

A Letter from Ireland

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www.YourIrishHeritage.com

A Letter from Ireland

**Irish Surnames, Counties,
Culture and Travel**

Mike Collins

Your Irish Heritage

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Your Irish Heritage

Old Abbey

Waterfall, Cork, Ireland

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Carina, Evan and Rosaleen—
my own Irish Heritage—and the thousands of readers of
Your Irish Heritage who make the journey so wonderfully
worthwhile.

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Preface

Just after Christmas I received an email from Mary, in which she talked about how her father had recently passed away. He was a third generation Irish American and they had established a little ritual over the last few weeks of his life. Each Sunday, she visited and read that week's "Letter from Ireland" to him. Together, they would chat and reminisce about their uncles, aunts and cousins all over the world. They recalled the two visits they shared to Ireland—the people they had met and the sights and sounds they enjoyed. Mary and her father already had a close and loving relationship. However, she felt that these Sunday morning chats helped them to connect at an even deeper level—both to each other and to a shared Irish heritage and ancestry that would always be there. I must admit, when I read that letter I had to drop what I was doing and walk outside in the air for a while. Now, when people ask me why I write the "Letter from Ireland" each week, I think of Mary and her Dad—among so many other stories that I have received—and I just smile!

About one year ago, in March of 2013, I started to post pictures of our (my wife Carina and myself) travels around

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Ireland on my Facebook page. This, in turn, led to lots of comments and questions. By May of that year we had established the “Letter from Ireland”.

Each week on a Sunday morning, I sit down and write a letter from our house in Cork in Ireland. At first, this letter went out to a few dozen people. At this point in time, it is going out to thousands of people of Irish descent all over the world. In the Letter, we chat about the Irish weather, surnames, counties, history and culture. And each week I have to put aside Monday and Tuesday to answer all the letters that come back from our readers. In this book you will find a collection of the letters from Ireland written each Sunday morning over the last year. You may notice that I try to keep an informal and chatty style. I decided to keep this style throughout the book as it seems to work best for all our readers—and I do hope that works for you too.

In Ireland we have the oral tradition of the “seanfhocal”, or wise saying. One example is:

"Ar scáth a chéile a mbairimid".

This can be translated as “we live in the shelter of each other”. I think that is a lovely way to underline the interdependence and connection between all people around the world of shared Irish heritage. So let me finish up by saying to you my friend, from here in the heart of Ireland—be you in Canada, Argentina, the USA, the UK, New Zealand, Australia or the many other countries our readers

Preface

come from—"Ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid". We too, live in the shelter of each other.

Mike Collins,

May, 2014, Cork, Ireland.

You can sign up for our "Letter from Ireland" at:
www.youririshheritage.com/letterfromireland

Introduction

Have you ever wondered where the surnames in your Irish family tree come from? Maybe you know already. Maybe you have a collection of birth certificates, census and other records that provide you with some bookends from the lives of your Irish ancestors.

However, you and I know that there is a lot more to being Irish than being represented by a collection of demographic data. How did your Irish relatives live? What was life like for them? What gave them their values—their drive and sense of fair play? This is the area we aim to tease out in this book. When I look back over the fifty “Letters from Ireland” we sent out to our readers over the last year, they appeared to fall into a number of categories. In this book we have placed each letter into an appropriate category. The sections are as follows:

Section 1. Your Irish Surname

Each time we get a new reader on the “Letter from Ireland”, we ask for the Irish surnames in their family tree. These surnames often provide the best clues—and the worst red herrings—when you are tracking down the area your

ancestors came from in Ireland. They have mutated so much over the centuries due to translation, mistranslation, emigration and wishful thinking. In this section we look at the wider stories of your Irish surname and the places and family groups associated with that name.

Section 2. The Counties of Ireland.

Most of our readers associate their family with one or more of the thirty-two counties in Ireland. In this section, we tease out a little more about the surnames of these counties as well as their history and heritage. It is estimated that there are about sixty million people around the world of Irish descent (we currently have about six and a half million people on the island of Ireland). However, over 40% of the ancestors of this sixty million come from just six counties in Ireland: Cork, Kerry, Clare, Galway, Mayo and Donegal. This reflects the huge exodus from Ireland from the mid 1800's as the Great Famine struck these counties with a large Gaelic population.

Section 3. Famine and Emigration

These two words have shaped so much of the Irish world outside Ireland over the last two hundred and fifty years. We had terrible famines during the 1700's as well as the "Great Famine" of the mid 1800's. The 1700's saw the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Ulster Scots to the colonies of America. Then we saw the emigration of the Gaelic Irish

from the 1840's all the way through to the 1980's. In this section, the letters look at both the personal stories and the bigger picture surrounding famine and emigration.

Section 4. Culture, Customs, Music and Craic.

What does it mean to be Irish? I think many of us would find that what is written in this section touches on global aspects of “Irishness”. Many people are surprised to learn just how ancient some Irish traditions are—traditions and values that have shaped the Irish character. In this section, we look at music, law and custom and just what it means to be Irish, no matter where you are.

Appendix. The surnames of Your Irish Heritage.

Finally, when our readers sign up for the “Letter from Ireland”, we ask them to share the Irish surnames in their family and the counties these names came from originally. This allows us to put together a large database of Irish surnames and their counties of origin which we use to put together many of the facts and observations mentioned in the “Letter from Ireland”. In this section, I have reproduced all of the names currently on our list (maybe it includes yours?)—including last known Irish county of residence.

I do hope you enjoy this collection of Letters from Ireland.

Slán for now, Mike.

Section 1: Your Irish Surname

Nine Surnames from Your Irish Heritage

June 9, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are! I'm sitting here on a nice sunny morning in Cork—feels like we've gone from mid-winter to mid-summer in two weeks.

At Your Irish Heritage, we focus on your Irish surnames and where in Ireland they come from—why? Simply because this matters to people! The 3 most common questions I get asked are:

1. My name is "O'whatishisname"—is it Irish?
2. Where in Ireland does the name come from?
3. My great Grandfather's name is Joe Conlon. He came from Kilkenny and we traced him as far as the parish hall in Ballingroibertown. There the trail ran cold. Can you help?

Questions 1 and 2 are what we are all about, as for question 3? Sorry, lots of other people can, but we can't

help.

So, today we're going to dive into the background of Irish surnames and locations. We're going to do this with a little help from one of our readers, Barbara, who is based in the USA. When she contacted me first, she passed on NINE Irish names (names in her ancestry that left Ireland for the US over the past few hundred years). Yep, nine names!

So, I had a look at them and found that they were a great mix of Gaelic, pre-Gaelic, English settler and Anglo-Norman names. Now, while we won't go into the specifics about Barbara's ancestry, let's use each of these names to bring a slightly different aspect of Irish heritage to the fore. Ready? Let's go:

1. Eaton—Emigrated From County Kerry.

This is an English surname derived from a place-name that would have appeared in Ireland from the 16th century onwards. Why? Typically they arrived as settlers, planters, soldiers. Lots of possibilities there.

I'm often asked about a particular Irish name of English origin and where in Ireland that name comes from. But many English planters travelled to Ireland as individuals or small groups, and there is often no specific place associated with these particular English names. That is, unless they had powerful lordships, then they could name everything around them after their family!

2. Keane—Emigrated From County Waterford.

Irish Gaelic surnames typically come originally from a first name—in this case the Irish "Ó Cein" which means "from Cein" which is more or less the modern Irish first name Cian.

This sept or clan would have started out in the County Waterford area of Munster, and it seems like Barbara's ancestor stayed in this area until they emigrated. This is typical of many Irish Gaelic Families. They tended to stay near the family lands for life, or move en masse.

3. Kenneally—Emigrated From County Waterford.

I mentioned how Gaelic surnames come from original first names. Well, where do Gaelic first names come from? The original Gaelic first names were typically descriptions of a quality the person had. Often visual, a personality trait or a comparison to an animal. In this case—it's the Irish "Ó Cinnfhaolaidh"—meaning "head of a wolf".

The Kenneallys were part of the Uí Fidgheinte sept which was found in Connelloe. Parts of the Uí Fidgheinte moved en masse as families (the O'Collins and O'Donovans to West Cork) when displaced by the Anglo Normans. But the Kenneallys were displaced all over many parts of South Munster.

4. Macnamee—Emigrated From County

Westmeath.

Have you a poet in your family? A feature of the old Gaelic system was a very strict hierarchy. The lords at the top—and each lordship surrounded by many roles and professions: poets, soldiers, doctors, genealogists and so on.

Often certain surnames were associated with certain professions, as in the case of the Mac Namees (Mac Conmidhe—sons of the hounds of Meath—more dog names!) who were the Filí and Ollamhs (poets and scholars) to the O'Neill lords around present day County Tyrone.

5. Manning—Emigrated From County Meath.

There's a peculiarity with Irish names. When they were anglicized from the original Irish, they were done so phonetically or sometimes by pegging to the closest-sounding English name. As a result, you might find many Irish surnames that are both Gaelic and English in origin.

This is the case with Manning. It is originally an English name, when you find it today in counties Cork and Dublin it's often belonging to people whose ancestors came from England. But it is also a version of the Gaelic surname "Mannion", which you will find mostly in County Galway. This version is descended from the pre-Gaelic Sodhan race and would have roots similar to the Picts of eastern Scotland.

6. Power—Emigrated From County Waterford.

"More Irish than the Irish themselves" was a quote from the 15th century. It related to many of the Anglo-Norman lords who invaded Ireland from the 12th century but became completely "Hibernicized", absorbing Gaelic customs, dress and language.

Power was one of those family names. Typically now found in County Waterford, it is one of the 50 most numerous surnames in Ireland.

7. Stanley—Emigrated From County Westmeath.

Remember Stanley and Livingstone? "Doctor Livingstone I presume?" As with Sir Henry Stanley, this name is of English origin and based on an English place name.

That's often the difference between English and Gaelic surnames. It seemed to be important to give the location or profession (Smith, Carpenter etc.) in an English surname. For a Gaelic surname, the emphasis was on which specific family grouping you came from and who you were related to. When you understand this difference, you understand a lot about tracing Irish surnames and locations. Stanley came to Ireland very early, it has been around since the thirteenth century, and the family originally settled in counties Louth and Meath.

8. Sullivan—Emigrated From County Kerry.

Sullivan which comes from the Irish “Ó Sulleabhain”, which probably means "one eye". This is the most numerous name in Munster (the most numerous in all of Ireland is Murphy).

The Sullivans originally came from South Tipperary (about 1000 years ago), but were driven west into Cork and Kerry to become an important part of the Eoghanacht tribe (Lords of which were the McCarthys).

So which is right? "Sullivan" or "O'Sullivan"? Well, they were all “Ó Suileabháin” at one time. But then it became beneficial to drop the O during penal times for Gaels. This dropping of the O lasted until a Gaelic revival of the 1800’s, when many surnames put the Os (and the macs) back into their surnames. But not everyone did.

For example, many of the emigrants to the USA and Australia would have left before the O came back and so you find many Sullivans overseas. Also, it seems that the majority of Sullivans in Kerry left the O out, while in Cork, they went back to become O'Sullivan. Can be confusing, can't it?

9. Terry—Emigrated From County Waterford.

This was an Anglo Norman family that settled in Cork city and county since about the 13th century. You'll also find the name in this form in England, so it is possible that it also belonged to an English planter.

So that's it! Phew! Nine names leading to one person. Our

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letter was a bit long this week, but I hope you enjoyed it. Each name teased out a different aspect of Irish Heritage. Many thanks to Barbara for sharing her names and do remember to share yours if you haven't done so already.

I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

Losing your O's and Macs— and getting them back

June 23, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are—from here in County Cork on a lovely Sunday morning in June! Hope you have a nice cup of tea or coffee at hand (I'm having a cup of Barry's tea myself).

Today, we're going to browse the evolution of the surname in Ireland, something I know is close to your heart! Next week we'll look at Viking, Norman and Planter names—but this week we start with the old Gaelic names. We've been getting lots of surname questions over the past weeks, so I'll now use some of these to illustrate the source of many of our Gaelic surnames. First up:

The Name Is McGee—And Don't Call Me Bobby!

I got an email from Mary McGee in which she asked:

"I met a lady called McCoy last year and she insisted we are distant cousins. How could that be?"

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Looking through our reader list, I notice that we have Keyes, MacHugh, Gee, McGee, O'Hea, Hayes, MacKaw, Makay and McCoy. What do you think ALL of these surnames have in common? These surnames have all been anglicized from the same Irish surname "Mac Aodha" (son of Aodh), or "Ó hAodha" (descendent of Aodh). Aodh (pronounced "Aay"—rhymes with "hay") was a very popular first name in Ireland up to the 10th century. Up to that point individuals were known by their first names and lineage. So, individuals were known as "Aodh son of Donnchadh" and so on.

From the 900's to the 1100's, families adopted the surname system we know today. Lots of families across Ireland (and Scotland) chose the name MacAodha or Ó hAodha, and that got anglicized into the different surnames we see above over the next few centuries. So, Mary, I guess we're all cousins going back to Adam and Eve but this lady is unlikely to be yours!

The First Surnames.

Next, June MacCarthy got in touch. She asked, "Why do you write MacCarthy as McCarthy?"

Ireland was one of the first countries in Europe to introduce a surname system in the 10th century. Most Gaelic surnames were formed around an illustrious ancestor, e.g. the O'Briens from Brian Boru. Gaelic surnames typically

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have one of five prefixes:

- O: as in O'Brien or O'Neill.
- Mc or Mac: as in McCarthy or McCoy.
- Gil: which comes from the Irish "Giolla" meaning follower—as in Gilmartin.
- Mul: like in Mulrooney or Mullarkey.

Sometimes, Gaelic surnames have a combination of the above as in Mac Giolla Iosa (MacAleese). A smaller class of Irish surname named the family after an occupation or profession, e.g. McInerney (Mac an Airchinnigh in Irish) which means "son of the eranagh (a type of lay abbot)" or Hickey (in Irish Ó hIcidhe) which means from the Doctor or Healer.

June wondered about the difference between a Mc and a Mac. Some people ask is the Mc Irish and the Mac Scottish? The answer is: there is no difference! The Mc is an abbreviation of Mac.

Losing The Os And Macs—And Getting Them Back.

Mary Sullivan contacted me (a fine Cork name). She commented, "it's a pity our family lost the "O" when we came to the States."

But, there's a bit more to it than that. From the 1600's onwards, Gaelic and Catholic people were discriminated against by the laws of the English ascendancy. This led,

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gradually, to the abandonment of the Os and Macs in many surnames. O'Murphy became Murphy, O'Kelly became Kelly and so on. However, in the late 19th century there was a Gaelic cultural resurgence in Ireland and many of these surnames took their Os and Macs back as a badge of Gaelic pride.

Take O'Sullivan as an example. When we look at the census data the following comes up:

Year:	Percentage using the prefix O
1866	4%
1890	13%
1914	20%
1944	60%

You can see that many emigrants who left Ireland during famine times were missing their Os and Macs—and mostly never took them back, whereas a high percentage of those who stayed in Ireland had them reinstated. Maybe it's time to take your O or Mac back! Mary is going to stick with Sullivan for now.

That's it for this week's rundown on Irish Gaelic names. Next week we will cover other Irish surnames including Norman and Viking ones, as well as English/Scottish planter names and families.

I'll see you next week! :))

Slán, Mike...

The Melting Pot of Ireland

June 30, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are—from here in County Cork. Another lovely Sunday morning in June (must be a record)! Hope you have a nice cup of tea or coffee at hand (I'm having a cup of Green tea myself).

Let's continue with the evolution of your surname in Ireland. Last week we looked at the old Gaelic surnames. Today, we're looking at Viking, Norman, Galloglass and Planter (which can be English or Scottish) names. We'll take a few examples using one of our readers, Patricia. She provided me with six of her family names: Byrnes, Clarke, Halpin, Leonard, Martin and Rafferty. While I may be completely incorrect with the specifics of Patricia's actual family, we'll use them for illustration!

The Melting Pot Of Ireland.

I often get asked the question: "Is my surname Irish?" My answer is simple: If your family has lived on this island for some time then yes, even though the name may be of

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Norse, English or Scottish origin etc. Let's remind ourselves of the mix of people that have lived on this small island:

- **Up until 500 BC:** "Fir Bolg" and the "Tuatha Dé Dannan" lived in Ireland.
- **Around 500 BC:** Arrival of the Celts (we call them the Gaels today) who intermarry with people on the island.
- **Around 800 AD:** Arrival of the Vikings who intermarry with the native Gaels over time. Start of the surname system.
- **1170 AD:** Arrival of the Normans and their surnames, who intermarry with the natives over time.
- **In the 1200's:** Arrival of the Galloglass (Scottish Mercenaries) and their surnames.
- **In the 1500's:** English take control of the island and start major "plantations" of settlers from both England and Scotland who bring their surnames with them.

Viking Surnames.

Patricia had the surname "Halpin" on her list. When found in Ireland, this name is typically of Norse origins. The Vikings appeared in Ireland about the 800's and established

strongholds in most of the current-day cities, Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Wexford. Gradually, the native Gaels learned to fight back and through intermarriage the Vikings were subsumed into the Irish culture and DNA melting pot.

Names such as Cotter, Dromgoole, Doyle, Jennings, Lappin, Higgins, McLaughlin, McManus, Halpin, Swan, Grimes, Sweetman, Storey, Hendrick, Rourke, Cosgrave, Kitt, Broderick, Kirby, Hewson, Dolphin and Coppinger would all be modern-day Irish surnames based on Viking culture. At this stage, most of those names would be considered "normal" Irish names. Maybe you see one of your names here?

Norman Surnames.

The Normans arrived in Ireland in 1169 at the invitation of a deposed Gaelic king, Dermot McMurrrough. Looking at Patricia's names, there is one of specific Norman origin, Martin, which is one of the more common names in Ireland today.

Initially, the Normans kept their own identity, but became subsumed into Gaelic culture over subsequent decades. Norman descendants today can be recognised by their surnames such as Condon, Bermingham, French, Butler, Barry, Power, Prendergast, Barrett, Plunkett, Roche, Burke, D'Arcy and Cogan. Other Norman names begin with Fitz (from the Norman for son) include Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon

and Fitzmaurice. Patricia's family surname of "Martin" probably came to Ireland around this time. One of the more famous Martin families was one of the "Tribes of Galway" (this was a collective name given to the leading families of Galway City in late medieval times).

Gallowglass Surnames.

After the arrival of the Normans in Ireland, the Irish Chieftains aimed to halt their advance into their lands. The Norman weaponry, armour and tactics were superior to anything the Gaelic Chieftains possessed. They turned to the Gallowglass or “foreign Gaels”, a band of elite warriors from the Hebrides Isles of Scotland of Norse/Scottish ancestry. The first Gallowglass arrived in Ireland in 1259 and these mercenaries were soon in demand from the warring Irish Chiefs.

The McCabes and MacSweeneys were so successful that their clans transplanted completely to Ireland, while others such as the MacDonalds, MacNeills, MacSheehy, McCoy's and MacRorys maintained their lands in Scotland as well as establishing new territories in Ireland—especially in the Ulster area.

English and Scottish Planter Surnames.

From the time of Henry VIII, the English administration took an active interest in making Ireland a more "civilised" place. One of their strategies was to transplant large

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numbers of Scottish lowlanders and English border natives (with their protestant culture and farming methods) into areas of good land in Ireland, displacing the Gaelic lordships of the region. Plantation of parts of Ireland started in the 1550's and lasted until 1714. During this time Ireland took in between 150,000 and 250,000 English and Scottish immigrants (the population of Ireland in 1700AD was about 1 million).

They arrived as adventurers, tenants, people seeking a better life, people escaping religious persecution or as a direct payment for soldiering. Most of these remained distinctly separate from the Gaelic Irish, maintaining their own protestant culture.

Others, such as 10,000 of Cromwell's soldiers, were paid with land grants. Most of these were single men who married with the native Irish women. There is, of course, a whole story here about land displacement, rebellion, religious and racial persecution, but we won't be going into that here.

Instead, let's focus on the surnames. English and Scottish border surnames are distinctly different from Irish and Scottish highland surnames. With Gaelic surnames, the persons lineage is to the forefront (MacCarthy = son of Carthaigh OR O'Carroll = of the Carrolls).

English surnames tend to be mostly occupational (Smith, Cooper, Wright etc.) or related to a place (Churchill,

Harland, Hall, Wood etc.). Patricia gives us the surname of Leonard, a common English name. But, is it a "planter" name? When tracing your family ancestors in Ireland using an "English" surname, there are two things to bear in mind:

- Gaelic names have often been associated with specific territories for hundreds of years—and have often moved as extended families have moved. This makes it easier to talk about where in Ireland a Gaelic surname comes from. With English "planter" names there was rarely the same context of family movement. Research will rely on tracking an individual's records.
- Through the 19th century, the anglicisation of Gaelic names took place. This often resulted in Gaelic names being translated to similar English name. My own Irish name is Ó Coileain, which becomes Collins when translated to English. Other confusing examples are Ó Laithbheartaigh which translates in some places to Lavery and some other places to Armstrong (the Irish for hand/arm sounds like "lav").

A final example would be Clifford. If this is provided as a family name from Counties Kerry, Cork or Limerick, it is almost always a Gaelic family. Anywhere else in the country it would be an English planter name.

That's the end of our trip through the melting pot of surnames that belong to so many people from this island—

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all Irish—but with so many stories behind each individual surname.

Slán, Mike...I'll see you next week! :)

Born on the Fourth of July

July 7, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are. I'm writing to you from Lisdoonvarna in County Clare this morning. Bit of mist about, but it should burn off shortly (fingers crossed!). Hope you have a nice cup of tea or coffee at hand (I'm sticking to the water myself this morning).

"I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy

A Yankee Doodle, do or die

A real live nephew of my Uncle Sam

Born on the Fourth of July"

These were the words of George M. Cohan, written in 1904, and probably best known from the movie "Yankee Doodle Dandy" with James Cagney. Were you, or a member of your family, born on the 4th of July? We asked our Facebook readers and six of you said YES! So, today we're going to look at George's family name, as well as the Irish family names of our Yankee Doodle Dandy readers.

One of the most interesting (and challenging) things

about tracing your Irish surname is the way that it can change and mutate over the decades and centuries. As we look at our seven surnames, let's look at some of these changes.

George M. Cohan (Keohane).

George Cohan was born in Providence, Rhode Island, to Jeremiah and Helen Cohan. They were Irish Catholics from County Cork, probably from around the Clonakilty area. Somehow, their name "migrated" from Keohane (pronounced "ka-yo-haan" in Cork) to Cohan on their arrival in the US.

Keohane is an old Gaelic name that is peculiar to West Cork which comes from the Irish "Mac Eocháin". It's also one of those names whose history is lost to us. It's probably a derivative or version of a similar Irish name. So, come on Clonakilty! Let's see a statue put up to one of your emigrant sons—the Yankee Doodle Dandy himself!

