

Cornelius Boyle and Family: North Dakota Pioneers

Part Six

Breakthrough to Ireland

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Owen Kerr and Dan Boyle in 1995 standing beside the gravestone of John Boyle, ancestor of both of them. John Boyle is the oldest known Boyle ancestor of Daniel C. Boyle, author of this article. John was the father of Patrick, who was the father of Cornelius, who was the father of my father, Martin. John's dates are 1766-1846.

Breakthrough to Ireland

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Breakthrough Challenges

Each family history presents its own challenges, frustrations, and satisfactions. For me the major and long lasting challenge was to make a breakthrough to Ireland, to the exact townland from which my ancestors emigrated. This article will detail the process, reveal the frustrations, and show the satisfaction derived from an ultimately successful effort, which began in 1981. It will show that, in spite of a scarcity of Irish records, a breakthrough is possible. Certainly, if I in my fumbling way can do it, there is great hope for you.

My breakthrough effort was daunting for several reasons:

- There were few family stories, no cache of old letters, and few readily accessible documents.
- Long generations—I was born in 1933, my father in 1878, his mother in about 1835 and his father in 1842. To reach the great grandparent level involved persons born in the last decade of the 1700s or the first years of the first decade of the 1800s. I am the sixth son of an eighth son of a fifth son. On my father's maternal side he was the ninth and youngest child of a mother who was the youngest child of a large family whose precise count is still undetermined.
- A three-nation involvement. My Boyle family had emigrated from Ireland, spent about 35 years in Ontario, and then moved on to Dakota Territory in 1881-82.
- This is 1989 and I live in Columbia, Maryland, a long way from North Dakota, Ontario, or Ireland.

The rule in family history is to **start with yourself** and then move backwards as facts and theories develop. I started pretty much with my grandparents. I will try to present this as it happened, but the way it should have happened will probably creep in. One does learn along the way and the impact of early mishaps, like grief, blurs with time.

In important ways my family of Boyles is not typical of Irish emigrants to the United States. They did emigrate to Canada first and they were farmers in Ireland, Canada, and North Dakota. From a research point of view, this situation has some disadvantages—fewer records were kept on Irish emigrants to Canada since no change in citizenship was involved. On the other hand some advantages of a rural setting are obvious. Unlike a friend, I have never had to write to the managers of 50 cemeteries in Pittsburgh in a massive, and unsuccessful, effort to find an ancestor. Still pouring through census records of rural communities in early stages of settlement can be difficult enough.

North Dakota Discoveries

The shortage of family anecdotes known to me can be attributed in part to the fact that my father, Martin, had died in 1956, his mother, Ellen, in 1905, and his father, Cornelius, in 1894. Both of Martin's parents were dead before he married in 1909. He and all of his brothers and sister were dead by 1967. Even my oldest cousins had no personal memory of the grandparents.

I did have a few things to aid me. There was an old leather folder filled with 1880s mortgages including a legal description of the original homestead in Ransom County, Dakota Territory, and

access to and familiarity with the family burial plot in St. Mary's Cemetery at Sheldon, North Dakota. In addition, there was general agreement that the family had moved to Dakota Territory from Orillia, Simcoe County, Ontario, and that Ellen's maiden name was Doyle.

In terms of the breakthrough to Ireland, St. Mary's Cemetery provided the best first clue. Cornelius and Ellen's tombstone, erected after Ellen's death, had an inscription saying they were natives of County Tyrone, Ireland. But knowing they were natives of County Tyrone was not good enough for me. I wanted to know the exact parish and townland where they lived, when they left, and especially whether they had been affected by the Great Famine of 1845-1849. I also wanted to know what their life had been like in County Tyrone.

From the documents in the folder I was able to determine when Cornelius had arrived in Dakota Territory (April 5, 1881), and from the tombstones his and Ellen's death dates, and the death dates of some of my uncles. In addition there was a Doyle grave in the midst of the Boyle plot confirming the Boyle-Doyle connection.

