

The north Antrim coast of Northern Ireland boasts some of the world's most stunning landscapes. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board



Northern Ireland

at the Smithsonian

Nancy Groce, Program Curator

The *Northern Ireland at the Smithsonian* program takes place at a seminal moment in Northern Irish history, following a ten-year period of relative peace and stability and the restoration of Northern Ireland's political institutions. We are honored to have more than 160 participants from throughout Northern Ireland—the region's finest performers, artists, craftspeople, cooks, athletic coaches, and occupational experts—join us on the National Mall to explain, demonstrate, and celebrate contemporary life in their beautiful, dynamic homeland.

This Festival program may come as a surprise to some of our visitors. Like so much else about contemporary Northern Ireland, day-to-day reality transcends assumptions and challenges stereotypes. Northern Ireland is changing rapidly: today, it is a sophisticated, forward-looking society with a booming post-industrial economy and a renewed sense of confidence in the future. Traditional culture, which in the past sometimes divided communities, now contributes to a shared future and fosters inter-community relationships.



Northern Ireland's greatest strengths have always been the warmth, hospitality, and humor of its people. It is also one of the world's most physically beautiful regions. Comprising 5,460 square miles, it is only slightly larger than the state of Connecticut. It has a population of approximately 1.7 million and five cities—each with its own unique character—and Belfast as its capital. It also has a large rural community that consists of a network of market towns and villages. Part of the United Kingdom, it shares a verdant island with the Republic of Ireland and is comprised of six of the nine counties of the ancient province of Ulster—Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone.

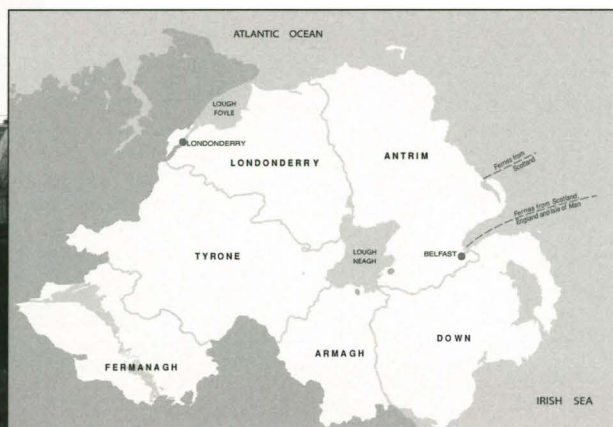
Few regions of the world have contributed more to the formation of modern American culture than Northern Ireland. Since the seventeenth century, a succession of immigrants from the region has had a profound impact on the development of the United States, heavily influencing culture, politics, education, science, religion, agriculture, and industry. At least seventeen of the United States' forty-three presidents are claimed to have Northern Irish ancestry.

The cultural wealth and diversity of Northern Ireland has only recently begun to attract the inter-

national attention it deserves. We hope that the 2007 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program, as well as numerous ancillary events planned for the Washington, D.C.-area in the months preceding the Festival, will encourage Americans to rediscover Northern Ireland.

There is room in this program book to touch only lightly on the region's ancient and complex cultures. Historians Jonathan Bardon and Paul Nolan provide brief but enlightening overviews of Northern Ireland's history; singer/songwriter Colum Sands eloquently introduces its performing arts traditions; folklorist Linda Ballard discusses its traditional crafts; food critic and historian Harry Owens provides a taste of its culinary culture; and Richard McCormick comments on its sports culture. In addition to English, two other languages are spoken in Northern Ireland: Máiréad Nic Craith introduces us to Irish and Mark Thompson to Ulster-Scots. We hope these experts' articles will introduce Festival visitors to the fabled past, vibrant present, and exciting future of this beautiful place.

Nancy Groce, Curator of Northern Ireland at the Smithsonian, is a folklorist, historian, and ethnomusicologist. She holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and has authored numerous books and articles on music, folklore, and culture. In addition to this exhibition, she has curated past Festival programs on New York City, Scotland, and Alberta.



(Above) Map of Northern Ireland.

(Left) Shoppers stroll the revitalized streets of downtown Belfast. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

Northern Ireland

A Short History

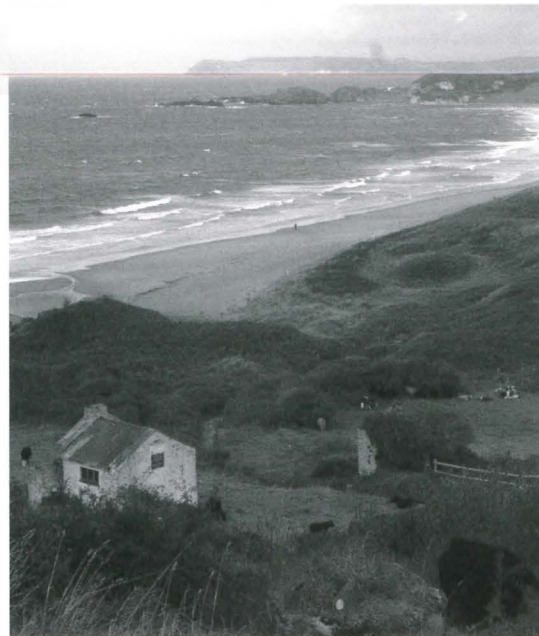
Jonathan Bardon

Human beings are relatively new inhabitants of Ireland. The oldest evidence of them, near Coleraine, dates to around 7,200 B.C.E. Celtic-speaking Gaels, skilled with horses and iron weapons, controlled the island by the beginning of the Christian era.

Ireland escaped Roman conquest and invasion by Germanic tribes. Not until the end of the eighth century did Ireland attract the attention of aggressive outsiders, the Vikings.

