and even many tenants was not comfortable, but the structures fulfilled the need for shelter. One can assume that the cottars wished for a better standard of living, but that assumption ignores the social fabric of Scotland prior to the Clearances. Take for instance the Lothian “gudeman” described in Robertson's writing. The gudeman, a tenant above the cottar class, lived in a larger and better equipped home but shared many of the same social functions as the cottar. Both classes worked side by side during the day, sat near and shared information around the same community fire, and both were, supposedly, authorities of religious scripture. The gudemen were able to purchase more expensive

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23 Frances Gies, and Joseph Gies. *Life in a Medieval Village* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 77.

24 George Robertson, *Rural Recapitulations, Or, The Progress of Improvement in Agriculture and Rural Affairs* (Irvine: Printed for the Author, 1829), 79-80.

books of a pious nature, whereas the cottars purchased cheaper tracts such as *The Holy War*.<sup>25</sup> Both types of literature were of interest to both the gudeman and the cottar, strengthening a bond the two groups shared. Rather than focusing solely on the living conditions of the cottar, it is enlightening to read about how the cottars lived day to day and to be able to view their lives in social contexts, such as these, that give one a better understanding of the cottars' place.

Like the bond between the gudeman and the cottar, there was a sense of place, of community, felt by those who dealt in agriculture. Though the cottars held very little land and were subject to their tenant and the landowner, the cottars were attached to the land they worked. Devine states, “what is beyond doubt, on the other hand, is that [the cottars] inevitably perpetuated an emotional attachment to the occupation of land.”<sup>26</sup> Devine's argument is supported by Dr. Hunter in his book, *The Making of the Crofting Community*. Hunter writes, “There would have been a very similar affection for land and place and locality. . . . I don't think the experience of Highlanders—the sense of loss of leaving their glen—would have been all that different from the sense of an eighteenth-century peasant in the Lothians or wherever moving from his place.”<sup>27</sup> The connection to the land was strong and deep not only for the cottars but for most human beings who rely on agriculture for life.

The traumatic shifting of hundreds of people from a landed agriculturist class to a landless laboring class necessitates the question of how these people felt about such a

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25 Ibid, 100.

26 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 105.

27 Peter Aitchison and Andrew Cassell, *The Lowland Clearances: Scotland's Silent Revolution, 1760-1830* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003), 27.



change. Hugh Miller, an assistant stonemason wrote in his memoirs about the state of the cottars and others forced off the land. Miller explained the “bothy system” as being housing for unmarried men who sought temporary work. In some bothy's, Miller found “twenty-four workmen crowded in a rusty corn-kiln, open gable to gable, and not above thirty feet in length.”<sup>28</sup> Miller went on to describe the crude beds and the constant presence of rats, one of which bit clear through the ear of a man sleeping next to Miller. These bothy's were mainly employed in agricultural planned villages but, over time, their use spread to other work locations as well. In nearly every passage concerning the bothy system, Miller related his extreme distaste. For example, “there are now single counties in Scotland in which there are from five to eight hundred farm-servants exposed to its deteriorating influences.” Miller warned that “unless means be taken to check the spread of the ruinous process of brute-making which the system involves, the Scottish people will sink, to a certainty, in the agricultural districts, from being one of the most provident, intelligent and moral in Europe, to be one of the most licentious, reckless and ignorant.”<sup>29</sup> This type of “brute-making,” the “grand evils of the system,” can also be seen in regards to the employer-employee relationship. Miller was appalled to hear the hired farm-servants ridicule their employer tirelessly and concluded that “he too evidently cared nothing for them, and they detested him.”<sup>30</sup> This was shocking to Miller because, just prior to the Clearances, the social pact between master and servant had been strong and respected. It can, therefore, be suggested that labor was discontent, to say the least.

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28 Hugh Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters; or, the Story of my Education* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1855), 177.

29 Ibid, 230-231.

30 Ibid, 229.

Scottish labor was not the only population discontented during the early nineteenth century. Their neighbors to the south began rioting and destroying machines in what was to become known as the Swing Riots. Miller wrote of William Cobbett, a vocal advocate for abolishing the poverty farm laborers endured. Miller insisted that it was important to follow the old ways and to obey the pact between master and servant, but “Cobbett, on the contrary, would have advised them to go out at nights a rick-burning.”<sup>31</sup> This passage is significant for showing that Scotland was aware of the troubles in England and that both keenly felt the squeeze of capitalist based agriculture. Cobbett was surprised that the Scots were not taking a stand, while his English compatriots were “on the edge of social war, with ricks being burnt, new machinery destroyed, men transported and in a few cases executed for their part in the destruction of property.”<sup>32</sup> Scottish landless laborers despised the bothy system and the new form of employer-employee relationship, but they did not revolt in mass. Outlets, which will be detailed in the following chapters, existed for them and allowed them a form of choice. There are undoubtedly many more reasons, as subtle as they may be, for the Scots refusing to rebel which need to be explored in greater detail, but those reasons rest outside the scope of this thesis. The above passages document a broad sense of discontent among the paid laborers. The social condition of the laborers can also be related through the eyes of helpless onlookers such as Christian Watt.

Christian Watt, born in 1833, recalled the effects on the landless at the tail end of the enclosure movement in rural Aberdeenshire. She wrote in her memoirs that “the

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People: 1560-1830* (London: Fontana, 1987), 303.

whole world changed. It was not gradual but sudden, like lightning.” Aberdeenshire felt the impacts of enclosure late, and Watt's comments can be attributed to the fact that by then land reclamation and division had become a well-oiled machine of change. Watt remembered that “whole gangs of men” reclaimed the land and that “huge parks were marching up the side of Mormond hill, so greedy did they become for land.” Her comments about the cottars are especially telling: “In the new order the cottar was hit hardest. Formerly he was a tenant at will with the same rights as a free man, for he could sell his little holding or leave it to his son. Now he was a slave.”<sup>33</sup> These words are extreme. From all the other sources cited, it is difficult to find a reference to the landless themselves feeling like a slave. Yet, this is how Watt felt about the cottars and how she saw their plight. It is also difficult to decide what exactly is meant by the term slave in this context. Three distinct social classes were emerging throughout the Lowland Clearances: the poor, the middle class and the wealthy, comprised mostly of landlords. Watt was likely talking about the cottars as being poor, but it was their loss of rights that was so important. Land had been security for the cottars. Being removed from that land and no longer being able to pass on what a cottar accumulated throughout his life to his children, forced him to join a new class of poor. This new class of poor was completely subject to the whims of business. With all the uncertainties of the capitalist based market, the cottars were forced to sell themselves to whomsoever was willing to pay. It may be within this framework of force that Watt attributes the word slave to the landless cottars.

In more ways than one, the landless cottars lost their place in the old agricultural

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33 Quoted in Peter Aitchison and Andrew Cassell, *The Lowland Clearances: Scotland's Silent Revolution, 1760-1830* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003), 66. Having been taken from the Christian Watt Papers which is now exceedingly difficult to obtain.

society. That society revolved around strong pacts between landlord and tenant where the tenants, of several different social tiers, worked together, ate together, read together, and socialized together. Place was created by just such activities practiced over centuries, leaving “unique signatures” on the land.<sup>34</sup> The cottars were essential to the harvest and growing season because they provided dependable, on-site labor. In return for their services, they were given a small patch of land where they could grow a garden to subsidize the little pay they received. The land was critical to their subsistence. Without the security of a lease, the cottars were evicted in droves, as is attested to in the *Old Statistical Account*. These landless felt their plight keenly, with men like Hugh Miller explaining the transformation of their position from master and servant to employer-employee. The continued transformation of agriculture also produced unrest in England that, if William Cobbett had his way, threatened to spill into the whole of Great Britain. Why the Lowland Scots did not rebel in mass is a great question and will be discussed. The changes in agriculture also introduced and solidified a new class structure. The cottars undoubtedly belonged to the “new” poor class and were now forced to find a wage in order to survive.

The loss of land and traditional rights to the commons signified a massive change in Scottish history. It was at this moment that the old ways, the last remnants of a clan or feudal class structure, were overtaken by a new class structure based on capitalism. Wages, not directly working on the land, now provided for the majority of the individual’s sustenance. The Lowland Clearances, therefore, perfectly epitomize the loss

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34 See Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective." *Philosophy in Geography*. Ed. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub., 1979) 387-427.

of place during this sweeping and permanent transformation.

The Landlords in Scotland saw the opportunity to connect their lands and the goods grown or raised on them to ever more expanded and sophisticated markets. To the Improvers (enlightened landlords, Scottish planners, etc.), the clearances were seen as essential for the nation to grow and prosper. On the one hand, space was transformed for the nation and, on the other, place was lost by the cottars. It is critical to examine further the factors behind the Lowland clearances including the relationship between the landlords and the state and how this relationship led to the clearances which transformed how the cottars lived and worked in their place under a growing capitalistic space.

## MAPPING SCOTLAND

Cartography is excellent for visualizing changes over time. Maps show both how space was changed and place succumbed to capitalist based agriculture. There is a very clear picture of the transitions taking place exemplified in the maps directly following this chapter.

The first step Scottish planners sought to undertake in order to improve the nation was to map the kingdom; though, mapping, as meant here, was more than cartography. Cartography is the science of visualizing the reality of the world and placing it on a two-dimensional plane in order to better comprehend the whole and the components of the subject. Space becomes materialized through cartography, as does place. Through the use of cartography, one is able to visually see space and place transform over time. As with cartography, examining the lives of Scots and understanding their professions lends itself to creating a map of society. Sir Robert Sibbald, Scotland's Geographer Royal, carried out this mission.

In order to organize space, human beings have developed sophisticated forms of mapping. Cartography is one way of making sense of abstract space. Geography and cartography reached a pinnacle of importance during the Enlightenment, a time of intense study of new intellectual and scientific material and thoughts, through which the State sought to better understand Scotland. Instead of delving into the Enlightenment, this thesis will focus on one man who was “concerned to use geographical information for Scotland's improvement,” which “marks him as an early figure of the Enlightenment.”<sup>35</sup>

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35 Charles Withers, *Geography, Science and National Identity: Scotland since 1520* (Cambridge:

He was a man of science, a product of the Scientific Revolution, if you will. This man was Sir Robert Sibbald.

Sir Robert Sibbald was commissioned in 1682 to be Scotland's Geographer Royal. It is important to note that the clearances did not take place until the mid-seventeen hundreds. Sibbald and his duty then can be seen as a precursor to the clearances. Maps, according to Sibbald, allow one to understand the landscape without actually being present. Maps, like lines, clarify boundaries and ownerships. Space becomes place in multiple senses. The owner of the land has control of his space, creating place for himself. Ownership, however, does not necessitate the creation of place. Cottars owned almost nothing but still created their place on the land others owned. This concept is material because it gives the cottars a sense of historic importance. In regard to the clearances, the making of maps was the first step to improvement. It was Sibbald's duty to provide a cartographic understanding of Scotland and of the resources Scotland had at its disposal.

