



The McMahons
of **Trohanny**

and Surrounding Townlands

Patrick McMahon
and Eugene McMahon

We would like to acknowledge the help given to us in compiling this family history.

Many people have, directly or indirectly, played important roles
in the work that has culminated in this book.

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and to Carmel Rice, of Meath Heritage & Genealogy Centre, who helped to kick-start this project.

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mcmahonsofmonaghan.org website.

In particular, we would like to single out our Uncles Jim and Paddy of Maio;

Cousins, Joseph and Peter of Rathbawn, Paddy of Moynalty, Rose and Mary of Kells.

Thanks also go to Mary Murchan of Moynalty who acquainted us with unrelated McMahons
in the locality.

Finally, our thanks go to Paul Claffey for his dedicated work on the design and layout of this book.

Cover picture shows the former McMahon Farmhouse in Trohanny
lovingly restored 2000-2005 by its owners, Joe Bergin (stonemason
from Balbriggan, County Dublin) and his wife, Aine McGarry.

We are grateful to Aine for the use of the photograph reproduced
on the covers of this book.

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View over the former McMahon family farm in Trohanny

*We dedicate this book to our wives, Grania and Anne,
without whose support and encouragement
we would have been unable
to complete this work*

McMahons of Oriel



So dorn dona dubhfuillibh

'Here is the fist of the dark-blooded'

This is an enhanced version of the MacMahon coat of arms. Ours appears to have been designed with the Normans in mind. Each element in the design symbolises a particular quality or trait of the family portrayed.

The Ostrich – Willing obedience and serenity

Horseshoe – Good luck and a safeguard against evil spirits

Arm Embowed – A person with qualities of leadership

Sword – Justice and military honour

Fleur-de-lis – Purity, light

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1 Introduction

Work began on this project in 1976 when Eugene, one of the authors of this book, made a thorough collection of oral material from the then elderly family members as well as an examination of relevant parish records (*Reference 1*). In 2005, the second author Patrick McMahon, joined the endeavour, concentrating on trying to find more family records, initially using the internet.

Despite the paucity of documentary evidence, the one self-evident truth is that we, the McMahons of Trohanny, are descended from a long line of survivors probably going right back to the early inhabitants of this Island (possibly even as far back as 7000 years – maybe even to the Fir Bolg!). Unfortunately, our research has not produced sufficient evidence to prove our irrefutable descent from kings or even minor nobility, a commonly held belief among ancestor hunters, although we do suggest a plausible linkage.

In his recent book on Y-chromosome (maleness) inheritance, Professor Sykes claims (*Ref. 2*) that this may not be as far fetched as one might think; around 1000 AD there were something like 450 kings of one sort or another in Ireland and therefore many people living in Ireland to-day could be descended from at least one of them (a sort of Ghengis Khan effect). The assumption is that the progeny of kings would have had a better chance of survival than ordinary folk and hence have had a better chance to produce progeny of their own and so on. Interestingly, his studies also show that, with the exception of a few places like Orkney, Shetland and East Anglia there was very little impact on the distribution of Y-chromosomes from the various invasions of Britain and Ireland. In fact both countries shared many of the same Y-chromosomes, which he attributed to common pre-Celtic or Pictish populations. In fact one particular Y-chromosome (which he termed 'Oisín') is very common in England, Wales and especially Scotland and Ireland. 92% of those sampled in North-Western Ireland had the Oisín Y-chromosome as did 81% of the sample from the Western Isles of

Scotland (Dal Riada); this he attributed to the activities of Nial of the Nine Hostages (who, apparently was a bit of a Ghengis Khan himself). So, if we had any royal trappings, they disappeared a long time ago; alternatively, even if we were descended from a passing Gallowglass, then this is unlikely to be discernible even with the most up to date DNA analysis.

The work includes the material first reported (*Ref. 1*), but in many instances this later effort is much wider ranging. More data and oral history were collected and subjected to more rigorous scrutiny, resulting in clarification to some of the earlier conundrums. The essential weakness of much of the basic source material necessitated a great deal of interpretation to fill in the many gaps in the narrative.

