

SCOTLAND EDUCATION

Universal, government mandated and funded (through taxes) education may have been the biggest factor in the success of the Scots as they spread out around the world.

“How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The true story of how western Europe's poorest nation created our world & everything in it”, November 2001, Crown Publishing Group, NY by Dr. Arthur Herman (Professor of History at Georgetown University) is an excellent read on the influence of the Scottish diaspora.

While there had been some universities and church schools from at least the fifteenth century, starting from 1561, led by John Knox (Knox Presbyterianism), steps began towards a system of universal education in Scotland. Knox believed that if everyone could read their Bibles, they could be better Christians – but of course, they could read everything else as well.

By 1616 education in Scotland was mandated by an order of the Privy Council, followed by Education Act of 1633, which provided for tax supported funding of universal public education.

By 1700, a big part of the Scots was literate and Scotland's universal public education system had been developed well ahead (perhaps by as much as 100 years ahead of everyone else) of England or most other European countries.

School was attended six days a week for ten to twelve hours a day!

As those Scots spread out to the world (most heavily from about 1750 through 1850, due to Culloden, the Clearances and a potato famine), they took with them their renowned work ethic and ability to thrive in harsh conditions (which, admittedly, many other ethnic groups also could do).

However, and very importantly, those Scots were literate, making them valuable employees and able to take on positions of leadership.

The influence of those Scots on the world was substantially disproportionate to the size and wealth of Scotland, based on the traditional measures of influence (natural resources, location, size, military power) – and education was the key!”