St. Mary's Cemetery is adjacent to the village of Sheldon, North Dakota. Less than 200 people reside in Sheldon. Nine miles away is located the last farm home of Cornelius and Ellen. That farm was my birthplace. Based on the tombstone dates, I found and copied by hand the obituaries printed in the local weekly newspaper. The paper had gone through many names and ownerships before closing in the 1950s. Fortunately, a file copy of each edition was available. I copied the obituaries when I went to Sheldon to celebrate the centennial of its founding in 1981.

The obituaries established that the Boyles were well regarded in the community where they farmed. The funeral procession for Cornelius was recorded as the largest one that ever passed through Sheldon. (Sheldon was 13 years old at the time). For the funeral of Cornelius and Ellen's oldest son Owen who died in 1899, "there were 30 teams following the hearse..." on a January day in North Dakota. The obituary stated that he carried \$7000 in life insurance. However, as interesting and enlightening as the obituaries were, they contained no clue about where the Boyles had lived in County Tyrone. One specific contained in Cornelius's obituary was wrong. It stated that he had emigrated to Canada when he was six years old. Ellen's obituary was vague. She had emigrated "...when a young woman."

Compendium of History

Another contemporary source which I found in a roundabout way added more information. It is a fat book called *COMPENDIUM OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY*, published in 1900, a sort of massive vanity press publication. I found it in the Mormon Library in Salt Lake City while I was on a business trip. Of course, it would have been available in almost any North Dakota library had I known to ask. However, I have not lived in North Dakota for years. I am doing this research from Maryland.

The Compendium of History and Biography had articles on both my grandfathers. For Cornelius it:

- Listed the names of his parents, Patrick Boyle and Rose Boyle, suggesting that his mother's maiden name had been Boyle.
- Indicated he had four brothers, but did not name them
- Stated that his widowed mother and five sons emigrated to Ontario in 1845, and that the mother lived out her life there.

There are obvious inconsistencies among the sources. Emigration in 1845 at age six does not jibe well with death in 1894, age 52—close, but “no cigar.”

Sometime later, a relative mentioned that there was a picture of Ellen and a brief article about her at the North Dakota Historical Society. It was part of a series that had been done by an organization called the Pioneer Daughters. The article listed her children in order of birth and traced the route taken in traveling from Ontario to Dakota Territory. It indicated that they had farmed near Orillia in Simcoe County, Ontario. It was vague about time of emigration from Ireland. None of these sources mentioned a point of origin in Ireland more specific than County Tyrone.

Old Letter

From a cousin I did obtain one old letter. Mary Ellen Niles, the only daughter of Cornelius and Ellen, wrote it. I thought it would be a great find. After all, Mary Ellen had lived with Ellen until Ellen's death and was the last of her children to die (in 1967). There must have been time for stories. The letter proved to be a strange mixture of fact and fiction, and of incorrect details adding up to something like truth. It is worth quoting and has taken me years to decipher.

Now to tell you about my dear Dad and Mother, also Aunt Bridget. Father was born in Roscommon Co., town of Boyle of whom was named after my Great Grand Father who was a Professor there, died quite young, left widow, five small sons. Grandma came with her little boys to Canada. She remarried a Mr. Kane hence the Kane family whom My Dad brought out from Canada in 1893 a year before my Dad died. John the oldest boy already at our place. Dad paid their way Uncle Jo, Auntie, 3 girls, 3 boys some real small—so much for that—he also built a house across the road from our place for them to live.

Well this Mrs. Flannery whom I met over in Hollywood went to school at Boyle College. She told me Mr. Cornelius Boyle's picture still hung in the College—a fine looking man she said. As was my father a handsome man as were all of his sons.