We have also attempted to set our family's story within the correct historical context. In attempting to trace our lineage back as far as possible, we have had to make some extrapolations which some might think were fanciful. We have, however, only reported those which we considered plausible.

1.1 Aims

The aim of this document was to bring together all the available information we have and try to deduce, given the limitations of some of the data, the direct line of descent for the Trohanny branch of the McMahon family. In attempting a brief history of our family, we have therefore focussed on the passing down of the family name of MacMahon or McMahon from generation to generation. No slight is intended to female members of the family, and hopefully no offense will be taken to what must necessarily be a survey of the patrilineal line of descent.

A secondary aim was to document as many branches of the family for which we had information, and establish their relationship to the Trohanny line of descent.

A third aim was to try and bridge the gap from the 18th century back into the 17th century and beyond.

2 Methods, Sources, Limitations

It soon became apparent that trawling the Internet for information specific to our family was to a large extent a waste of time and money. There was just not enough known about the family members in order to carry out meaningful searches, e.g. a second or unusual Christian name, place of birth etc. Many Internet databases (apart from being copied from a common source) only gave Ireland, or occasionally a county, as place of birth, which was of little use. For our purposes, it would have been necessary for the townland or the parish to have been included with each entry. However, the biggest and almost insurmountable obstacle to the analysis was the complete absence of written records (births, deaths and marriages) for much of the period under review (*Annex A1*). These missing periods corresponded in many instances with when key ancestors would have lived. We have had to deduce from the available oral evidence and using the laws of probability, who these more distant ancestors might have been.

2.1 Methods

The main methods used were:

- ◆ To obtain and analyse the entire 'McMahon' database for the County of Meath;
- ◆ To augment and re-analyse the oral history;
- ◆ To research whatever records were available on microfilm and from the Internet.
- ◆ To research the earlier history of the MacMahon clan in Monaghan, using relevant history books, supplemented by internet sources.

Data from the print-out of the 'McMahon' database was entered onto an Excel spreadsheet thus forming a working database where data could be sorted and sifted (*Appendix 1 to Annex A*, page 69). For completeness, this database was augmented

with data from sources other than the Meath Heritage Centre and also deductions derived from the probability model. This database was used to sort the entries into family groups, generations, geographical location etc. From this information and the oral history, family trees were plotted, also in Excel. These varied throughout the study and were continually updated as new information became available.

As expected, much of the data was conflicting; there could be several candidates having the same Christian name in the same or neighbouring townlands for one family position. In order to assist in the analysis of such conflicts, a small probability model was constructed (*Annex B1*, page 76). This was an 'Age Fit' model which placed age constraints on potential fathers and mothers. Working backwards from known dates of birth, limits for dates of birth were deduced by the model for Fathers, Grandfathers and Great Grandfathers. Potential candidates had to fit these limits in order to qualify.

A further technique used was a simple form of cluster analysis (*Annex B2*). This was used to try and establish migratory routes and settled communities.

A final tranche of oral history was collected from the oldest G8 family member (*Annex J*). This was integrated with the existing knowledge, confirming some existing information and introducing some new angles.

2.2 Sources

The main source of raw data was the analysis and data base supplied by the Meath Heritage Centre (*Ref. 3*). This was augmented by information from the Mormon library archives in Salt Lake City (*Ref. 12*). Added to this were elements of oral history from senior family members (our uncles Jim & Paddy, the Rathbane McMahons, the Yores, etc.) and scraps of documentary evidence originally saved by our paternal Grandmother, Margaret Farrelly. This was an attempt to build upon the case prepared in 1994 (*Ref. 1*).

In attempting to trace the earlier Monaghan origins of the family, we had to rely on whatever sources we could find on the internet (*Ref. 9*), Peadar Livingstone's *The Monaghan Story* (*Ref. 6*) and G.A. Hayes-McCoy's *Irish Battles - A Military History of Ireland* (*Ref. 15*).