Madilyn (Mannix).

One of Madilyn's sisters was born on the 4th of July, and Mannix was one of her Irish names. While Mannix may sound like an unlikely Irish name (who remembers Mannix the private eye on TV?), it actually comes from the Irish Ó Mainchin, referring to a Monk. This was a sept that is found, like George M. Cohans family, in West Cork. The

name was also anglicized as Manahan. Anglicization was the main reason for a lot of name migration we have discussed. Other people heard the name in Irish, and chose a similar sounding word or name to give it an English version.

Susan (Sullivan).

Staying in County Cork, Susan also had a relative born on the 4th of July, and she still proudly wears the surname Sullivan. We've covered the Sullivans a few times before, but the interesting thing to note is that many of the Sullivans who emigrated to the US from Cork and Kerry, did so before the 1860's.

At this time, the Os and Macs were dropped from many surnames in Ireland, but many were reinstated in the late 19th century. So, if you are a US Sullivan, this often means your family emigrated before 1860. If you are a US O'Sullivan, they probably emigrated after that time.

Kay (Carroll).

Kay's family name is Carroll from the Irish Ó Cearbhaill. This is a very popular surname found in many places in Ireland as it was adopted as a surname by several distinct family groups. The interesting thing is the way this surname travelled quite "intact", only losing or gaining the O. This is probably down to the way it sounds quite like the way it spells and sounds like an English word.

Tim (MacDonald).

I'm sure Tim is asked on a regular basis if his surname is Scottish! When the name MacDonald is found in Ireland it may come from an old Scottish Galloglass (mercenary) family OR it can also be an anglicisation of the Irish Mac Domhnaill (usually anglicised as MacDonnell). It can sometimes be sourced from Scottish planter families who arrived in Ireland after the 17th century. So, his answer may be that MacDonald is the Anglicisation of an Irish name, or that it is a family of the Scottish MacDonald clan that left Scotland and settled in Ireland for many centuries. His choice!

Melanie (Delaney)

Melanie's family surname, Delaney, comes from the Irish "Ó Duibhlearga" and originates mostly in counties Laois and Kilkenny. This is an example of a name that lost its O, and never got it back. You will never hear the surname O'Delaney nowadays.

Rebecca (Conaty).

Rebecca's family name belongs to the same family of surnames as Walsh, Scott, Ireland etc. They usually mean a man from Wales, Scotland or Ireland etc. In this case, Conaty is an abbreviation of Connaghty which comes from the Irish "Ó Connaghtaigh", meaning "man from the

A Letter from Ireland

province of Connaught". It was a nickname that stuck in County Cavan. Rebecca's ancestors probably came from Connaught to Cavan at one time, and were given the nickname Ó Connaghtaigh. They hung onto the name—and stayed in Cavan!

Many thanks to our Yankee Doodle Dandy readers for joining George Cohan on this week's journey around your family names. I hope you enjoyed the trip! If you have any questions or comments, feel free to get in touch.

I'll see you next week! :), Slán, Mike...

The Royal Families of Ireland

July 28, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are, from here in County Cork. I'm sitting down to have a cup of Barry's tea. I hope you're feeling nice and relaxed for a Sunday too!

Have you ever wanted to be a member of a "Royal Family"? Maybe you are! Today, we're going to have a look at the royal families and surnames of Ireland.

The Royal Lords.

For hundreds of years up until the arrival of the Normans in the late 12th century, Ireland was divided into many autonomous kingdoms. Each was ruled over by a "Rí", or King. These Kings won their lands through military and political might. The boundaries of their kingdoms were constantly changing with the ebb and flow of power. In fact, you could say that it was this arrangement of "tribal independence" that made Ireland so susceptible to invasion

by a more centralised force down through the years.

Today, we're going to choose a particular point in time, around 1515 AD. Why? By that time, the surname system had been fully introduced, so we can mention your surnames in connection with these royal families. Also, by that time, many of the Norman "invaders" had been fully subsumed into Gaelic culture—fully adopting Gaelic customs. What was left of the old English administration was an area around Dublin known as "The Pale". Beyond that was "beyond The Pale"—a land of individual chiefdoms and seeming lawlessness.

So, who were the royal families of Ireland around 1515 AD? A well known English state paper of the time informs us that beyond the Pale:

"There reigneth more than 60 chief captains... that liveth only by the sword, and obeyth unto no other temporal person. Also there be thirty great captains of the English folk (Normans) that follow the same Irish order and every one of them makes war and peace for himself without any licence of the King."

These 90 or so "captains" (also known as lords by this time rather than Kings) were the autonomous royal families of Ireland. These Lords were spread throughout the four provinces of Ireland. Their territory was guarded by Gallowglass mercenaries and the castles we see today. A Gaelic revival was also underway—a remembering and

reinvention of Irish traditions and customs from before the invasions of the 1100's.

The lords kept historians and genealogists. They reclaimed old royal inauguration sites and entertained with their poets and bards. They intermarried with other royal families to establish beneficial alliances and they sponsored churches and monasteries on their lands. The "overlords" had the right to call up troops from the other lords in their area and extract some taxes, but many of the lordships were autonomous.

The Royal Family Names.

So, who were these families? Well, I'm not a big fan of lists (especially big ones), but here we go:

Munster:

McCarthy (Overlord), O'Sullivan, O'Donovan, O'Mahony, O'Driscoll, O'Keefe and Finn

Fitzgerald (Overlord), Roche, Condon, Barry, Courcy, Fitzmaurice and Fitzgibbon

O'Brien (Overlord), McMahan, McNamara, O'Grady, O'Connor and O'Loughlin

Butler (Overlord), Power, Tobin, Purcell, O'Kennedy, MacBrien, Mulryan (Ryan), O'Meagher and O'Dwyer

Leinster:

MacMurrough (Overlord), O'Byrne, O'Toole, O'Brennan, O'More and O'Dempsey

Fitzgerald of Kildare (Overlord), Fitzpatrick, O'Dunne, Fleming, O'Molloy, Tyrell, O'Carroll, O'Connor, MacCoghlan, MacGeoghegan, Nugent, Plunkett, O'Farrell and Dillon

Ulster:

O'Rourke (Overlord), MacClancy, MaGauran, O'Reilly, Maguire, MacMahon and MacKenna

O'Neill (Overlord), O'Donnell (Overlord), O'Boyle, MacSweeney, O'Doherty, O'Cahan (Kane), MacQuillan, MacDonnell, Savage, White, MacCartan, Magennis, MacCann and O'Hanlon

Connaught:

Burke (Overlord) O'Shaughnessy, O'Heyne, O'Madden and O'Kelly

O'Flaherty (Overlord), Joyce, O'Malley, Barrett, O'Dowd, O'Hara, MacJordan, MacMorris, Bermingham, MacCostello, O'Gara, MacDermot and MacDonagh

Is your family name here?

I'll see you next week! :) Slán, Mike...

Our Top 10 Irish Surnames

September 15, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are, from County Cork. The autumn's really kicking in here, but I think it's a lovely time of year. Still, Carina's starting to have her "porridge" for breakfast in the morning! How about you? As you may already know, when people contact us on Facebook, we ask them for their Irish surname(s) and the county their ancestors came from. We then add this to our list and use it to figure out some good stories that need telling. And now we're hitting almost 4000 readers on that list! So, we thought it would be fun to share the most plentiful (see how I avoided using the word common there!) names on the list.

The Top 10 Surnames In Ireland.

We start by looking at the Top 10 Surnames in Ireland today. They are:

1. Murphy
2. Kelly

3. (O)Sullivan
4. Walsh
5. Smith
6. O'Brien
7. Byrne
8. Ryan
9. O'Connor
10. O'Neill

Any surprises there for you? Probably not, except perhaps for number 5. More about that one later.

The Top 10 Surnames On Our List.

Now, let's compare that to the names you provided for our list. They are (starting with the most numerous):

1. Kelly
2. (O) Sullivan
3. Murphy
4. (O) Reilly/Riley
5. (O) Doherty
6. McCarthy
7. O'Brien
8. (O) Connor

9. Walsh

10. Smith

And bubbling under, we have Ryan, Kennedy, Lynch, (O) Mahon(e)y, Murray, (O)Neill, (O)Shea and Byrne/Byrnes/Burns.

You see, the majority of our readers are in the USA (about 90%). This means that a lot of the surnames on our list represent those who left Ireland for the USA as emigrants in great numbers. That fact points to one time in Ireland's history—the Famine—from the 1840's onwards. At that time, most of the names on the list were really over-represented in the west, north-west and south-west of the island of Ireland. These were the typical names of Connaught, Southwest Munster and Northwest Ulster. It also strikes me how many of these names were the old royal families and chieftains of Ireland, but were pushed westward into poorer lands from the 1600's onwards.

But There Is More To These Surnames.

Interesting Point 1: Readers often mention how "the O got dropped when my ancestor came to this country". But it was common practice in mid 19th century Ireland to have the O dropped and they were not re-established in Ireland until later in the 19th century. So, when your family arrived in their new country, they mostly brought with them the Irish spelling of the time.

Interesting Point 2: I was looking at another site's list and they wanted to leave out Smith as it was "English", which is ludicrous! We have many "Smiths" in Ireland for 2 reasons: 1) It was a common English Planter name which came to various parts of Ulster and 2) it is also the Anglicisation of the Gaelic name "Mac an Ghabhann" or "son of the smith". If you look in the Irish telephone directory today you will see thousands of "English" names, but the majority are anglicisations of old Gaelic names (like my own—Collins). Does your Irish surname(s) appear on our list? What else do you notice?

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike and Carina...We'll see you next week! :)

Why are there so many English names in Ireland?

October 27, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are—from County Cork. Hope your day is going well wherever you are!

The weather has been a little dreary here in Cork over the past week. It reminds me of a story I once heard. When the Celtic Gaels were being encouraged to move to Christianity in the 400's, one of the "encouragement tools" the missionaries used was the idea of hell. But when they explained the terrible fate that awaited if the Celts did not become Christians, the answer was:

"so, you're telling us that this place called Hell is warm and dry all the time... I'm not sure I see the problem with that!"

I can see the point! I wouldn't mind slightly more "hellish" weather at the moment.

Last week I shared five resources to help you dig a little deeper into the information and stories surrounding your Irish heritage. We also asked for your favourite resources—

and got a load of recommendations back (thank you!) and we'll share these in the next few weeks.

Why Are There So Many English Surnames In Ireland?

One of our readers—Joan—decided to "road-test" some of our recommendations and came back with the following comment:

"I looked up surname Hamill on one of your recommended resources. The forum said it was Scots/English and Anglo-Saxon. But there were four other comments from Irish people who said it was Gaelic".

So, what's going on here? I think Joan has touched on a problem with the larger online ancestry sites. If you go to these sites and read about surnames such as Hamill (or Collins, or Howard or Clifford or Smith or Reynolds and so on), they will typically be presented as English or Scottish names. And that is because they are! Which is confusing as you try to track the heritage of a surname that YOU know is Irish.

Always Start With The Irish For Your Name.

When you are really interested in tracing the heritage of your Irish surname, I find that the only way to pin down that name is to learn the original Irish language version of the surname. Have a think about it. Take the surname

O'Reilly—which is also heard as Riley, Reilly, O'Riley (and other versions I'm sure I'll hear one day).

The thing is none of these English versions are correct! They are all derivatives from the original Irish surname. Versions that have sprung up over centuries with the introduction of English in Ireland, emigration and so on. The most useful starting point is the original Irish language version: Ó Raghailigh (pronounced Oh Rah-al-ig—just say it fast). This is the root for all the O'Reilly English language versions out there. But, the Reillys have it easy (and the McCarthys, O'Briens, Murphys and so on) as they were never pegged to an equivalent English name. When English speakers heard Ó Raghailigh spoken for the first time, they just said it as they heard it: O Reilly. The "trouble" started when an English speaker heard a name for the first time AND it reminded them of an English name that they already knew. And that's the English name they pegged to the Irish name!

Back To Hamill.

Which brings us all the way back to Joan and the surname Hamill. In Ireland, Hamill mostly comes from the original Irish “Ó hAdhmaill” (pronounced Oh-ham-will). This Gaelic family were part of the Cenél Eoghain tribe in what is now County Tyrone. Surnames were gradually introduced in Ireland from the 800's onwards, and all was well until many of the surnames were anglicised from the 1600's onwards.

A Letter from Ireland

In the case of Ó hAdhmaill, an English speaker heard the Irish name spoken. It reminded him of the familiar English name Hamill, and so "Hamill" becomes a given name for this old Gaelic family. And today when you go onto many ancestry sites, you notice that while names like "Hamill" are included, there are a small portion of Irish folks jumping up and down in the corner protesting that this is also an Irish name! And they are right—to a point!

But if you really want to be sure—the best thing to do is find out the original Irish for your Irish surname, learn to phonetically pronounce it, and learn all the English variations that have come along for this name over the centuries. And now, if you have a puzzle like this around your Irish name, do let me know!

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike...I'll see you next week! :)

The McCartneys of the Mull of Kintyre

December 8, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork. I hope you are starting, or having, a good day wherever you are. The mornings are getting very dark around here as winter deepens. I need a bit of kick-start these mornings, so I've definitely moved onto the coffee!

We got back last night from a trip to Dublin. We had an important job to do (more on that later in the letter), but we did get some time to catch up with friends and family. On Friday evening we were all kicking back in front of the fire and the telly—as you do—and on came "the Christmas number ones of years gone by". Great stuff. Before we know it, we're all singing along to the 1977 Christmas Number One, "Mull of Kintyre" by Paul McCartney and Wings. Do you know it? Great—all together now:

"Mull of Kintyre, oh mist rolling in from the sea my desire..."

Mulling Over The Surname MacCartney.

Coincidences do happen. Earlier that day, I got a question from one of our readers, Kenneth. He asked:

"Hi, trying to find some relatives in Northern Ireland. The MacCartney family settled in Ireland from Scotland in 1621. Theophilus MacCartney immigrated to Canada in the 1871. What tribe would we be with?"

Before we give Kenneth his specific answer, it's worth opening this up a little. A lot of questions come my way about the movements between Ireland and Scotland over the centuries. The Mull of the Kintyre (more or less meaning the "baldy headland" in Gaelic) peninsula is in Argyll in Western Scotland. You can see the coastline of Antrim clearly from there. Kintyre is thought to have been the crossing point for the earliest humans on their travels to Ireland about 10,000 years ago. About 1,600 years ago it was used as a route by the people the Romans called the Scotti (the Roman name for the branch of the Irish, who in turn gave Scotland its name). They spread from Ireland to establish the kingdom of Dál Riata between the north-east of Ulster and Argyll in Scotland.

So, Kintyre has seen a lot of coming and going over the years between Ireland and Scotland. This bouncing back and forward over the centuries between Ireland and Scotland has provoked many of our readers to ask "Is my surname Irish or Scottish?"

Your Irish Surname

Back to the surname McCartney and Kenneth's question. My straight answer is that I don't know for sure! The internet and many books are full of stories that people present as facts—and insist on them being correct. I think it is more useful to have an open mind and be prepared to entertain a number of possibilities.

Let me give you a couple of these possibilities and you can decide which works best for you! One of the stories you will hear about the surname McCartney is that:

"The McCartneys are a branch of the great family of McCarthys in Munster in the south of Ireland. The fifth son of Cormac Fionn McCarthy was Donogh Cartnach who is the ancestor of the McCartneys. Donough Cartnach left 2 sons, the eldest Donal served under Robert the Bruce of Scotland and received a grant of land in Argylleshire, called 'Glen Artney' from the King of Scotland in the 1200's. Some of Donal's descendants later moved to Galloway. From there George Macartney emigrated to Ulster from Scotland in the 1600's. He is the original ancestor of many of the families of Macartney in Ulster and Ireland. He bought the property of Lissanoure in 1649 near Cloughmills Co. Antrim." (Source—Wikipedia).

Now, wouldn't that be a nice story to believe! On the other hand:

"McCartney is cognate with the Irish surname McCartan.

A Letter from Ireland

McCartan is derived from Mac Artáin, which denotes the son of Artán (Artan is a diminutive version of the surname Art)—and was the surname was taken by chiefs of Kinelarty in County Down. The McCartans belong to the Uí Echach Cobo branch of the Dál nAraidi dynasty of the Cruthin." (Source—Wikipedia).

This suggests that a branch of the McCartans moved to Scotland at some time OR share a common ancestor with the McCartneys. Now, I know I'm being a bit of a devil by suggesting that the source for both of these is Wikipedia, but you do need to be careful of what you read about Irish family histories on the internet, especially on Wikipedia!

So, back to Kenneth's question: Which tribe do the McCartneys belong to? Well, they could have been originally "Eoghanacht" (McCarthy's of Munster) OR the Dal nAraidi (which ironically were a Cruthin tribe who originally came from the east coast of Scotland!). Of course, when they travelled to Scotland they became part of the Clan Mackintosh. Gets complicated, doesn't it! In the absence of facts and records, we tend to believe what we want to believe. Reminds me of that old newspaper saying: "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story". On the other hand, maybe we should write to Paul McCartney and ask him what he has found out. Maybe he could even write a song about it for us!

That's it for this week, I'll see you next week! :), Slán,
Mike...

The Norman Surnames of Ireland

February 16, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork, I hope you are keeping well wherever you are.

Definitely a grand stretch in the evening around these parts, there is good daylight up to about 6.00 pm. You can feel the land beginning to stir and there's a small bit of heat in the sun. I'm sitting here this morning having my cup of Barry's tea and I hope you'll pour a cup of whatever you fancy yourself and join me (it's a bit of a long one this morning, but it's a good story!)

Do You Have Norman Surnames In Your Family Tree?

Speaking of Barry's tea, Barry is just one of the many Norman surnames we find in Ireland. When we hear the word "Norman" in Ireland today, we often think of the "Anglo-Norman" invasion of Ireland in 1170 AD that we

learned about in school. Many of my own friends today have Norman surnames—Roche, Barry, Fitzgerald and so on. We attended the same classes in school, played for the same teams and shared a lot of growing up together.

Many of the readers of Your Irish Heritage have Irish surnames that have a Norman lineage. Do let me know if there are Norman surnames in your Irish family tree.

But where did our Norman ancestors come from? To find that out, we need to go back to another time and country.

The Norman Homeland.

By 876AD, the Viking threat was well established over much of Europe. Many Vikings were launching raiding parties from their Norwegian home and returning with the spoils for later trade. Around this time, a man called Harald Finehair was asserting himself as the first true King of Norway. Not all were happy with his approach, including a man called "Hrolfr" (later known as Rollo). Rollo was the leader of a band of Vikings who were together for over 20 years—raiding and extorting tribute on many shores across Britain, Ireland and France.

On the 17th of November, 876 AD, Rollo and his men arrived in the north-west part of France, around the modern city of Rouen. This time they had no home in Norway to which to return. They were looking for a territory in which to settle and use as a base for further raids—a new place to

call home. Over the next forty years, this band of Vikings carried out raids from this new base and sent a clear message to the local rulers that they saw this territory as their new home. Charles, King of the Franks, pragmatically decided to formalise this territory as the new homeland of the group and the Duchy of Normandy was established with Rollo as the first Duke of Normandy.

The Norman Way Of Life.

The land in Normandy was a huge improvement on the old farmlands in Norway. The Norman focus was on the cultivation of grain (unlike the focus on cattle in Ireland), and the rich, heavy soil of Normandy could yield four times more than the stony soil of Norway. Over the next one hundred and fifty years, the Normans settled down with their new neighbours. They strategically intermarried and made alliances and also copied the French hierarchy headed by a class of nobility.

But one aspect of Viking ancestry that the Normans were slow to lose was a restless ambition. They had a desire to expand beyond their present boundaries and gather more material possessions, land, power and glory. The Normans could back up their individual ambition with the power of feudalism, farming and fighting technology, their use of the castle. They also felt they had God on their side.

Expansion Beyond Normandy.

Over the course of one hundred and fifty years, from 1047 AD to 1200 AD, this Norman ambition and capability triggered one of the most extraordinary expansions of power from such a small area. During that time, Norman Knights had successfully been "invited into", or invaded, Britain, Sicily and Ireland as well as starting the first crusades to the near east where they established many more strongholds. All of the conquests were consolidated with the winning and granting of land, building of castles and establishment of a new feudal order in each locality.

In 1035 AD, Duke Robert of Normandy was killed on the return from one of these first crusades. His son, William, gradually assumed his power and title. In 1066 AD, the King of England at the time, Edward the Confessor, died. William of Normandy had a distant claim to the throne of England and was ready to assert his claim.

By September, 1066 AD, William's forces were ready to invade England and take what he considered to be his rightful place on the throne of England. William's boats, knights, warhorses, archers and soldiers numbered in the thousands. They set sail in October and met the English army at Hastings on the 14th of October, 1066 AD. After a full day of matched and ferocious fighting, William had won the crown of the King of England. A hierarchy of just ten thousand Norman knights went on to replace the aristocracy of England with William, now William the

Conqueror, at their head.

Five generations later, the descendents and vassals of this aristocracy formed the main part of the invasion of Ireland from Wales in 1170 AD. The Normans would bring their fighting, farming and feudal technology with them—as well as an insatiable ambition—and shape much of what we see around us in the Irish landscape and politics. Even to this day.

Norman Surnames Of Your Irish Heritage.

Norman naming conventions were typically the same as many Irish naming conventions—only derived from French.

- **Son of - Fils** - phonetically became "Fitz", e.g. Fitz Gerald
- **Of/From - de** - e.g. de Bari - which in Ireland became de Barra and eventually Barry.
- **Nickname/Role** - le - e.g. le Gros - or the fat one. Another famous Irish role name was FitzWalter which assumed the role (and surname) of Butler in Ireland.

The Norman-derived names that we have on our Reader list include:

Archdeacon/Cody, Aylward, Barron, Barrett, Barrie, Barry, Bermingham, Blake, Bluit, Bonds, Bourke, Brannagh, Brett, Britt, Britton, Brown, Browne, Burke,

A Letter from Ireland

Brew, Bryan, Butler, Campion, Cantillon, Cantwell, Carew, Chambers, Claire, Clare, Codd, Cody, Cogan, Colfer, Condon, Comerford, Cooney, Courcey, Crosbie, Crozier, Cullen, Cummiskey, Cusack,

Dalton, Darcy, D'Arcy, Day, Dillon, Fagan, Fields, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, Fitzhenry, Fitzsimmons, Fitzsimons, Fitzstephens, Fleming, Flemming, Francis, French, Furlong, Gibbons, Grace, Griffin, Griffith, Hackett, Hays, Hussey, Jordan, Joyce, Keating, Lacey, Lawless, Liston, Logan, Lucey, Lynch, Lyons, Marshall, Martin, McQuillan, Molyneux, Morris, Morrissey,

Nagle, Nangle, Nugent, Plunkett, Power, Powers, Prendergast, Punch, Prior, Purcell, Redmond, Rice, Roach, Roberts, Roche, Rochford, Russell, Savage, Sinnott, Stapleton, Stephens, Talbot, Tyrrell, Wade, Wall, Walsh, Welsh, White, Wolfe and Wyse

That's it for this week, I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

Section 2: The Counties of Ireland

A Roadtrip through 17 Irish Counties-Part 1

August 4, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are from here in County Cork. We got back late last night from a great road trip during which we covered 17 of the 32 counties in Ireland. We travelled from south to north and back down again (you can see our route in the enclosed map).