Mother was born in County Tyrone she only a child when she left Ireland. Aunt Bridget who lived with us as long as I can remember came to Canada when Mother was a bride, moved in and just stayed. Grandma Doyle a widow came to live with Mother when Pat was a baby and passed on when Mother had five boys. But Aunt Biddy lived until 1893, she never even made her own bed. As I remember, had breakfast in bed every morning and I took it to her and waited on

her as soon as I was able. One morning I took it to her and I ran downstairs and told Mother she was sick, they went after Priest and Dr. she passed on that day in her 90s. Dad was always so good to her always bringing her tobacco, she smoked a pipe, and candy too. She was supposed to have a great legacy left her in Ireland. But nothing ever came of it. Atty. Daugherty tried, but to no effect. So now you know as much about dear old Ireland and my dear ones as I do. God have mercy on them. Bridget Donnelly was from Armagh.

I will return to an analysis of Aunt Mary's letter later.

Census Records

Having exhausted the local records, I turned to census records. I ruled out the 1880 Dakota Territory Census as too early and learned that, except for a few fragments, the 1890 United States Census is lost. I found that there was an 1885 Dakota Territorial Census. From it I learned that my grandparents had moved within Dakota Territory from Ransom County to Highland Township, Cass County by 1885, even though they retained ownership of the Ransom County land until later. By this time, the older of their nine children were on their own. One factor that made verifying the accuracy of the census entries easy was the presence of a corresponding entry for Bridget Donnelly. Bridget Donnelly, a spinster aunt of my grandmother, had accompanied the family to Dakota Territory after having lived with them in Ontario. She took land of her own and later sold it to Ellen. The consideration was "Love and Affection" and \$1.00.

Ontario Discoveries

Census Records

Then I turned to Canadian census records. For practical purposes, they began in 1851 and were conducted at 10-year intervals. In following the Orillia, Simcoe County lead, I set myself up for a merry chase. After a year of correspondence and reading Simcoe County census microfilm, I became discouraged and contracted a professional researcher. Finally, we established that the location where my grandparents had lived was originally in Simcoe County, but the boundary had been changed about 1850. Without changing locations, the family was in Ontario County, Ontario Province, and there we finally found the records. Today that same location is back in Simcoe County.

The Ontario County census records for 1871 show my grandparents, Cornelius and Ellen with the first five of their nine children and the ubiquitous Bridget Donnelly. They are living in Mara Township, Ontario County, Ontario Province. My Irish dictionary shows that Mara is Irish for sea. There were separate entries for a Peter Boil and a John Boyle family. They turned out to be brothers of Cornelius. The 1861 records show Ellen living with her parents Owen and Margaret Doyle and with Bridget Donnelly.

Church Registers and Cemeteries

Now that the family was located, it was possible to find church registers and cemeteries. The family was Catholic and in Mara before there was a Church. St. Columbkille's Catholic Church was opened and blessed in 1857. Again using a paid researcher, I asked that St. Columbkille's Cemetery, just outside the village of Uptergrove in Mara Township be walked. Uptergrove is very near Orillia, but had been settled earlier. The large Lake Simcoe separates the two locations.

Tombstones for three great grandparents were found. Rose Boyle, mother of Cornelius, and Owen Doyle and Margaret Donnelly, parents of Ellen, were buried in the same section of the cemetery. The tombstone inscriptions for all three great grandparents showed them to be "natives of County Tyrone, Ireland."

From the tombstones, I could estimate death dates, age at death, and birth dates of the great grandparents. I was able to find in the parish registers the record of the marriage of Cornelius and Ellen on May 6, 1862 and learn that they were second cousins. I was also able to document the second marriage of my great grandmother Rose Boyle to James Kaine and the birth of a Kaine son in 1846. They lived two townships away in Brock Township.

For Rose and her five Boyle sons the time of emigration from Ireland could be narrowed to a three year window between the birth of Cornelius in County Tyrone in 1842 and her wedding in Brock in 1845. Mara records indicated that the names of Rose's sons were John, Peter, Patrick, Tole, and Cornelius. (Later research documented they had arrived at Holland Landing in Ontario in October 1844.)

Neither the Dakota records nor the Ontario records contained any point of origin information beyond County Tyrone. This was a definite frustration, but not a clue to quit. There were some Irish resources to consider.