To assist him with his enormous assignment, Sibbald petitioned certain portions of the populace to aid in the acquisition of the geographic knowledge of Scotland. This petitioning relied on those who knew the spaces about which inquiry was being made. Thus, Sibbald's map was based on first-hand accounts, at times biased, but the information was significant for better understanding Scotland. Once more, space and place are needed to illustrate the totality of the Lowland Clearances. Sibbald's *Advertisement of 1682 and his General Queries* consisted of several questions. Questions of import include: "What Nature of the Country or place? And what are the chief

products thereof? What Roads, Bayes, Ports for shipping, and their Description? What towns of Note in the Country, especially Towns Corporate? The Trade of the Town?”<sup>36</sup>

These questions illustrate his preoccupation with Scottish production and how that production might improve Scotland. Roads and ports are pertinent logistically speaking and are the arteries of commerce. Understanding the answers to Sibbald’s questions provided not only a map of the country but a map of society, including the forgotten cottars. The answers showed of what Scotland consisted, both geographically and fiscally. Beyond that, the answers showed a hierarchy of society. Sibbald petitioned the well-off populace who in turn answered his questions by explaining what lands they held and who worked them. The cottars’ place was there, at the bottom of the societal hierarchy. Their place in Scottish society is what one tends to remember through history: the poor peasant class. Without documentation, the life of the cottars and the effects of the lowland clearances on the cottars leaves a void, a hole, a blank space in an otherwise clear historical narrative. This blank space in the history of the clearances can be addressed through the study of space itself, geographically, socially and politically. Through the use of space and place one can understand these historically marginalized people better.

Sibbald directed his attention “to the present state of the nation and to its future condition,” which is most evident in his formative political agricultural tract entitled *A Discourse Anent Improvements may be made in Scotland for Advancing the Wealth of the Nation* written in 1698.<sup>37</sup> This document is telling because it shows that the idea of

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36 Ibid, 78.

37 Ibid, 83.



improvement had been entertained well before the dates of the Lowland Clearances. It also shows how the state wished to improve itself from within.

Perhaps the role of political management in Scotland has been largely overlooked in regard to the Lowland clearances. Though written from a 20<sup>th</sup> century viewpoint, Henry Lefebvre in his “Production of Space” writes that the state “is consolidating on a world scale. It weighs down on society (on all societies) in full force; it plans and organizes society 'rationally', with the help of knowledge and technology, imposing analogous, if not homologous, measures irrespective of political ideology, historical background, or the class origins of those in power.”<sup>38</sup> This is a radical view, yet it was what Robert Sibbald was commissioned to do: to organize space via maps in order for the state to understand what it had. As an agent of the state, to carry out the will of the state, Sibbald participated in the re-organization of Scottish society.

The state relied on science to create a more fiscally acceptable reality. What was lost were the historical practices of ancestral peoples, their place. One major form of simplification is the cadastral map, a map that gives information about a certain space in order to promote understanding of what resources are on the space and to define the borders of a certain location. In essence, the cadastral map provides the information about which Sibbald inquired. The old, historic ways of living and of farming were seen by the state as dysfunctional and not profitable. Every county, perhaps even every settlement, could have had its own traditional way of measuring, weighing, or planning. These traditional ways were counterproductive to the state and to improvers of the time period. It would be virtually impossible to rationally plan an estate based on such practices. A

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38 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 23.

uniform administrative code was needed in order to facilitate improvement and land reform.<sup>39</sup> Pertaining to the Lowland Clearances, standardization eliminated the old run-rig system of agriculture. This allowed the state via landlords to consolidate the land, which excluded the cottars and the commons, their ancestral place. Standardization also allowed the transformation of agriculture. Thus, market based agriculture supplanted subsistence based agriculture.

Though Sibbald recorded valuable information, nothing more than unpublished accounts came of his efforts. Another man, Sir John Sinclair, a self-appointed improver, surpassed Sibbald in learning about and recording the life of the people of Scotland. Sinclair followed the advice of Sir James Steuart, who declared that, “every plan for [the purpose of understanding the political economy] which does not proceed upon an exact recapitulation of the inhabitants of a country, parish by parish, will prove nothing more than an expedient for walking in the dark.”<sup>40</sup> It was, of course, overwhelming to contemplate traveling to and recording information from every parish. Therefore, Sinclair sent a questionnaire to every parish and relied upon the answers of officials from the local churches because they, along with academics and scientists, were literate.<sup>41</sup> Their place in society deemed them important, as they held talents lower classes did not have time to cultivate. The compiled reports submitted by the local church officials made up the *Old* and *New Statistical accounts of Scotland*.

The *Old* and *New Statistical Accounts* provide detailed information gathered from

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39 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (London: Yale University Press, 1998), 35.

40 John Sinclair, Jr. *Memoirs of the Life and Works of the Late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1837), 2.

41 Ibid, 16-29.

the parishes all across Scotland. The reports were published in several volumes. The volumes contain information ranging from the current events of the day, reports on the weather and more, to the occupations of the population. The information gathered came from answers to one hundred and sixteen pre-planned questions that Sinclair formulated. The first forty questions asked about the geography, the climate, and the natural resources found at the parish. The next sixty questions dealt with population and migration. The final fifteen questions addressed the agriculture and industrial production of each parish.<sup>42</sup> The answers the parish ministers and others gave Sinclair provided information needed to map Scotland both physically and socially. With a better understanding of the agricultural and industrial practices, landowners like Sir John Sinclair could argue for the changes to the spaces they owned.

Sinclair, not satisfied with merely questioning the populace of Scotland, took action on his own lands in Caithness in order to inspire others. Sinclair wanted to show his contemporaries that improvement was imperative if Scotland was to become profitable. If enclosure proceeded, land would be consolidated, new, more efficient and effective methods of farming would be applied and then production would increase with the goal being to sell the excess produced at a profit. This sequence was seen as the golden rule if Scotland was to compete and grow wealthy. Landlords, like Sinclair, had the power and wealth to enact these changes and did so. To that end, Sinclair enclosed and consolidated eight smaller farms into one large area of production dedicated to the improved forms of farming. Sinclair improved his lands in order to show how rotating

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<sup>42</sup> Charles Withers, "Scotland Accounted For: An Introduction To The 'Old' (1791-1799) And The New (1834-1845) Statistical Accounts of Scotland" *Statistical Accounts of Scotland*, [http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/statistical\\_accounts.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/statistical_accounts.htm) (accessed 4 April 2014).

crops, while adding marl and lime to the soil, helped boost production<sup>43</sup> These actions earned Sinclair the title of “Agricultural Sir John.” The title bestowed upon Sinclair is significant in showing the importance of agriculture in Scotland and the acceptance, at least by those who shared his position in the societal hierarchy, of the proposed changes to which he subscribed.

Sinclair was also a leading supporter, and the originator, according to his memoirs, of the creation of an Agricultural Board. During his travels, he saw “twelve millions of acres almost in a state of nature; and that many statesmen were looking helplessly for subsistence to other countries, while they overlooked the abundant capabilities of their own.”<sup>44</sup> This quote shows how space was used to negotiate enclosure, unused space in this case. Though debated ferociously in the House of Commons, the Board of Agriculture became realized in 1793. This board gave weight to improvement and justified the Lowland Clearances as necessary to promote more productive lands to offset the reliance on foreign grains.

Sinclair was instrumental in mapping the country of Scotland; however, he and Sibbald represented merely one side of the mapping coin. Cartography played a major role in the Lowland Clearances; therefore, it is important to take a step back and consider, by examining the changing mapping methods during the Enlightenment and onward, how map-making in Scotland contributed to the whole of the project.

The advent of mapping during this time period is meaningful because it relates

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43 Ibid., “Sir John Sinclair” *Significant Scots*, [http://electricScotland.com/history/other/sinclair\\_john.htm](http://electricScotland.com/history/other/sinclair_john.htm) (accessed 4 April 2014).

44 John Sinclair, Jr. *Memoirs of the Life and Works of the Late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1837), 46.

directly to the Lowland Clearances and to the idea of improvement. Space and place was transformed from a physical reality to a two dimensional plane based on coherent lines and legends. Maps literally showed ownership of space and provided records of such ownership.

Map-making in Scotland is a complex subject. It was not until the Scottish Enlightenment that cartography reached the height of its influence. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the cartographic depictions of national boundaries, land reform and land rights. Then there is the question of how important the surveyors and cartographers were and what authority was given to them in order to map Scotland. The creation of “Enlightened” maps was as much a part of the improvement of the state, which granted the cartographers their authority, as it was helpful to the landlords and tenants who wished to enclose the land they owned or worked. Individuals like John Ainslie, a Scottish surveyor and map-maker, show the link between landowners and map-makers which, according to Charles Withers, “underlay the accelerating pace of estate mapping and agricultural change.”<sup>45</sup> Cadastral maps, which visualize the administration of property, are of the utmost importance in this regard. These cadastral maps demonstrate standardization and rational land management by dividing the land into portions for specific purposes. Such purposes consisted of fencing sections off for livestock or dividing a field based on soil types and planned crops with stone walls. It was the use of these maps and the surveyors, these improvers who created them, whom the landowners hired to oversee the changes to their estates.

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45 Charles Withers, “The Social Nature of Map Making in the Scottish Enlightenment, c. 1682 – c. 1832” *Imago Mundi* 54 (2002), 54.

Figure 1 shows a map that was created in the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries. The creator of this map, Timothy Pont (1565-1614), was a forerunner to Robert Sibbald in the realm of cartography. Pont was more interested in creating the first atlas of Scotland than in understanding the people of Scotland. Pont visited every location mapped and made drafts at the actual locations.<sup>46</sup> This endeavor is reflected in his map, as it lays out the spatial relationships between inhabited areas and major geographic features. It can be seen that Pont took great pains to draw miniature scales of certain areas, like the city of Dumfries. Figure 1 displays only a small portion of Pont's work. Pont's contribution is lauded as a major accomplishment for early Scottish cartography because of his travels and his exhaustive depictions.

Where Pont was concerned with the spatial layout of the country, Major-General William Roy (1726-1790) was concerned with an accurate and faithful representation of Scotland. The Roy Military Survey "provides a uniform graphic snapshot of the entire Scottish mainland at a time when the landscape was beginning an era of rapid change."<sup>47</sup> This rapid change includes the enclosure movement in Scotland. Figure 2 (1747-1755) clearly illustrates changes wrought by the enclosure movement at that time. Figure 2 is Roy's map of Dumfries (the same area that Pont's map depicts). There are many noticeable differences between the two maps. Color is used to emphasize important locations or geographic features. Cities and villages are colored red, streams and rivers blue, hills green and brown. The map even shows topography in which the elevation is

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46 Robert Chambers, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1825), 255.

47 National Library of Scotland, "Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-1755," <http://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html> (accessed 4 April 2014).

created using inward or outward strokes. Dumfries is now visualized with a top-down view. The top-down view allows one to see the spatial relationships within the city, something Pont's map did not do. What is most interestingly depicted here is the agricultural landscape. Roy's map shows the old agricultural practice of run-rig next to the new enclosed method of farming. The old and new landscapes are most apparent when looking west of Dumfries. Uniform rectangles dominate the landscape in the south while strips of run-rig are still being applied in the north. This map, then, is an excellent illustration of the changing mode of agriculture in Scotland and how space was being transformed for that reason.

The Roy Military Survey is an outstanding example of Scottish cartography due to its rendering in stunning detail well before aerial photography. It is a beautiful and expansive work, yet it does not show, specifically, how the land was divided on any given estate. Figure 3, the Plan of Lothmore does, however, show the division of land on estates. The Plan of Lothmore map was created by John Kirk in 1772. This map does not exhibit the scope of Roy's maps, but it does not need to. The Plan of Lothmore map is a cadastral map, a map created with the sole purpose of visualizing the organization of an estate. While this map includes farms in Golspie and Loth parishes of Sutherland, it suits the same purpose as a one-estate cadastral map. Each section is illustrated to show where walls, dykes, or hedges should be erected. The soil type is given, along with what crops should be grown where and the locations on which livestock should pasture. Irrigation drains are listed along with the settlements. Numbers overlay the sections accounting for the acres, which are then tallied on the left hand side of the map. Great care has been taken to make this map as accurate as possible.