And that's what I'd like us to talk about today—the Counties of Ireland. Which county in Ireland does your family come from? Whenever I ask that question, the answers come in by the hundreds! We all seem to have a very strong emotional tie to the counties in our heritage.

But let's get it straight, counties were put into place merely as a means of administration. It was a way to divide land for taxation and grant purposes. Today, however, we're going to stick with the stories of the counties and the surnames and families associated with each. Now, don't worry, I won't keep you here all day going through all of the 17 counties we travelled through. We'll start with the first

The Counties of Ireland

five counties on our trip this week and then cover the others over the next few weeks.

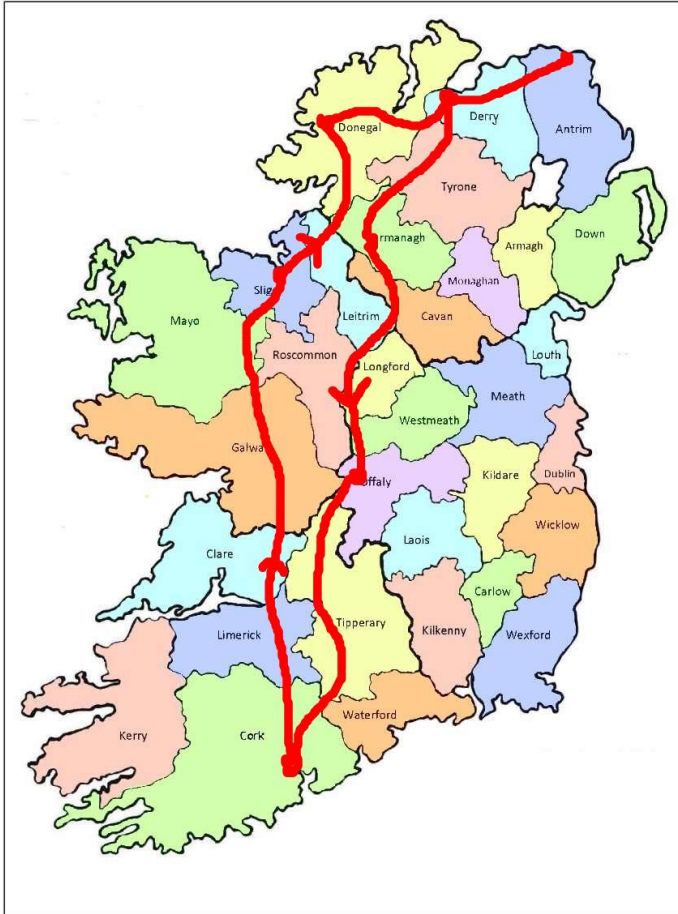


Figure 1 Our 17 County Trip

Remember that before the arrival of the Normans in the 1200's, there were no counties in Ireland. There were five provinces and a whole string of independent kingdoms. In general, counties were made by combining smaller Gaelic territories in a way that suited the Norman-English

administration at the time and had little to do with older tribal boundaries.

County Cork.

Cork is the largest county in Ireland. Before it became a county of Ireland, it was part of the Kingdom of Desmond, ruled by the McCarthy family and their princely septs of the:

O'Sullivan, O'Donoghue, O'Callaghan, O'Keefe, McAuliffe, O'Donovan, O'Mahony, O'Driscoll, O'Crowley, MacSweeney, O'Leary, O'Healy and O'Riordan families.

One of your families?

After the Norman invasion in the 12th century, the McCarthy clan were pushed west into what is now West Cork and County Kerry while the north and east of County Cork were taken by the FitzGerald, who became the Earls of Desmond. The FitzGerald had a number of other Norman families under their lordship such as the Roches, Condons and Barrys.

Like many of the counties of Ireland, County Cork gets its name from its main city, Cork, which comes from the Irish "Corcaigh" meaning "marshy ground". The County of Cork was "shired" by the 1200's but was officially created in 1606.

County Limerick.

We then crossed into County Limerick just north of the

town of Charleville. From the 4th to the 12th century, the ancient Gaelic kingdom of the Uí Fidgente was approximately the same as the modern County Limerick. After losing a two century conflict with the neighbouring O'Briens of the Dal gCais, most of the rulers fled for County Cork (including the Collins and O'Donovan family groupings). Their lands were almost immediately occupied by the FitzGeralds and other Norman families such as the Delanceys and Burkes, who permanently prevented their return.

Limerick City, which gives County Limerick its name, was founded by the Vikings in 922 AD. The County of Limerick was shired by the 1200's by the Normans, but only officially became a county in 1609 AD.

County Clare.

Just north of the city of Limerick we arrive in County Clare. County Clare was originally part of the Kingdom of Connacht ruled by the Uí Fiachrach Aidhne tribe, but was annexed to the Kingdom of Munster and settled by the Dal gCais in the mid-10th century. It was renamed Thomond, which translates as “north Munster”. This was the time of Brian Boru, the most famous High King of Ireland. From 1118 AD onwards the Kingdom of Thomond became the stomping ground of the O'Brien Clan.

The various families associated with the O'Briens

included:

O'Dea, McMahan, McNamara, McGarry, O'Grady, Hogan, Considine and Lynch.

One of the most striking things you notice as you travel through County Clare is the sheer number of castles. They seem to appear every couple of miles. This indicates just what a volatile area this was, with lines of power constantly being challenged by the various Gaelic families and the nearby Normans.

Thomond was handed over to the English Government in 1543 AD and the area became the county we know today as Clare. The name Clare comes from the Irish "Clár" and is derived from the area around the modern town of Clarecastle.

County Galway.

Pushing further north, we arrived in County Galway. Nowadays, Galway is part of the province of Connaught. However, if we go back to a time to before the arrival of the Normans—there was no County Galway, but there was the Kingdom of Connaught. And this Kingdom was ruled over by the O'Connors.

Today, if you travel through County Galway, you might notice a county with three distinct personalities:

- Galway City itself. This was built up by the Burke

The Counties of Ireland

family and the "tribes of Galway" who were mostly a Norman merchant class (is your family one of the Tribes of Galway?)

- East Galway. This was the kingdom of Uí Maine—ruled over by the O'Kellys.
- Iar Connacht or Connemara. A kingdom ruled over by the O'Flahertys.

In 1556 AD the Kingdom of Connacht was broken up into the County of Galway was formed.

Our final county for today is...

County Mayo.

Like Galway, County Mayo was originally part of the ancient Kingdom of Connaught. The chief kings in the area at that time were the O'Malleys and O'Dowds. Funny enough, there is a Mayo Village which gives the county its name, but all that is left of this village are the ruins of Mayo Abbey. Maigh Eo means "plain of the Yew trees", the Yew being a tree that's often associated with churches and abbeys.

County Mayo came under Norman control in 1235 AD and this Norman control meant the demise of many Gaelic lords and chieftains, chiefly the O'Connors of Connacht. During the 1230's, the Normans under Richard Burke invaded and settled the area introducing new families such as:

A Letter from Ireland

*Burke, Gibbons, Barrett, Staunton, Prendergast, Walsh, Morris,
Joyce, Costello and Price.*

These Norman names are still common in County Mayo today. Like Galway, County Mayo was formed with the breakup of Connaught in 1556.

Right, we'll take a breather there and continue with our trip next week—passing over into County Sligo.

I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

A Roadtrip through 17 Irish Counties-Part 2

August 11, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are from here in County Cork. We've finally finished our two weeks of travelling around Ireland and spent the last four days in Dingle, County Kerry. A wonderful part of Ireland, maybe you've been there before?

However, this week we continue with our road trip from last week. We move on to the counties of Sligo, Donegal, Leitrim and Fermanagh. As before, we'll stick with the stories of the counties as well as the names and families associated with each.

County Sligo.

We left County Mayo and headed over the "border" into County Sligo. Sligo is a pocket-sized gem of a county tucked away up in the north-west of Ireland. The county itself was formed in 1585 AD and is named after the main port town

of Sligo.

The first thing you notice about Sligo is the amazing array of megalithic tombs and related stone-age remains. So many layers of history surround you, all with the backdrop of wonderful altar mountains like Ben Bulbin. Maybe you've visited and experienced these natural wonders for yourself?

Before it became a county, the territory was originally under the MacDermot clan, who were then replaced by the Norman Burkes in the twelfth century. It was then claimed by a branch of the O'Connors (lots of O'Connor clan branches throughout Ireland), who ruled as under-lords to the O'Donnells of Tir Connail. Sligo county avoided plantation and settlement in the 17th century, so you still tend to find a majority of Gaelic surnames in the county.

The county is also strongly linked with the name of the poet W.B. Yeats, the Nobel prize-winning poet, who is actually buried in the village of Dromcliffe. It's hard to avoid his presence on the tourist trail wherever you go. Other surnames associated with the county include:

O'Dowd, Clancy, Harte, Burke, McDonagh, O'Hara, Mulrooney, O'Gara, Waters, Brebheny and McSharry.

Are your folks from County Sligo?

County Leitrim.

The drive today from the town of Sligo eastwards to Leitrim

is one of the most beautiful drives in the world. You head into a valley surrounded by lovely altar mountains and through wild green wooded valleys. This was probably close to the way Leitrim looked before the County was formed in 1565 AD from the west part of the then Kingdom of Breifne.

The O'Rourkes ruled this territory for more than 700 years until their final dispossession in the seventeenth century. Their lands were granted to English landlords such as Villiers and Hamilton at that time, but the planned settlement of English planters never really took off.

The most striking thing for me is the story that the population numbers tell us about County Leitrim:

- 1841 (pre-famine): Population 155,000
- 1851 (post-famine): Population 112,000
- 2002 : Population 26,000
- 2011: Population 31,798

These numbers really highlight the shocking overpopulation (and poverty) that existed in the county prior to the famine. Since the famine, the population remained in decline all the way to 2002 and then became the fastest growing county in Connaught in recent years. But there are still only 32,000 people in the county today. Family surnames associated with the county include:

Mulvey, Rooney, McGovern, McHugh, McKeon, Reynolds and

Kiernan.

Are your people from County Leitrim?

County Donegal.

Things start to get much wilder in Donegal! As we drove north and west, the country became more mountainous and boggy. Road signs started to appear in Irish. We have arrived in the land of Tír Chonaill!

County Donegal is famous for being the home of the Clann Ó Domhnaill (the O'Donnell Clan). Up until the early 1600's, the O'Donnells remained one of the most powerful Gaelic families in Ireland. In early times, the area was part of the kingdom of Aileach founded by Conall and Eoghan, the two sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Eoghan took Tyrone (Tír Eoghain, "Eoghan's land") and the Inishowen peninsula, while Conall took the rest of the modern county, which became Tír Chonaill or "Conall's land".

The modern County Donegal was created in 1585 AD by amalgamating the old Kingdom of Tír Chonaill with the old Lordship of Inishowen (ruled by the O'Doherty clan). Based at Donegal Castle, the power of the O'Donnell Kings only ended in September 1607 AD, following an episode known as the "Flight of the Earls" from near Rathmullan. This incident is often seen as the end of the reign of the Gaelic chieftains in Ireland.

The county was one of those 'planted' during the

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Plantation of Ulster from around 1610 AD onwards and you will find pockets of Ulster Scots settlement in towns like Ramelton. Other surnames associated with the county include:

Gallagher, O'Boyle, MacSweeney, McFall, McLaughlin, O'Doherty, Gillespie, Breslin, Bonar, Brannan and McDaid.

Are your folks from County Donegal?

County Fermanagh.

We passed into county Fermanagh at the town of Blacklion on the border with County Cavan. The last time we crossed the river that separates Northern Ireland from the Republic was back in 2008. Back then, the remnants of 30 foot high lookout posts looked out over the border. Although they were no longer in use, they provided a very physical reminder of the "troubles" that affected this area of the country over so many decades. When we cross the river today in 2013, the lookout towers are demolished and there are no signs to suggest you are crossing from one political jurisdiction to another. Just a "Welcome to County Fermanagh". How things have changed for the better!

County Fermanagh comes from the Irish "Fir Manach" which means "men of Manach" and was a stronghold of the Maguire clan up until the early 1600's. They had their main castle in the modern town of Enniskillen. However on the confiscation of Gaelic lands, the county was divided

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between Scottish and English undertakers and the native Irish. The chief settler families to benefit under the new divisions were the families of Blennerhasset, Cole, Hume, Butler and Dunbar. Other names common in the county include:

Rooney, McGovern, McGoldrick, McCartan, Johnston, Nixon, Ferguson and Irvine.

Is your family from Fermanagh?

That's it for this week, I'll see you next week when we continue with our trip around the counties of Ireland, heading even further north and east! :)

Slán, Mike...

A Roadtrip through 17 Irish Counties-Part 3

August 18, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are from a bright sunny morning in County Cork. Our road trip of two weeks ago seems like a while ago, but many of the memories will last for years to come!

As we continue our road trip around Ireland this morning, we move to the counties of Derry, Antrim and Tyrone. As before, we'll stick with the stories of the counties and the names and families associated with each.

County Derry.

First, let's get something out of the way, why am I calling this County "Derry" as opposed to "Londonderry"? Well, simply because that's the way I was brought up in the Republic of Ireland. History has evolved to this point that people of a Nationalist tradition in the North and South will always call it Derry while those of a Unionist tradition will

always call it "Londonderry". For those of you whose ancestors came from this county or left on ships from the port, you will always see "Londonderry" on documents. That was the official name of the time. However, if you visit the city of Derry today, the authorities are at pains to call it Derry/Londonderry.

And what a city! Have you visited? It has an intact walled town on the banks of the River Foyle. It's a city of music, culture and very, very friendly people. We ended up staying for 3 nights!

The place-name Derry comes from the old Irish "Daire" meaning "oak-grove". It was once part of the area known as Tír Eoghain (Eoghan's land) after one of the sons of the Niall of the Nine Hostages. The land here was in the hands of the O'Cahans (Kanes) until the 1600's. This area, along with most of Ulster, was the most strongly Gaelic area of Ireland until the 17th century. The Normans never really made an impact here. But with the overthrow of the Earls (O'Neill and O'Donnell), the plantation of the lands started in earnest with English and Scottish planters.

In 1610 AD, the livery companies of the city of London agreed to plant the area, and the county of "Londonderry" was established. The native Gaels were moved on (in theory) as new towns were established and an influx of English and Scottish settlers began. The thing is though, many of the planters realised the benefit of leaving the native Gaels to work on their land (although often illegal)

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and so many Gaelic surnames remained in the places where their forefathers had been for a thousand years before.

As well as Kane, other surnames associated with the county include:

Baird, Boyd, Braden, Breen, Cowan, Crilly, Crow, Cunningham, Doherty, Duddy, Elliott, Friel, Haggerty, Irwin, Johnston, Lyttle, McCloskey, McEldowney, McEhvaney, McKinnon, McLaughlin, McMillan, McQueary, Moody, O'Donnell, Reilly, Stewart, Thompson, Toughill, Warke and Young.

County Antrim.

We drove along the north coast leaving Derry behind and moved into County Antrim—heading for the Giants' Causeway. People often ask "Do you see a difference between the North and the Republic?" I must admit, one of the differences I always notice is the look of neatness in the North (a bit like what you will see in the "home counties" of England). You definitely feel like you are somewhere else. Then we drive through a town with Union Jack flags flying from every pole and house and the pavement curbs painted in blue, white and red, you realise that you are now in a town or village with a unionist majority.

County Antrim is named after its former county town, Antrim. The counties of Antrim and Down (east of the River Bann) were settled by Scottish planters long before

the plantations began in earnest in other parts of Ireland. This is a place where the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has the largest religious denomination.

In the early Middle Ages, southern County Antrim was part of the Kingdom of Ulidh (which gives Ulster its name) and was ruled by the clans of Keenan and Donlevy. The north of the county was part of Dál Riada, which stretched into western Scotland. A branch of the O'Neills of Tyrone migrated to south Antrim in the 14th century, and ruled it for a time. Their family was called "O'Neill Clannaboy". A Gallowglass sept, the MacDonnells, were the most powerful in north Antrim. The cultural diversity of the area can be seen clearly in the sheer variety of surnames associated with the county (643 Antrim surnames registered in 1890 AD, by comparison with Tipperary which had 133). Names such as (I thought I'd put all of our Antrim readers names in to make a point about this diversity):

*Adams Allen Allingham Armour Barnard Barnett Black Blair Boyd
Brown Brownley Campbell Close Craig Cranford Crossett Crowe Curistan
Devlin Dixon Duffy Entrikin Fosters Gibson Gilmore Gilpin Griggs
Haney Hamilton Harland Hawthorne Hull Hurson Irvine Jamieson
Jobnston Kell Kernahan Knox Larkin Lavery Leighton Lucas Lynn
Mackle McAteer McAuley McBride McCaffery McCaugherty McClements
McCluskey McConaghie McConnell McConway McCormick McCracken
McCurdy McDonald McDonnell McDuff McFarlane McGee McIlwee
McKay McKeown McNair McQuillan McSpadden Meechan Molyneux
Moore Noble O'Hara O'Neill Patterson Perry Savage Scally Scott Simpson*

Strawbridge Telford Thompson Todd Traynor Trimble Wales Wilson

County Tyrone.

One of the first things we did when we came to Tyrone was visit the "Ulster American Folk Park" near Omagh. Have you been there? In a way, it represents the early history and prehistory of the United States. You quickly realise how much the Ulster Scots emigrants (many of whom came from this county) formed much of the attitude of the frontier as well as the values that have become enshrined in the US constitution. These Ulster Scots firmly identified themselves as Irish (as opposed to Scottish) when they arrived in these colonies. Their families had lived in Ireland for up to six generations. In the period up to 1780 AD, it is estimated that 250,000 Ulster Scots left these parts for the US colonies.

County Tyrone is the heartland of what was O'Neill country for more than a thousand years. The county gets its name from the ancient division of the north-west of the country between the two sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages, Conall and Eoghan. Most of what is now Donegal became Tír Conaill, Conall's land, while the remainder went to Eoghan. It was the defeat in 1603 AD of the rebellion led by Hugh O'Neill that marked the final collapse of the old Gaelic order. His lands were confiscated and the Plantation of Ulster began ten years later. Given the history of the county, a wide variety of English, Scottish and

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Irish surnames are associated with it. Names such as:

*Barclay Bradley Calboun Carlin Carlon Carolin Carson Cochrane
Corr Crawford Devlin Dungannon Earley Early Ferguson Findley
Galleen Gibboney Gibson Gilchrist Gorman Greer Hackett Hamill
Haston Johnston Kennedy Lafferty Lambert Laverty Logan
Loughran Macklam Mallon Martin McAleer McCaffrey McCarron
McCook McCormick McCusker McElbatton McGarrity McGinley
McGlynn McGrath McGuckin McGurren McHugh McKinney
McSorley Mellon Murray Neville Nickell O'Brien O'Neill Paisley
Porneroy Quinn Scott Sharkey Shea Shinnors Skivington Snodgrass
Thompson Wallace Watters and Wilson*

I'll see you next week when we start to head south again!

Slán, Mike...

A Roadtrip through 17 Irish Counties-Part 4

August 25, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are on a bit of a drizzly morning here in County Cork. Are you familiar with "The Lord of the Rings" or "Game of Thrones"? Well, this morning's newsletter may sound a little "middle earth" as we are heading into the ancient "Middle Kingdom" of Ireland.

The weather here is definitely moving towards the chilly end. I'm having a nice cup of Barry's tea here to wake me up, how about you?

In the original Gaelic province divisions Mide was the fifth province and covered the modern counties Westmeath, as well as most of Longford and a part of County Cavan. That's where we're heading as we continue our Irish road-trip this morning. As before, we'll stick with the stories of the counties as well as the names and families associated with each. Do your families come from any one of these counties?

County Cavan.

We crossed the political border from County Fermanagh into County Cavan one bright Sunday morning. It was a quiet day on the roads. One of the things you notice in Cavan is that the horizon is never more than a few hundred yards away, making the countryside feel local and intimate (a bit like "middle earth" from Lord of the Rings. OK, I'll stop the LOTR references now!

We are now in O'Reilly country! In ancient times, the area of Cavan was part of the kingdom of East Bréifne (also called Breffni O'Reilly after the ruling family). In fact, the county is still often referred to as the Breffni County. Historically, Cavan was part of the western province of Connacht, but was transferred to Ulster in 1584 AD when Bréifne was shired. It became County Leitrim to the west and County Cavan to the east. This is an Chabháin in Irish, and the county was named after the town of Cavan.

The plantation of Ulster in the early 1600's saw the building of several new towns such as Cootehill, Killeshandra and Virginia—and they still have a "planter feel" in their layout and buildings today. This is a county in the modern republic where you see a heavy influence from those plantation times. A lot of English and Scottish settlers moved into the county and established a prosperous flax and linen industry. O'Reilly, however, still remains the single most common name in the county. Other surnames associated with the county include:

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*Argue Armstrong Baron Bradley Brady Campbell Clark Cleary
Clerkin Conaty Cosgrove Denning Doonan Doyle Fitzpatrick
Flannagan Flood Gargan Gillick Gilsenan Greene Hand Hanna
Heaslip Hill Hughes Kernan Kiernan Lally Lawlers Leddy Lynch
Maguire McBrien McCabe McCullough McDonald McDonnell
McEvoy McGinn McGovern McNally Murtagh Quinn Rogers
Sheridan Seefin Smith/McGowan Sullivan Thompson Tweedy
Varley*

Is your family name here?

County Longford.

When I was growing up, Longford had a real reputation as a Republican county. And when you look at its history, it is referred to as a centre for the rebellion of 1798 AD and a key county for activity during the Irish war of Independence. Longford has had a harsh past, losing almost one-third of its population between 1841 AD and 1851 AD to starvation and emigration. Like many counties in Ireland, this "drip" of emigration continued all the way to the late twentieth century. By 1986, the population fell to 25% of the 1841 AD population.

This county area was traditionally the territory of the O'Farrell clan. The county was created in 1564 AD, taking its name from the principal town, "Longfort Uí Fearghail" which translates as "O'Farrell's landing place".