2.3 Limitations

The main limitation in this analysis was the absence of documentary data and the rather limited oral history. Very little data from outside North Meath was examined since there were very few verifiable indications of direct descent from outside this

area. Exceptions to this were the Hearth Money Rolls for Co. Monaghan (1663 and 1665, *Ref. 4*), a compilation of Irish Flax Growers in Co. Monaghan (and also for Meath, Louth and Cavan), dated 1796 (*Ref. 5*), the genealogical tree of the Dartrey MacMahons, as well as summaries of both the Dartrey Papers and the Shirley Papers. Of course, it is possible that more snippets could be gleaned were we to apply the same degree of intense research to Monaghan as we have done to North Meath. That being said, any research in Monaghan prior to 1800 would be similarly handicapped by the scarcity of parish records.

2.4 Nomenclature

Throughout the report we have tried to minimise the use of terms such as Great Great Grandfather etc. Instead we have introduced generation labelling, G1 to G13 (*Annex A2*), which is used throughout most of the report. Where we have had to use terms such as 'Great Grandfather', readers from generation 12 and later will have to add an extra 'Great' for each generation after G11.

Lough Muckno, Castleblaney –
alleged site of a McMahon stronghold.



3 History of the McMahons of Monaghan (Oriel)

The family name can be traced back to a warrior named Mathghamhna (Mahon), who died in battle in 1022 A.D. From that time onwards, his descendents adopted the surname Mac Mathghamhna (MacMahon). At that time, the family had but local importance in the Lough Leck area of West Monaghan, while their distant kinsfolk, the O'Carrolls, held sway over most of Monaghan and Louth.

3.1 12th century

With the arrival of the Normans in the late 12th century, all of that changed. The O'Carrolls were soon defeated in battle by aggressive Norman barons pushing northwards into Louth. The defeat of the O'Carrolls created something of a political vacuum in Monaghan, and the MacMahons wasted no time in establishing themselves as the newly dominant clan in the region.

For the Monaghan MacMahons, it can be assumed that all of those bearing the name MacMahon, McMahon, M'Mahon or even plain old Mahon are descended from the original Mahon of the early 11th century.¹ At a time when multiple wives and very large families were common among the richer nobles, many parallel lines of descendents would have been in the natural order of things. Most of these would have retained the common surname of MacMahon. Over the generations, yet others of Mahon's descendents would have discarded the common surname of MacMahon in favour of surnames denoting more recent patrilineal descent, e.g. MacArdle, McGeogh, McHugh, Hughes, McPhillips, McKeown, etc. As a result, many Monaghan families with quite different surnames share an element of common ancestry dating back to our original forebear (*Figure 1*).

The Trohanny McMahons are almost definitely descended from one of these

¹ The Clare MacMahons are a totally distinct clan that traces its descent from a brother of Brian Boru in the early 11th century.

Monaghan branches, given both our family's early 19th century record of settlement in North Meath (close to the southern boundary of County Monaghan), and the family lore about our McMahon relatives in the Carrickmacross area (*Annex 14*). However, owing to a lack of specific documentary records, we cannot identify with any certainty the precise line of descent prior to the 19th century. We are therefore compelled to rely on whatever reasonable conjecture and supposition the historical facts afford us (*Annex P*).

History does not oblige us by leaving much record of the common people of earlier times, but we can at least follow the broad outlines of the family story down through the earlier centuries. This is best done through a study of the political and economic fortunes of the clan leadership. Much of that history revolved around cattle raids and inter-family rivalry over the Chieftainship. In pursuit of these self-serving endeavours, various MacMahon nobles often allied themselves with whomsoever appeared to hold the most power at the local level, be it the O'Neills of Tyrone or the Normans/English in Louth and Meath.

3.2 Eochaidh MacMahon

It is generally accepted that the family dynasty truly began with the reign of Eochaidh MacMahon (1250-1273). Throughout the 14th century, the Chieftainship alternated between the descendents of Eochaidh's three sons. The decision in each case as to which branch attained the Chieftaincy was generally reached by force of arms. By the early 15th century, under the leadership of Ardghal MacMahon (1406-1427), one of these three branches prevailed and became the dominant one.