A century after they overwhelmed England, the Normans came to Ireland. They quickly overran much of the south and west, yet Norman hold of Ulster's coastlands remained precarious. By the late fifteenth century, all Ulster, save the castle of Carrickfergus, had fallen outside the English Crown's control.

The sixteenth century witnessed seismic change. England became a powerful, centralized state under Tudor monarchs. It also became Protestant, so its rulers could not afford to allow Catholic powers—Spain in particular—to threaten the realm from the west by making common cause with disaffected Irish. In the reign of Elizabeth, the Gaelic lords of Ulster, commanded by Hugh O'Neill, the Earl of Tyrone, led Ireland's ferocious resistance. After a succession of humiliating reverses, the English finally succeeded in crushing the people of Ulster only by slaughtering their cattle and laying waste their cornfields. When O'Neill surrendered in the spring of 1603, Ulster was swept by a terrible man-made famine. Bitter religious division in Europe made Ireland's defeat all the worse. The English



Archaeologists believe the earliest Irish settlements were established along the north Antrim coast. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

conquerors left a dreadful legacy of resentment and suspicion to reverberate down the centuries.

The Gaelic nobles of Ulster found it impossible to adjust to the new regime. In September 1607, they sailed away from Lough Swilly in north Donegal, never to return. King James I, the first ruler of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, seized the opportunity in 1609 to embark on the most ambitious scheme of colonization ever undertaken in Western Europe—the Plantation of Ulster. The King's British subjects—provided they were Protestants—were invited to colonize vast tracts of confiscated land in six counties. And come they did, eventually in the tens of thousands.

Built in 1177 by the Normans, Carrickfergus Castle has played a pivotal role in Ireland's history for centuries. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Bureau



This grandiose project, however, was only partially successful. Colonists had been told that the natives had been largely wiped out by war and famine, but during the first decades of the Plantation, they found themselves everywhere outnumbered by them. The conquered Irish in turn faced an influx of planters, speaking an alien tongue, professing a religion they regarded as heretical, abiding by laws that were unfamiliar to them, and intent on dispossessing them. Political instability in England ensured that blood would flow for the rest of the seventeenth century. As Parliament prepared to wage war on Charles I, the Ulster Irish massacred thousands of British settlers in 1641. Scottish troops and the forces of Parliament then exacted fearsome revenge. The ascendancy of a Catholic King, James II, in 1685, once again precipitated full-scale war in Ireland.

For a brief period, Ireland became the cockpit of Europe. Driven out of England by his nobles and William of Orange (ruler of Holland), James came to Ireland with a large professional army. The epic resistance of the colonists, who took refuge in the walled city of Londonderry, gave William time to bring a great multinational army to Ulster. William routed James near Drogheda by the Boyne River on July 1, 1690, and his army finally triumphed at Aughrim in the far west on July 12, 1691.

William's victories, celebrated by northern Protestants every year thereafter, were so complete that Ireland enjoyed a century of peace. Penal legislation deprived Catholics of political rights, access to public office, and employment in the legal profession. A law that prevented Catholics from buying land ensured

that by 1780 Protestants (who formed approximately one quarter of the population) owned 95 percent of the land. Nevertheless, the island prospered, benefiting as it did indirectly from the expansion of colonial trade. The population rose from about two million in 1700 to over five million in 1800.

Ulster had been Ireland's poorest province. Now it flourished as never before, largely due to the development of the linen trade. Fearful of Irish competition, the Westminster parliament legislated to restrict exports of Irish wool and cattle. By contrast, linen was given official encouragement. Manufacture of linen in Ulster was at first essentially a domestic industry carried on, for the most part, by people who divided their time between farming and making yarn and cloth. The heart of the industry was the "linen triangle," which extended from Dungannon in the center of Ulster, east to Lisburn, and south to Armagh; then, as output increased, Newry was drawn in. During the second half of the eighteenth century, drapers bought cloth unbleached, thus giving weavers a quicker return for their work. In effect, these linen merchants became Ulster's first capitalists by investing their profits in bleach greens, where, with the aid of water power, they finished the cloth to the high standard required by the English market. The drapers, in short, made sure that Ulster had an important and early role to play in Europe's first industrial revolution.

In spite of the robust economy, many Presbyterians in Ulster grew restless and sought a better life across the Atlantic. Immigration to America commenced when Protestant Scots had almost ceased immigrating





to Ulster. Irish Catholics had neither the resources nor the inclination to go to British colonies that were still overwhelmingly Protestant.

"The good Bargains of yar lands in that country doe greatly encourage me to pluck up my spirits and make redie for the journey, for we are now oppressed with our lands at 8s. an acre," David Lindsay explained to his Pennsylvanian cousins in 1758. By 1770, emigration from Ulster was reaching about ten thousand a year. Already accustomed to being on the move and clearing and defending their land, these "Scotch-Irish" were drawn to the "back country," there to push forward European settlement by frontier skirmishing with Pontiac and other Native Americans.

As the eighteenth century progressed, the Enlightenment made inroads in Ireland. Most of the Penal Laws were repealed, although Catholics still could not become members of Parliament. Inspired first by the American Revolution and then by the French Revolution, some Presbyterians in eastern Ulster campaigned for a representative Irish parliament (which in effect represented only the Episcopalian aristocracy and gentry). Some, calling themselves the United Irishmen, made common cause with the oppressed Catholic peasantry and prepared to fight with French help for an independent republic. Protestants in central and western Ulster, in contrast, formed the Orange Order in 1795 to defend Protestant rights.

The Giant's Causeway, a geological phenomenon on the north Antrim coast, is comprised of thousands of hexagonal stone columns. A focal point for myths and legends since pre-historic times, it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

The historic walled city of Londonderry, also called Derry. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

When rebellion came in 1798, it began the bloodiest episode in modern Irish history—more than 30,000 met with violent deaths before the year was over.