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The association of the area with the O'Farrells goes back to the 800's and despite the arrival of the Normans in the 1100's, the O'Farrells ruled until the seventeenth century. At that time, a limited plantation of English settlers took place. Surnames associated with the county include:

*Adams Abern Blake Brady Campbell Cullinan Duignan Farrell
Finsely Gaynor Ginty Heaney Kane Keane Keating Kelly Kiernan
Killian Larkin Loftus Lynch McCreanor McGann McGovern
McKenna Mulvihill Murray Nulty O'Farrell O'Reilly O'Rourke
Quinn Radigan Rodgers Rudden Seery Smith Walsh Whitney York*

Is your family name here?

County Westmeath

As we crossed from County Longford into Westmeath, we headed in the direction of the mighty River Shannon, which forms the western border of the county. Specifically, we headed towards the town of Athlone.

County Westmeath covers what was the northern part of the province of Mide (which literally means "middle") and was known as Teffia. This area always had the Gaelic Irish chiefs in the driving seat (apart from brief interludes) and among them were the McGeoghegans, O'Currys and O'Mulleadys. However, after the final defeat by Cromwell in the 1600's, there were huge confiscations of land and hardly any of the original Gaelic or Norman proprietors survived.

The Counties of Ireland

Many emigrants from Westmeath made their way to Argentina in the nineteenth century, where their sheep-rearing skills were much valued (and hello to all of our Argentinean readers—we have quite a few!). Surnames associated with the county include:

*Abearn Begley Bohan Brady Broder Brougham Byrnes Callaban
Cashin Cormack Cumiskey Dalton Daly Darcy Delamer Dooley
Earley Farrell Flynn Foley Gallagher Geoghagen Geraghty Gorman
Grehan Heaney Jeffries Keboe Kenny Killoughy Lavin
MacGeoghagan MacNamee Malone McGuigan Mulball Nugent
O'Farrell O'Rourke Redden Reilly Rush Stanley*

Is your family name here?

That's from our trip this week through Ireland's "Middle Kingdom". Next we continue our trip south and cover the final counties before we arrive back home in Cork.

I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

A Roadtrip through 17 Irish Counties-Part 5

September 1, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are from here in County Cork on the first day of September. I guess the Autumn is finally upon us with all the children heading back to school in these parts. All the same, it's a lovely day here and I do hope you are being treated kindly by the weather in your part of the world.

Today, we're going to finish our road-trip around 17 counties of Ireland. As before, we'll stick with the stories of the counties and the names and families associated with each. Do your families come from any one of these counties?

County Offaly.

We headed down through County Offaly on a Sunday morning with one destination in mind—Clonmacnoise! Do you know it? Have you been there? Neither Carina nor I had

the opportunity to visit in the past and we were more than ready!

County Offaly was originally known as King's County when it was first shired. It was only in 1922 that it assumed the name Offaly or "Uí Failghe" which reflected the Gaelic tribe who inhabited these parts. Up to the 1600's, the powerful Gaelic families in the area were the O'Carrolls, O'Connors and O'Molloys.

In a beautiful setting on the banks for the River Shannon you will find the monastic city of Clonmacnoise. For hundreds of years before the arrival of the Normans it was one of the greatest centres of learning in Europe. It was a place full of life, learning and pilgrimage. One of the things we noticed as we walked the site and buildings were the imprints that the Gaelic Kings and chieftains of Ireland left on this area. You still hear them in the names of the various buildings scattered around the site: McCarthy's Tower, Temple Connor, O'Rourkes Tower, Temple Kelly and so on. It also holds the remains of the last High King of Ireland, Rory O'Connor (as well as his father Turlough) and reminds us of a time when Ireland was composed of a number of smaller kingdoms brought together under one High King.

If you want to experience a place where you can both feel and reach into Ireland's ancient past, Clonmacnoise is the place to come.

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Surnames associated with the county include:

*Carroll Coleman Condron Connolly Corcoran Coghlan Culgin Daly
Dempsey Dooley Dunne Egan Flannagan Flattery Kelly Lane Lalor Loney
Lynam Malloy Moren O'Bannon O'Carroll O'Madden Rafter Warren*

Is your family surname here?

County Tipperary.

It's a long way to Tipperary! But when you get there, it's well worth the journey. Tipperary is a land of mountains, plains, lakes, rivers and wonderful farmland. This last attribute made it very attractive to the native Irish as well as the colonising Normans and English.

Before the Normans arrived, the modern county straddled the kingdom of Thomond (dominated by the O'Briens) and that of Desmond (dominated by the MacCarthys). The county provided the front line of many battles between the two, ending only when the McCarthys were pushed from Tipperary into Cork and Kerry. For most of this period, Cashel, in the south of the county, was the seat of the kings of Munster. With the coming of the Normans, the Butler family made inroads into the north of Tipperary and pushed the O'Briens further west into their original stronghold of Clare. The county was created and named after the town of Tipperary in 1328 AD, making it one of the oldest of the Irish counties.

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As we travelled down through the heart of Tipperary, we passed through the historical towns of Roscrea, Thurles, Cashel and Holy Cross Abbey. The land felt like it might have felt for thousands of years. We were off the beaten track and travelling where you will find no tour buses. Indeed, part of our route was the "Slighe Dhala" which was one of the five ancient roads that travelled from West Munster to the sacred site of Tara in modern County Meath. We ended our trip through Tipperary travelling through the wonderful medieval town of Cahir, with its incredible Butler/O'Brien castle and then made our way across the county bounds back into the county in which we live—Cork—the start of our journey.

Surnames associated with Tipperary include:

*Abern Aylward Bannon Barry Beary Blake Bonney Browne
Brunnock Burgess Butler Cabill Carney Carroll Coady Coffey Colue
Coughlin Cummings Daley Daly Dempsey Doherty Donnelly
Donovan Dwyer Egan Emerson Fannons Field Flynn Fogarty
Galligan Gaynor Giltinane Gleeson Hawkes Hawkins Hayes
Hogan Houliban Hyland Kelly Kennedy Keogh Kirwan Lahy
Lanigan Lonergan Long Luttrell Lynch Macken Mackey Madden
Maher McGrath Meagher Moloney Mooney O'Bannon O'Brien
O'Donnell O'Dwyer O'Gorman O'Halloran O'Mara O'Meara
O'Sullivan Pendergrast Purtill Quinlan Rockett Roughan Ryan
Shea Smeltzer Talbot Tobin Torpey Tracy*

A Letter from Ireland

And that concludes our road-trip around 17 counties of Ireland as we cross the border from Tipperary back into Cork—our starting point.

I do hope you enjoyed our extended trip—and do let me know of your own travels in these counties (although I already have enough replies to fill a book).

We'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike and Carina.

The County Cork Red Herring

December 29, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork on our last Sunday before the New Year! It's nice and calm and frosty here at the moment, a real relief after the storm winds of the last few days. I'm having a cup of straight coffee (the letter this morning involves numbers and calculations!) and I hope you take the time to join me now with your own nice cup of tea or coffee.

This morning we are going to take a look at some trends on our list of surnames and keep it interesting (fingers crossed!).

4600 Irish Surnames.

When you subscribe to this letter for the first time, I invite you to send on the Irish surnames in your family tree and the counties they last lived in (if you know). This has resulted in a list of over 4,600 surnames to date. And it's

starting to get very interesting with plenty of trends and facts emerging from the list. And that's what I want to start sharing with you now.

The County Cork "Red Herring"?

Right away, it's important to mention that over 95% of our readers come from outside Ireland. You mostly have an ancestor (or two) who left Ireland over the past four centuries and brought their Irish surname with them to Canada, the USA, Argentina, Australia, England, Scotland, New Zealand and so on! Many of our readers (maybe you?) have tracked these ancestors, patiently filling in the family tree over the past number of years. So, this morning, I want to tackle a trend from our list that may be of interest to you if you are one of these people! I call this trend the "County Cork Red Herring".

Let me explain. When I look at our list, I see that about 18% of all the names provided by our readers give County Cork as the County last lived in. Now, this number seems high as there are 32 counties in Ireland (do the maths!). To put it in context, there are about 36 million US citizens today who declare themselves of Irish descent and this means that 6.5 million of those have county Cork prominently in their family tree.

Let's Dig A Little Deeper.

However, when I look at the list of "Cork" names given for our list, I notice that while many of these names are very typical for Cork, many are very unusual for Cork. Ireland is like that, you can track the origin of a lot of our surnames down to their most likely area/county of origin.

Let me illustrate. Here is a list of all of the "County Cork" names given by our readers (maybe your surname is here):

*Ahearn/Aheren/Ahern Allen Barr Barrett Barron Barry Bartley
Beatty Bergen Bluitt Bolger Brady Brannelly Bransfield Brennan
Brogan Brown Browne Buckley Burdin Burke Byrnes*

*Cabill Cain Callanan Camier Cantey Carey Carmody Carrigan
Carroll Carter Casey Cashman Cassidy Cavanaugh Clancy Clarke
Cleary Cleland Coakley Coffee/Coffey Collins Comerford Condon
Connell Connery Connolly Connor/Connors Conway Coppinger
Corbett Corkery Corridan Costigan Cotter Cottom Coughlan
Coughlin Coyle Creeden Cremin Cronin Crossen Crowe Crowley
Culliton Cummings*

*Dabney Daly Daugherty Davis Deneen Dennehy Dennison
Desmond Deveney Doheny Donahoe Donahue Donohue Donovan
Driscoll Duffy Dugan Duggan Dunn Dwyer Early Eckley Egan
Ellis Fane Farmer Farrell Fegan Ferrigan FitzGerald Fitzpatrick
Flaherty Flanagan Fleming Fletcher Foley*

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*Gaffney Gallagher Galligan Galway Gaughan Gerrity Gibbons Gill
Gilleran Gilman Glavin Goggin Green Greer Griffin Haggerty
Hallahan Haloran Haney Harrington Harris Hartigan Hawkes
Hayes Healy Heard Heffernan Hegarty Hennessy Herlihy Hickey
Holland Holohan Horgan Hourihan/Hourihane Howard Huey
Hurley Irish Jeffers Jeffrey Joyce Joynt*

*Kearney Keefe Kelleher Kelley/Kelly Kennedy Kenny Keohane
Kieley/Kiley King Kingston Kirk Lalley Landers Lane Lawless
Leach Leahy Lee Lordan Luddy Lynch Lyons MacAuliffe
MacDonald Madden Mahoney Malone Manning Mannix Marnell
Martin McAninley McCann McCarthy/McCarty McCartney
McCloskey McCormick McCotter McDermott McDevitt McGarry
McGinn McGinnis McGlynn McGrath McGraw McIntyre
McKenzie McLaughlin McMabon McThreinfer Meehan Mehegan
Mobally Molloy Moran Morey Morrissey Moynahan Mulcahy
Mulchinaugh Mulchinock Mullarkey Mullen Mullins Murphy
Murray*

*Nally Neely Newman Noonan Nugent O'Brian/O'Brien/O'Bryan
O'Callaghan O'Colmain O'Connell O'Conner O'Connor O'Cronin
O'Donnell O'Donovan O'Driscoll O'Flaherty O'Halloran O'Hearn
O'Herrons O'Kaye O'Keefe O'Lalley O'Leary O'Mahony O'Malley
O'Neil/O'Neill/O'Niell O'Rourke O'Shea O'Sullivan O'Tuama*

The Counties of Ireland

*Parker Pension Phelan Phillips Power Poythrus Price Quinlan
Quinn Quirk Reardon Regan Riley Riordan Roach/Roche Rogers
Ryan Rylee Saunders Savage Scanlan Shea Shearin Sheehan Sisk
Slattery Smith Snee Stanton Steele Stewart Stone Sullivan Sweeney
Taylor Terry Thomas Tooby Tooker Toomey Tracey Tuckey Walsh
Ward Whalen White Wholey Winters*

Now, here is my breakdown of this list into three parts:

1. Surnames Very Typical In Cork

*Abearn/Aberan/Abern Allen Barrett Barry Buckley Cabill
Camier Cantey Carey Collins Comerford Condon Connolly
Coppinger Cotter Coughlan Coughlin Creedon Cremin Cronin
Crowley Deneen Dennehy Desmond Donoghue Donovan Driscoll
Dugan/Duggan*

*FitzGerald Fleming Foley Haloran Harrington Hayes Healy
Hennessy Herliby Hickey Horgan Houriban/Houribane Hurley
Jeffers Keefe Kelleher Keohane Kingston Leahy Lee Lordan Lynch
Lyons MacCarthy MacAuliffe Mahoney Manning Mannix
McCarthy/McCarty McCotter Moynahan Murphy Nugent
O'Brian/O'Brien/O'Bryan O'Callaghan O'Connell O'Cronin*

*O'Donovan O'Driscoll O'Halloran O'Keefe O'Leary O'Mahony
O'Shea O'Sullivan O'Tuama Phelan Reardon/Riordan Regan
Roach/Roche Savage Sheehan Sullivan Sweeney Tooby Toomey*

Walsb

2. Surnames Somewhat Typical In Cork

*Barr Brady Brown Browne Burke Callanan Carmody Carroll Casey
Cashman Cavanaugh Clancy Coakley Coffee/Coffey Comerford
Connell Connor/Connors Conway Corkery Costigan Culliton Daly
Dunn Dwyer Egan Flaberty Gaffney Glavin Goggin Griffin
Hartigan Hawkes Heffernan Hegarty Kearney Kelley Kelly Kennedy
Kieley Kiley Lane Martin McGrath McMahon Mulcahy Mullen
Mullins Newman Nugent O'Conner/O'Connor O'Flaberty
O'Neil/O'Neill/O'Niell O'Rourke Phillips Power Quinlan Quinn
Quirk Ryan Shea Shearin Slattery Smith Stanton Whalen Winters*

3. Surnames Unusual In Cork

*Barron Bartley Beatty Bergen Bluitt Bolger Brannelly Bransfield
Brennan Brogan Burdin Byrnes Cain Carrigan Carter Cassidy
Clarke Cleary Cleland Comerford Connery Corbett Corridan
Cottom Coyle Crossen Crowe Cummings Dabney Daugherty Davis
Dennison Deveney Doherty Duffy Early Eckley Ellis
Fane Farmer Farrell Fegan Ferrigan Fitzpatrick Flanagan Fletcher
Gallagher Galligan Galway Gaughan Gerrity Gibbons Gill
Gilleran Gilman Green Greer Haggerty Hallahan Haney Harris*

The Counties of Ireland

*Heard Holland Holohan Howard Huey Irish Jeffrey Joyce Joynt
Kenny King Kirk Lalley Landers Lawless Leach Luddy
MacDonald Madden Malone Marnell McAninley McCann
McCartney McCloskey McCormick McDermott McDevitt McGarry
McGinn McGinnis McGlynn McGraw McIntyre McKenzie
McLaughlin McThreinfer*

*Meehan Mebegan Mohally Molloy Moran Morey Morrissey
Mulchinaugh Mulchinock Mullarkey Murray Nally Neely Noonan
Nugent O'Colmain O'Donnell O'Hearn O'Herrons O'Kaye
O'Lalley O'Malley Parker Pension Poythrus Price Riley Rogers
Rylee Saunders Scanlan Sisk Snee Steele Stewart Stone Taylor Terry
Thomas Tooker Tracey Tuckey Ward White Wholey*

As you can see, that last list of names (unusual in Cork) is a very long one. Now, I may not be 100% accurate on this (85% plus) but these are names that readers believe are names of their ancestors that come from Cork. So, what is going on? Well, I don't want to jump to many firm conclusions yet, my guess is that the port of Queenstown (Cobh) has a lot to do with it. Queenstown/Cobh was probably the most important exit port for many of Ireland's emigrants. Over a million people left there over hundreds of years. Many of these emigrants may have informed their families that County Cork was the place they came from (which was true in a way).

A Letter from Ireland

So, if you are a little "suspicious" as to whether your ancestors actually lived in County Cork, their actual surname provides you with a good clue. Then track down that surname to the part of Ireland where it is more prevalent and you may break down a brick wall or two in your genealogy research. As I mentioned, this is only a theory of mine at the moment and I will keep digging. What do you think?

That's it for now.

Slán, Mike... talk next week! :)

The Two Graces of County Mayo

April 27, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte and I hope you are doing well. What a lovely Sunday morning here in Cork. The leaves are out on most of the trees and the grass is just starting to get "troublesome" again! I'm having a cup of delicious water from the well—back to basics—but I do hope you'll have a cup of whatever you fancy and join me now.

Let me start by asking you to do something. Close your eyes and think of Ireland. Let the images and sounds come wafting into your consciousness. Perhaps you are seeing green fields with stone walls? Or a wild blue sea beating off high cliffs and flowing onto white sands? How about empty bog land stretching to the mountains across lonely small roads? Or maybe colourful villages containing lively pubs with the best musicians around?

I'm sure you have many more sights and sounds to add to these few! I bring this up as we recently travelled to a county where you will find all of the stories, pictures, history and

scenery of Ireland within its border. That is County Mayo.

Do your ancestors come from the county?

County Mayo.

Carina and I were in Mayo last weekend driving a part of the new "Wild Atlantic Way" which is Europe's new longest (and prettiest!) scenic drive. Now, while Mayo is the third largest County in Ireland, it is also one of the emptiest. Its' population dropped from 388,887 in 1841 to 110,713 in 1991, mostly due to emigration. Let's put this in perspective (and see if I can get this right so early in the morning!):

- In the USA, approximately 37 Million people identify themselves as being of Irish descent.
- In our Your Irish Heritage list (now over 6,000 names) approximately 10% have names that came from County Mayo originally.
- This suggests, by extension, that around 3.7 million of people of Irish descent in the USA alone would report County Mayo surnames in their family tree.

That's a lot of people spread around the world from one small county. People with surnames like:

Walsh, Gallagher, Kelly, O'Malley, Moran, Duffly, McHale,

Gibbons, Joyce, O'Connor, Conway, Higgins, Murphy, Bourke, O'R

illy, Gardner, Durkan, O'Doherty and McHugh

which were the top surnames in Mayo in 1890. But, this morning we are going to focus on the holders of two of these names: Kelly and O'Malley. Two of County Mayo's finest ladies—one became a Queen, and the other a Princess.

The Two Graces Of County Mayo.

In the year 1530 AD, Grace O'Malley was born on the shores of Clew Bay in County Mayo. Her family took their name from the country and tribe of Uí Maille, Grace was to become known as both the Queen of Uí Maille and the Queen of Connaught during her lifetime. She was also later popularised as the "Pirate Queen". There is so much that I could write about this lady, her exploits and legends, but not in this short letter.

Instead, let me show you a picture I posted on Facebook. It is a picture from Easter Sunday morning last taken outside Carraigahowley Castle near Newport in County Mayo.



Figure 2 Carraigahowley Castle

In 1566 AD, Grace O'Malley was married to Richard Bourke. The Bourke family were overlords of the O'Malleys and this marriage, a second for Grace, was probably motivated by an ambition to grow her wealth and standing. Bourke was owner of Carraigahowley Castle which was located in a sheltered harbour and very suitable for the hiding of pirate ships. After only one year of marriage, O'Malley and her followers locked themselves in Carraigahowley Castle and Grace called down to Burke, "Richard Burke, I dismiss you." Those words had the effect of ending their marriage under Brehon Law. But by that law she also got to keep what was already in her possession—and that included the castle and lands around it. Grace went on to live for many more decades and based herself in her new stronghold. She most likely died at Carraigahowley Castle around the year 1603 AD.

Five Miles Up The Road.

Just five short miles up the road from Carraigahowley Castle—near to the town of Newport, you will find the townland of Drimurla. This was the birthplace of one John Peter Kelly. John was an unskilled labourer who left his birthplace and home in 1887 and emigrated to Philadelphia in the USA. In November 12, 1929, his granddaughter, Grace Patricia Kelly was born. This is, of course, the beautiful movie star Grace Kelly who between 1951 and 1956 went on to star in eleven Hollywood movies.

Grace is equally famous for her marriage to Prince Rainier of Monaco. They were married on April 19, 1956 when she also assumed the title of Princess Grace of Monaco. She visited Ireland, including her home place in Drimurla, County Mayo, a number of times before her premature death in 1982. Can you imagine these two Graces, who were near neighbours but across the centuries, sitting down in front of the fire in Carraigahowley Castle? The Queen and the Princess talking about their hopes, dreams, loves and families. Each noticing the strong determination, iron will and ambition in the other. Now that would make a good movie: "The Two Graces of County Mayo".

Talk next week, Slán, Mike... :)

Section 3: Famine and Emigration

Dear Old Skibbereen

July 14, 2013

A very different sort of letter today. My original plan was to talk a little about the pattern of emigration from Ireland over the last 300 years—and how that has been so linked to climate and harvest failures. But, sometimes feelings overtake facts.

As I went through much of the wonderful literature—especially the "Atlas of the Great Irish Famine"—a single photograph jumped out. It was a picture from 2009. In it, the children of a local school, about 80 in total, linked hands around a small green plot in Abbeystrewery cemetery in Skibbereen. They looked like a red daisy chain against the vibrant green of the well-mown plot.

However, buried under that small plot were between 8,000 and 10,000 famine victims—dead from hunger and disease. You really cannot separate feelings from facts when you look at such a picture. My own great-grandparents are buried in this cemetery. Their mothers and fathers would have been alive at the time of these burials. Perhaps yours were too.

Famine and Emigration

As you look at the famines and crop failures of the 1700's and the 1800's which drove many of the population of this island to the four corners of the world—you start to notice the pattern of rent-racking, eviction and land-grabs that amplified these terrible natural disasters so much more. First, the Ulster Scots left their smallholdings in their hundreds of thousands for the colonies and later the Gaelic Irish left in even greater numbers.

It becomes very difficult to articulate the feelings that well up inside. So, it's time to stop. I'll give up on my own words now and turn to the lyrics of the 19th century folk song "Skibbereen":

*"Oh father dear, I oft-times hear you speak of Erin's isle,
Her lofty hills, her valleys green, her mountains rude and wild,
They say she is a lovely land wherein a saint might dwell,
So why did you abandon her, the reason to me tell.
Oh son, I loved my native land with energy and pride,
Till a blight came o'er the praties; my sheep, my cattle died,
My rent and taxes went unpaid, I could not them redeem,
And that's the cruel reason why I left old Skibbereen."*

Do reply if you would like to share any comments or stories. Next week we'll get back to more information on the families of Ireland. For now, I hope you have a safe, healthy and happy week with your family and friends.

I'll see you next week. Slán, Mike...

Your Thoughts for the President of Ireland

November 19, 2013

We headed over to Leamington Spa in England—as our eldest boy—Evan—has emigrated over there as of last August. It was wonderful to see him in his new home for the first time since he left—finding it challenging, but thriving all the same. He is one of the tens of thousands of under-25's who have left Ireland over the past 5 years in search of work and adventure. It seems that this Island of ours just cannot get over its fate as a centre for people emigration over the centuries.

We travelled back by boat and car from Birmingham (any Berminghams out there?) and followed the path that many of the Normans made through Wales to set out for the coast of Ireland. But that's the subject of a later newsletter! Back to today. I suggest you drop what you are doing just now—and go over and put the kettle or a cup of coffee on—as this weeks' newsletter is both special and long!