John Ainise's map, Figure 4, is another cadastral map worth perusing. Ainise's map was created in 1801 and illustrates a town plan of Baron Norton's Feu. While still taking into account the arable land needing to be enclosed, this map is much more focused on the locations of buildings on the land. Letters correspond to the descriptions given on the left hand side of the map, while numbers are once again overlain indicating the acres present. What is interesting about this map is the scale bar at the bottom. Given these precise measurements, tenants were ensured that each section of the plan could be correspondingly walked and fenced off. It was this kind of detail and scientific planning that helped landowners carry out the Lowland Clearances so successfully.

The scientific planning and rationale for national improvements stems from the Scottish Enlightenment. Improvement was to be, and seen as, a practical benefit, not only to the landlords who chose to enclose but to society in general. Mapping Scotland created a basis for improvement. Sinclair's map of society, a map made to illustrate the presence of the various people from the lowly cottars to the well-off landlords, allowed others to read about the country from the ground up. Cartography became increasingly of import for understanding of what exactly Scotland consisted and for the reorganization of land. Maps negotiated the necessity for enclosure and improvement by allowing others to view space and place in a geometric sense. Parcels and shapes overtook place as land became an investment opportunity and the promise of increased wealth. Maps physically showed the necessity for enclosure and improvement by providing a systematic and rational tool that provided proof of the benefits of improvement. It was necessary to be able to visualize space, and place, in order to carry out the large scale improvements many landlords favored. It is also essential, however, to explain the role of England and the



English markets the Scots looked to in order to sell their surplus. The Union of 1707 notably altered the commercial relationship between Scotland and England and created the impetus for enclosure.



Figure 1<sup>48</sup>

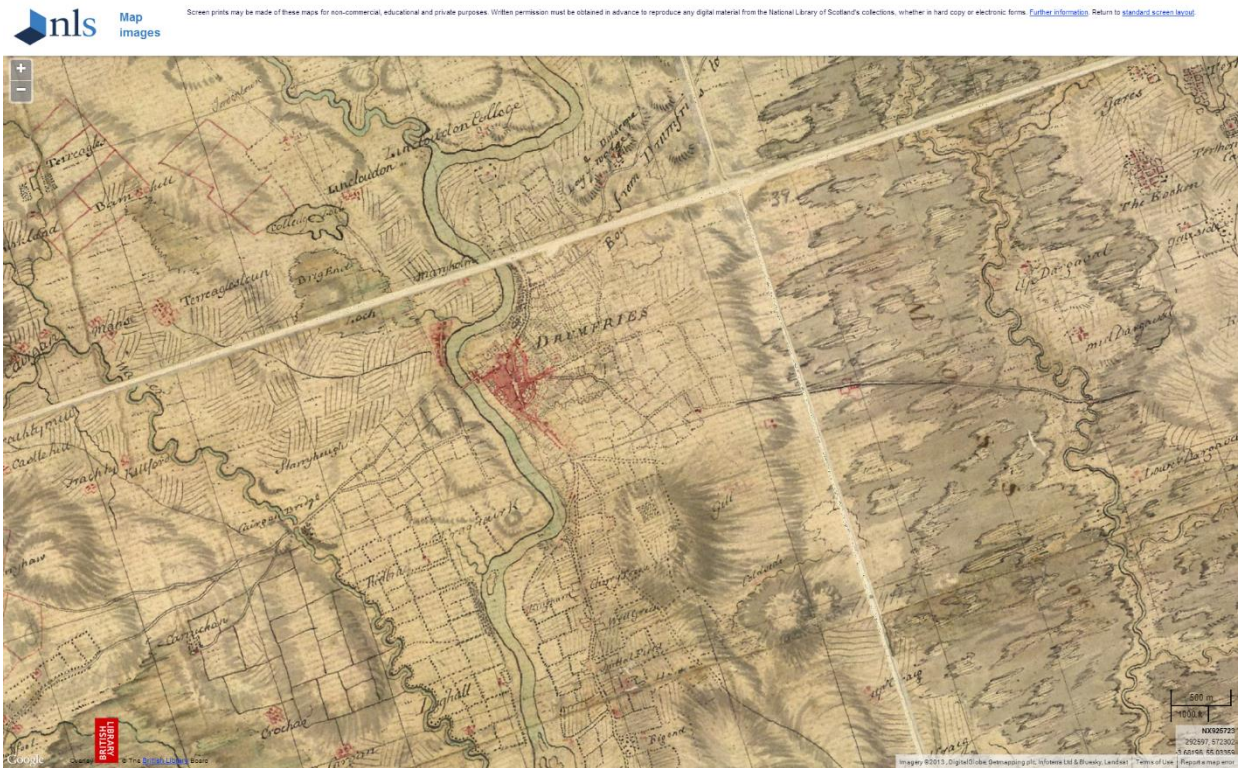
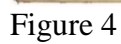


Figure 2

<sup>48</sup> Maps courtesy of the National Library of Scotland's online archive. <http://maps.nls.uk/estates/>





## THE ROLE OF ENGLAND

The Union of 1707 is a landmark event in the history of Scotland. Language was changed, a new flag, the Union Jack, was created from the Cross of St. Andrew, and the Scottish Assembly was absorbed into Westminster.<sup>49</sup> Those in power, the land owning class, voted for the Union in order to save what was left of the Scottish economy. It is essential to make clear that the English markets provided an incentive for Scottish landowners to enclose their estates in order to sell surpluses. This was a vote of necessity to many.

However, it is not surprising that many viewed the Union with distaste and anger. Sir John Clerk (1676-1755), writing in his journal, describes the general feeling among landed Scotsmen as a free-for-all where the business of the day joined whatever party promoted its interest most.<sup>50</sup> Because of the infighting among parties and because “the conclusion that public feeling in Scotland was too determinedly hostile to the Union,” Sir John Clerk was hesitant to agree to become a commissioner for the Union.<sup>51</sup>

There was also a tempestuous history between England and Scotland. Wars prior to the Union of 1707 stymied Scottish trade, as England faced off against France and the Netherlands several times during the seventeenth century.<sup>52</sup> France and Scotland had shared a mutually beneficial relationship for over a hundred years prior to the Union, a

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49 See John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce. Vol 1 (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Son, 1888).

50 John Clerk, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Baronet, Baron of the Exchequer, Extracted by Himself from His Own Journals, 1676-1755*, ed. John Gray (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1892), 56-57.

51 Ibid.

52 T.C. Smout, “The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707” *The Economic History Review* 16, no. 3 (1964), 458.

fact England could not ignore. And, disenchanted by England's unfair embargo of Scottish trade, Scotland endeavored to sever its ties with England. The English Parliament became increasingly militant and was “anxious to settle the Scottish question once and for all by a full incorporating Union.”<sup>53</sup> Such a union would ensure that the Scottish would no longer benefit or collaborate with England's oldest rival. Place, in this sense the whole of Scotland, was to be engulfed by another country. The ramifications of this change in place, as a national identity, are still important today, as seen by the recent vote for Scottish succession in September 2014.

In March of 1705, England passed the Alien Act. The Alien Act was initiated as the result of fighting between the Scottish and English parliaments due to questions of succession after King William III and Queen Mary II failed to produce an heir. Scotland demanded that economic conditions in Scotland be made a priority if the English parliament were to decide an heir. After some political maneuvering from both parliaments, Scotland threatened to remove Scottish troops from the English army. England had enough and pressed where Scotland was weakest—the Scottish economy. The Alien Act forced the Scots to the bargaining table. The act declared all Scots south of the Scottish border to be considered aliens and that all Scottish estates in England would be confiscated. The act also forbade the trade of Scottish cattle, linen, and coal in English markets, which accounted for nearly fifty percent of all Scottish trade.<sup>54</sup> The act was later repealed, but the Scots felt their predicament keenly: lose fifty percent of Scottish trade or join England. Anger ensued, leaving Unionists like Sir John Clerk unsure of Scotland's future.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 461.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 458.

It was clear to those on both sides of the debate that an end to Scottish trade with England would be detrimental at best and lead to catastrophic bankruptcy at the worst. Men like Daniel Defoe commented on the necessity of trading with England. He concluded, “the Union is the most desirable thing that ever was offered to Scotland.”<sup>55</sup> Defoe assured his readers that he and his fellow merchants were writing “with hearty affection to every Scotsman” and that the “Union [would] bring honor, peace, strength, and riches.” He reassured others that there was no trickery to be had from his letters and that “no consideration on Earth would tempt us to betray or mislead you.”<sup>56</sup> Defoe's opinion exposes the distrust many had of the Union. Discussed below, these writings also show how prominently the merchants favored Union to avoid losing out on trade.

On the other side of the argument, anti-Unionists welcomed the Alien Act. They encouraged Scotland to go it alone and to strengthen their economy without England. The Scots could look to the markets of France, Holland and other foreign enterprises. Such a goal may have been achievable; however, this raises the question of England's military superiority and how long England would tolerate Scotland in such a move. In the end, arguments such as Defoe's won out. The Union came into being on January 16<sup>th</sup> 1707, after a 110 aye and an 83 nay vote was recorded.

The inner workings of the Union can be squarely traced to economics. Scotland needed free and open trade to England and abroad. The Scottish economy, particularly because of the failed Darien scheme, was in shambles. The Company of Scotland, the

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<sup>55</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Letter Concerning Trade: From Several Scots-gentlemen that are merchants in England to their country-men that are merchants in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1706), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 15.

orchestrators of the Darien scheme, established two colonies on the Gulf of Darien in Panama (1698-1700), both of which were abandoned. The failure of the colonies can be attributed to disease, the lack of leadership and preparation (there was no clear plan to sell goods while many starved due to poor farming), all while being attacked and pressured by the Spanish whose land the Scots appropriated. To make matters worse, nearly half of all the circulating money in Lowland Scotland was backing the Company. When the colonies utterly failed, the majority of investors went bankrupt leaving Scotland economically weak. Compacting the failure of the Darien Scheme, Scotland had weathered four famines from 1695 to 1699.<sup>57</sup> If Scotland did not bend the knee, their future would be in jeopardy. If they rejected the Union, they would be stuck with the plunging economy they were already experiencing. They would also feel the weight of the English parliament, as parliament could pass economic acts that would strangle Scotland further in order to ensure the Scots were of no threat. In addition, the threat of military action against them loomed. By voting for Union, Scotland took the only suitable path that held a more positive economic future. With the question of Union resolved, the Scots looked toward that future which lay in the English markets that were now fully open to them at home and abroad.

It is essential to make clear that the English markets provided an incentive for Scottish landowners to enclose their estates in order to sell surpluses. Scottish cattle, linen, coal, and other surpluses from Scotland continued to move through English markets freely. Though a huge burst of economic success did not directly follow the Union, Glasgow merchants, explored in greater detail below, sought to make a fortune

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<sup>57</sup> T.C. Smout, "The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707" *The Economic History Review* 16, no. 3 (1964), 459.

through colonial trade.<sup>58</sup> Space and place again are important concepts to understand in regards to the economy. The economy drove changes in both space and place and is the main reason for the loss of the cottars' place in Scotland. Whereas maps of society made clear a person's place and made clear the distinction between space and place being changed over time, the economy altered space by mere abstraction. Though the economy has notable signatures on space, the idea of an economy is understood by giving objects value. These objects are then traded and become important reasons for enclosing, thus transforming space and place.

Scotland did not look seriously at the prospect of enclosure until the early eighteenth century, whereas England had been enclosing land since at least the fifteenth century. Enclosure can be seen as synonymous with improving farming methods in order to produce higher yields and higher financial returns. The rotation of crops, the use of marl and dung as fertilizer, and the planting of nitrogen rich crops, such as turnips, allowed continual production. William Macintosh, writing in 1729, encouraged those who owned and worked the land to promote the agriculture of Scotland.<sup>59</sup> The Society of Improvers, founded in 1723, preceded Macintosh and produced a manual consisting of questions from various landowners and responses from the society. In this way, all readers could share in the accumulated knowledge and apply it to overcome the obstacles of enclosure. The manual is partly dedicated to a Mr. Hope of Rankeilor who studied agricultural practices in England and abroad. Rankeilor suggested that the Scottish soil

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58 For further information on the early economy after the Union of 1707 see T.M. Devine *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010) and R.H. Campbell "The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707," *The Economic History Review* 16, no. 3 (1964).