The Westminster government responded to the insurrection in Ireland by deciding that the island must be ruled directly from London. The privileged, unrepresentative Irish parliament was cajoled and bribed into voting itself out of existence, and in January 1801, the Act of Union came into force. Now Ireland became an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The viceroy, Lord Cornwallis, observed that the mass of the Irish people did not "care one farthing" about the Union, for or against. He was probably right. But the "Protestant Ascendancy," the nobility, hated losing their exclusive parliament, and many Orange lodges—fearing that the Union would bring with it "Catholic Emancipation" (the right of Catholics to attend Parliament)—petitioned against it.

The ensuing decades witnessed a radical change in opinion. The Union became a burning issue with profound consequences for Ulster, and it remains the single most important issue in Northern Irish elections to this day. Protestants found that the sky did not fall in after the Union: they retained privileged control of public services, elections, the legal profession, and local government. Catholics, generally in favor of the Union at first, turned against it because it did not allow them to attend Parliament. Emancipation had to be wrested from a reluctant Westminster government in 1829. Then, as nationalism spread, the demand for restoration of a Dublin parliament grew stronger. Daniel O'Connell led the movement in the 1830s and 1840s.

Irish politics became polarized along religious lines. Almost all Catholics of every class sought some form of Irish independence. The economy over most of the island had not fared well under the Union, and when potato blight struck in the 1840s, a million people died of hunger and disease, and over a million others immigrated, mostly to America. Apart from some high-profile men such as John Mitchel, Isaac Butt, and Charles Stewart Parnell, the great majority of Irish Protestants now closed ranks in support of the Union because they feared Catholics would dominate an Irish parliament. In the Northeast, where Protestants formed a comfortable majority, the Union had already been a striking success.

Belfast in the nineteenth century became the fastest-growing urban center in the United Kingdom. Its population, merely 19,000 in 1801, had reached 350,000 a hundred years later. Belfast's industrial revolution began with the production of cotton yarn by power-driven machinery. Then, in the 1830s, entrepreneurs adapted their machinery to the steam-driven manufacture of linen. During the American Civil War, when Lancashire was starved of supplies of raw cotton, Ulster's linen

industry experienced an unparalleled boom. Belfast became—and remained for some time—the world center of linen production. The president of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, H. O. Lanyon, made this estimation in 1895:

I find the length of yarn produced in the year amounts to about 644,000,000 miles, making a thread which would encircle the world 25,000 miles. If it could be used for a telephone wire it would give us six lines to the sun, and about 380 besides to the moon. The exports of linen in 1894 measured about 156,000,000 yards, which would make a girdle for the earth at the Equator three yards wide, or cover an area of 32,000 acres, or it would reach from end to end of the County of Down, one mile wide.

An engineering industry emerged to provide flax machinery. The deepening of the sea channel to Belfast docks led directly to the opening of the most remarkable chapter in Ulster's economic story. Shipbuilding began on an artificial island created from waste mud in Belfast Lough in the 1850s. Under the dynamic management



of Edward Harland, iron and later steel vessels were constructed in a revolutionary manner. During the American Civil War, the Confederates purchased some of these ships in order to outrun the Northern states' blockade. Then, in partnership with Gustav Wolff, Harland supplied one of the world's largest shipping firms, the White Star Line of Liverpool, with all its transatlantic passenger liners.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Belfast's shipyard built the biggest ships in the world. Belfast became Ireland's largest city and the port of third importance in the United Kingdom. The city also had the biggest linen mill, dry dock, tobacco factory, rope works, flax-machinery factory, spiral-guided gasometer, aerated-waters factory, fan-making, tea machinery works, handkerchief factory, and colored Christmas card-printing works in the world.

The people, however, were more sharply divided than before on Ireland's political future. When the British government decided in 1912 to give the island "Home Rule" (a devolved government in Dublin), Ulster Protestants pledged themselves to use "all means which may be found" to prevent it. By the summer of 1914, as rival paramilitary armies paraded the streets, the country seemed headed for civil war.

Civil war was postponed by the outbreak of the First World War. Catholics and Protestants in almost equal numbers enlisted voluntarily to fight in the trenches against the German Empire and its allies. A small minority of Republicans preferred to use the war to fight for independence. Their uprising during Easter week of 1916 was crushed in less than a week, but seeing that there was still no parliament in Dublin, Irish nationalists became disillusioned and sought complete independence.

The British government, eager to extract itself from the Irish imbroglio, decided in 1920 to partition Ireland into Northern Ireland, composed of the six northeastern counties, with a devolved parliament in Belfast, and Southern Ireland, made up of the remaining twenty-six counties, with a Home Rule parliament. That solution was quickly rejected by nationalists: they fought on and won independence (within the British Empire) in December 1921. Northern Ireland, despite ferocious intercommunal warfare between 1920 and 1922, survived intact as part of the United Kingdom. The British government's arrangement for Northern Ireland suited the Protestant majority very well.

Although peace returned in 1923, the economy continued to suffer. The First World War dramatically altered global trading conditions. Other countries, such as the United States, Japan, and Germany, were able to build ships more cheaply and rapidly than Belfast. Linen faced a rising challenge from cheaper cotton, changing fashion, and the first synthetic fibers. Around one fifth of the male workforce was unemployed in the 1920s, and following the 1929 Wall Street Crash, more than one quarter was out of work.



(Left) Belfast grew from a small port village into a major manufacturing center during the nineteenth century. Courtesy Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

(Right) The Mourne Mountains in County Down. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

When world war came again in 1939, the efforts of Belfast's aging Unionist government to protect citizens proved woefully inadequate. The city suffered severely from German air attack during the spring of 1941: more citizens lost their lives in one night's raid on Belfast than any other city in the United Kingdom save London. Thereafter, Northern Ireland became an arsenal of victory as the shipyard, engineering works, and textile factories strove to meet the insatiable Allied war demand. While Northern Ireland played a crucial role during the Battle of the Atlantic, the twenty-six southern counties, known as Éire since 1937, remained neutral. The United States used Northern Ireland as its base in preparation for the North African and Normandy landings. The American servicemen (at one stage, they formed one tenth of the population of the six counties) received a warm welcome from all sections of the community.