Last Week I Proposed.

Last week I proposed that we send a letter to the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. This is a man who is the symbolic head of the people of Ireland. He spends most of his days travelling around and meeting people, hearing their stories, connecting with their hopes and concerns. I invited you to pen a paragraph or so that you would like to see in such a letter. I suggested it might include:

- What having Irish roots means to you?
- How you celebrate your Irish heritage around the year?
- Any questions that you have for the people who currently live in Ireland.
- Your hopes and wishes for the future.
- What you feel when you visit Ireland—the good and the not-so-good!
- Any questions you may have for the man who is the symbolic head of the Irish nation.

Well, I already got so many replies, many of which I have included in the rest of this newsletter. Wonderful, heart-felt sentiments about the sense of connection you feel with Ireland, its culture and your heritage.

So, have a read through the following. I will include a "cover letter" and a composite letter that will include most

of the words and sentiments shown in these individual letters. I will then send it off to President Higgins in the next few weeks.

Here are some examples of your wonderful words and feelings:

Your Original Words To Michael D. Higgins.

"Dear President Higgins,

I recently spent a month in your beautiful country, it was not nearly enough time! I am 1/2 Irish, Grandmother McManus from Fermanagh and Grandfather Dunne from Leitrim. I just wish I had asked them more questions about their homeland while they were still alive.

I spent a few days in Belfast and it was so sad to see that the "troubles" still continue. Each night I was there, there were street shutdowns because of suspected packages. To see the murals and the fences was devastating to me. While driving through Sligo one day, I was amazed to see what I perceived to be a SWAT truck and many military personnel around a bank. Found out it was just a money delivery. And in Dublin, the day of the budget announcement, there were more police than I have ever seen anywhere.

The people that I met in my travels were all so warm and helpful, it seems incongruous that there is such a heavy military/police presence needed. I applaud the efforts being made to teach children that we are all alike, regardless of where we live or what church we attend. I loved Lough MacNea's peace monument, "Imagine an island where we

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could all live in peace”.

It seems to me that people who can share such a beautiful dot of land with the world and make the world feel so welcome, and has seen the horrors of wars first hand, people who are outraged at the taking of young children from a birthday party, or a woman dying in childbirth in a hospital, or a shooting, would realize that we cannot change the past. The world changes daily and we must change with it.

I pray that the love the Irish people show to the world can heal the hate between the people themselves.

Go raibh mile maith agat, AnneMarie

Dear President Higgins,

I spent a great deal of time in Ireland (especially Dublin) in 2012. I found all of Ireland welcoming and kind-hearted. I wish I had \$.25 for each pint I was offered. I felt more at home there than in the States. Truly my Irish heritage is valued and appreciated. I even bumped into you at The Nations' Cup at the RDS competition that year. You are not hidden from your people. I love that.

Best wishes, Donna

Dear President Higgins,

I have had the privilege of visiting your beautiful country twice and hated leaving both times. I consider my roots to be in Nenagh, County Tipperary, as that is where my paternal great-grandfather, Thomas

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Egan, lived before emigrating to the United States in 1860. He's one of two people I have thus far been able to trace. The other was my grandmother's grandmother, Anne Larkin, from Dublin. Having Irish blood running through my veins is a very important part of who I am and how I live. It's difficult for the eye to light anywhere and not see something Irish...be it a bodhran, a harp, a claddagh, a Tara brooch, a Celtic cross, the framed copy of The 1916 Proclamation (which I find impossible to read without getting a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes) on my dining room wall, or some other symbolism that identifies the Irish. I soak up as much Irish history as I can. I am fiercely proud to claim Irish blood, knowing the century-long struggles of "our" people. I have no question for you, but I do have a statement... Long Live Ireland and Her People!

Liz

Dear President Higgins,

When I was born, my mother and I lived with my father's parents because my father was in the South Pacific (WWII). As an infant, I spent most of my time on my grandfather's lap. As I got older, I spent my days following him around the apartment and on the floor next to his chair listening to opera. When my grandfather became too ill to sit in a chair, I played on the floor next to his bed. One day my mother took me to the dime store and bought me a wind-up, metal chicken that clucked and laid wooden eggs. When we got home I ran to the bedroom to show my grandfather my new toy. The room was empty and the bed was made. I want to go to Cork City to see where my grandfather lived

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(I know the address) and perhaps discover what made him the kindest man I have ever met.

Sheila

Dear President Higgins:

We were in Europe once and my husband who has a 100% Irish background ran into some Irish men. He stated "Nice to meet you. I'm Irish American." To which they replied " Yeah, lots of rats deserted the ship." He was hurt, yet tried to understand. Is this a common thought or did we just run into some unpleasant ones? We would love to go to Ireland yet now he has expressed thoughts that maybe we wouldn't be welcomed, especially if looking for ancestors? Any thoughts?

Thanks, Doreen

Dear President Higgins,

My Irish roots and heritage mean the world to me. One of the best "exports "from Ireland have been the people over many generations. When they came to America, they brought with them their wonderful gifts of humour and determination and they have used these gifts to make the world a better place. As an Irish American I feel a responsibility to continue by example to instil determination and humour to those who need it.

The Irish people are the kindest people on earth and I try to follow

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in their footsteps. When I visit Ireland I always feel welcome and very safe. I hope and pray that Ireland will remain an example of happiness and kindness which they have achieved through generations of adversity. I pray that whatever is not so good about Ireland will be corrected by her people. I have not seen the "not so good".

Cordially, Mary

Dear President Higgins,

Having Irish roots means the world to my family. The pride of being Irish is so important to my son and husband and now even to my young grandson. My young grandson tells everyone that Ireland and especially Milltown, County Kerry is his land, because that is where his big, big, big papa comes from and that is from the mouth of a seven year old. When we came back from Ireland him and his 8 year old cousin just could not get enough information and they sat for three hours straight wanting information about Ireland and Milltown and wanted pictures.

Each of them had handfuls of information about the family and Ireland and carried it around and shared at school their notes about everything they had. They asked us and wanted the info. We wanted to take breaks and they refused. And now all they talk about is when we can take them for a visit. The pride of Ireland is in the hearts and minds of all ages. We have photos and everything from St. Patrick statues, and a little of everything Irish in our house. Our 14 year old grand- daughter has friends from Ireland on Facebook and they have made the comments and laughed that our family is more Irish and display more things from Ireland than they have in their homes.

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And cook more of the food than they do living in Ireland.

Our hopes for the future is to be able to retire in Ireland and be able to have our children and grandchildren come to visit us and maybe also move to Ireland and have dual citizenship. We are so close to having everything we need except for the church records of his great grandfathers.

When we were in Ireland to visit we were home. And when we had to leave to come home and ever since which has been a year ago our hearts have been heavy because we miss the beautiful country and the most beautiful talented people we have ever met. Ireland truly is a piece of heaven here on earth. And since then we have become good friends with many through Face book from Milltown and that are from the family still living there. Can't wait to go back and meet with them. Such family pride in Ireland. We are truly blessed to be part of the history of your beautiful country.

Helen

Dear President Higgins,

All of my life I have had a sense of connection with Ireland and Irish people. I love every aspect of this heritage. I finally got to visit Ireland this last year and felt like I was home. I will always feel a special connection to this land and my heritage.

Barbara

Dear President Higgins,

To me, having Irish Roots means that I came from a combination of families who all had the same convictions and deep sets of values. They came to the US with the hopes of digging their roots deeper & making better lives for their families. They instilled in me a feeling of fidelity for both countries but a yearning to hold on to the Ireland of my forefathers. I spend a lot of time searching for my families left behind in Ireland without luck. I wonder if those there wonder what happened to those who left or do they care.

Peggy

Dear President Higgins,

I hope everything is well with you. My parents were born in Ireland and came to the US to make a living. I belong to several Irish pages on Facebook. The feedback from some Irish natives is that if I wasn't born there, I'm not really Irish. Well, I understand that since I was born here my nationality is American. Since my parents were born there my ethnicity is Irish. My ma used to say, "If ya got a drop of Irish blood in ya, you're Irish." Maybe you can explain to me why some Irish seem to have a negative attitude towards Irish Americans. Thank you for your time. :)

Joan

Dear President Higgins,

I am very proud of my almost 100% Irish heritage. My father's family emigrated to the colonies pre-American revolution, but I am a fourth generation Irish American on my mother's side. One of my goals in life is to find my Irish relatives and meet them. I wonder if the Irish wonder about their lost relatives like we wonder about them?

Sometime around 1901 my great grandfather, Thomas Nolan, brought his family to the United States where my grandmother was born. I can remember as a child hearing about Bloody Sunday and all I wanted to do was grow up, move to Ireland and join my [brothers and sisters] in their fight for freedom and though I am no longer a child my heart still aches for Irish lives so senselessly taken away throughout the years. I am planning a trip to Ireland in the fall of 2014 for me and my husband's 25th Anniversary, I can only hope that our plans become reality, I would love nothing more than to see the place that holds my heart hostage.

Sincerely, Rebecca

Dear President Higgins,

I have been tracing my family history quite intensely for 3 years now. I have come to know and love your country and these Irish ancestors of mine. My great great-grandfather John Irish was from either Cork or Kilkenny, married Catherine Welsh/Walsh from Kilkenny, and they left Ireland in the mid to late 1840's. I am at a dead end and hope to one day come to your lovely country and search for further connections.

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A proud American Irish, Linda

As I mentioned, I'll include all of everyone's words in a letter and send it off to President Higgins in the next few weeks.

That's it for now! Slán, Mike...I'll see you next week! :)

A Letter to the People of Ireland

December 1, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are—from County Cork on a nice winter's morning. We're looking forward to going out for a hike later on the Sheep's Head peninsula (and getting a few photos!). I hope your day is starting and going well wherever you are. If you are living in the USA—I guess your head is just about clearing as the Thanksgiving holiday and weekend draws to a close! I do hope you had a good break and time with family and friends.

Letter To Michael D. Higgins—President Of Ireland

A few weeks back, I proposed that we send a letter to Michael D. Higgins—a letter through him to the people in Ireland. And we received some truly wonderful thoughts, feelings and sentiments. Here is what happens next. On Friday, December 6th—I will post the letter to President Higgins from the General Post Office in Dublin, the scene of the Easter Rising in 1916. It will contain a "composite

letter" and all the individual letters that you have sent on. Let's see what happens next!

I have included the composite letter below also. Now, I know it's not perfect (!)—but I wanted to capture the many thoughts and feelings found in your individual letters and try to use the original words as much as possible—and do so in a single page:

President Michael D. Higgins,

November 30th, 2013

Áras an Uachtaráin,

Phoenix Park,

Dublin 8

Dear President Higgins,

We are the readers of "Your Irish Heritage". Though we may number only in thousands, we feel our sentiments represent the tens of millions of people of Irish descent throughout the world. A particular line from your inaugural address struck us: "It is my wish to be a President for all of the Irish at home and abroad". We wonder many things—but above all we wonder if the Irish think about their lost relatives like we think about them?

Although many of our ancestors did not return to the turf of Ireland since they left in the 1700's, during the Great Hunger—and even

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later—a love of its history and culture live on through us. They left Ireland as young men and women—never able to return. It saddens us that many Irish people had to leave during those times "because." Because is a big word. They left because everything they owned was taken from them; they left because they were being persecuted; they left because they refused to die. This experience has affected our sense of the history of Ireland—perhaps in a way that many who still live on the Island of Ireland cannot understand.

And when they came to their new country, they brought their wonderful gifts of humour and determination and used these gifts to make the world a better place. Our parents and grandparents had to live their Irish Heritage through the stories, songs and lullabies that were passed down through their families. Now we have the Internet which has helped many of us to realise, for the first time, just how Irish we really are. Something gets into your blood when you are able to trace your ancestors and connect with their world.

Some of us have the good fortune to visit Ireland on a regular basis—for many of us it is the trip of a lifetime. For many more, the means to visit Ireland will never be forthcoming. But somehow, the connection remains intact. For some of us, the strangest feeling is of being Irish, but "not" Irish. When we meet Irish people we can feel such joy—but also something akin to grief at the disconnection. The Mexican-American writer Richard Rodriguez called it "the hunger of memory" and I think it pertains to many descendants of your "Diaspora."

We have our homes, families and communities in many parts of the world but maintain such family pride in our Irish heritage. We are

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truly blessed to be part of the history of your beautiful country. We fervently hope that Ireland, in recovering from financial recession, will regain and preserve her ancient culture and her people's warmth and generosity.

So, in closing President Higgins, we wonder of your feelings about us—the people of the Irish Diaspora spread throughout the world. Do the people on the Island of Ireland think about their lost relatives the way we think about them?

Yours Most Warmly and Sincerely,

The Readers of Your Irish Heritage.

So, do let me know of the thoughts and feelings going through your mind as you read this! Which part speaks for you the most?

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike... talk next week! :)

One Man and 35 Surnames

March 23, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte and I hope you are doing well. It's a cool and bright Sunday morning here in County Cork. The early flowers are coming out on the trees as I look out the window, providing a nice cheery burst of colour to enjoy! I'm having a peppermint tea this morning and I hope you'll join me now with a cup of whatever you're having yourself.

I was chatting with my father a few days back—he's of an age where childhood memories spring up unexpectedly into the conversation. He talked about the great time he had with his brothers "lepping" and pushing each other off the end of the pier in Foilnamuck, West Cork, while his father worked on a boat nearby. As children ourselves, we went swimming off the end of this same pier on many the endless summer day—not another person in sight for miles around.

John Collins

In 1880, John Collins, my great grandfather, left the townland of Arduramore in West Cork and travelled all of

10 miles to marry Catherine Sullivan. They then built a house in the townland of Foilnamuck on the shores of Roaringwater Bay where John could build his boats on the nearby pier.

John was a skilled shipwright and was responsible for both designing and building the sand boat fleet of Ballydehob. In the days before artificial fertiliser, it was essential to feed the land with both kelp and nutrient-rich sand from the bottom of local inlets. The sand boats dredged the inlets and carried this sand to the local quays. The local farmers either had sand boats of their own for this purpose or hired local boat owners to keep their lands supplied.

Ballydehob Quay was the central hive of sandboat activity, boats came in by day and night and discharged their load of sand and kelp for the local farmers to collect by horse and cart. It was a centre of commerce, chat and entertainment. John Collins ran his operation from Foilnamuck Pier, a couple of miles from the village. It was constantly busy with apprentices and visitors dropping by for repairs and a general chat. While John was relatively successful with his boatbuilding business, most of his own brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews had to look elsewhere for a living. Always overseas.

My great-grandfather died in 1916 and his son, Mike, took over the business. However, by the end of the second world war the demand for sand as a fertiliser had dropped away.

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My own father and his brothers were in line to apprentice as boat-builders. But there was now no point, so they served their time as carpenters instead. Each in turn headed towards the building boom that was London in the 1950's.

I wonder how John Collins would feel if he could cast an eye over what became of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren? Of all of his descendents, only one in four remain in Ireland today. The following surnames from his family tree give an indication of the many corners of the world where the rest ended up:

Balfour Barry Bosley Britton Burke Cannon Collins
Cornette Deutscher Doering Donovan Fennell Flores
Freeman Glazek Goff Halliday Hervey Kreger Laster Lien
McEwan Mrocza Nelson O'Brien O'Donovan O'Neill
Pilarski Richardsen Ryan Rybinski Stypula Valentine
Whetstone Whitford

So, today Carina and myself might take a trip down to Foilnamuck and sit on the edge of the pier and maybe even dip our toes into the still-chilly water. We'll think of John Collins, if we catch a boat sailing by, and the many hundreds of our cousins who spread all over the world from this very spot.

Talk next week,

Slán, Mike... :)

***Section 4: Culture,
Customs, Music
and Craic***

Running an Irish Castle for a Day

June 16, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte wherever you are! The weather here in Cork has switched back to "changeable" and it makes you quickly realise why Ireland is so green! Today we're going to have a look at what it takes to run a household. Sound exciting? But we're not talking about an ordinary household, more a castle and the large family estate of lands that surround it.

You see, a few weeks back, Carina and myself went to County Galway and visited Aughnanure Castle in Oughterard. Ever been there? Aughnanure was the main castle of the O'Flaherty Clan, the kings and lords of West Connaught. It was one of five castles they kept in the area. The O'Flahertys were the lords of the Uí Bruin Seala sept who were originally from around the present day Galway City. However, they were driven west into Connemara in the 1200's where they held sway for over 400 years. But that's not what we want to talk about today. Back to

household management.

What caught our eye in the castle was a great illustration of the types of people and roles it took to support a Gaelic royal household of the time. It gave us an insight into Gaelic society of mediaeval times and when we dug a little deeper, we noticed that many of the roles were held by particular families. Maybe you'll see your own surname? So, what was life like in the Gaelic castle? John Dunton observed at the time:

"the hall is crowned with poets and musicians... ladies embroidered rare tissues... Fighting men abound. Mantles are made and swords sharpened, wounded men are attended to by doctors, criminals are being punished, part of the day is spent listening to romances."

An information poster at Aughnanure illustrated and explained the retinue that the O'Flaherty had in his circle. They included a:

- Genealogist
- Physician
- Travelling Bard and Harpist
- Judge
- Steward
- Blacksmith
- Gallowglass (soldiers)

- Revenue collector
- Cup bearers
- Keeper of the Bees

But there was very little information, so we decided to dig a little deeper and here's what we found out.

1. Ollamh (pronounced "Ollav")

The word Ollamh is an Irish word used today to mean "professor" but in medieval times it meant scholar or master—often the master of a particular discipline. When the word "Ollamh" was used by itself, it typically meant a scholar historian/poet/genealogist. The Ollamh for history and poetry for the O'Flahertys (they recorded of genealogies, wrote of events and composed poems) fell to the Kilkelly family. While every chief had his own Ollamh, the head Ollamh of a province such as Connaught would have been the head of all the Ollamhs in that province, and would have been a social equal of the provincial king.

Other typical family names for Ollamhs across Ireland were Daly, Cassidy, Ward, Forbes, Higgins, Keenan, Dunleavy, Mulconroy and Cleary.

2. Physician

The practice of medicine was reserved for a select number of families. A father typically passed his medical knowledge

to son and sometimes to daughter or kinsman, so ensuring that specific family groups retained the knowledge as hereditary physicians. The physician family to the O'Flahertys were the Canavans. Other physician families across Ireland included Cassidy, Shields, Callinan, Beglin, Hickey and Lee.

3. Judge

Early Irish law was known as Brehon Law. It was a complex system of law that delivered judgements pegged against the strict hierarchy that existed in Gaelic society. Each Gaelic chieftain had their own judge (Brehon) in their kingdom to interpret the laws for local cases. The O'Mullawill family (also known as Lavelle) was the Brehon (judge) of O'Flaherty. There were many Brehon families in Ireland. They ran the law schools and maintained an expertise within their own family. They included names such as Breslin, Davoren, Donnellan, Coffey, Keenan and Egan.

4. Steward

The steward was responsible for the day to day running of the castle, preparing banquets, sourcing provisions and directing the servants. The Morrolly family supplied the head stewards for the O'Flahertys.

5. Soldiers

A Gaelic chieftain typically had to maintain a standing army, however small, of a number of horsemen and soldiers. He often brought in Gallowglass (mercenaries) for particular battles. I'm not sure who the marshals and commanders of the horse were for the O'Flahertys, but my own mother's family—the Mannions—were responsible for marshalling the forces (and leading into battle) of the O'Kellys in nearby East Galway. That explains why you always did what you were told in our house!

6. Erenagh

The Erenagh was effectively the lay abbot (however, they were probably closer to being a modern accountant) for church and parish lands. The Erenagh family within one of the O'Flahertys' territories were the O'Leathcargais. Other Erenagh families from around the country were the Cronins for the McCarthys, the McInerneys for the McNamaras (in fact, McInerney literally means "son of the Eranagh"), Lennon, Farrelly, O'Herlihy, Connole, O'Doorty, Sheridan, Hourihan and Scullin.

7. Keeper of the Bees

Remember that honey provided the only source of sweetness in the Irish diet. It was something to be nurtured, cherished and guarded. The O'Conlachtna family were the

Keepers of the Bees for the O'Flahertys.

That's only touching the surface of the roles and tasks that it took to run a Gaelic Chieftains affairs. In future newsletters, we'll come back to this and include some of your own stories and family surnames. The most interesting thing for me is to realise that Irish families often had certain traditional work running through the generations (my own family of Collins's were boat builders and carpenters for generations) as well as being anchored in particular locations.

How about you? Do certain professions and roles run in your own family? Maybe you see one of your family surnames above?

I'll see you next week!, Slán, Mike...

The Tribes of Ireland

September 29, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork to wherever you are. It's a bit dreary this morning, we call it a "fine soft day" around here (hoping it'll move on soon!)

In between working on my upcoming newsletters, blog posts and spending an enjoyable hour or so each day getting back to everybody by email—the days are just flying by here as we head further into the autumn. I've just made a nice cup of coffee (sometimes nothing else will do) and today we're going to dip into "The Tribes of Ireland" (also the title of our new book). So, do put the kettle on, grab a nice cup for yourself and join us on our journey.

Let's Start With A Date: 1150 A.D.

I've chosen this as the "still point" for looking at Irish and Gaelic society. At that moment in time:

- The Normans had yet to "invade" and start the gradual colonisation of Ireland.
- The Vikings had landed on our shores and set up the

first towns. They formed alliances with the native Gaelic kings and intermarried.

- The Gaelic "Tribes" and kingdoms of Ireland had been in place for hundreds of years.
- The surname system that we are familiar with today was slowly being introduced.

This is time we will choose to look at the Tribes of Ireland.

Tairrdelbach Ua Conchobair.

Now, isn't that name a mouthful! This name could also be anglicised as "Turlough O'Connor" (pronounced "Ter-lock"). Turlough was the King of Connaught and High King of Ireland in 1150 AD. At that time he was about 60 years of age. He ruled over an Ireland of nine Kingdoms which was to change shortly after in a most dramatic and violent of manners. Over the next few weeks, Turlough will come into our stories quite a lot as we travel around the Tribes of Ireland.

Ireland In 1150 AD.

In 1150 AD Ireland was a land of tribes. Each tribe was like a mini-kingdom. It occupied its own tribal lands, administered its own justice and constantly fought with the other tribes to expand their territory. There were about fifty-

five of these tribes throughout the island and each one was allied into a larger over-kingdom. These over-kingdoms (also showing their ruling families) were:

Kingdoms Of The North:

- Northern Uí Neill: MacLochlainn and Ua Neill (McLoughlin and O'Neill)
- Ulaid (Ulster): MacDuinnleibe (Dunleavy)
- Argialla: Ua Cerbaill (O'Carroll)

Kingdoms Of The South:

- Tuamumu (North Munster): Ua Briain (O'Brien)
- Desmumu (South Munster): MacCarthaig (McCarthy)

Kingdoms Of The East:

- Midhe: Ua Maelsechnaill (McLoughlin)
- Laigin (Leinster): MacMurchadha (McMurrough)

Kingdoms Of The West:

- Connaught: Ua Conchobhair (O'Connor)
- Breifne: Ua Ruairc (O'Rourke)

Do you recognise any of the family names above? Are they in your family tree? Alongside these kingdoms were the Vikings who had arrived 300 years before. At first, they

came on short attacking trips, but over time set up the coastal towns of Dublin, Cork, Wexford, Limerick and Waterford.