Ardhal had ten sons, but only one of them, Ruadri (d.1446), assumed the clan leadership, while his nine brothers would presumably have given rise to further parallel branches of the MacMahon family. Ruadri, in turn, had sixteen sons! Thirteen of these sons presumably went on to sire unrecorded lines of descent. However, the historical record is more concerned with the remaining three sons, Aodh Rua, Eoghan and Redmond, whose descendents disputed the leadership over the following 150 years. These we refer to as the Farney (South Monaghan), the Dartrey (West Monaghan) and the Lucht-tighe (Central Monaghan) branches of the MacMahon clan.

The ongoing tussle over the leadership was generally accompanied by internecine warfare. A system of primogeniture would likely have produced a more stable society but, under Brehon law, a form of low-key sporadic anarchy prevailed. When a chieftain died, all male MacMahons sharing a common patrilineal ancestry with the deceased (going back anywhere up to four generations) were technically eligible to advance a legitimate claim to the chieftaincy. This proved to be a recipe for ongoing social and political unrest, compounded in no small degree by the competing



Figure 1: Monaghan Families

MacMahon brothers or cousins seeking military assistance from outside the county.

What we, with the benefit of historical eyesight, can see so plainly was not so obvious to them. Too late they realised that their best defence against an English conquest and a defeat of their whole way of life lay in maintaining a united front against the English interest. By the time that this became more plainly apparent in the late 16th century, it was already too late. The English conquest had by then assumed a virtually unstoppable momentum.

Some of the more pragmatic MacMahons (especially in Farney) attempted to maintain their status by adopting the English language and customs. Whatever their chances were in this regard before Kinsale, the loss of that battle by the Gaelic lords of Ulster sounded the death knell for both their economic prospects and their way of life. After 1601 the English had little use for Gaelic allies.

Six years earlier, the last official investiture of a MacMahon chieftain, Brian MacHugh Og MacMahon of Dartrey, had taken place at the coronation stone above Lough Leck (in West Monaghan). Of course, much of the prestige associated with this title dissipated in the years following the Battle of Kinsale in 1601. Despite this, Brian MacHugh Og MacMahon (Sir Brian na mBarrog) chose not to join his father-in-law, Hugh O'Neill, and the other Ulster nobles in their exodus to the continent in 1607. Instead, he decided to remain on his estate in Dartrey, where he died in 1622.²

Indeed, in the years immediately following Kinsale, the various MacMahon nobles initially managed to hang onto much of their land, albeit with burdensome obligations under the newly imposed English system of land tenure. However, they were for the most part unable to successfully adapt to the English landholding system of titles, rents and mortgages. Being unused to the cash economy and English legal system that were introduced into Monaghan in the early 17th century, they were soon obliged to sell off much of their lands in order to meet their cash obligations under the new system of rents and taxes.

In a final spasm of rebellion in 1641, a valiant attempt was made to turn the clock back. However, following the eventual defeat of that rebellion in 1650 and the subsequent Cromwellian settlement, nearly all of the MacMahon lands were confiscated and ownership bestowed instead on demobilized soldiers and British speculators. Most of the MacMahons stayed on the land, however, but in sadly reduced circumstances. There were insufficient numbers of British settlers to work the land, and so the native Irish were retained as tenant farmers, landless labourers, tradesmen, etc.

A fairly decent historical record exists of the conditions that prevailed in County Monaghan (and indeed in the rest of Ireland) during the subsequent 150 years. This allows us to paint a tentative picture of the social, economic and political context

² The reader may reference his specific family tree, the Dartrey MacMahons, in Annex P.

within which our MacMahon ancestors must have lived prior to their migration into North Meath c.1800. This period saw the introduction of a foreign system of laws and socio-economic obligations, together with the gradual displacement of the Gaelic language and native customs. For the first generation or two, this change proceeded quite slowly, largely because (unlike elsewhere in Ulster) Monaghan was not planted by a large number of British settlers.