During the peaceful, uneventful years after the war, all was not well in Northern Ireland. The Westminster government in effect had taken its eye off the ball since 1923. Blatant unfairness in local government elections, public and private appointments, and allocation of local authority housing did much to keep alive the resentment of the Catholic minority (around one third of the region's inhabitants). The civil rights movement in the United States, protests against the Vietnam War, and riots in Paris encouraged the growth of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement. Direct action on the streets dissolved into outright intercommunal warfare in the summer of 1969, and in 1972, Westminster decided to rule the region directly from London.

Governments and oppositions alike at Westminster agreed that the long-term solution was a new devolved assembly and government in which Protestants and Catholics would share power. But the violence raged on, making Northern Ireland's conflict the longest-running in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Both Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries called

ceasefires during the fall of 1994. Although they were violated on many occasions, conflict did not return on the previous scale.

Warmly supported by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, and American President Bill Clinton, the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 gave cross-community backing to power sharing. The agreement faltered on several occasions, but no one doubted that Northern Ireland had turned a corner. In spite of surviving suspicion, which sometimes flared into vicious sectarian strife, the region entered the new millennium with a level of peace that would be the envy of many large American cities. Peace brought in its wake fresh investment, impressive reconstruction, and the near disappearance of mass unemployment, which had blighted life for many decades.

Born and educated in Dublin, Jonathan Bardon has been teaching in Belfast since 1964, most recently in Queen's University Belfast. His books on Irish history include A History of Ulster, Belfast: An Illustrated History, and Dublin: One Thousand Years of Wood Quay. He scripted A Short History of Ireland, 240 five-minute documentaries, which BBC Radio Ulster is currently broadcasting.

At the foot of the Queen's Bridge, "The Angel of Thanksgiving and Reconciliation," a fifteen-meter high sculpture by Andy Scott, welcomes visitors to Belfast.
Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board



Music in Northern Ireland

Colum Sands

Music in Northern Ireland now takes place in myriad settings—kitchens, parlors, and pubs, as well as schools, festivals, and concert halls. Not infrequently, traditional forms of instrumental music—jigs, reels, marches, and polkas—attract dancers who happily spend evenings weaving the complex patterns of ancient Irish dances onto modern dance floors. And even as beloved old tunes are performed and sung for today's listeners, tomorrow's music continues to be created. Modern technology—recordings, radio, iPods, and cell phones—often helps spread the latest traditional-style compositions. Irish music, like other Celtic music, is enjoying a worldwide boom that few would have predicted only a few years ago. —Nancy Groce

Northern Ireland is a relatively new name for an ancient place with a wealth of music and song to celebrate both its youth and age. Luckily, the songs and tunes are light-footed travelers; they cross borders with ease. Indeed, were they not so light of foot, the whole island of Ireland might have been submerged years ago—weighed down by the sheer weight of glorious dance tunes and songs in praise of counties, towns, villages, parishes, and townlands. And that would be before we started counting the sad songs! Then, there is the story behind each song, which reminds us that the source of the music, even for those who write it, is always something of a mystery.

Not far from where I live in County Down, a man named Joe Brannigan sang a fine song called “The Maid of Ballydoo.” When asked by a song collector where he had learned the song, Joe explained, “I was courting a girl one time, and I found it in her pocket.”

A quick search in the pockets of history reveals that in common with the north and south of the United States, the north and south of Ireland has a long history of overseas visitors. Some of them came well armed. They grabbed anything they could, wrote their histories in terms of battles won and spoils acquired, and raised monuments to themselves with the same lack of subtlety as their ambitions.

Others came, and still others come in search of better times. They bring with them new hopes, dreams, words, tunes, beliefs, and all those countless elements



Throughout Ireland, musicians gather for “sessions”—informal, but not unstructured, evenings of music and song. In Belfast, Kelly's Cellars is one of many pubs that proudly host traditional music gatherings. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

that melt into a culture's lifeblood. Their history lives in that place where the step of the dancer flies above the plod of the soldier, and the song of hope soars like a rainbow on a wet day. It is in this place of youth and age that there is a verse for everyone, from the old north and south of Viking and Celt to all the cultures that lie between and beyond today and tomorrow. In this space, there is a partner for every dancer, a listener for every musician, and, above all, a song for the future.

Colum Sands is a member of County Down's well-known Sands Family and has toured and recorded with them and as a solo performer in over thirty countries. He has released five albums of original songs (which have been recorded and translated by many artists), and he has produced over sixty albums in his own studio in Rostrevor. In 2000, he released a book of songs, Between the Earth and the Sky. For the past ten years, he has compiled and presented Folkclub, a popular weekly program for BBC Radio Ulster. He received a Living Tradition Award for his work on stage and studio.

The Irish Language

in Northern Ireland

Máiréad Nic Craith

Irish (also called Gaelic or Gaeilge na hÉireann) is an Indo-European language that has been spoken in Ireland for over 2,000 years. It is the language of some of the world's greatest poetry, legends, stories, and ballads, and it has an extensive written literature that dates back more than a thousand years.

Irish is one of six Celtic languages currently spoken in Western Europe. It is closely related to Scots-Gaelic (Scotland) and Manx (Isle of Man). Other Celtic languages include Welsh (Wales), Cornish (Cornwall), and Breton (Brittany, France). One of the national languages of the Republic of Ireland, Irish is spoken with particular passion in Northern Ireland. Since the seventeenth century, English has been widely used throughout Northern Ireland; however, the census of 2001 established that over ten percent of the population in the region had some skills in the Irish language.

