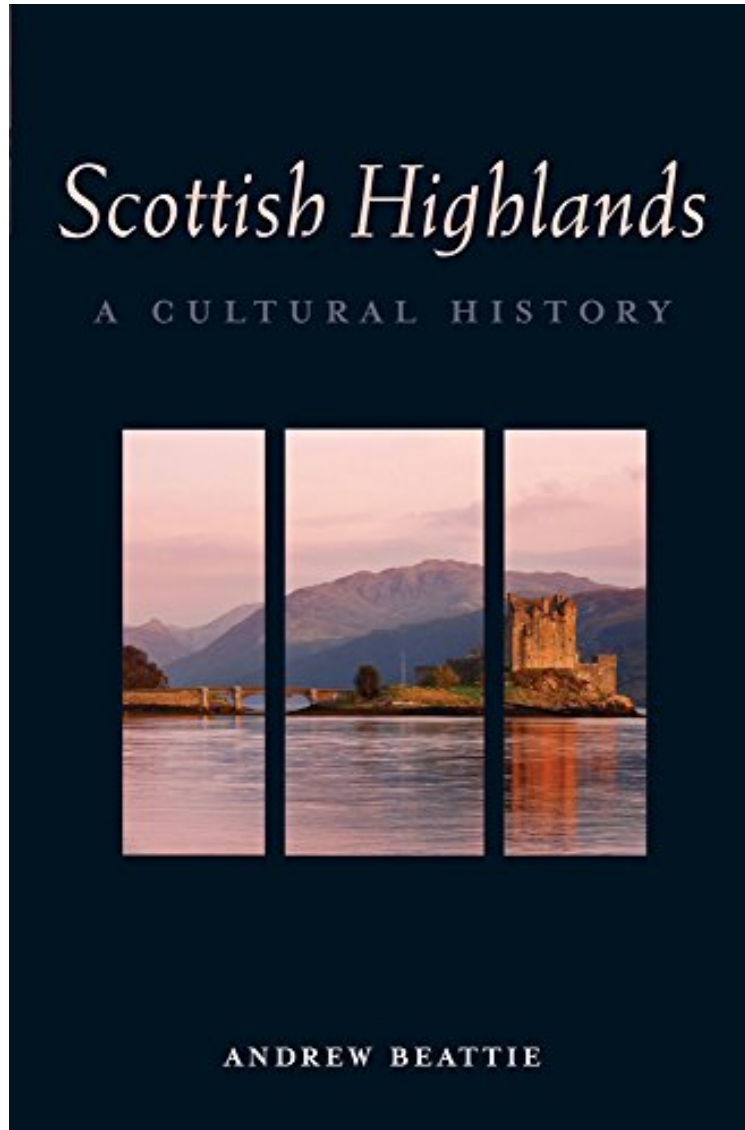


[Mobile book] The Scottish Highlands (Interlink Cultural Histories)

## The Scottish Highlands (Interlink Cultural Histories)

*Andrew Beattie*

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**Andrew Beattie : The Scottish Highlands (Interlink Cultural Histories)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Scottish Highlands (Interlink Cultural Histories):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A quite good introduction to Highland Scotland's complex history and culture.By lyndonbrechtThis is the first book I've read in this series, which seems to be a couple of dozen so far. I'll read another or two, hoping they will be this good. Beattie's writing is crisp and sometimes wry. It really is about the Highlands, with the rest of Scotland as a presence offstage. The book is in four sections: Landscape, History, Imagination and Visitors. Landscape includes geology and it's a complex geology indeed. History is a rather long

section, and it covers from the mysterious Picts to the coming of the Gaels to Bonnie Prince Charlie, the clearing of the glens (people thrown out and replaced with sheep) and to the present. Imagination includes Scotland as a memory, the idea of Scotland in poetry and novels--the common image of Scotland is largely a creation of the novelist Sir Walter Scott and the Romantic inclinations of Queen Victoria. Visitors looks at tourism, which goes back to the ilks of Boswell and Johnson's famed trip in the 1700s; this section includes the origin of tourism as well as some of the sites, and has some aspects of a tourist guide, while at the same time critiquing tourism. There's a good deal of discussion of the clearing of crofters out of the glens, a brutal and sometimes bloody process in the days of unregulated capital. The risings and such that led to the demise of Highlanders as a military threat are discussed. The reality of Highland life for most people appears to have been grinding poverty and endemic violence. It's common knowledge that "Scottish" items such as the plaid tartans are a creation of the later 1800s. There are some interesting details. I'm still foggy on the Lord of the Isles and why the Shetlands and Orkneys were Norwegian until the later 1400s, but this book helped me understand that a little better. Then there's the matter of Highlanders speaking Gaelic and Lowlanders what is essentially a dialect of English; the Highlanders anciently came from what is now Ireland, merging somehow with the Picts. Scotland has a rather more complex history than I had been aware of. Oddly, I'm reminded of New Guinea, where a very rugged terrain has made people in valleys next to each other essentially foreigners--Scotland's much smaller, much less ancient history but still very rugged terrain made Highlanders in neighboring valleys--glens--strangers and often enemies. The book has an excellent "further reading" section. The map is good but small, likewise the illustrations are good but small.

The Scottish Highlands form the highest mountains in the British Isles, a broad arc of rocky peaks and deep glens stretching from the outskirts of Glasgow, Perth and Aberdeen to the remote and storm-lashed Cape Wrath in Scotland's far northwest. The Romans never conquered the region, and in the Dark Ages the island of Iona became home to a Celtic Church that was able to pose a serious challenge to the Church of Rome. Few travelers ever ventured there, however, disturbed by the tales of wild beasts, harsh geography, and the bloody conflicts of warring families known as the clans. But after the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden the influence of the clans was curbed and the Scottish Highlands became celebrated by poets, writers, and artists for their beauty rather than their savagery. In the nineteenth century, inspired by the travel reportage of Samuel Johnson, the novels of Walter Scott, the poems of William Wordsworth, and the very public love of the Highlands espoused by Queen Victoria, tourists began flocking to the mountains - even as Highlanders were being removed from their land by the brutal agricultural reforms known as the Clearances. With the popularity of hiking and the construction of railways, the fate of the Highlands as one of the great tourist playgrounds of the world was sealed. Andrew Beattie explores the turbulent past and vibrant present of this landscape, where the legacy of events from the first Celtic settlements to World War II, to the construction of military roads to mining for lead, slate, and gold have all left their mark.\* Disputed Land: From Rob Roy, William Wallace, and Robert the Bruce, to Bonnie Prince Charlie and the clansmen who participated in the notorious massacre at Glencoe, the Highlands have provided the arena for centuries of conflict.\* Folklore and Tradition: The wildness of the mountains has inspired a unique popular culture, from legendary tales of water-beasts and people with "second sight" to popular gatherings such as Ceilidhs and the Highland Games.\* Scenic Inspiration: From visiting English poets such as Wordsworth and Byron, to native Scots writers such as Neil Gunn and Hugh MacDiarmid; from Turner to Mendelssohn; the scenery of the Highlands has inspired novelists, composers, poets, filmmakers, and artists through the centuries.

About the Author Andrew Beattie is the author of two previous books in the series on the Alps and the River Danube.