59 William Macintosh, *An Essay on Ways and Means for Inclosing, Fallowing, Planting, &c. Scotland* (Edinburgh: Freebairn, 1729), i-355.



and the climate were ripe for improvement. Conditions were so favorable that if improvement was carried out on a massive scale the Scots could expect the same “convenience and circumstances” as the English to the south.<sup>60</sup> Such calls to observe and emulate England reinforced the movement toward improvement and enclosure.

By 1760 seventy-five percent of England had been enclosed. English landowners each had, since the Tudor enclosures (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century), consolidated his holdings into a single large farm. Consolidation in England also meant the removal of common lands used freely by anyone. Crops were rotated based on specific strategies being incorporated by many landowners which provided surplus goods. Walls were erected using stones and other material which delineated borders and ownership. Using English enclosure as a model from which to build, Scottish landowners spent vast sums of money in order to facilitate enclosure. Some of the most ardent improvers went bankrupt in the race to enclose their estates. Such men became cautionary examples, but they did not stop others from pursuing improvement.

One of the first steps taken to improve agriculture in Scotland consisted of doing away with the old run-rig system of husbandry. The Lothian landlords understood that the run-rig was “neither beneficial to themselves nor to the people” and was therefore discouraged.<sup>61</sup> In line with such changes, the landlords consolidated the land and, like Sinclair, combined several small farms into one centralized area of production. Enclosure assured the ability to manage areas of a farm more minutely and more efficiently. Many

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60 Robert Maxwell, *Select Transactions of the Honourable The Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Sands, Brymer, Murray and Cochran, 1743), 1.

61 George Robertson, *Rural Recapitulations, Or, The Progress of Improvement in Agriculture and Rural Affairs* (Irvine: Printed for the Author, 1829), 259.

tenants were replaced by a select few who had the motivation to ensure improvement on their landlord's estate. Thus, enclosure was aided by lower classes that saw a rise in their place in society along with the landlords they served. The cottars' place in the Lothians followed suit with others, and it was replaced by those who encouraged improvement. Place was systematically dismantled, due to its backwardness, in order to facilitate economic space. Changes in farming practices ensured surpluses and, thus, marketable goods. Through this view of space and place we can understand that changes did not simply occur without effects. One of the effects of improvement was the undoing of an entire social class that is understudied and little understood. Place gives the cottars importance and historical remembrance.

English markets played an important role in Scottish enclosure and in the Clearances. The Scots were forced, out of economic necessity, to vote for union in 1707 but were then benefitted by unrestricted trade with England and abroad which boosted the Scottish economy.

England's role in the Clearances is only one part of the story, however. The roles of the State, the landlords, and the merchants of Scotland all need to be explored to provide a more complete picture of how and why the Lowland Clearances occurred.

Scottish enclosure can be seen as a spatial relationship between organized land holdings and traditional land usage. Agriculturists like Sinclair understood this spatial relationship and encouraged landowners to look to the rational organization of their lands.<sup>62</sup> The Scottish state was not ignorant of such relationships. The state appointed

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<sup>62</sup> Ian H. Adams, "Division of the Commonty of Hassendean, 1761-1763," *The Stair Society, Miscellany I* (1971), 171.

men like Robert Sibbald to map the country and sought out improvements in trade via the Union of 1707. More importantly, the state encouraged enclosure through acts of parliament.

It is noted that the Scottish government “was not entirely irrelevant to the development of agrarian reforms.”<sup>63</sup> In 1661, 1669, 1685 and 1695 statutes allowed the division of commonties and lands still being farmed in run-rig and for the erection of fences. A 1772 Act provided easy credit to landlords in order to stimulate estate improvements. The State wanted improvement in order to prosper and to strengthen itself as a nation. The State provided and passed the necessary laws for the landlords to enclose and remove the place of the cottars. In some cases, however, the government did not proceed fast enough or far enough, leaving men like Sir John Sinclair to petition parliament in order to expedite improvement.

These Acts helped transform the Scottish rural landscape by providing for the consolidation of land, the division of commonties, and for the erection of enclosures. Two acts of the 17<sup>th</sup> century are important frontrunners to the later enclosure acts. The first act, of 1641, discouraged tenants from tearing down dykes and enclosures. The 1647 act built upon the first and allowed for the commons in the Lothians, Lanarkshire and Ayr to be divided without the consent of tenants established in those counties. The reason behind the acts was to allow the barren commons to be turned into productive agricultural grounds. Both of these acts were rescinded by the 1661 Recissory Act, but the framework of enclosure still stood. As both acts were annulled, another act was created. This new

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<sup>63</sup> T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 95.

“Act for planting and inclosing of ground” encouraged enclosure and granted special protection to those who did. This protection came in the form of punishments to those who tore down enclosures.

Two more important acts were passed in 1695. The first act, the Runrig Act, arranged to consolidate lands still in run-rig, since run-rig was seen to be “highly prejudicial to the policy and Improvement of the Nation, by planting and inclosing.”<sup>64</sup> The second act, the Commonty Act, allowed that, “any commonty in which neither the Crown nor royal burghs had rights could be divided at the instance of any proprietor.”<sup>65</sup> Skilled surveyors were sorely needed in order to divide the commons appropriately and rationally. Finding skilled surveyors was a problem because the surveying profession was not extensively practiced in Scotland at the time the aforementioned acts were passed. As time passed, the need for accurate records increased the demand for trained surveyors. Measurers, surveyors and cartographers were diligently sought. These three professions became of interest to many science-oriented individuals who desired to become the vanguard of progress. Their skills were used time and again in the division of commonty.

Some landlords saw the need to keep such men close by and, therefore, promoted individuals to the role of estate factors. As was discussed in the introduction, states act as a reducing force: a force of rational simplification. The surveyors and cartographers established and used standardized methods that changed the appearance and shape of rural Scotland. This change of space highlights the state’s role as a consolidating force. The state imposes its will, not only on its subjects but on the very land itself. The

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64 Ibid, 173.

65 Ibid, 175.

Commonly Act transformed the spatial relationship between tenants and the land. Such as the case in England, half a million acres of land that had been previously held under multiple tenancy was reduced to the ownership of a relatively few individual proprietors. The state did not interfere with the rate of consolidation nor restrain the landowners from improving their estates. This noninterference included ignoring the eviction of tenants and cottars. The law was on the side of the landowners.<sup>66</sup> Yet, that picture does not seem to be entirely correct.

The memoirs of Sir John Sinclair, President of the Board of Agriculture, contain a series of letters that offer insight into the inner workings of parliament at the time. Recorded a hundred years after the Commonly Act, the debate over enclosure on a mass scale was still ongoing. Sinclair wrote to Lord Chancellor Rosslyn in the House of Lords, appealing to him to see his bill on turning the waste lands of Scotland into productive areas.<sup>67</sup> The appeal fell on deaf ears, and Sinclair's bill was denied passage. Sir John Sinclair felt the sting of defeat, but valiant supporters of his bill wrote to him encouraging him to continue his enterprise. These letters are important to show that the call for improvement was of great interest to multiple individuals. The following letter, written by Sir John Call to Sinclair, is a testament of support and encouragement from others:

My dear Sir,  
I learnt from my newspaper with great astonishment, and with equal concern, that your enclosure bill was put by in the House of Lords on the motion of the Lord Chancellor, without one single argument against it, at least according to the report in my paper. I know not to what motive I can impute this, but I fear the fees of office in that House, and perhaps in ours too, have an influence they ought not to have, against a great public

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66 T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 96.

67 John Sinclair, Jr. *Memoirs of the Life and Works of the Late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1837), 107.

measure. Whatever may be the cause, I hope the Board of Agriculture, in another session, will resume the business with zeal and perseverance; and that, supported by societies in every county, and by the numerous parties who have already petitioned in favour of the bill, they will form such a combination of interests, as the legislature must attend to. I will not say all that I could on this subject, because I am somewhat out of temper; but I cannot help thinking it to be an act of great injustice to individuals, as well as a counteraction of an obvious improvement in agriculture and all its relative advantages, to prevent the owners and occupiers of waste and common land from enclosing such lands by common consent, and in order to amend the soil and increase the produce. I am, my dear sir, with great esteem, your faithful and obliged servant,  
J. Call.<sup>68</sup>

Sinclair's memoirs include other letters to the same effect. A Mr. Bird of Appleby expressed, "the failure of your most excellent intended general enclosure bill is still greatly to be regretted, as it most probably would, if passed into a law, have been the most beneficial to this country of any act since Magna Charta [sic]."<sup>69</sup> These letters convey worry and encouragement and expose a conflict over profitability and space, specifically, the commons which the cottars had used as part of their place for centuries.

Sinclair's fight went on for several more years. Supporters of the bill became discouraged. Lord Carrington conveyed to Sinclair, "If after the fatal experience of more than twenty millions sterling having been sent to foreign countries for the purchase of grain within the short space of a few years, noble lords will still condemn millions of acres, which are capable of every kind of produce, to remain dreary wastes, I can impute it to little less than a species of infatuation."<sup>70</sup> This is a single case of the state interfering with the rate of consolidation, however, it is important to note that the direct ownership of the lands Sinclair sought to improve are unknown. If the state owned the lands and not

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68 Ibid, 108-109.

69 Ibid, 109.

70 Ibid, 110.

proprietors, then cost would be the single greatest issue, something Lord Carrington adamantly condemns as hypocritical with reference to importing grain. The conflict between the Board of Agriculture and parliament is somewhat surprising, given the state's willingness to pass agricultural bills promoting improvement prior to Sinclair's call. This conflict can then be viewed, in one sense, as the state not moving fast enough to expedite agricultural changes in Scotland.

The state played its role in the Clearances through acts of parliament and through providing for the mapping of the country via surveyors and cartographers. The Acts passed by parliament show a long, evolutionary process that, much like the changing phases of the market, transformed the economic and social fabric of Scotland. The law also played an important role when it came to individual landowners and how they benefited from their place in society in regards to improvement. It is the landlords' spatial connection that must be explored in order to understand the main driving force behind the Lowland Clearances and the removal of place.

## THE LANDLORDS AND THE MERCHANTS

The Lowland Clearances were most directly carried out by landlords, who were driven by a desire for greater profits from their landholdings. The state and the landowners were closely tied. Only landed gentry were allowed to vote and play a role in government. Landed gentry also acted as justices of the peace, giving them complete mediation powers for all disputes on their lands. The spatial relationship between a landlord and his land and the class relationship between the landlord and his position in society granted him the protection and encouragement to do what he wanted for the sake of improvement. The expanding markets provided the stimulus for new profit to be realized. Profit did play a major role in the willingness of landlords and tenants alike to accept and effect changes and may have been the main incentive for landlords to enclose; however, documentation from the eighteenth century indicate more of an inclination toward collective patriotism and national improvement than toward individual greed.