In recent years, the British government has promised to support the language in Northern Ireland. The Good Friday, or Belfast, Agreement (1998) committed the government to "recognize the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity" of Irish and some other languages. Three years later, the British government placed Irish under the protection of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Of greatest significance has been the pledge in the St. Andrew's Agreement (2006) to introduce an Irish Language Act. Irish speakers are keen to maximize the opportunities this affords. In January 2007, Irish became an official working language of the European Union.



By Tír gan teanga,
tír gan anam—

A country without a language is
a country without a soul.

—Patrick H. Pearse

Associations such as Gaeloiliúint and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta are involved in the successful provision of "Irish-medium education" (all subjects taught in the Irish language) in Northern Ireland. In January 2007, over 4,000 pupils in Northern Ireland were studying through Irish in 42 preschools, 32 primary schools, and 3 post-primary schools. The University of Ulster and Queen's University of Belfast offer courses in Irish and Celtic studies. The demand for Irish-medium education is increasing.

BBC Northern Ireland currently broadcasts radio programs in Irish, including *Blas* (which explores topical affairs) and *Caschlár* (a program of music from around the world). Raidió Fáilte, a community radio station, broadcasts with great success in West Belfast. Some Irish-speakers in Northern Ireland can also tune into RTÉ Radió na Gaeltachta, an Irish-language radio station from the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland has no dedicated Irish-language television service, but TG4, the Irish-language television channel from the Republic of Ireland, is widely available. In 2004, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced the establishment of an Irish Language Broadcast Fund, which supports Irish-language television production in Northern Ireland. *Lá*, an Irish-language newspaper, is published on a daily basis. There are a number of very useful Internet sources for Irish-speakers such as *Beo*.

A number of organizations, north and south of the border, are involved in the protection and enhancement of Irish at all levels of society. These include Conradh na Gaeilge, Foras na Gaeilge, Gael-Linn, Pobal, and ULTACH Trust. These dedicated organizations work to increase the profile of the language in all sectors and encourage bilingualism from an early age.

Máiréad Nic Craith is Professor of European Culture and Society, and Director of the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages at the University of Ulster.

A wall mural in Londonderry (Irish *Doire*) encourages the use of the Irish language. Photo by Ullrich Kockel

Introducing the Ulster-Scots Language

Mark Thompson

In May 1606, one year before the British established Jamestown in Virginia, the Hamilton and Montgomery Settlement became the first permanent Scottish settlement in Ireland. The Ulster Plantation was not the first contact between Ulster and Scotland, but it marked the beginning of a century of large-scale Protestant migration that led to a shared Catholic-Protestant heritage in Northern Ireland.

Among the many traditions that the Scots brought to Ulster was their language, which shared the same ancient Germanic roots as English but developed independently to become the internationally recognized “language of Robert Burns.” Ulster-Scots, the dialect of Scots spoken in Ulster, was rich in song, stories, and sayings. The late 1700s saw a stream of publications in Ulster-Scots by the Weaver Poets, a school of self-educated textile workers whose politically radical verse appeared in Ulster newspapers. The most famous of these men was James Orr (1770–1816), the Bard of Ballycarry, who is often called “the Robert Burns of Ulster.” This “United Irishman” participated in the failed Rebellion of 1798, fled to the young United States, and eventually returned home to County Antrim.

When Ulster-Scots immigrated to America in the eighteenth century, they took their language with them. Publications such as David Bruce’s *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, Originally Written under the Signature of the Scots-Irishman*, which appeared in western Pennsylvania in 1801, and Robert Dinsmoor’s *Incidental Poems*, published in New Hampshire in 1828, are the best examples of the language from the early days of the United States. Michael Montgomery’s study, *From Ulster to America: The Scotch-Irish Heritage of American English*, documented nearly 400 Ulster-Scots words in contemporary American English, from afeard (frightened) to young’un (child).

Today, Ulster-Scots is enjoying a revival in Northern Ireland. A language of the field, the heart, and the home, Ulster-Scots is a regional tongue with an international impact. Boosted by the tireless work of the Ulster-Scots Language Society, a grassroots organization, Ulster-Scots was officially recognized in 1992 in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. (Its inclusion in the charter was endorsed by the U.K. government in 2001.) After centuries of marginalization and scorn, the situation has now turned full circle: there is an ever-increasing confidence and pride in the language. Linguistically, historically, and culturally, Scotland, Ulster, and the United States share a three-way *auld* acquaintance that should never be forgot.

Mark Thompson is Chair of the Ulster-Scots Agency, an organization established following the Good Friday, or Belfast, Agreement of 1998. He is committed to the mainstreaming of Ulster-Scots and to developing the cultural and economic potential of Ulster-Scots identity. He works in the design and advertising industries and lives just a few miles from his childhood home on the Scottish-facing coast of the Ards Peninsula in County Down.