Basic Irish Resources

Basic Irish resources include the following. Not all of them were pertinent to my particular situation, but they might be to yours.

- **Irish Census Records.** Irish census records are available for 1901 and 1911. For practical purposes, all previous nominal census records have been destroyed or are missing. These records of course were too late to be useful to me.
- **1890 Names List.** This publication lists names for which five or more births were registered in Ireland in 1890, and gives some geographic breakdown. For some names, this list is more interesting than helpful. But some Irish names are not widely distributed throughout Ireland. Boyle is an example—in 1890, it was found in nine of the 32 counties making up the island. Nine counties may be formidable, but 32 would be definitely worse. For Boyle the great preponderance of entries were for Donegal, with Mayo second and Tyrone third. However, the 1890s are too late to be directly useful to me.

- **Public records** Public registration of births, marriages and deaths in Ireland began in 1864; for Protestants public registration of births and marriages began in 1845. Still not useful to me. My Boyles and Doyles were Catholic and had left before 1864.
- **An Index of Surnames of Householders in Griffith's Primary Valuation.** It is available from the Mormon Genealogical Library. [Note added 2015. It is now available on Ancestry.com.] The entries index two major surveys of people in Ireland. It is as close to a census record as is available for the middle 1800s. The first is Griffith's Valuation of Tenements. This survey occurred in each Irish county in the late 1850s or the early 1860s. It is organized by county and parish. From the Index you can determine how many families of a given surname were recorded in each parish.
- **The Tithe Applotments** The other survey was done about 1830, in some counties a few years earlier, in others a few years later. It is organized by parish. It does not count the number of families with a given surname in each parish; but it does indicate that a least one person with the surname was there.

Of the two Griffith's is most complete. It includes tenant farmers, laborers, and townspeople. Its purpose was to provide a basis for collecting taxes to support workhouses where the poor and homeless were interred. The Tithe Applotment records are more limited. The entries include only those tenants who had long-term leases on farm property. Its purpose was to establish a basis for collecting tithes to be paid to the Church of Ireland. Everyone including Catholics, Presbyterians and Methodists were required to pay tithes to the Anglican Church of Ireland.

When one finds an entry in the index of interest, the entire return for the parish can be consulted. The index is of particular interest since it spans the years of the Great Famine—the Tithe Applotments were done earlier and Griffith's later. With 1,000,000 Irish dying and another 1,250,000 emigrating during that time, there was much turmoil, including much movement of people from one location to another inside Ireland.

With the Index of Surnames I hit pay dirt, but not without frustration of various kinds. In 1982, my wife and I were on a delayed honeymoon in Ireland. Checking out Tithe Applotment records in the dank library in Omagh, the county town of Tyrone rapidly became tedious with the pleasures of touring the beautiful Irish countryside, and other more personal pleasures, so close at hand. Still in a relatively short time we did find Tithe Applotment records for more persons named Patrick Boyle than we were prepared for—way too many to sort out.

Later, using Mormon records in the comfort of the local Mormon library, I got smarter. I checked the index for parishes in County Tyrone where Boyles, Doyles, and Donnellys had lived about 1830 and where they were living about 1860. I knew that my grandparents were related so that meant that their parents must have lived close together. Since Doyle was the least frequently occurring name, I concentrated on Doyles first. The Tithe Applotment records were most important of course. I knew my ancestors had left before 1860.

Beginning of the Breakthrough

Irish World Research

Combining what I knew from North Dakota and Ontario with the clues from the Index of Surnames of Householders I was ready to contact an Irish researcher. I was able to name the persons I was concerned with and to give fairly precise dates. I wrote with some assurance.

I believe the Roman Catholic parish records for the Middle, Upper, and Lower Dungannon Baronies, especially for Killeeshil, Pomeroy, and Donacavey parishes, and for Clogher Parish in Clogher Barony would be the best places to start.