William Macintosh, in his essay on enclosing, speaks to the landowners: “I believe that most of the Nation are sensible of the usefulness of inclosing their ground [as] to convince the scepticks [sic] of its being practicable as well as useful, yea necessary, to make us a happy and rich people.”<sup>71</sup> Macintosh continues, “but, hard as it is, I don't fear, but the distinguished class of men I address my self to . . . I verily believe their zeal, as true patriots, will let about it; and their capacity, as guardians and trustees of

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71 William Macintosh, *An Essay on Ways and Means for Inclosing, Fallowing, Planting, &c. Scotland* (Edinburgh: Freebairn, 1729), 1-2.



us, will bring it to the desired effect.”<sup>72</sup> The words “guardians” and “trustees” express responsibility. Landowners, being the select few who could participate in parliament, felt that it was up to them to improve for their betterment and the betterment of the nation as was discussed prior. Macintosh finds it his duty to encourage other landowners to bring about improvement out of a sense of responsibility to the country. Such dialogue gives credence to how far reaching and important improvement ought to be for all landowners.

Bryce Johnston lends credibility to Macintosh's call to enclose through his examination of Dumfriesshire agriculture. Johnston imparts that agriculture is now marked with greatness and is of national importance. He praises the Board of Agriculture as a shining example of patriotism and claims that all improvers “gratify their Sovereign in serving their country.”<sup>73</sup> It is prudent to proceed with a contrasting view of the past state of agriculture and the improvements carried out.

From all accounts, agriculture in Scotland prior to the late eighteenth century was underproductive. John Ramsay explains that Scottish agriculture suffered because of various wars in which Scotland was involved.<sup>74</sup> Ramsay also notes other reasons men of all stations overlooked the improvement of their lands. The importance of the succession to the throne or the fall from the throne, along with changes in the church, “employed the attention of all ranks of men.”<sup>75</sup> Thomas Somerville, in his memoirs, also agrees that agriculture “was in a wretched state” before improvement.<sup>76</sup> What improvements

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>73</sup> Bryce Johnston, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Dumfries with Observations on the Means of its Improvement* (London: T. Wright, 1794), v.

<sup>74</sup> John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Alexander Allardyce. Vol 1 (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood and Son, 1888), 187.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 187.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times 1741-1814* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1861), 360.

followed were both massive in scale, starting in southwest Scotland and penetrating deep into the Highlands, and long lasting, making Scotland one of the top producers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

One of the major obstacles to improvement was the lease. The lease ensured control over the land. This fact went both ways. In most respects, the lease allowed the landlords complete control over the improvement of their lands by removing the many and keeping a select few. On the other hand, leases acted as barriers to the tenants. Tenants were uncomfortable spending money and time on improving the land they worked when they knew their leases were being canceled and that soon, like many others, they would be asked or forced to leave.<sup>77</sup> Johnston, concerning leases, also believed that the lease should be fair to both the landlord and the tenant. He called for landlords to resist the temptation to raise rents and asked them to offer good working tenants a “fair and equitable” lease.

Sinclair notes that in ancient and feudal times the connection between the landlord and his tenants was one of military importance. In return for living on and working the land, the landlords required small rents along with military service if the need arose. When the feudal system was abolished, the connection between the two parties changed, and “the contract becomes more of a mercenary nature, without however totally destroying ties of a more pleasing description.”<sup>78</sup> The tenant, on the other hand, felt inclined to work hard and improve the lands he worked to ensure his lease was extended or face eviction.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 360.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 166.

The Lowland Clearances are known as such because the people were removed from the land in droves. Eighty to ninety percent of those living in Scotland lived in the countryside. Most of these people relied on the land in order to survive. Of these eighty to ninety percent, only one percent owned any piece of land.<sup>79</sup> The old system of feu and tack, in which land was rented at a specific price and paid for in varying forms, was systematically dismantled. Thus, emigration came into the picture and became an option for those removed from the land. Many hoped to establish a new life in the New World to the west and arrived by ship in Canada or the American colonies. Others flocked to the new industrial centers of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Some became laborers in planned villages that sprung up all over Lowland Scotland. Still others became destitute and lived out their paltry lives begging in the streets. Estate papers show that from the mid-eighteenth century on the number of tenants and peasants working the land were falling. In areas such as Dumfriesshire, there was a decline of fifty to seventy percent over forty years.<sup>80</sup>

The question then arises, if the landlords evicted so many people, why was there little to no response? It is overwhelmingly agreed that the Lowland Clearances unfolded as a “silent revolution.”<sup>81</sup> Writers of the time period speak of a class of people, the majority being wage laborers, who were in a wretched state of existence. These people belonged to the lowest class in society, owning very little, if anything, and dependent on

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79 Neil Davidson, “The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004), 232.

80 T.M. Devine, “The Lowland Clearances and the Transformation of Southwest Scotland,” presented in person and reported by Kate Kennedy (2011).

81 The term “silent revolution” is used by T.M. Devine and by Andrew Cassell and Peter Aitchison several times. T.C. Smout along with I.H. Adams also give the term credibility by stating that Lowland Scotland did not see any massive uprisings during the Clearances.

the land others owned. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun affirms this wretched state by writing, “in the letting of our lands at so excessive a rate makes the tenant poorer even than his servant whose wages he cannot pay.”<sup>82</sup> Sir William Seton wrote that, “The Husband-men, which in my opinion are the most miserable of all our Commons.”<sup>83</sup> There is very little of record indicating that the peasant class took action. However, we can look at two arguments and one case of resistance: the Galloway Levellers.

One main argument made for the lack of a major, widespread conflict over the Lowland Clearances is that there existed an outlet, or a “safety valve,” for the people forced off of the land.<sup>84</sup> In the early half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh were looking for both unskilled and skilled labor. This migration of the evicted coincided exactly with the waxing stages of the Industrial Revolution. Opportunities in America and Canada were also favorable options, and planned villages took in landless families in order to promote commerce. Emigration then can be seen as an important factor in its own right.

Starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a massive exodus from Scotland. The majority of Scottish emigrants were Highlanders fleeing Scotland after the Battle of Culloden in 1746, but many Lowlanders emigrated also. The ability to emigrate accounted for Scottish mobility and encouraged the spread of Scottish Enlightened ideas abroad. Between 1700 and 1775, 14.4% of the American population was Scotch-Irish

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82 Neil Davidson, “The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004), 237.

83 Ibid, 237.

84 T. M. Devine, “Social Stability and Agrarian Change in the Eastern Lowlands of Scotland, 1810-1840,” *Social History* 3, no.3 (1978), 342.

(rising from 3% in 1700 to 14.4% in 1775).<sup>85</sup> Looking at data compiled by the United States Department of Homeland Security there is a sharp increase in emigration from the United Kingdom to the United States from 1820, spiking in 1850 and increasing again in 1875 to include over half a million immigrants. These numbers take into account emigrants from Ireland also as many Lowland Scots first emigrated to Ireland and then across the Atlantic.

There is evidence, most notably reported in Arthur Herman's study *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, that during the Scottish diaspora a great portion of Scotland's enlightened emigrated abroad. This loss of skilled people in Lowland Scotland may have played a role in the Lowland Clearances, but that role mostly dealt with the speed of enclosure. The enclosure movement in Scotland was seen as necessary for the benefit of all. If anything, the emigration of enlightened individuals slowed down the Lowland Clearances in regards to scientific planning. As stated before, cartographers, planners and surveyors were in high demand.

Migration also played a role in the "safety valve." Planned villages housed laborers that were otherwise left to their own devices after eviction. Cottars migrated miles to find work in planned villages. For example, ninety-seven migrants came to the village of Johnstone in Renfrewshire. The mean distance these people traveled was 5.8 miles with a maximum distance of fifty five miles.<sup>86</sup> Demographics can be helpful in recreating what happened to the cottars also and fit with migration patterns nicely.

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<sup>85</sup> Paul Boyer, *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1990) 99.

<sup>86</sup> Douglas Lockhart, "Migration to Planned Villages in Scotland between 1725 and 1850." *Scottish Geographical Magazine* 102, no. 3 (1986): 172-74.

Demographics show that migrants from the countryside who took up residence near the coast were predominately employed in geographic specific occupations. In the village of Gardenstown in Banffshire for example, 63.5% of the population were fishermen.<sup>87</sup> The same can be said about other types of villages situated for certain location specific industry. Planned villages attracted many would be inhabitants and perpetuated migration from the field to rural villages to urban centers.

The second main argument made for the lack of rebellion revolves around the study of rent. As enclosure became the norm in England and worked its way into Scotland, the way landlords collected rent from their tenants changed. Rent in kind, paying the landlord in grain and harvestable goods, had been in place since before feudal times. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun described, “our management in the countries cultivated by tillage is much worse, because the tenant pays his rent in grain, wheat, barley or oats: which is attended with many inconveniences, and much greater disadvantages than a rent paid in money.”<sup>88</sup> Such inconveniences revolved around the market where standardized forms of money were becoming more required. With the advent of capitalist agriculture, laborers were paid in coin and, in turn, paid their rent in coin. This change of payment removed the now landless further from the land and the acquisition of the basic necessities of life. As bread and food prices soared or fell, depending on the market, laborers were forced to gain their subsistence through cash purchases. The Swing Riots of southern England is one major example of a populace reacting to starvation induced by pay and rent being cash transactions.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>88</sup> Neil Davidson, “The Scottish Path to Capitalist Agriculture 1,” *Journal of Agrarian Change* 4, no. 3 (2004), 237.

The Swing Riots began when new machinery was introduced and, along with it, wages were lowered. Juxtapose the rent and pay structure of England with that of Lowland Scotland and the situation becomes clear. Even into the early to mid-nineteenth century, payments in kind made up a considerable portion of wages for most workers.<sup>89</sup> This system provided Scottish laborers a shield from the effects of the market, whereas others who relied solely on a coin wage were not as fortunate.

The Lowland Clearances unfolded during a time period in which an outlet existed for the disenfranchised. The fact that there was only one recorded event of armed resistance to the enclosure movement in Lowland Scotland can be attributed to receiving payment in kind along with a small wage. “Few movements were more foolish, more hopeless, but at the same time more eminently Scottish and sympathetic than this” wrote S. R. Crockett. He writes of the Galloway Levellers. Crockett details the understanding between the landlords and the people in terms of the ancient sept of the clan; that the land belonged to the chief but was held “in trust for his people.”<sup>90</sup> He recounts the now typical procedure of enclosing the land and removing the commons, and even “hills incapable of cultivation.” Crockett explicates the social ties broken by explaining that, “the lairds were no more of the people. They had taken the side of what all Galloway considered as an alien and persecuting sect.”<sup>91</sup> The people in Galloway felt betrayed, their tradition and place yanked out by the roots.

The landlords of Galloway, like those in many other counties in Lowland

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89 T. M. Devine, “Social Stability and Agrarian Change in the Eastern Lowlands of Scotland, 1810-1840,” *Social History* 3, no.3 (1978), 334.

90 S. R. Crockett, *Raiderland: All about Grey Galloway, Its Stories, Traditions, Characters, Humours* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1904) 223.

91 Ibid, 223.

Scotland, unleashed their improvers. Crockett explains the social dimension of the Lowland Clearance by writing: “They set their lawyers to work, and, soon discovering that the poor folk possessed no claims to their holdings (save that of having entirely created them, built up every stone and sod of offices and dwelling-house, and cultivated in peace their two or three scanty parks and meadows of rough grass for centuries), proceeded to clear their borders of them and all their works.”<sup>92</sup> This comment is key to understanding how the space of these lands was transformed into place by the inhabitants and then consequently destroyed during enclosure. Crockett goes on to explain the previous religious troubles that had plagued Scotland under Charles II and his brother James II, which he sees as further motivation for the Levellers. With the past still fresh in the minds of the Galloway Levellers, they acted on what they saw as yet another major injustice.