This Ulster-Scots sampler, completed in 1923, was discovered in Canada. Photo by Mark Thompson

Traditional Crafts in Northern Ireland

Linda Ballard



Bob Johnston, basket maker at Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, describes his work as "a pursuit of perfection."
Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

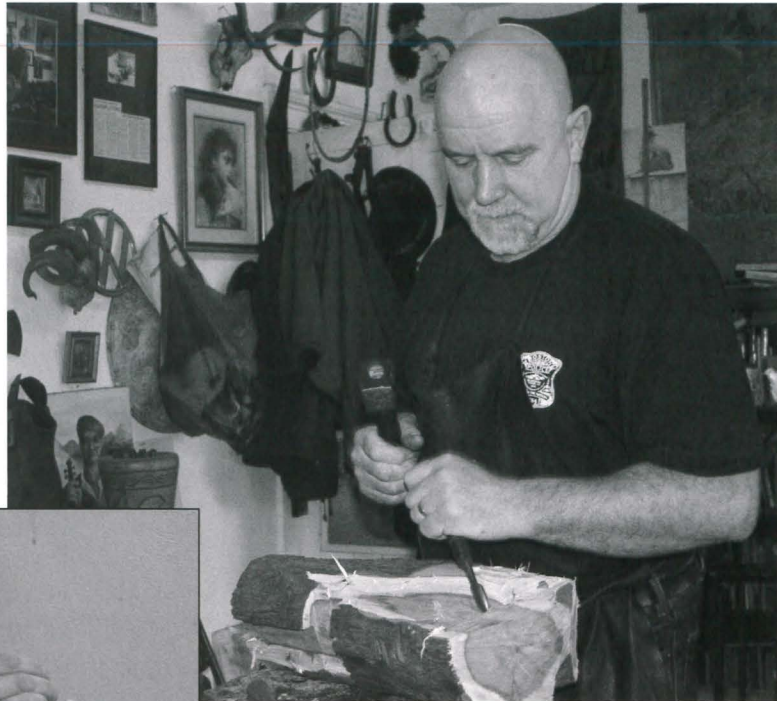
The crafts of Northern Ireland are historically related to those of the British Isles, especially western Scotland, and Europe's Atlantic coast as far north as Norway. Irish boatbuilding, basket making, and metalwork skills can be traced back at least 4,000 years.

Crafts have always related directly to everyday life, and in the past, were intimately connected to survival. In the pre-industrial age, many people were dependent on the skills available in their communities. Some crafts, such as sewing or basic woodworking, were known and practiced at every level of society to provide clothing and domestic necessities. Other crafts were more specialized, and people relied on the local smith, stonemason, cooper, or basket maker to meet those needs.

One characteristic craft, fine Ulster linen, arose in the eighteenth century, and large quantities were exported to the United States. In the beginning, linen production required a complex network of people to transform the flax plant into a commodity suited for the international marketplace. In the 1820s, Jacquard technology was adapted to the linen loom, and beauti-

ful damask patterns became more common. Later still, powered looms were introduced and linen played a major role in the growth of Belfast as an industrialized port city. By the late twentieth century, linen production had sharply declined. Today, some firms are still in operation, including Thomas Fergusons Irish Linen of Banbridge, County Down, which continues to weave high-quality, double-damask linen.

Linen production on a large scale encouraged skills, such as hand embroidery and drawn-thread work. Women fitted these arts into their daily routines to earn often-vital family income. Fabric to be decorated by home workers was brought from the factory to a central point, often a shop in a provincial town, and craftswomen sometimes walked miles to deliver their completed work for payment. Lace making was also organized along semi-commercial lines, although women with enough leisure time also produced lace and embroidery for use in their own homes. Some lace styles, such as Clones, Limerick, and Carrickmacross, took their names from locations in Ireland.



(Above) Eamon Maguire, *bodhran* maker and bog oak carver at work in his Ogham Gallery on Belfast's Antrim Road. Photo by Nancy Groce, Smithsonian Institution

(Left) Belleek Pottery workers handcraft intricate woven clay baskets. Photo courtesy Belleek Pottery

Today, computerized sewing machines have greatly simplified the production of colorful Celtic embroidery for Irish dance dresses. Many of the patterns now considered “traditional” were originally drawn in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century to reflect contemporary fashion. Some embroiderers continue to work by hand, adapting ideas from old sources to produce new designs.

Although textile arts are particularly strong, numerous other crafts and art industries flourish in Northern Ireland. Fine porcelain from the town of Belleek in County Fermanagh was first made in 1857 and quickly gained an international reputation. Producing traditional and contemporary designs, Belleek now employs 600 people who craft, paint, and finish by hand delicate, highly prized china.

Today, specialized crafts continue to be practiced in ateliers and workshops throughout Northern Ireland, where many artisans produce work such as jewelry, ceramics, glass, and clothing on a commercial or semi-commercial basis. Some craftspeople specialize in making

musical instruments, including uniquely Irish *bodhrans*, Lambeg drums, and *uilleann* bagpipes. Organizations, such as the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland, Craft Northern Ireland, and District Councils, provide support to artisans.

Some ancient, traditional skills, such as basketry and blacksmithing, which are seldom practiced today in homes and communities, are fostered at two of Northern Ireland's National Museums—the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (just outside Belfast) and the Ulster American Folk Park (near Omagh in County Tyrone). Northern Ireland continues to place high value on traditional craft skills and respects the creative link between past and present generations.

Linda Ballard is Curator of Folklife Initiatives at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. She has spent many years working on all aspects of folklore, folklife, and culture in Northern Ireland, including documenting and recording regional traditions. She lives on the coast in Bangor, County Down.

Trades and Occupations in Northern Ireland

Paul Nolan

The winter wind that whips Belfast Lough forces the men who work in the Titanic Quarter to keep their heads down as they move from their site offices onto the moonscape where the giant earth diggers bulldoze piles of brick, soil, and glass—the detritus of former glories. One hundred years ago, as that same wind blew up the Lough, men stood under the shadow of the vast walls of the dry dock, looking up at ships so large they seemed to belong to some other world. It was here that the great White Star liners were built, ships with names like *Olympic*, *Gigantic*, and *Titanic*. Everything was on a grand scale. Belfast, which emerged from swamp in the second half of the nineteenth century, turned into one of the engines of the industrial revolution: here, the largest shipyard in the world, there, the largest rope works. When the evening sun settled, its light fell upon the red brickwork of the new engineering buildings and the tea- and tobacco-processing factories to convince the citizens that the dark, satanic mills were creating a New Jerusalem.