This period also saw the turmoil associated with the Williamite wars of 1689-91, culminating in the final defeat of the Jacobite forces at the Boyne, Aughrim and Limerick. This probably did not impact directly on the lives of many in Monaghan, but it did ensure that the old order would never return. Indeed, what followed was a grim century for the Catholic peasantry all over Ireland, including Monaghan. Not only had all hopes of recovering land titles evaporated, but the 18th century also saw the imposition of harsh Penal Laws against Catholics.

By the start of the 18th century, a functioning system of tenant farming under English law was well established in County Monaghan. Within such a system, our ancestors' welfare would have been largely at the whim of their particular landlord(s) and they would have had few rights with respect to the retention of farm leases. This would have resulted in a considerable degree of social and economic instability, so that it would not have been unusual for members of each succeeding generation to migrate into neighbouring parishes in search of suitable tenancies. This could certainly explain why, sometime before 1813, our first readily identifiable ancestor (G5 Roger McMahon) moved onto Moate Farm (near Robertstown in North Meath).

The reader is referred to *Annex P* for a much more complete and detailed summary of the clan history prior to 1800 A.D.

Celtic Cross at the entrance
to Robertstown Cemetery



4 Family Migration

4.1 The Lower Barony of Kells

The later history indicates that this is where our most recent ancestors finished up, in particular, in the parishes of Kilbeg and Moynalty in North Meath.

The Civil Survey of 1654 (*Ref. 14*) indicates that most townlands of Moynalty (including Moyo) were owned by members of the Betagh family.³ The later Down Survey (1659) showed the redistribution of villages (as the townlands were called) in which Moyo passed from Edward to Henry Betagh. Interestingly, the name Moyo was used in the mid 17th century and obviously predates the name Trohanny for the townland. About this time too (1653), Thomas Taylor arrived in Ireland, presumably to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire land cheaply from those Cromwellian officers who did not wish to remain in Ireland. It wasn't until 1736, however, that the Taylor (Taylour) family acquired Headfort, and even then, the family had to wait until 1800 before acquiring the title Marquis of Headfort and Baron Kenils (Kells). This is of some interest to us in as much as that Headfort was the dominant landlord for much of North Meath, including the ancestral Moate Farm.

4.2 From Monaghan

Our family most likely originated in Monaghan. There is some supportive evidence in the oral recollection of 'Newtown McMahons', near Carrickmacross, who were related to us in some manner (*Annex J.4 page 118*). The village of Nobber in North Meath is only about 15 miles by road south of Carrickmacross in South Monaghan. A possible migratory path may have taken the family southwards from the

³ There is some speculation that this may have been a generic name for the native Irish, meaning 'food growers' (derived from 'bia')



Figure 2: **Migratory Route from Monaghan to North Meath**

Carrickmacross area through Drumconrath and Nobber parishes to Kilbeg parish, where we find the Robertstown graveyard and Moate Farm (both the graveyard and the farm have strong and verifiable family associations).

Carrickmacross is marked by a star in *Figure 2*. The direct route southwards from there would pass through Meath Hill to the small town of Nobber. The indications are that, following its move southwards from the Carrickmacross area *circa* 1798 - 1808,⁴ our family settled to the west of Nobber and to the north of Carlanstown. The Tithe Records of 1828 list a William McMahon as a farmer of substance in Moate.

In any event, this migration would have been dictated by economic necessity, i.e. the availability of farm leases, which were in the control of landlords such as Jack Farrell or Anthony Strong Hussey (who had acquired the Barnwall lands in Kilmainhamwood by 1837), or the Marquis of Headfort (who owned the Barony of Kells) in the Kilbeg area.⁵

⁴ Estimated date derived from the expiry dates of many tenancies near Carrickmacross (Annex Q.4)

⁵ Radcliffe may have purchased land from the Headfort Estate in the mid-19thc., as he is the landlord of record for the Maio Farm, at least from 1854.