These parishes all listed Boyles, Doyles, and Donnellys as present at the time of the Tithe Applotments. For this purpose, I concentrated on the Doyles rather than the Boyles. The Griffith's Valuation, admittedly for a later time, suggested that Doyle was the least frequently occurring name that Boyle was somewhat common, and the Donnelly was very common. In fact, this part of Tyrone had been Donnelly country since surnames were first used in Ireland. Sure enough, my ancestors were found in Killeeshil parish, Middle Dungannon Barony, County Tyrone. By the way, there is a Killeeshal parish in County Carlow and a Killeeshal parish in County Waterford.

I chose Irish World to conduct my search in Ireland. I chose them initially because they were located in Dungannon, the largest town in the area in which I expected my ancestors would be located. I reasoned that they would have access to local registers as well as microfilm records. Previously I had a problem with the baptismal record of my father, Martin, in Ontario. I could not find it on microfilm available from the Mormons.

A local researcher, Mrs. Joan Pealow of Orillia, Ontario had access to the actual parish records. She found my father's baptismal record on a page, which had not been microfilmed because it was largely illegible.

Irish World Replied

We found that in the parish of Killeeshil a Patrick Boyle and Rose Boyle (whose maiden name was also Boyle) had a son John Boyle christened on 14 November 1830. Later on 14 October 1832, they had a second son Peter Boyle baptized. It would appear that these would be the parents and brothers of your grandfather Cornelius Joseph Boyle. The names and dates correspond with your own information. Added to this the fact that Rose Boyle's maiden name was also Boyle, further convinces the belief that these are your ancestors.

After Peter's baptismal record, we find no more reference to this Boyle family. From about 1834 until the rest of the decade, there would seem to be a gap in the Killeeshil parish records, which may explain why no mention was made to Cornelius Boyle's brother Patrick born c1837. From sources of local knowledge however, we have found out that a Patrick Boyle from Killeeshil left Killeeshil parish with his family to go and live in the townland of Inishative, in the parish of Termonmaguirc. This Patrick Boyle's brother Con Boyle had already moved from Killeeshil to Inishative. When we checked the parish records of Termonmaguirc we found that a Patrick Boyle and a Rose Boyle of Inishative had a son Tully Boyle baptized on 3 September 1838. Once more the maiden name of this Rose Boyle was also Boyle. If as we presume, the Tole Boyle you mention in your letter is in fact Tully Boyle born 1838, then it is reasonable to assume that this Boyle family of Inishative is the same Boyle family originally of Killeeshil whom we believe to be your ancestors.

Termonmaguirc records also reveal that the last child of Patrick Boyle and Rose Boyle was a Constantine Boyle who was baptized on 9 April 1842. We also found out that within three years Patrick Boyle had died and was buried in Inishative.

At this point, a complication arises in our theory. It would be tempting to assume that the Constantine Boyle born in Inishative 1842 is your grandfather Cornelius Boyle with variations on his Christian name occurring through the ages. This could not be so however because we know that Constantine Boyle born 1842 in Inishative later moved and settled in Dungannon without emigrating. It would thus appear that we have been following the wrong track. Though much of what we found seemed to fit the information you gave us our assumption seems somewhat tarnished by the fact that Constantine Boyle remained in Ireland.

On reviewing the theory, the only hypothesis that emerges is that Patrick's brother Con Boyle who had been living in Inishative may have had a son Cornelius Boyle born just before the Termonmaguirc records commence in 1834. We know that Con Boyle died in Inishative in 1842, and it is therefore most likely that if Con Boyle had a son Cornelius, that he would have been adopted by his uncle and aunt, Patrick and Rose Boyle. When Rose Boyle emigrated with her children after Patrick died, Cornelius Boyle would have left with them. Our assumption therefore is that you would be a direct descendant of this Cornelius Boyle who was a nephew of Patrick and Rose Boyle and not a son.

Somewhat tarnished! I was devastated. Talk about a long slow curve with a fast break. I knew that my grandfather Cornelius had emigrated with Rose. Who was this interloper Constantine? I speculated that Cornelius's baptismal record was missing and that Rose's circumstances were so desperate after the death of her husband Patrick that she had emigrated with her older sons leaving a newborn baby behind. How sad! I speculated that the previously unknown to me,

Constantine, was left to be cared for by relatives. Perhaps there was an expectation that the relatives would emigrate later.