Such a movement was doomed from the outset because of the lack of proper leadership and because the Levellers themselves were mostly made up of young people. They wore costumes as they ran through the night listening to their self-proclaimed leader, Captain Dick of the Isle, and “the element of adventure entered largely into their motives.”<sup>93</sup> Using poles, the Levellers “put forth their strength as one man, and the hated fences would be levelled with the ground.”<sup>94</sup> Such activities immediately attracted the attention of several landlords throughout Galloway. The landlords asked for Regulars, professionally trained soldiers, to come to their aid. With every wall the Levellers toppled, the Regulars came closer to catching them. The Levellers were eventually

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92 Ibid, 223.

93 Ibid, 228.

94 Ibid, 228.



hunted down and cornered at Duchrae Moat Wood where the final confrontation took place.

The Levellers had built themselves a remarkable circular defense on a hill. Armed with guns, swords, and other weapons of battle, the Levellers stood their ground behind their barricade. Crockett does not explain in detail the confrontation that followed, indicating only that when it was all said and done the “commander of the regular troops was very lenient to the Levellers—much more so than the lairds and 'enclosers' of the time approved of.”<sup>95</sup> The Levellers were arrested, fined, humiliated, and then released. Their revolt is the only known collective act against enclosure in the Lowlands.

The landlords aimed to improve their lands and did just that. Several landlords went bankrupt in the process, but the greater majority, with the law on their side, enclosed their lands and removed the people who had lived there for generations. The landlords’ reasons were clear. They wanted to take advantage of market based agriculture for greater profits in order to be competitive in the changing world. Though the State and the landlords played prominent roles in the Lowland Clearances, another group was equally important in displacing place in order to create a capitalistic space. These were the merchants of Scotland.

Some merchants were influential in the call for Union in 1707. Defoe told the Scots that under the Union, taxes would be dropped and the English market would be open to export Scottish oats and other agricultural goods. <sup>96</sup> With the Union in place, many merchants looked to their futures. That future strongly depended on the market.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>96</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Letter Concerning Trade: From Several Scots-gentlemen that are merchants in England to their country-men that are merchants in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1706), 3.

The market, however, was at times tumultuous and unpredictable. Events such as the South Sea Bubble caused many merchants and landlords who invested in the South Sea Company to go bankrupt. The South Sea Company assumed England's war debt from the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714) in exchange for a monopoly over all trade to the Spanish colonies. Stock rose to astronomical levels over a one year period of hyped success, starting in the latter half of 1719 and then dropping dramatically in 1720.<sup>97</sup> It is wise to consider the global impacts of the South Sea Bubble as it was only one of several speculative bubbles during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. When the bubble popped, the hopes of many who invested in the Company were extinguished. This popping also effected English banks, bubbles in other countries (such as the Mississippi scheme bubble in France), and the general public in many countries. The rapid rise and decline in stock bankrupted many, demonstrating how the market directly influences space and place.

Space and place must be mentioned, as both were affected in multiple ways. Place was changed for those investors who went bankrupt and lost their properties and wealth. This change in place had a ripple effect as bankruptcy allowed others, such as merchants during this time period, to purchase land and carry out enclosure. This affected those who lived on the land who were forced to become destitute, become wage laborers or to migrate. Space is important not only in relation to the seas being navigated by the South Sea Company but because it shows how far reaching British influence was (along with other competing nations that colonized and traded foreign goods). Space did not confine merchants. Merchants became enormously wealthy, trading with the colonies and with

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<sup>97</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "South Sea Bubble", accessed February 13, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/South-Sea-Bubble>.

England. Employing this accumulated wealth, merchants began to buy out traditional landlords who fell on hard times or went bankrupt trying to improve their lands. It was with the rise of these “alien” landowners that the old ways died out completely. Merchant landowners bought land to grow richer, not to protect those who had lived on the land for generations.

Tobacco became a major cash crop, which the Scots embraced wholeheartedly during the eighteenth century. So much so that in a single year, the Scottish imported more tobacco than all the English exports combined.<sup>98</sup> Glasgow tobacco merchants owned fifty percent of the world trade in tobacco following the British victory in the Seven Years War. The money from such trade was “the key to generating improvement and progress in society.”<sup>99</sup> To put the Scottish domination of the tobacco trade in clear terms, ninety-eight percent of all tobacco was even imported to the ports of Greenock and Port Glasgow.<sup>100</sup> The merchants took steps to control more resources and to become even wealthier.

Merchants tried several schemes as new-found landlords, when it came to learning to deal with land ownership. Some became typical landowners and generated a profit through enclosure and the market. Others bought lands that were known to contain extractive goods such as coal and lead. Still others combined the two and leased parts of their land for extracting goods while keeping other parts solely for agricultural purposes.

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98 T. M. Devine, “The Colonial Trades and Industrial Investment in Scotland,” *The Economic History Review* 29, no. 1 (1976), 1.

99 “The Price of Progress,” 8 Dec. 2009 episode of *A History of Scotland* (BBC One, 2008-2009; BBC Home Entertainment, 2009 DVD).

100 T. M. Devine, “The Colonial Trades and Industrial Investment in Scotland,” *The Economic History Review* 29, no. 1 (1976), 1-2.

These activities did breathe new life into Scotland, which accelerated the pace of the Lowland Clearances.

Money was not the only draw the merchants felt when purchasing land. Landowners were seen as socially prestigious, and merchants desired to join such a group. The Patronage Act of 1712 allowed landowners to choose parish ministers. Landowners also held political power at both the national and local levels. Such power ensured that their authority extended well beyond the lands they owned.<sup>101</sup>

Land thus far has been discussed in terms of space and place, in which place was subverted for space in order to carry out capitalist-based agriculture. In 1804, William Marshall stated, “Landed property is the basis on which every other species of material property rests; on it alone mankind can be said to live, to move and to have its being”<sup>102</sup>, which often times resulted in control over the lives of the many by the few. Merchants saw this as a fact and embraced the power that was bought with money.

Using Geographic Information Systems, figure 5, we can show the change of landownership. The following map of Lowland Scotland shows the number of merchants, between 1770 and 1815, who bought land versus those landowners who inherited their land. What is quite clearly depicted in the majority of the counties is that the lands purchased by merchants exceeded the lands that were inherited; thus, in turn, illustrating the growth of new wealth in Scotland following the Union and the ways that new wealth was acquired.<sup>103</sup> Acquisition of this new wealth facilitated social mobility.

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101T. M. Devine, *Clearance and Improvement: Land, Power and People in Scotland 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 67.

102 Ibid, 67.

103 Ibid, 81-90. Devine has produced a chart of landholdings by colonial merchants that is of interest.

Through the use of several primary documents ranging from matriculation records to deeds Devine has

It is known that the Scottish merchants became vastly wealthy. How they went about accumulating that wealth is interesting in its own right. The character of these men is important to reveal, as they were to become the new landed gentry. This new landed gentry bought land to turn a profit and embraced enclosure in order to do so. For these men, enclosure was necessary for larger yields and therefore larger profits. Many merchants became wealthy by not playing by the rules. Tobacco, in the American colonies, had its price set once a year every year on the same day. The harvest, the demand from Europe, and other factors combined to determine the price that was set. This set price then acted as the Golden Rule that everyone was expected to obey. Merchants found a loophole even in such a strict rule.

The scheme consisted of investors in merchandise from unloaded west-bound merchant ships offering farmers goods on credit. Once the farmers agreed and partook of the offers, “they became shackled to the merchants.”<sup>104</sup> When harvest came around, the merchants could then pay any price they wanted for the tobacco. Such a scheme allowed merchants to sell tobacco at twenty percent below market price. This undercut all those holding to the price already set, which meant the Glasgow merchants held nearly complete control of the tobacco trade. The farmers of the colonies sank deeper into debt. Many colonial farms failed, while the merchants prospered.

Adam Smith, an influential member of the Enlightenment and author of *The*

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compiled a list of one hundred and forty individuals who either bought land or inherited land. The list shows that some merchants already came from the landowning class, thus inheriting the land while participating as merchants. The chart also lists the estates bought or inherited, what county the estate(s) were located and the date of acquisition. The GIS image was created using ArcGIS 10.1 and is based off of the data provided by Devine.

104 \_\_\_\_\_ “The Price of Progress,” 8 Dec. 2009 episode of *A History of Scotland* (BBC One, 2008-2009; BBC Home Entertainment, 2009 DVD).

*Wealth of Nations*, praised the merchants: “Merchants are commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen, and when they do, they are generally the best of all improvers”.<sup>105</sup> These were the type of men who would breathe the new life into Scotland. They were to be the ones who brought about equality and progress. Yet, Benjamin Franklin, visiting Scotland and speaking with Adam Smith, saw nothing but inequality. In a letter to Joshua Babcock, Franklin writes, “In these countries a small part of the society are landlords, living in the highest affluence and magnificence: The bulk of the people tenants, extremely poor, living in the most sordid wretchedness in dirty hovels of mud and straw, and clothed only in rags.”<sup>106</sup> Merchants joined the ranks of the opulent at the expense of the poor, with the influence of their business tactics extending from the colonies all the way back home.

The new class of landowners took full advantage of the opportunity to enclose their newly purchased land. They had the funds to execute changes at a faster pace and with a larger force than the traditional landlords. Such gusto expedited the Lowland Clearances and the removal of place. The social implications of this removal were far reaching. Prior to 1650, one fifth to one third of the entire rural population was made up of cottars. By 1815, Lowland Scotland no longer consisted of a social tier where cottars were considered a class. The cottars disappeared, victims of the removal of place. What was left was a general social class of wage laborers. These laborers found work where possible. The cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh allowed for migration from farm to city,

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105 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1910), 362.

106 “The Price of Progress,” 8 Dec. 2009 episode of *A History of Scotland* (BBC One, 2008-2009; BBC Home Entertainment, 2009 DVD).

but some landlords saw the need to keep labor nearby. To that end, new villages were created that participated in promoting industry, the subject of the following chapter.