Tribes, Clans And Kin.

When you start to look at Irish history (and Scottish history which is quite close), you start to hear lots of different terms bandied about: Tribes, Clans, Kin, Septs and so on. So, it's time for us to make some distinctions:

- **TRIBE:** We will look at a "Tribe" as a group who occupy designated Tribal Lands. Within these lands, all come under the same law. In Ireland the area occupied by this group was known as a "Tuath".
- **CLAN:** The "Tribe" is made up of a number of "Clans". Now, Clan doesn't actually mean family in the way we understand it, although it is typically an extended Kin group. But its purpose is more administrative and political.
- **KIN:** Within the Clans were a number of "Derbfhine" who were a male kin group all descended from a common great-grandfather. This, again, was a legal structure (in Brehon Law) which dictated hereditary rights and so on.

So, tying this together, on the death of a Clan's king, the surviving members of the Derbfhine would elect a new

successor from their number. The wider clan, e.g., cousins who were too distantly related to be members of the *Derbhfine*, would not have a say in the election. Maybe now you can see why it was so important to know your family, lineage and kin in Ireland? It's a habit we keep to this day.

Back To Turlough.

So, you might be thinking "that's quite a small group of people from which to elect a King". But let me let you in on a secret. It's not! Turlough had at least six wives and twenty-four sons. Brehon Law allowed for all children outside marriage as well as foster children to be included in the "*Derbhfine*". As you might imagine, this extended "family" quickly grew to hundreds of individuals over 4 generations.

And another secret: Many of the Irish-descended readers here are actually descended from royalty! Why? Well, when a King produces so many Princes, there is huge demand for land and resources inside this ruling group. They edge out all the non-royals over some generations, until they themselves are displaced.

Next week, we will continue our journey around the tribes and lands of Ireland as seen through the eyes of Turlough and others.

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike...I'll see you next week! :)

A Country of Family and Kin

November 23, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork to wherever you are! All is well here as we pass into the darker half of the year. We have now passed Samhain (Halloween) and the Autumn colour is still all around. It's great time of the year to get out and about taking a few pictures. We're hoping to get down to Killarney National Park later and should have a few pictures for the Facebook page by the end of the day.

Two weeks ago, I was in the port town of Cobh and the following question came through (God bless email!) from Peter, one of our readers:

"Why are you writing the Tribes of Ireland book—and what's it all about?"

Well, there is no time like the present so I decided to pen a reply there and then. Here is what I came up with:

As I write these words, I'm sitting on the waterfront of the beautiful town of Cobh in County Cork. On one side are the waters of Cork harbour and on the other the

colourful shop-fronts of the town. In the middle of these shop fronts sits a pub called "Kellys". It has a large sign for Murphy's Stout, which is a local beer, hanging over its door. These are also two of the most popular surnames in Ireland today.

Cobh is a town that has seen well over a million Irish emigrants leave it's shore over hundreds of years. Through most of that time it was known as "Queenstown", but then reverted to it's older Irish name once Ireland regained Independence.

A Country Of Family And Kin.

Ireland is a country of family and kin, a country of tribes, and it has always been like that. If you travel around a country like England you will encounter many surnames which derive from a place, or an occupation. You will see names like Wright, Churchill and Thatcher. In Ireland it is different. When you examine Gaelic surnames that came into use from about 900 AD onwards, you notice that the vast majority of surnames are "son of" (Mac) and "grandson of" (O). It was more important to tell the world which kin and family you belonged to than anything else. That is where a sense of honour, duty and trust came from. Even as you travel around Ireland today, you will encounter people's surnames above the pubs and shops, acting as distinctive markers for a particular family. Names like Kelly and Murphy. You quickly know which territory you are

travelling through.

Sitting here in Cobh, it comes to mind that there was next to negligible emigration before the Great Famine of the mid-1800's by the native Gaelic population. Sure, many hundreds of thousands of Ulster Scots left for the colonies through the 1700's, sometimes bringing Gaelic indentured servants with them. But the Gaels had a huge attachment to land and kin and one that did not break no matter how bad things got. But they did get bad.

And once the floodgates opened in the mid 1800's, whole extended families of Irish Catholics left Ireland for the shores of America, Canada and the UK. Over the following decades many chose to go further afield of their own free will to Australia and New Zealand. I look at my own father who emigrated to England in the 1950's and found work for each of his siblings in turn, sending on for one after the other. Over a short number of years there seemed to be more of his family living in London than Cork.

The reason I have written this book is to explore the tribes, families, territories, customs and culture of Ireland—a potent mix that seems to have worked its way into the DNA of all people of Irish descent including people with Gaelic, Anglo-Norman and English/Scottish planter surnames.

I frequently get asked the question: "My surname is e.g. O'Brien. Can you tell me a little more about the name and

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where it comes from?" This book is here to answer that question by taking a snapshot of Ireland at a time just before the invasion of Ireland by the English (or Anglo-Normans). It was a time when Ireland was a fragmented place, both politically and in terms of territory, but it was united in language, custom and culture. It was a time when your Irish family surname came into being for the first time.

How important is that feeling of connection to kin and tribe to you?

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike...I'll see you next week! :)

Christmas Time in Ireland

December 22, 2013

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork. I hope the weather isn't too extreme wherever you are (whenever I mention the local weather here in Ireland, it seems that at least 10% of our readers are experiencing some calamitous climate event where they are!). It was great to hear from so many readers in response to last week's newsletter, so many new names and stories. It took me until Wednesday to reply to them all! Thank you so much for sharing. I'm having a nice cup of Barry's tea at the moment—I hope you take the time to join me now with your own nice cup of tea or coffee.

Christmas In Ireland

It's really feeling like Christmas around here at the moment! People are smiling more and starting to connect again with old friends and family members they may not have seen in a while. Our own son, Evan, returned home from England on Friday night so Christmas has definitely started on a good footing in our house!

A Letter from Ireland

I was asking Carina the other night about her memories of Christmas as a child. She grew up in a country shop but also spent a lot of time in her grandparent's farm in rural north Cork. There were two lovely memories that came to her in remembering her Christmas.

The first was the feeling of being on a farm. The feeling of being close to the animals—well, she could have been in Bethlehem itself! Granddad O'Donoghue always made sure that the animals had a little extra food on a Christmas Eve, it just seemed like the right thing to do. As they were out tending to the animals, they looked up into the dark open sky, hoping to see one star a little brighter than all the others and her granddad always managed to find her one! Coming down from the animals toward the kitchen door, she remembers the glow of a single candle there in the window. A light and symbol of shelter, comfort and the feeling of home.

"There will always be room for the night and a welcome in this house" she remembers her grandmother saying as she lit the candle each night over Christmas."

In 1997, Mary Robinson, who was the President of Ireland at the time, started a tradition of lighting a candle in the kitchen window of the Áras an Uachtaráin (the President's residence). She did so to signify the connection with all of the people of Irish heritage and descent throughout the world. She wanted to let people of Irish

descent around the world know that we are thinking of them and there would always be a welcome here in Ireland.

So tonight, Carina and myself will light a candle in the kitchen window of our own home, a candle of friendship and welcome, for all the readers of Your Irish Heritage. Especially for you. Wishing you and your family a very Happy Christmas,

Nollaig Shona Duit,

Mike and Carina.

The Irish Anti-Heroes of American Movies

January 5, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork and the first "Letter from Ireland" of the New Year! The rain is horizontal outside the window as I look (it's way beyond being a "soft day"). I hear many of our friends across North America are having a lot of really cold weather at the moment and I hope you stay safe wherever you are. I'm back on the Barry's tea this morning and I hope you take the time to join me now with your own nice cup of tea or coffee.

Have You Ever Noticed?

Well, we're wrapping up the Christmas decorations today (January 6th is the official last day of Christmas in Ireland) and looking forward to the New Year. In a few moments, we're going to look back over the last year and into the coming year. But just before that, I noticed something last week as I gently drifted into a mince-pie coma in front of the fire and television.

Don't ask me how, but I managed to watch three different "Sci-Fi" movies in quick succession and noticed something for the first time. The movies were "Avatar", "Terminator" and "Tron" (I know, I know, I promise my taste will improve in the new year!). What caught my eye was that, in each of these blockbusters, the hero's name was Irish. There was "Sully" (Sullivan from Avatar), "Conner" (O'Connor from Terminator) and Flynn (O'Flynn from Tron). All the characters had a lot in common. They were charming fighters, all anti-establishment but with strong moral compasses. They fought and got beaten back, but persisted and somehow made the right thing happen in the end.

So, it appears that Hollywood screenwriters have decided that having an Irish surname gives the audience strong expectations of an anti-establishment hero or martyr. Have you ever noticed this before? Once you start looking you'll see it everywhere!

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike... talk next week! :)

An Irish Name for Your Baby

January 26, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork and I hope you are keeping well wherever you are. This is normally the place where I mention the weather in Cork and enquire after your own, but if I don't mention it today then it might go away (at least for a while!). That's Irish logic for you. I'm on the coffee this morning as I write as we have a few numbers and statistics to work with. I do hope you'll join me with your own cup of whatever you fancy as we go through this morning's letter.

What's In A Name?

Let me ask you a question. Supposing you were looking for an Irish-related first name for your new baby (or wanted to gently hint about one for your grandchild)? What would it be? Seán? Kelly? Colleen? Conor? Patrick? Well, in Ireland we have experienced the highest birth rate of all the European countries over the past couple of years. I was

curious about the most popular baby names and looked up the 2012 results from our statistics office. They were:

Boys:

- Jack
- James
- Daniel

Girls:

- Emily
- Sophie
- Emma

These may not come to your mind when considering "Irish names", it seems like a lot of English "costume drama" had an influence on the girls names. So, let's look at a few old Irish alternatives to these names. I suggest we take a journey back to a time when Ireland was cut off from much of the rest of the world. A time before Christianity came to Ireland and a time before history was written down. A time when Ireland produced many first names that still resonate around the world today.

Ireland—A Country Of Heroes And Champions.

Let's search for Irish names before the Patricks and the Séáns came on the scene. We go back to a time of Ireland of

myths and stories—just at the start of our written history. What were the names used at that time? Would you recognise any of them? Are any of the names "useable" today? Would you dare suggest one for a new member of your family? Here are some of my own favourites. Let's start off with some strong female names:

- **Aoife (pronounced "ee-fa")**. Meaning radiant and beautiful. Aoife was the mother of Cuchullain, one of Ireland's legendary heroes.
- **Meadbh (pronounced "Mayve")**. Also Maeve in English, meaning source of joy. Maedbh was the warrior queen of Connacht of the old myths.
- **Gráinne (pronounced "Grawn-ya")**. She was the daughter of an ancient high King of Ireland. Also, who can forget "Grainne Uí Mhaille" (Grace O'Malley) of Mayo, the Pirate-Queen?

And onto the boys:

- **Aodh (pronounced A, just like the capital letter)**. Meaning born of fire. Aodh is one of those names that is the root for so many more familiar first and surnames. Aiden/Aidan means little Aodh. While the surnames McHugh, McGee, McGeoghegan and Egan all come from "son of Aodh"
- **Niall (pronounced Nile, like the river)**. Meaning passionate. Niall of the nine hostages was a King in

Ireland around the 400's. We get many surnames from this first name—the most obvious one being O'Neill. However, the Vikings were also impressed with the name and took it back to Scandinavia as Njall, and it came to England many centuries later as Nelson and Neilsen.

- **Cormac (pronounced halfway between Corr-muc and Corr-mac).** Meaning son of the charioteer. Cormac Mac Airt was a King of Ireland in the third century and this name has been popular since then. Of course, you'll also find it in surnames such as McCormack.

So those are my six choices for Irish baby first names. Maybe we'll see them back in vogue soon enough if we start a campaign together. What are some of your favourite Irish first names? Perhaps you have some already in your family tree?

That's it for now!

Slán, Mike... talk next week! :)

Five Sisters—One Baby

February 2, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork and I hope you are keeping well wherever you are. The weather is "calm as a dove" here at the moment, fairly different to yesterday as the west coast of Ireland was pounded yet again by six metre swells and storm-force winds. I'm writing later than normal this morning—and I'm on my fourth cup of Lyon's tea. I hope you'll join me in a cup of whatever you are having as we start into the letter.

More About Your Irish Names

In last week's letter I asked:

"If you were looking for an Irish-related first name for your new baby (or wanted to gently hint about one for your grandchild), what would it be?"

I gave my own favourites and then spent three days replying to your wonderful suggestions, stories, regrets and questions! It got me thinking, maybe we should have a

second shot today at these "given names".

Five Sisters—One Baby

My own mother, God rest her soul, was brought up in east Galway where she was one of ten children on a small farm. Her father died when the eldest was eleven and she was one of five sisters and five brothers. Her given name was Margaret, but no one called her that, she was always called by her second name, Philomena. Her eldest sister was Pauline. Next down was Norah, except in typical Irish fashion that migrated from Noreen to Norah as she got older. Next down was Bridie, short for Bridget, whose feast day was yesterday, the first of February. And then along came the youngest girl, whom everybody called "Baby" when she was born, but they kept calling her "Baby" long after the younger children came along. I remember my mother calling us kids together to go visit "Baby's house" even when Baby was a forty-year old mother of four!

Those memories come back to me, spurred on by the wonderful stories and naming "conventions" in your family that I have been reading all week. In my mother's time, both boys and girls adopted the names of various saints as given names. It was only in my own generation that many of the older Irish names started to come back into vogue. So, today, let's have a look at some familiar "English" names and some of the old Irish equivalents (as opposed to direct translations).

English Names And Old Irish Equivalents

These are names that are not direct translations from English to Irish, but "equivalents", some of which may surprise you.

Let's start with some girls' names:

- English: Jane/Janet. Equivalent Irish: Sinéad (pronounced "Shin-ade").
- English: Barbara. Equivalent Irish: Gormladh (pronounced "Gurm-la").
- English: Joan. Equivalent Irish: Siobhán (pronounced "Shiv-awn").
- English: Margaret. Equivalent Irish: Mairéad (pronounced "Mor-ade").

And on to the boys:

- English: Charles. Equivalent Irish: Cathal (pronounced "Caw-hal"). This also gives us the surname Cahill.
- English: Terrence/Terry. Equivalent Irish: Turlough (pronounced "Tur-lock").
- English: James. Equivalent Irish: Séamus (pronounced "Shay-mus", sometimes Shay for short).
- English: Daniel. Equivalent Irish: Domhnall/Dónal (pronounced "Dough-nal"). This also gives us the

surnames McDonnell and O'Donnell. Think of "Daniel O'Donnell".

- English: Timothy/Tim. Equivalent Irish: Tadhg (pronounced "tie-g").

In relation to all the "Patricks" and "Patricias" out there, I received many comments and questions on this name during the week. In Ireland, the Irish for Patrick is often used. It is Pádraig which is pronounced "Paw-drig". However, in Munster especially, most Pádraigs are pronounced "Paw-rick" and often the shorter version of that is used—"Paudie" (which is pronounced "Paw-dy"). So, you Patricks might want to try on these alternatives for a change. With Patricia, this is almost always shortened to either Pat or Trish or Trisha.

Well, that's it on "given names" for a while—but do feel free to share your comments and questions!

I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

What Does it Mean to be Irish?

February 23, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork and I trust you are keeping well in your part of the world. All is good here on a Sunday morning, with a nice cup of coffee by my side I'm looking forward to you joining me in this morning's letter.

What Does It Mean To Be Irish?

It's coming up to that time of year again, a time that's hard to ignore if you have a drop of Irish blood in you, Saint Patrick's Day. So, today I'd like to have a look at the question: "What does it mean to be Irish?"

Think of the qualities that make up the Irish "character". When I ask our readers: "What do you love most about your Irish heritage?", I get replies like: an ability and love of music; closeness of family; a sense of justice; ambition; a fondness for a party; a love of words and learning and a keenness for all things spiritual. These seem to be timeless

qualities that most people would see in themselves and other Irish people. Maybe you would like to add some extra qualities to this list?

We Irish have always listened with great interest to the opinion of other nations and outsiders as they observe our character. One of my own favourite stories is about the source of the word "Gael" or "Gaelic" which did not come into use among the Irish until around the 7th century. It came from a Welsh word "gwyddel", which means "marauder". This was the name given by the Welsh to Irish raiders on the coast of Wales. The Irish of the time, with their value of daring and glory, quite liked that label and it worked its way into everyday use. In more recent times, a famous psycho-analyst commented:

"This is one race of people for whom psychoanalysis is of no use whatsoever."

— *Sigmund Freud*

I doubt if there is an Irish man or woman who would not take pride in such a description. It underlines our preference not to be pigeon-holed or labelled, and our love of individual self-expression.

This Irish novelist captures the Irish character in the 20th century as we emerged from hundreds of years of colonisation, forced migration, famine and repression of religion, culture and language:

"When anyone asks me about the Irish character, I say look at the trees. Maimed, stark and misshapen, but ferociously tenacious."

— Edna O'Brien

Rolling back another few hundred years, to a time before colonisation, we come across this description by the Englishman Richard Stanihurst:

"The [Irish] people are thus inclined: religious, frank, amorous, ireful, sufferable of infinite pains, vain-glorious, with many sorcerers, excellent horsemen, delighted with warring, great almes-givers and surpassing in hospitality. The lower sort (both clerics and lay people alike) are sensual and loose in living. They are sharp-witted, lovers of learning, adventurous, kind-hearted and secret in displeasure."

"Thank you very much"—might be the reply of many Irish people, even today.

Gerald Of Wales.

For our final view of the Irish from the outside, we go all the way back to 1180AD to the observations of Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales), who observed the Irish as part of the first English royal party in the late 12th century. Gerald was son of William FitzOdo de Barri, (common ancestor of the Irish Barry families), nephew of Maurice fitzGerald (common ancestor of the Irish Fitzgerald families) and grandson of Gerald de Windsor (alias

FitzWalter, common ancestor of the Irish Butler families).

He saw the native Irish as heathen savages thereby justifying any action that was taken by his noble superiors. So, it is interesting to examine his biased comments on the Irish appearance, character and values:

On appearance and health:

"[Nature] gives growth and proportions to these people, until they arrive at perfect vigour, tall and handsome in person, and with agreeable and ruddy countenances. The islanders have little need of physicians as there are few sick people—except those at the point of death."

On fighting:

"they go into battle without armour, considering it a burthen (burden) and esteeming it brave and honourable to fight without it."

On attitude to work and learning:

"The Irish are a rude people, subsisting on the produce of their cattle only, and living themselves like beasts—a people that has not yet departed from the primitive habits of pastoral life. [They] lead the same life their fathers did in the woods and open pastures, neither willing to abandon their old habits or learn anything new."

"They neither employ themselves in the manufacture of flax or wool or in any kind of trade or mechanical art; but abandoning themselves to

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idleness, and immersed, in sloth, their greatest delight is to be exempt from toil, their richest possession, the enjoyment of liberty. Whatever natural gifts they possess are excellent, in whatever requires industry they are worthless."

On music:

"It is only in the case of musical instruments that I find any commendable diligence in the [Irish] people. They seem to me to be incomparably more skilled in these than any other people that I have seen."

A quick and not completely inaccurate summary of Gerald's view would be that the Irish are barbarous, savage, and lazy with no clear system of power and authority. On the other hand they are very healthy and their music and musicians are very good. But Gerald was of his time and class. While there is a certain truth in what he observes and notes, there is much that Gerald also left out from his observations as he considered the existing Anglo-Norman systems to be superior and more civilised. He chose to ignore the intricacies of Irish culture and law as captured by the Brehon texts, the Irish love of spirituality and land (often the two meaning the same thing), the respect for societal status, the love of language and learning—and finally, a love of hospitality and extended celebrating!

I'm not sure how Gerald would have enjoyed the fact that many of the descendants of his relatives—the Anglo-

Norman families of Ireland—were "hibernicised" by the fourteenth century. They took on the wives, customs, dress, law and language of this "barbarous people" in a way the Normans never adopted to Anglo-Saxon customs and traits in England.

So, I hope that you let the Irish side of your character shine for all to see over the coming weeks leading up to Saint Patrick's Day, and together let's give the world something to talk about!

I'll see you next week! :)

Slán, Mike...

Druids, Bards and Brehons

March 2, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork —and I hope you are keeping well on this March Sunday morning. We're fairly "hopping off the walls" here at the moment as it rains while our heads are down finishing off the book for next week's launch and we're looking forward to breathing some outside air again! I'm skipping over the tea this morning (apologies to the Barry family) and having a glass of water from the well instead. Sometimes the original is best. I hope you'll join me now with a cup of whatever you're having yourself as we have a chat about the finer things in life!

Druids, Bards And Brehons.

Do you have any poets or musicians in your family? How about lawyers and doctors? Today we will be looking at the Brehons, Poets, Bards and Physician class in Ireland before the imposition of English rule in the 1600's. Many of us today have a romantic notion of Ireland—a land of Saints, Scholars and Musicians—with a bit of craic thrown in for good measure. A nation where a "turn of phrase" or a "nice

run on the fiddle" is valued alongside the more "pragmatic" aspects of life.

But, where did these notions and values come from? Were these abilities always held in such high esteem? We're going to have a look at the people who were entrusted with safeguarding Irish law and customs, Poetry and Music—as well as healing and medical knowledge. A class that encoded and preserved so much of the knowledge and customs that tied together a politically fragmented society.

At the time we are looking at the Island of Ireland—and for many hundreds of years before—it was a country fragmented into about 150 local kingdoms that we call Túatha (pronounced "Too-ha"). But the aspect that united all of its residents was language, custom and law. And the last two were bound together—the customs of the land were codified in the law. The Celtic language that we know as Irish today, and the accompanying beliefs and customs, gradually arrived in Ireland from 500 BC. The main channel of distribution was the Celtic oral tradition.

Julius Caesar wrote of the Celtic people:

"The Druids believe that their religion forbids them to commit their teachings to writing, although for most other purposes the Gaul's (Celts) use the Greek alphabet. But I imagine this rule was originally established for other reasons—because they did not want their doctrine to become public property, and in order to prevent their pupils from

relying on the written word and neglecting to train their memories."

He was talking about his experiences of the Celtic people when they occupied much wider territories than they do today—but there are a number of key ideas in his observations. He talks about the "Druids". When we think of a Druid today, we conjure pictures of an old man with a grey beard leaning on his magical staff from *Lord of the Rings*. But the Druids were the intellectual class of the Celts in pre-Christian times.