Figure 3: Robertstown Graveyard is about 300m north of the Fortified House

The final stage in this migratory path occurred when key family members moved from Moate to Trohanny and North Leitrim (and from there to Rathbane) in the mid-1830's. Corroborated oral recollections have it that our Great-Grandfather William (G8) and his half-brother, Big Peter, were relocated by Jack Farrell from Moate Farm in the 19th century (Annex H6). However, Fr. Paddy disputed this and claimed that our Great-Grandfather William (G8) was taken onto the Maio Farm by his uncle John; the Maio Farm was leased from George Radcliffe, Landlord of the Maio Estate (*Ref. 13*). Radcliffe may have purchased land from the Headfort Estate in the mid-19th century, as he is the landlord of record for the Maio Farm, at least from 1854.

4.3 From Other Areas

In the absence of verifiable hard data from before the 19th century, other migration theories cannot be completely dismissed. It is always possible that the original migrants could have come from any part of Ireland. What we do know is that various McMahon families formed fairly dense population clusters in the Moynalty/Nobber areas in the 18th and 19th centuries, but they were not necessarily all interrelated.

There was strong family insistence that some other McMahons living in the locality were unrelated despite their close proximity, suggesting that several distinct branches of the McMahon family had been settled in the area.⁶

It should also be born in mind that population densities waxed and waned for a variety of reasons. Much of this may have resulted from administrative social engineering carried out by landlords.

An equally valid assumption could be that a McMahon family migrated via Fermanagh/Westmeath and settled in Kilskyre, where we found documentary evidence of McMahons in the very early 18th century. (*Chapter 4.7*)

There is also documented evidence of a mixed Clare/Monaghan McMahon branch in Moynalty, Trohanny and Kilmainhamwood, although these were not related (*Ref. 11*).

4.4 Robertstown Roger

The parish of Kilbeg, containing both the Robertstown graveyard and Moate Farm, is an obvious place from which we can attempt to trace our family back through time into County Monaghan.

A couple of miles east of Moate Farm is Robertstown cemetery situated at grid reference N786 845, about 300m north of Robertstown Cross Roads (*Figure 3* and *Annex C2*). This has been consistently used by our family for burials over a number of generations.⁷ It is a large family plot by any standard (at least a dozen side by side graves inside the chapel ruins). Beside the family plots is the slab tombstone of Alexander Barnewel (Barnewall), who died in 1596. On this slab is chiselled the following inscription:

Ys Monument Renewed by Rogr. McMahon for his posterity, 1813

This is not readable today (*Figure C5*) but was recorded about 50 years ago by local historian, Jack Fitzsimons (page 82 of *The Parish of Kilbeg (Ref. 21)*). Fitzsimons went on to state that Roger was a 'strong' farmer but mistakenly thought (and later corrected) that McMahons no longer used this burial ground.⁸

⁶ It is probable that recollection of relationship, in the absence of any written evidence, would not stretch back further than about 3 generations.

⁷ Roger circa 1815, William 1900, and the families of his sons Peter (1939) and Patrick (1952).

⁸ The absence of marked headstones at that time probably led to this mistaken view.

It is believed that this Roger was a G5 member of our family. He could have been the first McMahon migrant into the area or a descendent of the first migrant. This inscription would suggest a reassertion of rights over the burial place and possibly the surrounding land of which earlier generations of MacMahons had been dispossessed. The Cromwellian settlement had been imposed a mere four generations previously, while the Williamite land seizures had presumably occurred in the lifetimes of G5 Roger's own grandparents. In a society where land ownership meant everything, it is surely not stretching the bounds of imagination to suggest an inter-generational sense of grievance over dispossession of both land and social status. Alternatively and much less interestingly, Roger may have simply been an assertive type who just commandeered what would have been by then a derelict chapel and graveyard, given that he was presumably farming in nearby Moate and possibly Robertstown as well.

If the inscription was carved at the time of his death, this would make him around 77-78 years old then. If so, this would make him a likely candidate for being the father of G6 William (the Tithes payer in 1828) and our ancestor. Alternatively, he could have been a brother of William and been about 45 years old when he died or commissioned the inscription.

