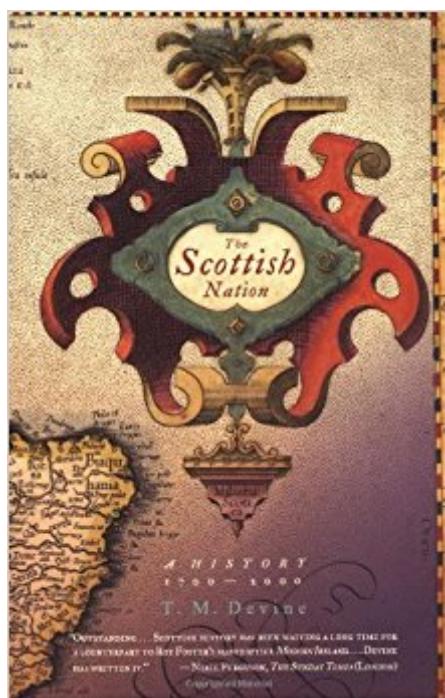


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The Scottish Nation: A History, 1700-2000



Synopsis

"A tremendous study of transformation . . . Devine's strength is his huge learning in the field of social history, especially the story of the rural communities of Scotland." (Neal Ascherson, Los Angeles Times) "Splendid . . . will remain the standard one in its field for a long time." (The Times Literary Supplement) T. M. Devine uses extensive original research to examine Scotland's urban vigor as well as describing the traditional aspects of Scottish history, covering key topics such as the Union, the Enlightenment, Industrialization, the Clearances, Religion, and the Road to Devolution. He also explores the global Diaspora of the Scots, the impact of migrants, and the effect of the World Wars. Throughout, Scotland's story is set against the background of British, European, and world history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

T. M. Devine is University Research Professor and Director of the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies at the University of Aberdeen. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

T.M. Devine's "The Scottish Nation: A History, 1700-2000" is that rarest of breeds, a scholarly work that can be enjoyed by the general reader. The book covers the history of Scotland from the 1707 Act of Union with England to the beginnings of devolution in 2000. In between, the author packs an astonishing amount of political, sociological and economic information into a coherent history. Devine's approach is both chronological and thematic. His narrative favors the norm over the heroic. A connecting thread is the uncertain relationship of Scotland to the United Kingdom. One

aspect of the relationship was the Jacobite challenge, with uprisings in 1715 and 1745. Another aspect was the disproportionate contributions of the famous Highland regiments to the wars of Empire. A third aspect was the early urbanization of Scotland and its transformation into the workshop of Britain. All these events had profound impacts on Scottish society in terms of education, religion, and local conditions; Devine combines a big picture approach with vignettes of often startling detail. Devine investigates the Scottish diaspora, which took thousand of migrants to the British Dominion countries and the United States, while noting the surprising volume of immigration, mostly but not entirely from Ireland. He describes the phenomenon of "Highlandism", in which a declining portion of Scottish society suddenly became emblematic of 19th century Scotland. More latterly, the struggle to rebuild a viable economy in Scotland after the World Wars has renewed interest in political devolution. Devine sees the reconvening of a Scottish Parliament at the close of the 20th Century as a sign of the times. "The Scottish Nation" is very highly recommended as a scholarly but readable investigation into the unique national entity that is Scotland.

This is an excellent account of the long and troubled road for Scotland under the rule of Great Britain. Beginning with the Union of 1707, which Scotland pretty much got railroaded into, Devine charts the meandering path toward Home Rule in 1999. Along the way he touches on the cornerstone events which shaped modern day Scotland such as the Crofters' War, the Highland Clearances, the Scottish Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. It is amazing to read just how vital the Scots were in the expansion of the British empire, yet Scotland remained subordinate to England throughout this period. Devine focuses primarily on the social and economic history of Scotland, noting how the failure of the Scots to construct a link between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean at the isthmus of Darien led to a financial crisis which England was able to exploit, thereby forcing Scotland to submit to its will in 1707. However, England still had a difficult time suppressing the Jacobites in Scotland, which continued to mount resistance movements throughout the 18th century. Probably the most notorious period was in the 19th century, when English landowners with the help of Scottish landowners forced the Highlanders off their grazing lands and made them to settle along the coastline. What began as a method of suppressing the remaining Gaelic culture, became a major relocation project that destroyed what remained of clanship in Scotland. It lived on in name only. Devine notes how Queen Victoria, a Jacobite at heart, revived Highland pride during her reign by establishing an estate at Balmoral. This along with the historical novels by Sir Walter Scott helped rekindle an interest in ancient Scotland and led to a cultural renaissance. With the industrial revolution, Glasgow usurped Edinburgh as the leading city in

Scotland, irrevocably altering the way of life for most Scots. Devine charts the rise of the political movements in Scotland, which began to push for greater home rule, feeling that Scotland was still be overlooking by the Parliament. The rise of the Labour Party was instrumental in the drive for Home Rule. Devine also notes the troubled relationship between Scots and Irishmen, particularly in Northern Ireland. A once similar culture now found itself at opposite ends of the spectrum. Devine takes in a big sweep of Scottish history, referencing early aspects of history, but focuses on the 300 years of Union with Great Britain. It is rich in reference notes, pointing the way to further reading on the subject. This is the culmination of his work on Scottish history, which he began with his book, Clanship to the Crofters War.

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