After the long process of deindustrialization, the cranes on today's city skyline are clear evidence of a twenty-first-century boom. The developments on the old Titanic site are emblematic of the changes in the society as a whole. The developers in charge of the project claim it will be the largest mixed-use development in Europe and that it will employ 20,000 people over the next fifteen years. They will not have jobs that the horny-handed toilers of the old shipyards would recognize; instead, they will have service jobs in steel and glass cathedrals. Hotel and retail will dominate the new landscape. And when Belfast Metropolitan College moves into the Titanic Quarter—close to the forthcoming technology center of Queen's University—the city will shift from a manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy.

Belfast shipyard workers leave Queen's Island at the end of their shift at Harland and Wolff, circa 1911. The ship in the background is the *Titanic*.

Photo courtesy Ulster Folk and Transport Museum



Those who gather in the waterfront bars and eateries will be the accountants, real estate developers, and technology wizards of the new economy. They will have more in common with their colleagues from Bilbao or La Défense in Paris than they will with the industrial workers who once built ships and planes on this site.

The changes do not mean that the traditional factory and farm have disappeared. Northern Ireland has always been a rural society; more people work in agriculture, forestry, and fishing than they do in any other part of the United Kingdom. There are still 28,500 active, mostly family-run farms and another 400 food-processing businesses. Taken together, however, they account for only 5 percent of total employment in Northern Ireland. Given the amount of air time the agricultural sector gets on local radio stations, the casual listener might be forgiven for thinking that many people earn a living from farming and related businesses. But there has been a steady attrition of approximately 2 percent per year for the last fifteen years. The decrease in milk prices and the restructuring of the European Common Agricultural Programme do not offer much hope for the future.

Manufacturing continues to account for some 20 percent of the economy, but that percentage is now sustained through small firms rather than the big industries of old. Ninety percent of local firms employ fewer than ten people. The common term “small-to-medium enterprises” (SMEs) should perhaps be changed to “tiny-to-small enterprises” to describe the low-rise landscape of local manufacturing. Northern Ireland follows the general pattern of the U.K. economy in which manufacturing is increasingly outsourced to China, Eastern Europe, or India. The safe option for new workers is to enter the services sector, which accounts for 70 percent of employment in Northern Ireland.

Government officials are concerned about the struggling private and the highly subsidized public sectors of the economy. Presently, the economy amounts to approximately £22 (\$44) billion per annum of which only £14 (\$28) billion is raised locally. The other £8 (\$16) million comes from the British exchequer.

There are, however, two comforting factors about new patterns within the workforce. Unemployment is now at the all-time low of 4.2 percent, lower than the U.K. average of 5.5 percent and considerably lower than the European Union average of 7.7 percent. The overall employment rate includes foreign nationals who drive taxis, work in poultry factories in mid-Ulster, and serve as health workers in hospitals and nursing homes throughout the country. The babel of accents in every high street may seem odd to the locals, but it is evidence of the normalization of the Northern Ireland workforce, which has pulled itself from its own backwater into the European mainstream. Unionists and nationalists, anxious to detect any sign of bias, pay much attention to recruitment of officers into the new Police Service of Northern Ireland. When the service set quotas for unionist and nationalist officers, it never expected that Polish residents would account for 1,000 of 7,700 applicants. No other statistic could speak so eloquently of the changing face of local employment or the prospect of breaking decisively with a past in which jobs (or unemployment) were passed down the family line. Northern Ireland is now firmly part of the new, modern Europe, and so, too, is its workforce.

Paul Nolan is Director of Education (Undergraduate) at Queens University, where he oversees all lifelong learning programs. He is on the editorial board of Fortnight magazine. Previously, he was director of the Workers' Educational Association in Northern Ireland.

Plans for the future of Belfast's Queen's Island include the post-industrial Titanic Quarter development.
Photo courtesy Titanic Quarter



Sport in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is an hour by car from Dublin and one hour by plane from London, which will host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. The country is approximately five thousand square miles, roughly the same size as Connecticut. Sport and physical activity have played a prominent role in Northern Ireland's largely rural culture.

Indigenous Irish games, some dating back thousands of years, are still an important part of contemporary Irish culture. Hurling (Irish *iománaíocht*) was the favorite sport of the legendary Iron Age hero Cúchulainn. Played by teams of up to fifteen hurlers with wooden, axe-shaped sticks ("hurls," "hurleys," or *camán*) and a small hard ball (*sliotar*), it is one of the world's fastest, most exciting field games. *Camogie*, the women's version, is also widely played.

Another indigenous game, Gaelic football, is best described as a combination of soccer and rugby. Opposing teams attempt to carry the round ball, which is slightly smaller than a soccer ball, across one another's goals. Handball and rounders (a team sport that is the ancestor of American baseball) are also popular Gaelic games.

Since 1884, Gaelic games and other forms of traditional Irish culture have been nurtured and regulated by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). With over 2,500 clubs in Ireland alone (500 of which are in Northern Ireland), the GAA organizes Club, County, and All-Ireland Championships that generate enormous interest throughout Ireland, as well as from GAA clubs and fans throughout North America, Europe, and Australia. One of the highlights of the year is the All Ireland Gaelic Football Final held at Croke Park in Dublin, where crowds exceed 80,000.

International team sports have large followings throughout Northern Ireland. Rugby and football (American soccer) are played on amateur and professional levels. The Irish Rugby Football Union Ulster Branch, also known as Ulster Rugby, was founded in 1879. Ulster Rugby oversees the sport throughout Ulster—the six counties that make up Northern Ireland and three Ulster counties that are part of the Republic of Ireland.

Founded in 1880, the Irish Football Association (IFA) is the world's fourth oldest football-governing body. The IFA is an important member of the



Indigenous Irish games such as hurling (right) and Gaelic football (above), seen here in their contemporary forms, trace their roots back thousands of years. Photos courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board



International Football Association Board, the sport's international rule-making body. Northern Ireland's most famous football player was the legendary George Best (1948–2005), who played for Manchester United in the 1960s. Recently, the Belfast City Airport was renamed in his honor.