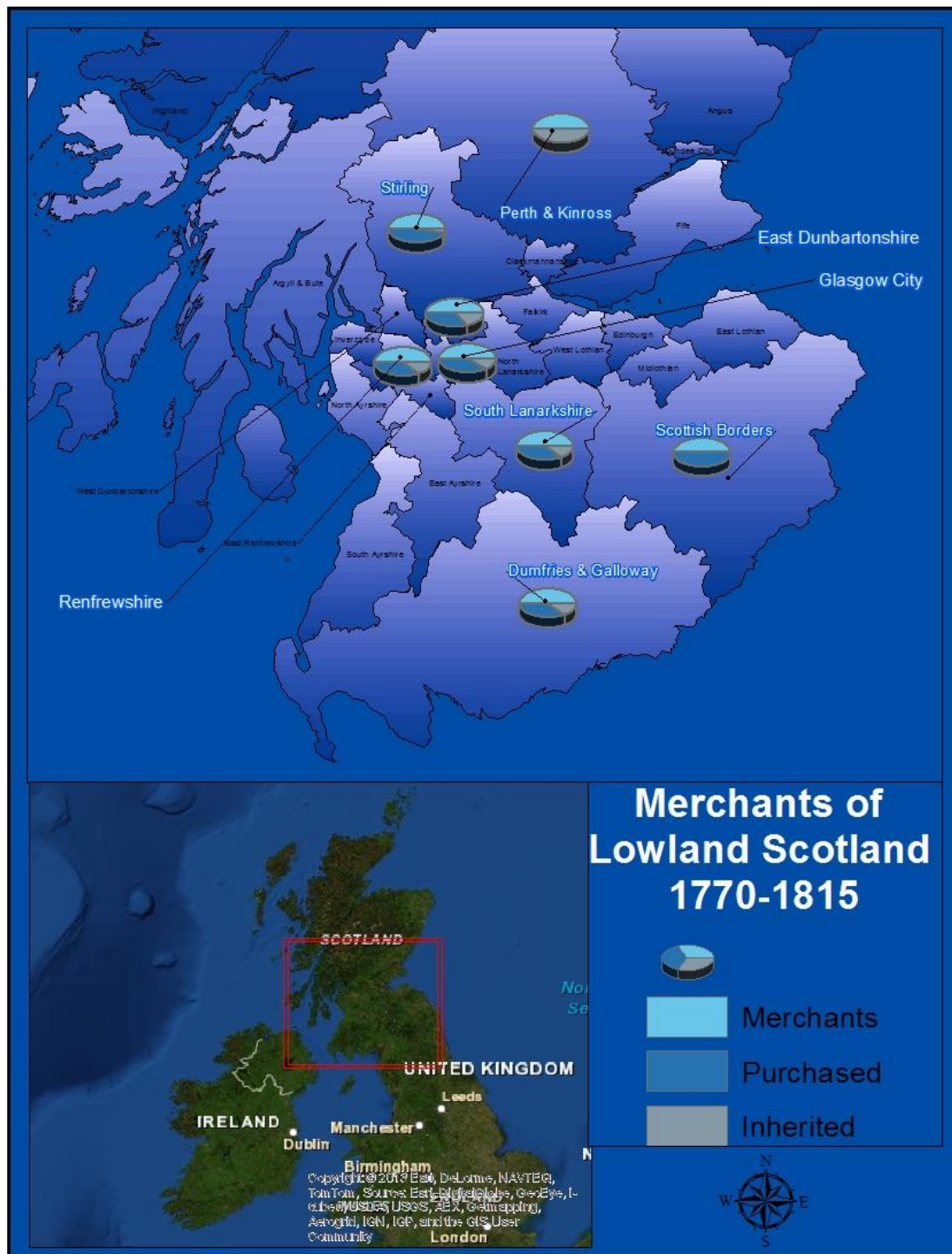


Figure 5



## THE CREATION OF PLANNED VILLAGES

Planned villages of Lowland Scotland came about because craftsmen and traders looked for favored geographical sites in which to live and work. For example, planned villages near water sources naturally promoted the textile industry. Landlords who owned the land understood the geography of such sites and encouraged the building of villages and the inviting of craftsmen to work there. Villages provided an outlet for local surpluses, while also providing employment for those “who might otherwise find themselves cast out of the district by enclosure.”<sup>107</sup> Planned villages also created local markets through which goods could be bought and sold. Tenant farmers provided food for the craftsmen via the market and the craftsmen provided clothing and other raw goods to the farmers.

With the changes in farming methods, fewer people were needed to grow more food. Surpluses resulted, as did the problems arising from such surpluses. Landlords had few options when it came to their surplus food. The favored option, of course, was to get the food to market as soon as possible. Narrow, unmaintained roads posed barriers to transporting surpluses long distances. Distributing the surplus among the populace posed the problem of undermining rent and the landlords’ authority. Planned villages, and the markets they were projected to bring, were one way to approach the surplus problem. Joseph Cumine of Auchry, in the first half of the eighteenth century, set about creating a planned village.

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<sup>107</sup> T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 75.

When Cumine first built Cuminstown, he was ridiculed. His neighbors laughed at the measly 11 pounds sterling per year he received for his troubles. Mr. Cumine took his time with his planned village. He invited manufacturing, loaned money, and acted as the sole mediator between differences of opinion that arose within the industry to be based there. Soon, more and more people came to live and work in Cuminstown, which now generated more than 120 pounds sterling a year.<sup>108</sup> Villagers of Cuminstown enjoyed a rising standard of living, while Cumine profited handsomely. This exemplary village encouraged other landowners to seriously look at the prospect of planned villages. Cuminstown is a success story, as one of the 600 or more planned villages that were created from the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century in Scotland.<sup>109</sup> This village was an exception to the rule. Cumine exerted his power as landlord to bring about a rising standard of living for those who worked in Cuminstown.

Landlords like Grant of Monymusk, Cumine, the Duke of Gordon, and others were “very conscious of the social disruption agricultural changes were bringing about.”<sup>110</sup> This statement indicates that there were feelings of humanity associated with the Lowland Clearances. John Cockburn, in his letters of Ormistoun wrote, “I hate tyranny in every shape, and shall always have greater pleasure in seeing my tenants making something under me which they can call their own than in getting a little more myself by squeezing a hundred poor families till their necessities make them my

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>109</sup> Lorna J. Philip, “Planned Villages in Dumfriesshire and Galloway: Location, Form and Function,” *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 3, no. 80 (2006), 105.

<sup>110</sup> T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 77.

slaves.”<sup>111</sup> Landlords wanted to make more money off of their lands, yes, but some also saw the need to care for the people who had lived there on the land for centuries.

Obviously, this was not always the case; it was not even the norm. It is true that populations did rise in areas where planned villages were created, but it is also true that many people cleared from the land moved to the larger centers of Lowland Scotland or emigrated across the Atlantic.<sup>112</sup> Yet, planned villages can be viewed as a viable “outlet.”

Villages, successful or not, had to deal with the social ills exacerbated by living in close quarters. The Borgue minister living in the county of Kirkcudbrightshire wrote, “In villages the most worthless and wretched part of society is commonly to be found. Thither the dregs of the community from all quarters are poured in.”<sup>113</sup> Many problems arose partly because industry was not introduced at a fast enough rate. Villages could only employ a set number of individuals. The rest were at a loss. The restitution of these “most worthless and wretched part of society” again illustrates how place was lost while space was changed in order to facilitate progress via enclosures and the rise of industry.

In the minds of many landowners, the “dregs of society” were a temporary problem to the planned villages. James Robertson expressed his faith in planned villages saying, “mutual confidence betwixt landlord and villagers will take deep root; and industry cherished by benevolence will produce the happy fruits of prosperity and

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111 John Cockburn, *Letters of John Cockburn of Ormistoun to his Gardener: 1727-1744*, ed. James Colville (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1904), xxiv.

112 Lorna J. Philip, “Planned Villages in Dumfriesshire and Galloway: Location, Form and Function,” *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 3, no. 80 (2006), 109.

113 Quoted from *Statistical Account of Scotland, II* (1792), 42 in T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 78.

affluence.”<sup>114</sup> Likewise, Robert Owen is quoted as saying, “the proposed villages will ever be the abode of abundance, active intelligence, correct conduct and happiness.”<sup>115</sup> Owen was so confident of the positive possibilities of planned villages that he thought they would breed a new social order in which overall government would be unnecessary.<sup>116</sup> Historians have cautioned such sentiments. The majority of landowners were busy with practical matters and had little time to dwell on utopian ideals.<sup>117</sup> Such practicality lent to the types of villages created.

Planned villages can be categorized into four main types: agricultural villages, fishing or coastal villages, rural trade industry villages and factory-based villages. Some villages undoubtedly combined one or more functions as industry changed. Agricultural villages were based on farming, and many retained the traditional look but incorporated the new standards of farming. Fishing villages were based on sea trade and industry. These two types of planned villages need little explanation; the last two, on the other hand, shall be discussed thoroughly.

The planned villages into which small rural industry was incorporated dominated the other types of villages in both number and scope.<sup>118</sup> In most cases, landlords invited individuals to establish industry within their villages. John Christie was one of these individuals. Christie came from Ulster in the north of Ireland and established the linen industry in John Cockburn's Ormistoun.<sup>119</sup> It is also noted that he brought with him the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>117</sup> T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 81.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>119</sup> Footnote 3 on page 21 of John Cockburn, *Letters of John Cockburn of Ormistoun to his Gardener: 1727-1744*, ed. James Colville (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1904) is quite interesting and

potato, which would have been the first to come to Ormistoun. John Cockburn's success grew. Sir James Hall of Dunglas wrote to the Earl of Marchmont in 1740 that “[Ormistoun] is riseing exceedingly he having 40 Linning lomes and wabsters, and to every 6 lomes has 60 spinsters and all other for cairding.”<sup>120</sup> Shops to offer wares made by the blacksmiths, candle makers, shoemakers and others were also built. These wares, along with market day surpluses bolstered the village economy. Ormistoun was a shining example of a rural industrial planned village done right, but it was not the only success story.

In 1790, the minister of Kirkden wrote, “there is hardly a house in the parish where one or more women are not employed in spinng yarn for Osnaburgh weavers. Many millions of yards of Osnaburgh cloth are every year made in this county.”<sup>121</sup> George Dempster of Nunnichen wrote in Sinclair's *Old Statistical Account* “streets have been marked out on a regular plan. . . . a fair or market has lately begun to be held, once a fortnight, on Thursdays, for the sale of cloth, yarn, and flax.”<sup>122</sup> The minister for the Parish of Craig wrote of success saying, “since the improvements in agriculture and manufactures have begun to stimulate industry, the mode of living amongst our people is very much changed; they are much better lodged, clothed, and fed, than they were twenty years ago.”<sup>123</sup> Another writer from Garvock expanded, “they pay much more attention to

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contains said information.

120 T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 93.

121 Harry Stuart, *Agricultural Labourers, as they were, are, and should be in their Social Condition* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1853), 8.

122 T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 94.

123 Harry Stuart, *Agricultural Labourers, as they were, are, and should be in their Social Condition* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1853), 7.

cleanliness and neatness in their persons and dwelling than formerly.”<sup>124</sup> In locations with access to running water, villages with sawmills and distilleries were established.<sup>125</sup> While small industry flourished, the planned villages did exceedingly well. The opposite is also true. When manufacturing slowed or ceased, the villagers were once again at a serious disadvantage.<sup>126</sup>

The last major type of village, the factory based village, shows some similarities and some stark contrasts to the rural industrial village. Like the other villages, the factory village was meant to provide a market for agricultural surpluses and employment for wage laborers. Unlike in the other villages, the landlord usually took a back seat to the daily operations, leaving entrepreneurs and businessmen in charge of the village affairs.<sup>127</sup> For example, it was David Dale, an entrepreneur, who chose the spot to build New Lanark, not Lord Braxfield, who owned the land. Braxfield was simply a “passive spectator and drawer of feu duties.”<sup>128</sup> Once again place changed; in this specific case, that of the landlords who took a backseat to the changes in their spaces. The place of the businessmen became more prominent in the social hierarchy, while they shifted space and place to meet the ends of industry.

Businessmen who owned and ran the mills undermined the role of the landlord and took center stage. It was the business that provided housing where “more than two

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124 Ibid, 7-8.

125 Such was the case for James Grant's Grantown-on-Spey where he set up a sawmill and a distillery. T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 94.

126 Harry Stuart, *Agricultural Labourers, as they were, are, and should be in their Social Condition* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1853), 10.

127 T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 95.

128 Ibid, 96.

breadwinners out of three worked in the mills.”<sup>129</sup> Housing became an issue of conflict between landlord and business owner. In the other planned villages described, landowners had the final say on aesthetics and the general layout of the village. This was not so in factory based villages. This prerogative fell also to the business owners. The end result was cheaply made houses, ignoring all but the most basic aesthetic qualities. This change in authority had long lasting consequences that go beyond the scope of this thesis. Needless to say, businessmen did not have the same paternal responsibility to which some landlords still subscribed.<sup>130</sup> The governing of the factory village also fell outside the scope of the landlord. Business owners “took special measure and employed special staff to control the 'morals' of their labour force in the village.”<sup>131</sup> These are important developments to note, as they are precursors to the domination of capitalism and the social-economic changes it brought.

Laborers who neither worked the land farming nor were employed by the mills nevertheless lived within one or more of the types of villages discussed. Miners, quarrymen, and others generated profits for landowners and businesses. For example, “lime works proved profitable for Sir James Kirkpatrick of Closeburn House and resulted in the development of the villages of Park, Croal Chapel, Nethermain and Whistlebain.”<sup>132</sup> Other activities like, lead and coal mining, made the Duke of Buccleugh

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129 Ibid, 96.