A Second Letter to Irish World

I was not impressed with Irish World's theory. I wrote them as follows:

I think that my grandfather, Cornelius, is a son of Rose and Patrick rather than a nephew for a couple of reasons:

a) Although I don't have a firm birth date for Cornelius, I have six different readings of his age from marriage, death, census and naturalization sources. All of these are consistent with a birth date about 1840-41, rather than one five or more years earlier.

b) When Cornelius and Ellen were married May 6, 1862, at the St. Columbkille's previously mentioned, a dispensation was needed because they were related. Cornelius is listed as 21 years old and Ellen as 27. Since the dispensation involved determining relationship, and with Rose living nearby, I believe correct information would have been given. It would not have been a time for Cornelius to claim to be younger than Ellen unless it was true. Patrick Boyle and Rose Boyle are listed as Cornelius's parents on the marriage register.

Irish World cried 'Uncle'

They wrote:

We are now in a position to conclude many theories on the Boyle search.

- 1. Cornelius Boyle, your grandfather, was a son of Patrick and Rose Boyle who first lived in Killeeshil and then moved to Inishative.*
- 2. We know that Patrick and Rose Boyle, your great grandparents, were related in some way as a 3rd degree dispensation was needed for permission to marry. This fact can be confirmed by referring to the enclosed copy of the Killeeshil marriage records for January 4, 1830. I have included the entries on the page in which the marriage was recorded and also the exact copy of the marriage register.*
- 3. From these facts and local knowledge we can assume with some confidence that Rose Boyle brought Cornelius, her son, to Canada with her and that Con Boyle who remained in Ireland was in fact the son of Michael, brother of Patrick and Constantine.*

Irish World enclosed a picture of the house in Inishative where Patrick and Rose Boyle had lived from about 1835 to 1842. It was, no doubt the birthplace of my grandfather, Cornelius. They also said that my great grandfather, Patrick had been buried at Carrickmore rather than Inishative.

Frustrations and Serendipitous Happenings

One of the frustrations I encountered in this search is that the Mormons tend to have Protestant church registers available where I am looking for Catholics and Catholic registers where I was looking for Protestants. I was fortunate in another regard. In Killeeshil the registers began in 1818, a relatively early date for Catholic registers in Ireland. There was a gap in the Killeeshil registers from 1835 to 1840. After having found the point of origin of my family in Ireland after a years long search, the absence of complete records for everyone was merely an annoyance. Hazards I discovered in my search of Irish records include the constant changes in the spelling of place names—townlands, parishes, and baronies all tend to vary from one record to the next. Part of the reason is that the original Irish language names and pronunciations were phonetically translated into English by persons with little or no knowledge of Irish, and sometimes a deficient grasp of English as well. Often the meaning as well as the pronunciation was distorted.

Another problem I encountered, with much anguish and no little expense to straighten out, was the apparent interchangeable nature of given names. This occurs because original Irish given names were being changed to English, and then recorded in Church registers in Latin. An example is this name; Oeghan in Irish, Owen in English, and Eugenio on the Church register. A related issue is whether the name in English should sound like the name in Irish or should it have the same meaning. In Irish Oeghan means “bright.” In English Owen sounds like Oeghan, but Owen also has a meaning in Irish. It means “river” in Irish. The English name meaning bright is Eugene. Consequently, Oeghan, Owen, and Eugene are largely interchangeable. In addition, sometimes one Latin name was used to represent several English or Irish names. Other times, more than one Latin name was used for a given Irish name. One remote relative who caused me anguish had nine children baptized. Five times he was listed on the register as Constantine and four times as Cornelius. He was known locally as Scots Conn, apparently because he had migrated to Scotland for a time.