This reliance on the oral tradition to learn and teach was extremely frustrating to later scholars who missed the opportunity to study the actual written word of these Druids. But I believe, like most Irish people, in the power of spoken language. A power through which canter, volume and tone paint much more information around the mere words of written language. All situations are subjective, unique and fluid—but the written word is fixed. The spoken word allows you to place subjective nuance in the right places. This is what a native Irish speaker often calls "Blás" (pronounced "Blauce") today. So, this oral tradition was how major events, genealogies, agreement and the law were transmitted for hundreds of years by the intellectual class known as the Druids—who probably metamorphosed in Priests, Monks, Brehon, Physicians, Poets and Bards after the coming of Christianity to Ireland in the sixth century. Let's go through each of these Professions one at a time.

The Brehon.

The ancient laws of Ireland have become known today as the "Brehon Laws". The word Brehon is an Anglicisation of the Irish word "Breitheamh" or "Judge". The Brehon was employed by the local Túath kingdoms and the larger over-Kings. Their role was initially to pass on the oral system of laws and apply them in the many cases of dispute. They passed on the laws—often to family members—through established Brehon schools. They were also responsible for the first written laws in the 6th century.

Filidh (poets) and Bards.

The Irish celebrated acts of heroism and daring. The Filidh (for all our readers from Philadelphia—pronounced "Philly") and Bards captured these heroic victories in songs and verses of praise for the victor. They also composed verses of satire—which were considered a powerful weapon. The Bards were the poets who composed the verse and song but the Filidh were seen as class above them—they had supernatural powers that were capable of injury through words. Being held in esteem—having your honour upheld—was the most desirable state. Losing that esteem—losing your honour in the eyes of others could be ruinous (and costly) for an individual and their family for generations. The Filidh were also the genealogists and historians for leading families of the day. Remember that Ireland was a land of little kingdoms—or "túatha"—at the time.

People did not travel beyond the boundaries of their land. Put simply, the law of the land no longer covered them and they were placed in danger without the support of their kin. However, the Filidh and Bards were some of the very few groups who were free to travel across the Island and this gave them a unique perspective on life and power at the time. They were the media of the day.

Physicians.

The physicians of the day were herbalists, surgeons—and used astrological observation as part of their diagnosis and prescription. Under the Brehon laws, the provision of treatment and nutritional food and herbs was made available for all who needed it. Wounded people were covered for compensation and treatment expenses by the perpetrator of the wounding. Only qualified Physicians were allowed to treat the sick and each Physician had to maintain four students. These physicians and their students maintained hospitals in the local T^úath.

The Irish language contains the world's largest collection of medical texts in any language before 1800 AD, after which the English language took over. There were many particular Irish families and surnames associated with each of these professions. Maybe your family surname was among them?

Slán, Mike... talk next week! :)

Looking into Saint Patrick's Mirror

March 16, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte from County Cork—and I hope you are keeping well on a lovely mild Sunday morning here in the south of Ireland. Spring has definitely arrived with the daffodils in full bloom and the wild garlic just about making an appearance by the side of the road. I do hope the weather is softening up nicely wherever you are! I'm having a cup of straight coffee this morning (no, not Irish coffee!)—and I hope you'll join me now with a cup of whatever you're having yourself.

The Wearing Of The Green

What do the Great Wall of China, the Sydney Opera House, the great Pyramid in Egypt, the Niagra Falls and the London Eye all have in common? They are all, of course, world icons—but for one day this year, these and many other similar icons will turn green. For one full night in the year they will be bathed in green light. That day is Saint Patrick's

Day, a feastday of the Patron Saint of a tiny island on the edge of Europe with only about 6.5 million people living on her shores. I find that extraordinary! What do you think?

In Ireland, Saint Patrick's Day was always a celebration of national pride and patriotism. When we were young, we were marched off to Mass with the shamrock cascading from our coats—pinned on with a harp badge or an Irish flag brooch. It was also a break day during Lent, you could knock back those forbidden sweets and chocolate with impunity, with Saint Patrick to thank for this special dispensation. It was Saint Patricks Day, a feast for the Irish, wherever they may be. What are the Saint Patrick's Day traditions in your family?

Looking Into Saint Patrick's Mirror.

Saint Patrick's Day gives us all an opportunity to reflect and appreciate the Irish traditions within our family and community—an opportunity to stop and have a look in "Saint Patrick's Mirror"—and mostly we like what we see. So, while it is wonderful to see all this green illumination on the wonders of the world—I just love to stop and ask people "What do you love most about Your Irish Heritage?" The replies are always so heartfelt and wonderful. I asked this question recently on our Facebook page and here are some of my favourite replies:

"I love that my ancestors had a strength that was amazing. They had

the strength to survive the famine. They had the strength and the courage to make the trip across the seas. They had the fortitude to believe that they could make a new life in a foreign land. I so admire them and all the Irish that did the same.

I also admire those who stayed behind and fought to survive, theirs was a strength most people today can only imagine. I am honored to be Irish...we are a strong people."

"Ireland is green and beautiful but being Irish is more than a place. After all we are everywhere and have made our mark on the world!"

"I'm an Australian and proud of it but have always felt a very strong connection to Ireland. I love the people, the music, the country etc. I look forward with hope to a trip back to my "homeland"."

"Love of family, sense of humor; I could go on and on. Having a story that had a beginning, middle, and so far no ending in sight. I love being Irish."

"Everything! But mostly the Irish spirit that resides within our DNA!!!! Amazing fortitude and knowing how to enjoy every minute!! Humor like no other nationality!!!) PROUD."

"That my mother had the courage and strength at age 19 to cross the Atlantic for a new life. and now I am finding the ones left behind..."

"Hospitality, wit, courage, determination and poetic creativity."

A Letter from Ireland

"The realization that all of humanity is imperfect. The Irish just strive to make imperfection the most happy of times. The struggle, the fight, the drink and the happiness."

"The spirit of rebellion that set us free and keeps us a force to be reckoned with."

I've got to say, just reading all those again puts a smile on my face—how about you? Each sentence feels like a little warm green beacon of light. So, at this most Irish time of year, we wish you all a wonderful Saint Patrick's Day—we are so delighted that you are part of our Irish heritage!

Slán, Mike and Carina.

A Tale of Two Easters

April 20, 2014

Céad Míle Fáilte and I hope you are doing well this lovely Easter morning. The sun is certainly dancing in the sky here in County Mayo this morning!

Carina and myself headed up from Cork yesterday to do another section of the Wild Atlantic Way. As I write this letter to you this morning, we are sitting in the shadow of Carraigahowley Castle where Grace O'Malley had her main residence after her second marriage. Do you know the story of Grace O'Malley?

And what a morning it is. The sun is bouncing off the water, the birds are singing and there's not another sinner in sight! We'll cover County Mayo and its' famous residents in a later letter, but just for this morning do grab a cup of something nice and we'll have a chat about something very much linked to this time of year.

Easter - 23rd April, 1014

This year we are celebrating the millennium of the Battle of

A Letter from Ireland

Clontarf which took place outside Dublin on Good Friday, April 23rd, 1014 AD. It was a battle renowned throughout Europe at the time. It took place between the forces of Brian Boru, High King of Ireland, against the allied forces of Norse Dublin, the King of Leinster and Viking armies from the Kingdom of the Isles. It lasted from sunrise to sunset and resulted in the defeat of the Viking/Leinster forces. However, Brian, who was aged 73 at the time, was killed in the course of the battle. Brian Boru was probably the first real High King of Ireland—the first to unite (by all means necessary) the disparate elements that made up Ireland at the time.

However, and this is the thing, it was probably a high point of a politically united Ireland at the time. The killing of Brian and much of Brian's family during the battle saw the return to an Island that was fragmented politically once again. In a sense, it was this fragmentation that brought about the coming of the Normans in 1169 AD and the later dominance of the English from the 1600's to modern times. It was a real turning point in history.

However, Brian Boru and his extended family left us with many surnames that we are familiar with today:

O'Brien, MacMahon, MacNamara, O'Hogan, O'Kennedy, O'Mahony and many more.

Maybe some of these surnames are in your family tree?

Easter - 24th April, 1916.

In two years time we will celebrate the centenary of the Easter Rising which started in Dublin on the 24th April, 1916, Easter Monday. The aim was to end British rule in Ireland and establish an Irish Republic. A "Proclamation of the Republic" was prepared and signed by Thomas Clarke, Seán MacDermott, Thomas MacDonagh, Pádraig Pearse, Eamonn Kent, James Connolly and Joseph Plunkett. After occupying the General Post Office, two republican flags were raised and Pádraig Pearse read the Proclamation of the Republic. This Proclamation asserted (among other things):

"the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland"

"religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens"

to treat "all the children of the nation equally"

The rising lasted until the following Saturday at which time the Irish rebel forces surrendered. A total of 3,509 were arrested and 90 of these were sentenced to death, including all seven signatories of the Proclamation.

The Rising was not supported by the majority of Irish people at the time and was a seeming failure. But the event, and the subsequent brutal reaction of the British administration, set in motion a whole stream of events that led to the Republic of Ireland that we know today.

A Letter from Ireland

A real turning point in history.

Two Easter weekends, one thousand years apart, but both key milestones on the making of the Ireland that we know today.

Talk next week, Slán, Mike... :)

Conclusion

I hope that you enjoyed this edition of a Letter from Ireland. If you would like to receive your own Letter from Ireland each week, you can sign up for free at:

www.youririshheritage.com/letterfromireland

Slán for now and chat next Sunday,

Mike Collins.

Appendix—The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

One of the things we invite our readers to do when they want to find out more about their Irish Heritage, is to pass on the names of their ancestors and the counties they come from (if known). We have been doing this since April 2013 and so far have over 6000 individuals on the list.

Here are the names that were submitted. I divided them up by county of origin (note: this is NOT necessarily where this surname originally came from but where the reader says their ancestor came from). Also, we have a large number of “don’t know”.

Please do have a look and see if you can find the Irish names in your family. If you want to add a name, just email me at mike@youririshheritage.com—include your own name as well as the names you want to add and the counties they come from.

County Antrim

Adair Adams Agnew Alexander Allen Allingham

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Anderson Armour Arrells Baird Barnard Barnett Barry
Black Blair Blaney Boyd Brown Brownley Butler Calhoun
Carney Close Compton Connolly Corry Craig Crawford
Creary Crossett Crowe Cubitt Culbertson Cunningham
Curistan Curran Devlin Dinsmore Dixon Dobbin Donnelly
Dougherty Duffy Dunbar Earl Entrikin Ferguson Ferral
Forsythe Fosters Frost Gaunt Gibson Gilmore Gilmour
Gilpin Gorman Graham Green Gribbin Griggs Guinn

Haney Harland Hawthorne Henry Hewitt Hill Hughes
Hull Hurson Irvine Jackson Jamieson Johnston Kell Kelley
Kelly Kenneally Kennedy Kernahan Keys Knox Larkin
Lavery Lavery Law Leatham Leighton Logue Lucas Lynn
MacKeon Mackle Maids Malone Marshall McAteer
McAuley McBride McBurney McCaffery McCann
McCaugherty McClain McClements McClure McCluskey
McConaghey McConaghie McConnell McConway
McCormick McCrary McCrum McCurdy McDonald
McDonnell McDowell McDuff McElwee McFall McFarlane
McGee McGowan McGrattan McIlhatton McIlvenny
McIlwee McKay McKeegan McKeeman McKeever
McKelvie McKeown McKillop McLaughlin McMullan
McNair McQuillan McSpadden McVeigh McWilliams

Meechan Meek Miller Molyneux Moore Morgan Morrow
Mulholland Noble O'Boyle O'Connor O'Hara O'Kaine
O'Malley O'Niel O'Reilly Palmer Patterson Peden Perry
Quinn Ralston Reilly Reynolds Riddle Ritchie Rock Ryan
Scally Scott Sheridan Simpson Slattery Spence Stirling

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Strawbridge Stuart Telford Thompson Todd Toole Traynor
Trimble Twigg Wales Walker White Wilson Youngue

County Armagh

Armstrong Atkinson Barbour Barron Black Blackburn
Blackie Calvert Canavan Caulfield Clarke Connelly Creary
Crozier Culley Curran Davitt Devine Devlin Donnelly
Doyle Dunlop Eldon English Farmer Finnegan Flanagan
Gallagher Gamble Gibson Gilbonney Gillon Gilpin
Graham Greenaway Greer Gregory Grier Haddock
Hamilton Hinton Hughes Hunter Irwin Johnston Keady
Keenan Kinman Lonsdale Mackle MacTavish Magee Martin

McArdle McCabe McCalla McCamley McCann McCarron
McCartin McConnell McConville McCrum McDonald
McGivern McGrann McGwin McIllenden McKee McLeary
McMahon McQuade Montgomery Moore Morrow O'Brien
Oliver O'Neil O'Neill Quinn Reynolds Shields Simpson
Slattery Smyth Taggart Taylor Toner Traynor Vallely Wilson
Winters Woods

County Carlow

Alpin Bambrick Brahan Brooks Burton Butler Condren
Connolly Denieffe Doyle Edwards Griffin Hayes Hoare
Hogan Joyce Kealy Kelly Keppel Kirwan MacDonald
Moran Noctor Nolan Nowlan Nowlin O'Byrne
O'Shaugnessy Ryan Smith Tracey Walsh Ward

County Cavan

Argue Armstrong Baron Biggins Boylan Bradley Brady
Brown Brownlee Campbell Clark Cleary Clerkin Conaty
Cosgrove Curran Dale Denning Doonan Doyle Farrelly
Fitzpatrick Fitzsimmons Flannagan Flood Gaffney Gargan
Gilsenan Gourley Greene Halton Hand Hanna Heaslip Hill
Hughes Jamison Kelly Kernan Kiernan Lally Lamison
Lawlers Leddy Lynch Maguire McBrien McCabe
McConnon McCullough McCully McDermott McDonald
McDonnell McEvoy McGillick McGinn McGovern
McHugh McMahan McNally Murtagh North O'Reilly
O'Rielly Patterson Poague Pogue Quinn Reilly Reynolds
Rielly Rogers Scott Seefin Smith Smyth Sorohan Sullivan
Thompson Tweedy Varley Weir

County Clare

Ahern Barrett Belsher Blake Boland Brady Bransfield
Brennan Brew Burke Burnell Cahill Carey Carmody Carrig
Casey Clancy Clare Clune Collins Connell Connole
Conoulty Considine Conway Corry Coughlan Coyle Cregan
Crotty Crowe Crowley Cunningham Curry Cusack Davoren
Deegan Delahunty Dempsey Dillon Diskin Doherty
Donnellan Donohoe Donohue Downes Doyle Driscoll
Dunleavy

Egan Ennis Falvey Fennell Fitzgerald Fitzgibbon
Fitzmartin Fitzpatrick Flaherty Flanagan Flannagan Foley

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Foran Fox Galvin Garvey Geoghegan Gill Glennon
Gordon Gorman Gregg Griffin Guinane Gulligan Hall
Halloran Hannon Hanrahan haren Harkin Hart Hartigan
Haugh Hayes Hehir Hennessy Hickey Higgins Hinchy
Hogan Hogg Holland Horan Houlihan Howard Hurley
Hurst Keane Keating Kelly Keniry Kenneally Kennedy
Kierce

Lacey Langan Larkin Lawler Lawlers Leyden Lillis
Linnane Lynch MacDowell MacNamara Madigan Magner
Maher Mangan Markham Maroney Marrinan Martell
Maxwell McAllen McEnery McGann McGough McGrath
Mcinerney McInerney McKinney McLaughlin McMahan
McNamara McNerney Melican Minahan Minogue Moloney
Morrison Murphy Nagle Nash Nelson

O'Brian O'Brien O'Dea O'Grady O'Halloran
O'Heffernan O'Keefe O'Loughlin O'Mealy O'Neill O'Shea
O'Sullivan Petty Pilkington Quilty Quinlan Quinn Reidy
Riedy Roach Rogers Rourke Rowan Ryan Scales Scanlan
Scanlon Scully Sexton Shalloe Shannon Shaughnessy Sheedy
Slattery Sullivan Talty Tierney Tubridy Waters Welsh
Whelan Whyte

County Cork

Abernathy Ahearn Aheren Ahern Allen Arundel Barker
Barr Barrett Barron Barry Bartley Beatty Bergen Berry Bluit
Bolger Brady Brannelly Bransfield Brennan Brogan Brown

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Browne Buckley Burdin Burke Byrnes Cahill Cain Callahan
Callanan Camier Cantey Carey Carmody Carrigan Carroll
Carter Case Casey Cashin Cashman Cassidy Cavanaugh
Clancy Clarke Cleary Cleland Clifford Coakley Coffee
Coffey Colbert Collins Collumb Comerford Condon
Connell Connery Connolly Connor/Connors Conroy
Conway Coogan Coppinger Corbett Corcoran Cork Corkery
Corridan Costigan Cotter Cottom Coughlan Coughlin Coyle
Crawford Creeden Cremin Cronin Crossen Crowe Crowley
Cullen Culliton Cummings Curran Curtin Curtis Cushin

Dabney Daly Daugherty Davis Delaney Deneen Dennehy
Dennison Desmond Deveney Dineen Dinneen Doheny
Donahoe Donahue Doney Donohue Donovan Dorgan
Doyle Driscoll Drummy Duffy Dugan Duggan Dunn
Dunnigan Dwyer Dykes Early Eckley Egan Ellis Ennis
Enright Fane Farmer Farrell Fegan Ferdinand Ferrigan Finn
FitzGerald Fitzpatrick Flaherty Flanagan Fleming Fletcher
Foley Freeman Gaffney Gallagher Galligan Galway Garde
Gaughan Geary Gerrity Gibbons Gibson Gill Gilleran
Gilman Glavin Goggin Green Greer Griffin Grogan

Haggerty Hallahan Haloran Haney Harney Harrington
Harris Hartigan Hawkes Hayes Healey Healy Heard
Heffernan Hegarty Hennessey Hennessy Herlihy Hickey
Hogan Holland Holohan Horgan Hourihan Hourihane
Howard Huey Hurley Irish Jeffers Jeffrey Jennings Joyce
Joynt Kearney Keefe Kelleher Kelley Kelly Kennedy Kenny
Keohane Kieley Kiley King Kingston Kingstone Kirk

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Lalley Landers Lane Lawless Leach Leahy Lee Leyhane
Long Lordan Lucey Luddy Lynch Lyons MacAuliffe
MacDonald Madden Maher Mahoney Mallon Malone
Maloney Manning Mannix Marnell Martin McAninley
McCann McCarthy McCartney McCarty McCloskey
McCormick McCotter McDermott McDevitt McGarry
McGill McGinn McGinnis McGlynn McGourn McGrath
McGraw McIntyre McKenzie McLaughlin McMahan
Meehan Mehegan Mohally Molloy Moran Morey Morrissey
Moynahan Mulcahy Mulchinaugh Mulchinock Mullarkey
Mullen Mullins Munday Murphy Murray

Nally Neely Newman Nicholson Noonan Nugent O'Brian
O'Brien O'Bryan O'Callaghan O'Colmain O'Connell
O'Conner O'Connor O'Cronin O'Donnell O'Donoghue
O'Donovan O'Driscoll O'Flaherty O'Flynn O'Halloran
O'Hearn O'Herrons O'Kane O'Keefe O'Keefe O'Lalley
O'Larkin O'Leary O'Mahony O'Malley O'Neil O'Neill
O'Niell O'Rourke O'Shaughnessy O'Shea O'Sullivan
O'Tuama Parker Pension Phelan Phillips Philpott Pomeroy
Power Powers Poythrus Price Purvis Quinlan Quinn Quirk
Raymond Reardon Regan Riley Riordan Roach Roche
Rogers Ryan Rylee

Saunders Savage Scanlan Scanlon Shea Shearin Sheehan
Shine Simpson Sisk Slattery Smith Snee Somers Stanton
Steele Stewart Stone Sullivan Sweeney Synge Taylor Terry
Thomas Timmons Tobin Toohy Tooker Toomey Tracey
Traynor Tuckey Walsh Ward Webb Welch Welsh Weston

Whalen White Wholey Winters

County Derry

Baird Barnett Bean Boyce Boyd Braden Breen Caldwell
Cassidy Cowan Coyle Creighton Crow Cunningham Curran
Dicky Dinsmore Doherty Duddy Elliott Fulton Gillihan
Glenn Guthry Haggerty Hasson Heaney Irwin Johnston
Kiernan Knox Lamberton Laughlin Law Lytle

Mallon McCarron McCashion McCloskey McCluskey
McDevitt McElvaney McKenna McKinnon McLaughlin
McMillan McPeake McQueary McTaggart Moody Mooney
O'Cain O'Connor O'Doherty O'Kane Powers Reily Roan
Teague Toughill Toye Vance Warke Whistle

County Donegal

Barr Begley Bonar Boner Bonner Boyce Boyd Boyle
Bradley Brennan Breslin Brown Bryson Burns Byrne
Canning Cannon Carey Clark Cole Coll Collins Conwell
Corrigan Coyle Crampsey Crawley Daly Daugherty Davis
Deery Dever Devlin Diver Docherty Doherty Dolly
Donaghy Donahue Donohue Doohan Doonan Doran
Doroity Dorrian Dougherty Duffy Dunn Early Elliott
Erskine Ewing Flanagan Friel Gallagher Gavigan Gill Gillen
Gillespie Granahan Grant Haggerty Hamill Hanlon
Hannigan Harkin Harkins Harley Hegarty Heraghty Houstin
James

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Kane Kearney Keaveney Kee Keeney Kelly Kerr
Kerrigan Knee Long Lowery Mangin Margey McAteer
McAuley McBrearty McBride McCafferty McCague
McCahill McCallion McCann McCarrig McCarron
McClelland McCloskey McClure McCole McConaha
McConnell McCool McDaid McDevitt McElwaine
McFadden McFaul McGarry McGarvey McGee McGeever
McGeoghegan McGettigan McGill McGinley McGinty
McGlinchey McGlynn McGonagle McGonigal McGough
McGovern McGowan McGregor McHugh McIlhaney
McIllwee McIlwain McIntyre McLaughlin McNamee
McNelis McPheely Melley Milligan Molloy Monahan
Mooney Morrison Mulhern Mullin Mullins Murray

Norfolk O'Boyle O'Brien O'Cannon/O'Cannain
O'Doherty O'Donnell O'Hare Orr Orrick Patterson
Pettigrew Porter Rea Redden Reilly Robinson Rodden Ryan
Scanlon Sharkey Sheedy Sheils Shovlin Simpson Spence
Stuart Sweeney Tinney Toland Walsh Weir Wylie