130 “All in all, it is difficult to believe that the quality of life for the villagers did not deteriorate as a result of social control passing out of the landowners' hands. They were, for all their obvious short-comings, just a little more respectful of humanity than the entrepreneurial middle class that came to replace them.” T.C. Smout, “The Landowner and the Planned Village,” in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 96.

131 Ibid, 96.

132 Lorna J Philip, “Planned Villages in South-West Scotland, 1730-1855: Analysing Functional Characteristics.” *Landscapes* 1 (2005), 98.

and other landlords of Blackcraig and Craigton wealthy.

Planned villages of all types can be associated with specific periods of time.<sup>133</sup> The first villages, from 1730-1770, were predominantly built within existing settlements. The land was enclosed and the existing structures remodeled and modernized, conforming to a specific pattern. These early villages were associated with “ports and harbours, land improvements, quarrying, tourism and transportation routes.”<sup>134</sup> Following the 1770s and lasting until just prior to the turn of the century, textile based villages sprang up along waterways in conjunction with tradesmen villages. This phase in planned village construction was “associated with a multitude of functions being developed across Dumfries and Galloway” along with other areas of Lowland Scotland.<sup>135</sup> Improvements in transportation and road construction also helped expand the propagation of the planned village during this time period. The third phase of planned villages, 1795-1820, revolved around land reclamation and the draining of bogs and other standing waters. The fourth and final phase, ending in 1850, saw small villages built along the new railways.<sup>136</sup> Each phase was not as concisely defined as this; some types of villages and some activities began earlier or later. It is important to understand that each phase was built on the experiences of the prior phase, resulting in villages that were adapted to provide the work most suitable to specific locations.

The phases of planned villages also corresponded to global activities. Planned villages were being built during three major, worldwide conflicts: the Seven Year War

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133 Ibid, 99.

134 Ibid, 99.

135 Ibid, 102.

136 Ibid, 101-102.



(1756-1763), the Revolutionary War (1776-1783) and the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815). The three wars provided stimuli for economic and industrial development while opening new trade, particularly to North America.<sup>137</sup> America was isolated from central European trade and, therefore, relied on linen from Scotland. In line with this, many other products became difficult to obtain and to trade, providing an impetus for landowners to create planned villages in order to produce and sell such goods.

The creation of planned villages, like the enclosure movement, transformed Scotland's landscape and society. During this period of village creation, the Scottish population went from being essentially rural to becoming principally urban. Wages supplanted payments in kind, further removing the people from the land and the necessities of life. These changes were touted as progress. Such progress would see Scotland born anew in wealth and equality—for the few. Primary sources do provide some evidence that the Scottish commoner's social standing did rise in terms of clothing, calorie intake, and housing. The opposite is also true, with businesses building shoddy housing structures and placing multiple families in single units in order to save money. Local populations grew, regardless of the day-to-day situation. The population of Torthorwald in Dumfriesshire doubled between 1791 and 1831.<sup>138</sup> The proverbial “sponge” worked to stem emigration, even if it was only short term.

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the undoing of the planned village. When industry began to concentrate in specific locations, it proved too

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137 Lorna J Philip, “Planned Villages in South-West Scotland, 1730-1855: Analysing Functional Characteristics.” *Landscapes* 1 (2005), 103.

138 Lorna J. Philip, “Planned Villages in Dumfriesshire and Galloway: Location, Form and Function,” *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 3, no. 80 (2006), 109.

competitive for outlying villages. Factories were moved to towns where easy access to fuel eliminated the need for multiple factory villages. The railways also contributed to the deterioration of planned villages. The villages originally had been a local market where surplus goods were sold to the local populace. The railway diminished this practice, as it became cheaper and easier to sell surpluses to long distance markets. Planned villages can, however, be seen as a stepping-stone toward the industrial revolution in Scotland.<sup>139</sup> The villages fit and filled niches that morphed, some into full-fledged towns and some dying off, especially the villages furthest from the concentrated industrial centers of Glasgow or Edinburgh.

Planned villages bolstered the local economy and absorbed the landless, providing them a place to live and to work. Some landlords saw the need to keep the people cleared from the land and built villages nearby to this end. Others saw villages as another source of income, and still others allowed entrepreneurs to build factories on their lands in order to stimulate industry. Whatever their reasons for being, planned villages successfully fulfilled their role until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Voices describing the living conditions of the landless are somewhat muted due to a lack of their words being recorded. Several memoirs and letters written by landlords contain evidence of the landless condition, but few contain the laborers' actual thoughts

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139 "In the Lowlands, where the most important fact of history since 1740 has been the coming of industrialization, the planned villages may perhaps be judged to have done their bit towards achieving this end. The crucial leading sector in the industrial revolution was in the textile trades: it did mean something in the early days that landowners were wholeheartedly enthusiastic to expand the linen and woolen trades on a rural basis: it did mean something that they gladly accepted the overtures of the early cotton pioneers to provide a site or a factory. . . it was surely important that they befriended the process in its early days, and though some became critical of it later, it was then too late to reverse the economic trends they helped to set in motion." T.C. Smout, "The Landowner and the Planned Village," in *Scotland in the age of Improvement*, ed. N. T. Phillipson and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), 98.

and words. *The Autobiography of a Working Man* by Alexander Somerville shares his memories of his father, a quarry-man, giving helpful insight into the lives of the many. Somerville recollects that the early nineteenth century was exceedingly difficult for his family. Rotten potatoes and a couple of fish fed their family of six. Alexander's father walked two miles to the Skateraw lime kilns where he "went away every morning before light and came home after dark, only taken a piece of bread made of oatmeal and a bottle of milk with him. . . this was for his day's subsistence."<sup>140</sup> Alexander praises his father as being "one of the best borers in the limestone quarry" while also being able to read.

Food supplies dwindled in the winter, and Alexander remembers his mother saying that she "wondered what in the world would come of us when [the potatoes] would be all done."<sup>141</sup> Their cattle, few in number, were also hard pressed to find adequate food. Alexander notes that the turnip crop failed that year, making it very difficult to feed their cattle. One of the horned animals raided the Somerville's dwindling pantry, and Alexander's mother did her best to beat the beast out. "He kicked out with his hind feet and kept eating," writes Somerville. "It was a dreadful sight to us; when the brute was dislodged, our poor mother sat down and cried over the loss of the potatoes. We all cried too, and bitter tears they were which we shed, one and all of us."<sup>142</sup> Such words are too few in number to depict an adequate picture of the time period in which the landless lived. Generalizing Somerville's words could encompass the majority of laboring families, but this would be an injustice. The Somerville's owned cattle, while other families probably did not. The Somerville's had access to fish, while other families

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140 Alexander Somerville, *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1848), 17.

141 Ibid, 18.

142 Ibid, 19.

further inland probably did not.

What is most important is that the lives of many people changed during the Lowland Clearances. Families had to adapt to a new way of living. Subsistence now consisted of an income instead of foodstuffs. The rise of single tenancies under professional farmers and the building of industry provided a wage labor force from which employers could pick and choose. The cottars' lives were forever altered.

## CONCLUSION

Scottish society went through a massive transitional phase during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Ninety percent or more of Scots lived in rural areas where they worked the land in order to survive. With the Union of 1707 establishing Great Britain, England opened its markets at home and abroad to Scottish merchants. The Scottish Enlightenment following the Union provided new knowledge and systems of standardization necessary to improve the land. Landlords, heeding the patriotic call, as the board of Agriculture would put it, joined in on and promoted such progress. The result was the displacement of the many. Capitalist-based agriculture assured landlords that they could make much more money enclosing their lands than leaving it as it had been for centuries. New leases were drawn up that favored single tenancies. The law was on the side of the landlords, allowing them to do with the land what they wished. The cottars place was removed in order to generate more wealth. Some landlords, seeing the landless as a readily available source of labor, built planned villages and attracted small industry. Other landlords saw it as their duty to give the landless a place to live and work. What resulted was the impetus for the Industrial Revolution to take hold in Scotland.

The lack of a massive uprising against the practice of enclosure and the removal of people from the land in Lowland Scotland is an interesting topic in and of itself. Scholars have argued that outlets existed from which the now landless could choose. Emigration to the American colonies or to Canada proved to be a popular option. Moving from the countryside to large cities also attracted the landless. Planned villages provided

another outlet. Payments in kind may have helped stem revolt by providing the basic needs of life for those who worked rather than having them become subject to the ups and downs of the market. Outlets such as these may be the reason why only the Galloway Levellers rebelled and acted against enclosure.

Planned villages, successful or not, provided the inertia for the Industrial Revolution. The villages housed cheap, abundant labor that produced consumer goods needed in times of war and in times of peace. Small industries gave rise to larger industries centered in geographically important regions of Lowland Scotland. Water, coal, and other fuel sources allowed factories to grow. With the landless having to find wage-paying jobs in order to survive, the factory owners grew wealthy. Consumer goods used in times of peace and in times of war were able to be created at a faster pace. The market now provided the necessities of life.

There is a great deal that still needs to be explored in regard to the Lowland Clearances of Scotland. The voices of the cottars and the landless are under-researched. Adding to the research presented here would better provide a voice to this silenced collective group. Space and place were changed in conjunction with the cottars and the landless. Place was systematically dismantled in order to transform space into modern methods of farming and industry.

Much of this thesis relies on the use of space and place to better make sense of how the Lowland Clearances were orchestrated and the effects of the clearances on Scotland's traditional populace. Yet space and place are more than ideas, they are concepts which can trace the lives of the cottars, leaving behind an outline of who these now wage-laborers, reliant on a wage and dictated by industrial work-spaces, were. An important

goal of this thesis is to better explain the cottars described above. Their place was that of the lowest socially, reliant on the commons which were destroyed by enclosure, trading in foodstuffs which was replaced by cash in kind further alienating the cottars from their historic agricultural tradition. Without the words and voices of these cottars, historians are forced to rely on second-hand accounts from observers like Christian Watt. The mapping of estates for enclosure and improvement implicitly included the cottars via recognition of the existence and future destruction of the commons. Within said map the cottars would be spatially connected to said commons, to the productive fields, to the landowner via rents and the exchange of foodstuffs. These spatial connections were tied together by feudal traditions and the cottages these cottars domiciled. These local connections outline the daily life of the cottars. Enclosure seriously constricted the space of the cottars thus constricting and eliminating their spatial connections to place. Who then were the cottars? The outline created above reveals not only how the cottars lived but who they were. They were the lowest social order and contributed to the estate through farming the land. Because they had no claim to land, they were susceptible to enclosure backed by the State and survived by living in a planned village erected by business men for the purpose of industry. Perhaps not critical to their lost place, they would in the end create a new place in a new space of capitalist industry as landless wage laborers who, as history has shown, would agitate for a voice in politics and become an important force in labor movements. In the end, the shadow of the cottars created by enclosure will become the full-fledged flesh composing the rising working class.

By looking from the top down and studying the links between the cottars and the leading factors behind the Lowland Clearances, we can understand who the cottars were

as historical actors. Through the lens of space and place one can bring a new dynamic to the research of the Lowland Clearances and of the cottars. Space and place give a sense of importance at every level and create a new understanding of the cottars who were marginalized and erased from Scottish society. Space and place help explain historic change and provide understanding as to what was lost or changed over time. Like rubbing charcoal on paper to suddenly make the invisible visible, by shining a spatial light and tracing around the shadow the light produces, by exploring what is there reveals a sketch of what is not there, by examining the negative image, we are able to view the un-viewable. This approach is not only useful for the study of the Lowland Clearances but can be a model for other studies where primary sources are lacking and the voice of the voiceless cannot be read.



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