There is also the problem of nicknames. With the Irish, there was a tradition of naming the first son after the paternal grandfather and the second son after the maternal grandfather. A similar scheme was used for girls. With large families and little mobility, several persons with the same name might reside in a small community necessitating nicknames to tell them apart. In my own family in North Dakota, there was a Big Martin, (my father), a Little Martin, and a California Martin as well as an Old Henry and a Young Henry, and Cornelius’s variously called Conn and Neil. It was something like the Bob Newhart Show where Larry has two brothers both named Daryl.

Satisfactions

One of the great satisfactions to come of this search was to be able to send a Christmas letter to Boyle relatives in nine states and three Canadian provinces. Excerpts follow which nicely summarize the breakthrough to Ireland. While she was Rose, Rosa, or Rosey in Ontario, my great-grandmother was usually Roseanne on County Tyrone records.



Reported to be Boyle house now farm shed.

The Saga of Roseanne

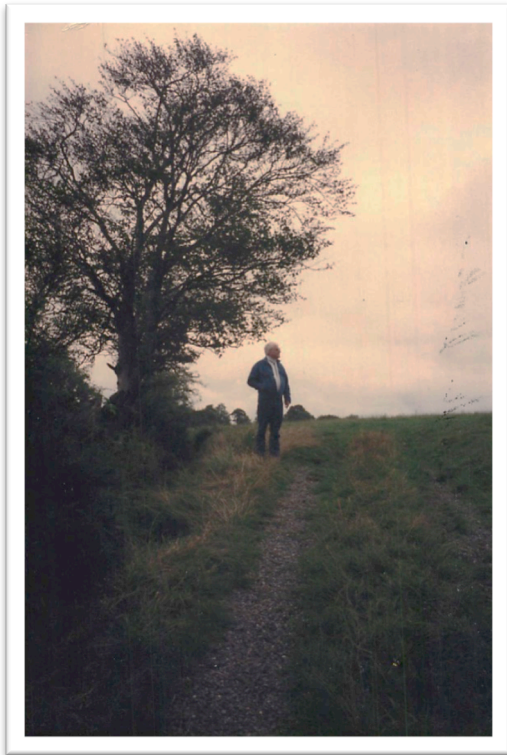
The house pictured was the home of our great grandparents Roseann and Patrick Boyle about 1835-1842, and the birthplace of our grandfather Cornelius Boyle on April 9, 1842. It is located in the townland of Inishative (now spelled Innishatieve), parish of Termonmaguirc, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. The closest village is Carrickmore (More recent information suggests this house, now a tool shed, was built after Roseanne and her family emigrated.)

Roseanne and Patrick had been married in the nearby parish of Killeeshil on January 4, 1830. Her maiden name was Boyle; in fact, they were second cousins. After the marriage, they lived in the townland of Aughinduffe, parish of Killeeshil. Their older sons were born there; John was baptized November 14, 1830 and Peter on October 14, 1832. A “local source” indicated that Roseann and Patrick had followed Patrick’s brother Con to Inishative about 1835. Sure enough, the “local source” was right. Roseann and Patrick’s younger sons were born in Inishative. Their son Patrick was born about 1835; Tully was baptized November 3, 1838; and Cornelius—our grandfather, was baptized April 9, 1842.

Patrick, husband of Roseanne, died soon after the birth of Cornelius. Patrick was buried in the cemetery of the largest Catholic Church in the parish, St. Colmcille’s in the nearby village of Carrickmore. (In Ireland, Catholic parishes are large with more than one church.) Years later, Roseanne would be buried in St. Columbkille’s cemetery, this one outside the village of Uptergrove in Mara township, Ontario. Mara Township borders on Lake Simcoe. The nearest town of substantial size is Orillia. Both of these cemeteries are named for the same Irish saint.

After Patrick’s death, Roseanne emigrated from County Tyrone to Brock township, Ontario (two townships south of Mara). Brock was in very early stages of settlement then. The first census did not occur until 1851. On June 1, 1845, Roseanne married her second husband, James Kaine in Brock. In 1846, she gave birth to her last son, Joseph Kaine.

