GLASGOW LANDS

In the spring of 1735, two young scouts were sent from Hopkinton, Massachusetts, to the foothills of the Berkshires to erect a few log huts and to start clearing forests in preparation for a group of men and women settling there in the fall. An unexpected spring storm had dumped three feet of snow on the ground, making the progress difficult, but nevertheless, by fall the group inched its way westward and settled in what they called "**Glasgow Lands**".

Difficulty and hardship were familiar to these Ulster Scots. In Ireland where their forefathers had settled in the early 1600’s by order of King James I of England, the ground they had been given to till was unforgiving; the fertile land was claimed by the rich or royal. These Scots eked out a meager living, eventually discovering two successful crops: potatoes and flax. The flax became their lifesaver, both ili Ireland and in America.

The group that left Ireland for Boston in 1718 finally settled in Hopkinton. There they entered into the life of the church, always most important to them. The church government was Presbyterian, and they brought with them the Westminster Confession and the Shorter Catechism, both of which load been prayerfully written in Ulster, and both of which ren2ttill

with us to this day. Life was better here. The women used their skill in weaving to produce beautiful household linens. But surreptitiously the Church there held a meeting excluding the Ulster Scots, and voted for a Congregational form of government. This was more than they could take, so they planned to leave Hopkinton and head west - beyond the Connecticut River to the hills and vales which would be called Blandford, the name chosen by Governor Shirley, who had come from England in a ship called the ***B1andford****.* The town was incorporated in 1741.

Worship played such an important part in their lives that the construction of the first meetinghouse was soon started. It took, however, from 1740 to 1805 to complete. Not long after this the meetinghouse was no longer considered suitable, and in 1822 the construction of **a beautiful white church, designed by Isaac Damon of Northampton**, was completed. This is the church now under renovation. **Proceeds from today's Scottish Festival will be used for its restoration**.

This is the story of the Scottish-Irish Presbyterians who brought their church, their ideals, their traditions, and their way of life to a new territory. Their lives shaped ours, and for that we today express our thankfulness.

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