Golf is played on world-class links golf courses, such as the Royal Portrush, the Royal County Down, and other beautifully-maintained courses throughout the region. Internationally respected Northern Irish golfers include Darren Clarke, Graham McDowell, and Rory McIlroy.

The large network of small country roads has helped popularize motor sports, including motorcycle, or “bike,” racing, rally car racing, and carting. They all seem to combine an ancient Irish love of horse racing with the region's long-standing aptitude for heavy engineering. “Rallying” is a type of motor racing held from point-to-point on public or private roads (temporarily closed for the event) rather than on purpose-built, circular tracks. Competing cars or bikes must be “road-legal.” Many competing vehicles are standard, production-line models that have been modified in small, family-owned shops and garages.

The North West 200 bike race is Ireland's largest sporting event. Each May, more than 100,000 spectators line winding, two-lane roads along County

Founded in 1890, Ballycastle Golf Club on the north Antrim coast is one of the oldest golf courses in Ireland.

Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Antrim's beautiful north coast to watch bike riders race through “The Triangle” of towns formed by Portrush, Portstewart, and Coleraine. The North West 200 is among the world's fastest competitions, with speeds exceeding 200 mph. Although some street signs are removed and hay bales are wrapped around lampposts and telephone poles, the race is not without risk, and accidents sometimes occur. Motorbike racers are Northern Ireland's homegrown sports heroes; some become legendary, like the late Joey Dunlop, who won thirteen North West 200 races.

Individual sports and outdoor activities are also practiced throughout Northern Ireland. With a long, unspoiled coastline and many miles of rivers, water sports, such as fishing, rowing, surfing, and sailing, are very popular. Bicycling, hiking, hill walking, and mountain climbing are pursued throughout the region, and many local residents and tourists take advantage of Northern Ireland's many beautiful parks and spectacular wilderness areas.

Food and Food Culture in Northern Ireland

Harry Owens



Northern Ireland has been developing an unmistakable alimentary dialect for centuries—one that is rich in diversity, fiercely independent, and supportive of local produce. Although much of the cuisine is heavily inspired by English and, to some extent, European fare, a flair for culinary innovation and exceptional resourcefulness have allowed the province to develop an entirely unique food culture.

This culture is well established in one of Ulster's most ubiquitous exports—the Ulster Fry. The Ulster Fry is similar in many ways to the Full English Breakfast but with an important addition—namely, potato bread, which embodies the enterprising nature of Irish cooking. Potato bread was invented in Ireland during the nineteenth century, when it was discovered that by substituting much of the wheat flour in unleavened

Each summer, the pretty County Down village of Hillsborough attracts thousands of visitors to its famous International Oyster Festival. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

bread dough with mashed potato (the staple of the Irish diet), leftovers from an evening meal formed a delicious breakfast food.

This resourcefulness continues today. A large proportion of the Ulster diet is based on locally grown vegetables (including *champ*, a stalwart that consists of mashed local potatoes mixed with chopped spring onions) and locally-reared meat, such as the renowned Finnebrogue venison. For the true connoisseur of the province's cuisine, however, it is Ireland's status as an "island nation" that is truly important.



Northern Irish fishermen, based in the province's three main fishing ports, are in close proximity to some of the world's richest fishing waters, and it is this proximity that makes Portavogie prawns, Glenarm salmon, and, particularly, Dundrum Oysters famous. The fame of Northern Ireland's oysters is celebrated at the Hillsborough International Oyster Festival, the home of the World Oyster Eating Championship, an annual event that attracts over twelve thousand visitors from around the world.

With the number of food savvy visitors increasing, thanks to events such as the Oyster Festival, and great immigration to Ulster in recent years, the province has hit a rich, European-inspired, epicurean vein. Although restaurants still make use primarily of local produce, influences from the expanded European Union allow

Fishermen unload crabs fresh from the Irish Sea in Donaghadee, County Down. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

greater creative freedom and help chefs recognize new ways to use the delicacies around them.

Despite external influences, Northern Irish cuisine remains distinctive. Whether you prefer the comfort of a home-cooked Irish stew or the elegance of some of the world's best seafood, Northern Ireland has a dish to suit you.

Harry Owens is a resident of the seaside town of Bangor and is a lifelong lover of Northern Irish produce, particularly seafood. As a special correspondent to Bridgestone's 100 Best Restaurants in Ireland and other publications, he shares his love of Ulster cuisine with readers.

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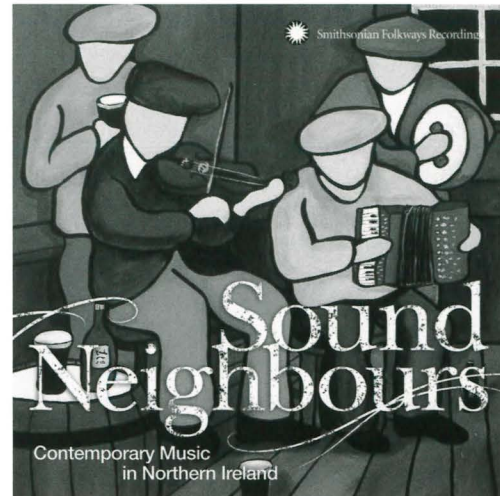
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Centuries old or recently penned, the diverse music of Northern Ireland's instrumentalists, composers, and songwriters evokes a profound sense of regional pride and growing confidence in a shared future. Introducing listeners to the powerful music of this beautiful, complex land, *Sound Neighbours* spans genres, generations, and geographic boundaries, featuring twenty vocal and instrumental tracks that celebrate the musical wealth of contemporary Northern Ireland.