Oddly, Roseann’s tombstone reads, “Rose, wife of Patrick Boyle, died September 6, 1872, aged 75, native of county Tyrone, Ireland” even though her name was Kaine when she died. The age given on the stone is probably exaggerated by a few years. A woman born in 1797 is unlikely to



Dan Boyle in 1995 standing on what was leased Boyle land in the 1830s.

be giving birth in 1846. The 1861 census record listed Roseann as 60 years old. That would give her a more likely birth year of 1801.

Where does this leave us?

We know precisely where our Boyle ancestors lived in Ireland, that they left Ireland when its population was reaching an all-time high. Commodity and linen prices were low. There was with fierce competition for land. Gratefully, they escaped the Great Famine. The Famine began in the fall of 1845 and lasted with various degrees of intensity through 1849. During that time, Ireland lost a quarter of its population, approximately one million to death and more than another one million to emigration. I experienced a sense of relief in learning that our Boyle ancestors did not experience the Famine.

Think of Roseanne's situation—a widow crossing the Atlantic on a primitive sailing vessel with her five small sons, the youngest, Cornelius, a babe-in-arms, or at best a toddler. The mortality on some trips from Ireland to Canada a few years later in

1847 was as high as 47 percent. Roseanne came to

Brock township, Ontario. I know there was at least one couple in Brock from Killeeshil. They were Daniel Doyle and Ann Boyle who had married in Killeeshil during March, 1829. Perhaps Ann was a sister of either Roseann or Patrick.

Letter Decipher

Another satisfaction is to finally be able to decipher Aunt Mary's letter. She was entirely wrong in one respect. My Boyle family has no connection to the town of Boyle in County Roscommon. My memory of all the witnessed Xs in lieu of signatures on the 1880s mortgages suggested to me that mine was not a family descended from college professors. Mrs. Flannery, not to put too fine a point on it, was full of baloney, maybe blarney. In other matters, the details were wrong, but the general drift was correct. It was likely Grandpa Doyle rather than Grandma Doyle who moved in when "Pat was a baby." Bridget Donnelly was in Ontario before Cornelius and Ellen were married.

She was correct about the handsomeness of her father and brothers and too modest to acknowledge that she herself was a fine looking women who maintained her good looks to an advanced age. I knew her best when she was 75 and being mistaken for a woman in her 50s.

She was right too about the Kane's and her letter helped solve an old family puzzle. There is an 1894 picture of Cornelius and Ellen and their family. However there is an extra male in the picture. From Aunt Mary's letter it is likely that the unknown was John Kane. He would have

been a half-nephew of Cornelius. She was right, too, about the origin of Bridget Donnelly, probably inadvertently. Bridget Donnelly was from Armagh. Not the city of Armagh or the county of Armagh, but the archdiocese of Armagh, as were all the rest of the family.

Even though the details were off, Aunt Mary's letter did establish that the Cornelius and Ellen were closely allied to her parents. In fact, they took over the farm of Ellen's parents.

Is there a moral? Yes. Abide by the motto that hangs in my former boss's office. When dealing with old family letters, "Trust, but verify."



Dan at the Mass Rock in 1995 in Aghinduffe where his ancestors worshiped.

Below is the Mass Rock in 2012 after the Millennium Renovation.



Epilogue

Irish World did report that there were living ancestors in the area and if we wanted to make contact, they would provide the names. We discovered upon visiting the area that the local Director of Irish World was my third cousin, one generation removed. His name is Owen Kerr. We met many of his brothers and sisters on that and subsequent visits, as well as three female third cousins. He is one of 14 children (13 lived within 10 miles of where they grew up). We are in touch with some of the family members to this day.



Kitty McCullin (3rd cousin) and Dan 1995



McCullin's grandchildren in 1995



Brigid and Teresa Kerr, third cousins, one generation removed - September 2012.



*Irish and United States Cousins and Friends - September 2012
at the home of Betty and Pat Tally in Galbally, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland.*

Revised February 27, 2016