County Down

Bailey Bannon Belshaw Bigham Bingham Binsely Blaney
Brennan Burns Byrnes Cahill Carmichael Clendenen Collins
Connors Coulter Cunningham Dargan Darraugh Dawson
DeLargy Denvir Devine Diamond Donley Dorrian Dorris
Dougan Downey Drake Duffy Edgar Fagan Ferguson Ferris
Fitzsimmons Fox Garvin Gibson Gilbert Gilbow Gilliland
Gilmore Grace Graham Green Gregg Gunning Halpin

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Hamilton Hanvey Heaney Heenan Heneddy Jennings Jess
Jordan Kelly Kenealy Kennedy Kielty Laverty Lundy Lyttle

MacMillan Magennis Magenty Maguire Mannis Martin
McCafferty McCliment McClurg McConnell McCosh
McCullough McErlean McGrattan McGuffin McKee
McKinney McMillan McMullen McNamara McRobert
Miller Mills Monaghan Moorheads Mulhall Mulholland
Mulloy Murphy Murray Nelson O'Neil O'Rourke Peters
Polley Robinson Rooney Rossbotham Ryan Savage Scott
Shea Skinner Sloan Smith Smyth Speers Spiby Thompson
Todd Tormey Trainor Tremere Turner Wallace Williamson
Wright

County Dublin

Adkins Bennett Burke Byrne Callaghan Carson Caviston
Coffey Coleman Comerford Condern Cooke Corcoran
Corp Cotter Crippen Cummins Cunningham Davis Delanny
Dixon Donaldson Donlan Doolan Dowling Doyle Dudgen
Duffee Egan English Eslin Evans Faughan Fenlon Free
Fulton Gilligan Grant Gray Halpin Hannah Hawkins Hayde
Heffernan Higgins Hughes Iveagh Jordan Kane Kearney
Kelley Kelly Lalor Leahy Leonard

Mackey Madden Maloney Mangan Masterson Mc Mahan
McAllister McBride McClelland McConnell McGuire
McIntyre McVickar Mitchell Molloy Mooney Moore Nolan
O'Connely O'Connor O'Flanagan O'Leary O'Neill O'Reilly

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

O'Rourke Osborne Owens Pollock Puzsau Quinn
Redmond Reid Reilly Riddell Riley Rolston Ross Ryan
Seaver Smith Sutton Taylor Tyndall Walsh White Woodard
Woods Yeates

County Fermanagh

Amy Armstrong Averell Beacom Beatty Bevis Bird Booth
Brady Carleton Cashon Cassidy Clark Corrigan Creighton
Dolan Donaldson Donnelly Dowd English Fair Farrell
Fisher Flanagan Gillogly Graham Gunn Harman Hicks
Johnston Kenney Largy Logan Loughnane Lunney Maguire
Malloy Maze McBrien McCabe McCauley McCusker McGee
McGhee McGillen McGrice McGuigan McGuinnis
McGuire McLaughlin McManus McVeigh Meehan
Moneypenny Moore Moroney Morris Munday Murray
Nugent Peters Quaid Rowan Slavin Taylor Thompson
Tierney Vance

County Galway

Athey Balun Beegan Blake Broderick Burke Byrne Cahill
Canavan Carr Carroll Carty Casey Cawley Cleary Cloonan
Coffey Collins Comer Conheaney Conneely Connolly
Connor Conroy Corless Corr Costello Coyne Crowe
Cubbard Cullinane Cusack Davin Dean Deely Dillon Dinan
Doherty Dolan Donahoe Donnellon Donohue Dorsey
Dowd Duffy Egan Fahey Fair Feeney Fell Finn Finnerty

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Fitzgerald Flaherty Flannery Fleming Flynn Folan Fox
French Gallagher Garvey Geoghegan Geraghty Gibson Gill
Glynn Gorham Gormley Guy

Halloran Hannan Hannon Haverty Heanue Hession
Higgins Hobin Hogan Holland Holmes Hughes Hushion
Hynes Irvine Jennings Joyce Keady Kean Keaney Kelley
Kelly Kelton Kennedy Kenny Kern Kerwin Kileen Kilkelly
King Kirrane Laffey Lardner Lavelle Lee Leech Leonard
Linnane Lowery Lunch Lynch Lyons Machan Madden
Mahan Malloy Manion Manning Mannion Martin
McAndrew McDonough McDonoughan McHugh
McKeever McLaughlin McNalley Melia Mellody Melody
Mitchel Molloy Monahan Mongan Mooney Moriarty Morris
Morrison Mullaney Mullen Murphy Murray

Nee Nelly/Connelly Noonans Norton O'Brien O'Dea
O'Donnell O'Flaherty O'Halloran O'Malley O'Shaughnessy
O'Toole Pike Quinn Raftery Reardon Rielly Rooney Ruane
Rush Ryan Scarry Screen Scuffle Shehey Skeritt Sloan Smyth
Spellman Stanton Stephens Sweeney Tivenan Treacy Walsh
Warren Whyte

County Kerry

Ashe Bowler Brassil Breen Brennan Brogan Brosnan
Browne Cahill Caldwell Callaghan Cannon Carmody Casey
Clifford Coffey Collins Connell Connolly Corcoran Costello
Cotter Coughlan Counihan Courtney Crimmins Cronin

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Curran Cusack Daly Daugherty Deady DeCoursey Degan
Devlin Dillon Dinneen Dodd Doherty Donnelly Donohue
Donovan Doona Dowd Dowling Downey Doyle Eaton
Egan Ferris Ferriter Finn Finnegan Fitzgerald Fleming Foley

Gallivan Galvin Gamble Garvey Gear Godfrey Goggins
Grady Greany Griffin Grogan Hallissey Hanafin Harper
Healy Herlihy Higgins Hoare Hobert Hogan Holden
Hoolihan Humenick Hurley Hussey Keane Kearney
Kelleher Kelliher Kelly Keyes Kirby Landers Lawlor Leary
Long Looney Lovett Lynch Lyne MacMahon Mahoney
Mahony Manning Mason McCarthy McCarty McDonald
McDonnell McElligot McGillicuddy McKenna McMahon
McSweeney Millane Moore Moriarty Moriarty Mulchinock
Murphy

Nolan O'Connell O'Connor O'Donnell O'Flaherty
O'Houlihan O'Mara O'Neil O'Neill O'Shea O'Sullivan Paine
Parker Purcell Quigley Quilter Quinn Reagan Reidy Riordan
Roche Rourke Scanlon Shea Sheehy Shine Slattery Spillane
Stack Stevens Stratton Sugrue Sullivan Tangney Tempe
Walsh Warren Webb White Wonderley

County Kildare

Bolger Brady Bryan Burke Campbell Carney Carroll
Connolly Cuff Deegan Fitzgerald Flannagan Garland
Goucher Graham Hannon Hayde Lehane Leonard Lewis
Marsh McCormack Mills Moran Muldowney Mulhall

Murphy O'Nolan Payne Reed Roantree Ryan Stewart Tighe
Walsh

County Kilkenny

Archdeacon Bearer Berrigan Boran Brannen Brennan
Brett Brophy Burns Butler Byrne Campbell Cantwell Carey
Clancy Coady Cody Collings Connors Conway Cormac
Costello Cove Cronyn Crow Cuddihy Deady Delaney
Dempsey Denieffe Dermody Dillon Dowling Dungan
Dunn Dwan Fennelly Ferguson Fitzpatrick Fitzsimons
Galvin Gannon Gorman Griffin Guilfoyle

Hamilton Hawe Hickey Hoban Holly Hunt Hurley Irish
Keefe Kelly Kennedy Kirwin Lahey Lyng Maher McCartan
McGuire McLaughlin Morris Muldowney Murphy
Naughton O'Connell O'Donnell O'Leary O'Mara O'Shea
O'Stahl Phelan Pielow Plunkett Power Purcell Reade Roche
Ryan Sansburn Sheridan Shortall Sullivan Walsh Welch

County Laois

Aiken Barnett Bergin Carter Cavanaugh Chambers Clooney
Cranney Dempsey Dowling Doyle Dunne Fahey Feeney
Finn Fitzgerald Fitzpatrick Hayes Hetherington Keating
Kelly Lawler McDermott McEvoy McLean Moore Morrissey
Mulhall Nolan O'Connor Scott Scully Tobin Wall Wilson
Wright

County Leitrim

Byrne Campbell Carrigan Clarke Conroy Costello Cullen
Cunningham Darcy Dinnen Dorigan Dunne Faughnan
Flynn Fowley Fox Gallagher Gilmartin Gormley Green
Grennan Hannon Heeran Keeran Kelly Kennedy Kiernan
Lenihan Mahan Mahon Marlowe McCartin McGarry
McGoey McGoldrick McGowan McGrail McGuire
McNulty McPartlan McSharry McTiernan McTigue Mostyn
Mulligan Murray Myers Noone O'Hara O'Neil O'Rourke
Rahal Reilly Shanley Shaw Smyth Tiernan Travers
Travers/O'Treabhair Walsh White

County Limerick

Bagnall Barry Barton Bluett Bowen Boyle Brigman Brown
Burke Byron Cahill Carroll Carrolls Caswell Cleary Coleman
Collins Collopy Colwell Conway Cops Cottom Coughlin
Cronin Culhane Cullen Cunneen Cussen Daly Davern
Dempsey Doran Dowd Downes Doyle Dunne Ennalls
Enright Farrell Finn Fitzgerald Flaherty Flynn Fogarty
Gainey Gaynor Gernon Gillespie Gillon Gleeson Glenney

Hannan Hannon Hartigan Hassett Hays Healey
Heffernan Hennessy Herbert Hickey Hourigan Ivers Keane
Keating Kelly Kinnerk Kirwan Lacey Lacy Lawler Leakey
Liston Lynch Madigan Maher Maunsell McCarthy
McCormack McCurren McDonall McGrath McQueen
Minihan Molohon Mulcahy Murphy Nash Naughton

A Letter from Ireland

Nealon Neville Nolan O'Connell O'Connor O'Donnell
O'Donoghue O'Heffernan O'Sullivan Quinn Raynard Ready
Reidy Ring Riordan Ryan Sexton Shanahan Sheedy Sheehan
Shier Smyth Spelesy Spillane Switzer Teskey Tobin Tracey
Vassey Wade Walsh Watson Welsh Woulfe

County Longford

Adams Ahern Blake Brady Campbell Connaughton
Corrigan Cullinan Dimond Duffy Duignan Fallon Farrell
Ferrell Finsely Ginty Heaney Johnston Kane Keane Keating
Kelly Killian Larkin Lennon Loftus Lynch McCabe
McCauley McClaughry McCreanor McGann McGovern
McKenna Mulligan Mulvihill Murray Murtha Nulty
O'Farrell Quinn Radigan Rawl Reilly Rodgers Rudden Seery
Shanley Smith Walsh Whitney York

County Louth

Brannon Breagy Byrne Callan Carroll Cassidy Devine
Doyle Duffy Finegan Harmon Kavanagh Kelledy Levins
Lynch Mathews McCabe McDonald McDonough McKeon
Mulholland Murphy Newcomb O'Hara Rafferty Reilly
Reynolds Rogan Rooney Shane Short Simpson Taaffe
Venable Yore

County Mayo

Ansbro Bailey Barrett Beatty Begley Beirne Bermingham

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Bird Blackburn Bloxham Bourke Boylan Boyle Brannick
Brennan Breslin Brett Browne Burke Burns Cadden Caine
Cairns Callaghan Canavan Cannon Carey Carlin Carney
Carolan Casey Cassidy Caufield Caulfield Chambers Clarke
Coleman Collins Conlon Connors Connolly Connor Conroy
Conway Cooney Costello Coughlin Coyne Crean Cuff
Culbreath Cullina Cummings Cunnane Cunningham

Daly Dane Davies Davitt Devanney Devlin Devor Dixon
Doherty Dolan Donlon Donnelly Dougherty Dowd Duffy
Dulin Dunleavy Durkan Durkin Earley Early Fallon
Farragher Fee Feeley Feerick Fergus Finn Fitzpatrick
Flanagan Flannigan Flatley Flynn Ford Forry Forster Foster
Frain Freeley Gallagher Galvin Gannon Garrey Garvey
Garvin Gaughan Gavaghan Gavin Geraghty Gibbons
Gormley Gough Granahan Graney Greeley Greely

Hall Halligan Hanahan Haney Harrington Hart Hastings
Healey Healy Henaughan Heneghan Henehan Henry Hickey
Higgins Hoban Hogan Huane Hughes Hurst Hyland Igoe
Jordan Joyce Judge Kane Kavanagh Keady Keane Kearns
Keenan Kelly Kennedy Kenny Kerins Kerrigan Kilbane
Kilcoyne Kilgariff Kilroy Kneafsey Lally Landers Larrisey
Lavelle Layng Leonard Levy Linsky Loftus Ludden Lyden
Lydon Lynagh Lynskey

Malley Malloney Malone Maloney Marney McAndrew
McBride McCauley McDermot McDonagh McDonald
McDonnell McDonnell/McDonald McEvey McEvoy
McGibbon McGinty McGowan McGreal McGuigan

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McGuire McHale McLaughlin McManus McMenamin
McMonagle McNamara McNicholas McNulty McQuaide
Mealey Millet Minoughan Molloy Monahan Monnelly
Moore Moran Morley Morrison Mortimer Muldowney
Mullaney Mullen Mulligan Mulroy Munnelly Murphy Murray

Naughton Nealon Neary Nellany Nolan Noone O'Boyle
O'Brien O'Connor O'Donnell O'Gara O'Hale O'Hara
O'Hora O'Malley O'Rourke O'Sullivan O'Toole Owens
Parker Patterson Payne Phillips Plover Prendergast Pugh
Quinn Rabbit Radigan Rainey Reaney Regan Riley Roach
Rooney Ruane Rush Ryan Sands Scully Sheeran Sheerin
Sheridan Sherrans Smith Stenson Sweeney Swift Tarpey
Tighe Toole Totton Treacy Tucker Tully Tunney Vahey
Walsh Walton Webb

County Meath

Barry Butler Byrnes Clinch Cummiskey Dillon Dolan
Durgy Fields Finnegan Fitzsimmons Flannigan Foy
Gilsenan Goodwin Growney Halpin Heary Hogan Hughes
Kangley Keeran Lane Leonard Lowther Lynam Lynch
Mahon Malone Manning McDonnell McFarren McGrane
McLaughlin McMahan McNally McNamee Meeke
Monahan Mooney Murphy Murray Nangle O'Daly Pender
Reilly Riley Rispin Shanley Sheehy Tully Williams Yore

County Monaghan

Bowes Boyd Brannigan Brown Callan Carolan Carroll
Cassidy Conally Connolly Duffy Duggan Durnin Faulkner
Fawcett Fields Finnegan Gauley Hughes Karr Keenan
Kellegher Lillis Lynn MacPhillips Maguire Malone Martin
McCabe McCarney McCarron McCaul McConnon McKee
McKeever McKenna McKittricks McMahan McQuade
Meehan Moor Moorhead Morris Quigley Quinn Sheridan
Smyth Stephens Sutor Taggart Timmins Treanor Ward
Waters Weir Wiggins

County Offaly

Carroll Coleman Connolly Corcoran Culgin Dempsey
Dooley Dunne Dunns Egan Flannagan Flynn Hogan Kelly
Lane Loney Malloy McMahan Menton Mooney Moran
Moren Mullally Murphy O'Bannon/O'Bannion O'Carrol
O'Connor O'Madden O'Reilly Rafter Rigney Stone Warren
Watson

County Roscommon

Beirne Brehon Brennan Bresnahan Burke Butler Byrne
Byron Casey Cassidy Cawley Charley Coady Conaughton
Conlin Connaughton Connor Cox Coyne Crawford
Croughan Curley D'Arcy Deffley Diffley Dillon Donoghue
Doyle Egan Fallon Feeley Fetherston Filan Finan Finerty
Finnegan Finnerty Flanagan Gaffin Giblin Giblins

A Letter from Ireland

Gilmartin Gilooly Glancy Glennon Glynn Gonoude Grace
Grinham Hanley Hayden Healy Heffernan Higgins Hoar
Horan

Kaveny Keane Keegan Keena Keigher Kelly Kenny
Killelea Kimmet Lane Larkin Leonard Lynch Martin
Mauriceroe McDermott McGee McHugh McLoughlin
McManus McNulty Mosgrove Mulrenan Murphy Murray
Murtagh Neilan O'Brien O'Connor O'Gara Padian Quinn
Reddy Reynolds Rush Savage Shanahan Shannon
Skeffington Smith Tague Thullis Tiernan Webb Winston

County Sligo

Armstrong Auliff Banks Barber Beatty Brennan Cahill
Canty Carbury Casey Cawley Clark Coleman Colman Coyle
Cuffe Culleens Cullen Cumiskey Cunningham Daly
Donegan Dunigan Durcan Durkin Dyer Fahey Farrell Fee
Feeley Feeney Finan Finnigan Flannery Flynn Foley
Gallagher Gardiner Gartland Geary Gilgan Gilmartin
Gilmore Grady Graham

Healy Henry Herly Higgins Hunt Jennings Jinks Judge
Kelly Kennedy Kenney Kerrigan Kilroy Lacken Lang Layng
Loughlin Madden Maguire Malloy Marren McCafferkey
McDonough McEtrick McGarry McGary McGloin
McGowan McKeon McKeown McTeirnan Meehan Meer
Moore Moriarty Morrison Mulligan Mulvaney Musgrave
Niland O'Gara O'Hara O'Neill Owens Pugh Quinn Rafferty

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Regan Scanlon Scott Scully St Lawrence Stimson Stinson
Sweeney Vesey Walsh White Young

County Tipperary

Ahern Aylward Bannon Barry Beary Blake Bonney Bowes
Brett Britt Browne Brunnock Bryan Burgess Butler Cahill
Cain Carden Carey Carney Carroll Charlton Clancy Coady
Coffey Colue Corbett Costelloe Cotter Coughlin Crotty
Culleton Cummings Cummins Daley Daly Daven Dempsey
Doherty Donnelly Donovan Dwyer Egan Emerson English
Fannons Fennessy Field Flynn Fogarty Galligan Gaynor
Geaney Giltinane Gleason Gleeson Gorman

Hanley Harrigan Haslett Hawkes Hawkins Hayes
Hennessy Hogan Holway Horan Houlihan Hyde Hyland
Jackson Kane Kay Keefe Kelleher Kennedy Kenney Keogh
Kirwan Lahy Landers Lanigan Lewis Lloyd Lonergan Long
Looby Luby Luttrell Lynch Lyons Mackey Madden Maher
Mahoney Maloughny McElliot McEvoy McGrath Meagher
Meara Moloney Monahan Mooney Moyles Mulcahy Mullally
Nolan

O'Bannon O'Brien O'Connor O'Donnell O'Dwyer
O'Gorman O'Halloran O'Mara O'Meara O'Neill O'Sullivan
Pendergrast Pennefeather Powell Preston Purcell Purtill
Quinlan Rockett Roughan Ryan Shanahan Shea Shelley
Slattery Smeltzer Smith Spillane Stanley Talbot Tobin
Torpey Tracy Tucker Tyrrell Vaughan Walsh Wellwood

County Tyrone

Anderson Barclay Braden Bradley Bryson Buchanan
Calderwood Caldwell Calhoun Carlin Carlon Carolin Carson
Casey Coffee Corr Crawford Daley Davey Devlin Duff
Earley Early Findley Flynn Galeen Galleen Garvin
Gibbonney Gibson Gilchrist Glennon Gorman Gray Greer
Hackett Hamill Haston Hempill Hide Hughes Johnston
Kennedy Killeran Lafferty Lambert Laverty Logan Logue
Loughran Loy

MacAroy MacCartney Macklam MacKnew Mallahan
Mallon Martin Maune McCaffery McCaffrey McCarron
McClanahan McConaha McCook McCooney McCormick
McCracken McCreary McCurdy McCusker McDonald
McElhatton McFarland McGarrity McGinley McGlynn
McGrath McGuckin McGurren McHugh McKenna
McKinney McLaughlin McLean McNulty McSorley Mellon
Mullen Murray

Neville Nickell O'Brien O'Donnell O'Neill Orr Paisley
Pomeroy Quinn Redmond Rooney Scott Seens Shea
Shinners Skivington Snodgrass Thompson Turbett Turbitt
Vaughan Wallace

County Waterford

Ahearn Barnidge Black Boyle Browner Burns Butler
Cantwell Carr Caruth Cleary Clooney Connolly Conway
Corcoran Costello Croke Cunningham Daly Egan Finn

The Surnames of Your Irish Heritage

Flynn Foley Furlong Godfrey Guiry Heffernan Hogan Hunt
Hurley Keane Keily

Kenneally Kiely Kiley Leckie Leonard Long Lyons Maher
Mahoney Martin McCarthy Moakler Mohoney Moore Munn
Murphy Navin O'Brien Porter Power Regan Roach Roche
Roe Shortis Sullivan Synott Terry Wall Walsh Whalen White
Whitty

County Westmeath

Ahearn Bagley Begley Bohan Brady Broder Brougham
Byrnes Callaghan Callahan Casey Cashin Coffey Conaty
Cormack Daly Darcy Delamer Dillon Dooley Dorsey Earley
Evers Fagan Farrell Flynn Foley Gaffney Gallagher Garvey
Gavin Geoghan Geraghty Gorman Heaney Higgins
Jeffries/Jeffert Kearney Kehoe Kenny Killoughy Lavin
MacGeoghegan MacNamee Mahon Maney Manning
Mannion McGuigan Mulhall Murray Nally Nugent O'Farrell
O'Rourke Redden Reilly Rigney Rush Seery Stanley Stone
Tierney Tormey Tyrrell

County Wexford

Aspel Berney Bishop Bolger Brett Buggy Bulger Butler
Byrne Byrnes Cahill Carroll Casey Cavanaugh Codd Coe
Colclough Colfer Corcoran Cox Crosbie Cullen Doyle
Edwards Fanning Fardy Fitzgerald Flynn Furlong Gaffney
Gannon Gavin Goff Hall Hempinstall Hope Howlin Jones

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Kanary Kavanagh Kelly Kennedy Kielthy Kinsella Kinsley
Kirwan Lannan Libby

Martyn McDonald McGrievy Molloy Mordaunt Morris
Murdoch Murphy Noctor Nolan O'Byrne O'Connor
O'Keefe O'Neill O'Shea Ralph Redmond Roche Rooney
Rose Rossiter Rossiters Ryan Sheehan Sinnott Skelton
Stanton Sutton Teague Whitty

County Wicklow

Barnes Barry Bates Byrne Clarke Coates Doyle Fitzhenry
Gartland Johnson Jones Kavanagh Kennedy Keogh
McAttackneys McHendrick McQuillan O'Byrne O'Toole
Pender Power Shannon Toole Twyford Tyrrell Wall Ward
Whelan Yates

Further Reading and Resources

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Online Resources

Your Irish Heritage Blog: www.youririshheritage.com

Your Irish Heritage on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/youririshheritage

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