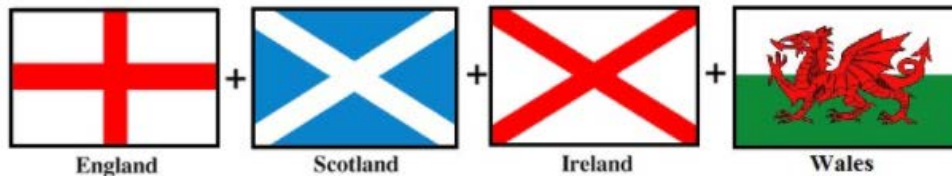


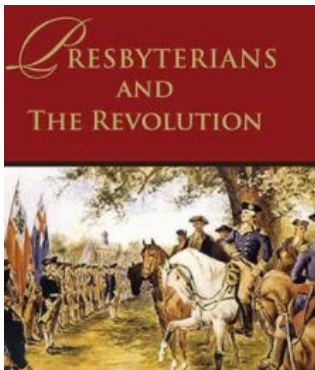
Hats off to the Nation and to Our Presbyterian Heritage!

In anticipation of the 1976 Bicentennial, the Journal of Presbyterian History published a volume titled *“Presbyterians and the American Revolution, An Interpreted Account”*. It is a wonderful collection of essays written to describe various aspects of Presbyterian involvement in the American Revolution. The opening document, *Presbyterian Immigrants and the Revolution*, intrigued me most. Here are just a few extracts from the article written by Dr. James Leyburn, Professor Emeritus of Washington and Lee University.

- Presbyterianism may justly claim to be the most thoroughly American religion in colonial times. In contrast with the Episcopal Church, whose ecclesiastical rule was centered in London until the War of Independence, Presbyterians from the onset governed themselves by an American organization with no control whatsoever from the other side of the Atlantic.
- Presbyterian Churches flourished in every colony except Rhode Island.
- Their members included poverty-stricken recent immigrants, hard-working pioneer farmers, substantial citizens, and such leaders as the President of the College of New Jersey.
- Presbyterians of 1776 consisted of three chief strains: Scotch-Irish, English and Scottish.



- It was the Scotch-Irish whose waves of immigrants for six decades before the Revolution chiefly gave the Presbyterian Church its “national” charter, lent impressive weight to the patriot cause, performed services in settling the frontier and in fighting both Indians and red-coats, and influenced politics decisively in important colonies (almost always in the direction of liberalization and democracy).



- It was the economic misery of Scotland, both in the Highlands and Lowlands, which sent the largest number of Scots to America in the years between 1763 and 1775. Evictions from sheep pasture land, rising rents, a long series of natural calamities (crop failures, cattle blights, and severe winters) and over-population were among the dominant reasons why some 25,000 Scots came to the colonies in those twelve years.

- Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Presbyterian Church to the American cause was its national scope. The prompt alignment of Presbyterians

with the patriotic movement was in some regions decisive, but the important point is that Presbyterians, more than the members of any other religious body, were in touch with each other from Maine to Georgia. Moreover, their attachment was likely to be a patriotism for the cause of America as a whole, not a vindication of the rights of Massachusetts or New Jersey or any other state.



- We are a remarkable church, in part, because we find strength in our “connectionalism”. From our beginnings we learned to collaborate and compromise in to order to maintain unity in the midst of our diverse origins and interests. It is a gift we can continue to offer our nation and our world. Happy Birthday America!

Jim

Jim Moseley, NCP Executive Presbyter