

# The Emigre, Highland Gatherings and Highland Culture 1740-1850

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While an initial phase in the development of the Highland Gatherings may have existed from at least the eleventh century until about 1750, a second phase in the development of this Highland phenomenon lasted from about 1750 until about 1850. At least three important factors affected the development of the Highland Gatherings during this period. In the first instance, the post Culloden policies of the British state further accelerated a process of cultural marginalisation and anglicisation. Secondly, a number of Highland cultural practices, including sporting traditions, were transported with the emigre, in particular to North America. It is important not to divorce the development of these Highland Gatherings overseas from the general causes and conflicts which contributed to the emigration process during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries whereby the descendents of those people, like the Duke of Argyll, who had been partly responsible for the destruction of Highland

culture became guardians of its existence, albeit in a romanticised form. In a determined attempt to retain selective aspects of Highland culture such as dance and music, many Highland Friendly Societies in Scotland and abroad actively encouraged the further development of a number of Highland Gatherings.