4.5 Possible Monaghan Lineage

One promising line of research was to try and trace the then unusual family names of Roger and William back through the centuries. There is only one other instance of the Roger name appearing in the birth/marriage/death records for Meath, and that was for a Roger born in 1843⁹ (*Appendix 1 to Annex A*, page 77), which would be irrelevant for our purposes. In a similar fashion, there were only six instances of William in the records for Meath, five of whom were born in the 19th century.

Looking back into the 18th century, the lists of flax growers for Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan in 1796 were examined (*Annex KI*). There were only three Roger McMahons, and all three were in Co. Monaghan (in the parishes of Kilmore, Donaghmoyne and Magheraclone) (*Fig 4*). Any one of these three could conceivably qualify as our ancestor. However, Magheraclone Roger was located closest to Meath and is therefore the most likely of the three to be the same Roger found chiselling away in Robertstown 17 years later. If so, we can postulate that he could

⁹ Born to John and Mary McMahon of Moynalty. He was likely related to us: his father, John, could well have been a brother to G 7 James, if so, Roger would have been a first cousin of G 8 William (born 1819). Alternatively (but less likely), he could have been a nephew of William's. Undoubtedly, this particular Roger was the pugilist who figured in family oral history.



Figure 4: Civil Parishes of Monaghan

have been born *circa* 1735, been a flax farmer in Maheracloone at age 61, and moved with his son William and family to Moate (in North Meath) in the early 19th century.

Such a move would not have been all that surprising, following a period of considerable social unrest during the 1790's. The Defenders, for instance, were very active on the Shirley Estate¹⁰ near Carrickmacross in the early 1790's, where the Roger McMahons may have been tenants.¹¹ By the later 1790's, the political temperature rose all along the eastern counties, including Monaghan, where there was some organisational activity by the United Irishmen (*Annex Q2*). At the same time, the financial situation for Shirley's tenants was difficult, given the uncertainty surrounding renewal of tenancies (*Annexes Q3* and *Q4*). It is probably safe to assume that Roger's move out of the area was largely owing to the difficulty in hanging on to a profitable tenancy.¹²

¹⁰ Farney was evenly divided in the 17th century between the Shirley Estate and the Bath estate, the owners of which shared a common ancestry in the Devereux family.

¹¹ The Shirley Estate was very extensive and originally covered 29,468 Irish acres, i.e. 47,734 English acres.

¹² 21 year leases were common on the Shirley Estate in 1777. Perhaps Roger's lease expired as early as 1798, causing him to migrate southwards into North Meath in search of a fresh tenancy.

In any event, we know for a certainty that Roger was well established in the Moate area of North Meath by 1813. By that time, his son William (G6) would have been running the family farm at Moate, presumably with the help of his sons James, Peter, John? and Thomas? This is somewhat conjectural, but it does meet the test in the following ways:

- It incorporates the Robertstown/Moate connection
- It provides an explanation for a family connection with the 'Newtown McMahons' of Carrickmacross in the Barony of Farney, South Monaghan.
- It solves the puzzle of how 1813 Roger fits into our family tree.

In attempting to trace the line further back than that, we encounter a sparsity of written records. If we again focus the search on finding the highly unusual name of 'Roger McMahon,' we get two interesting leads among the Dartrey McMahons.

The Hearth Money Rolls for 1663 and 1665 list the taxpayers of Co. Monaghan, i.e. those landholders owning houses with chimneys (*Annex K2*). Among them we find a Roger McMahon of the Barony of Dartry in the 1665 list. The name actually appears twice, indicating ownership of a house in the townland of Killynenagh and another in the neighbouring townland of Kilnanaw (both in the ecclesiastical parish of Currin/civil parish of Clones, and almost on the Cavan border). This may indicate the same person owning two houses, or more likely, father and son or two cousins with the same name in adjacent townlands.

Ten years earlier, around 1655, a Patrick MacMahon of Dartrey was born. He later married into another MacMahon family from the neighbouring area of Corravilla in North Cavan. They had four sons: Culagh (*circa* 1678), Bernard 1680-1747, Ross 1698-1745, and Roger (*circa* 1690), all born in Enagh in the Barony of Dartrey.

The genealogical table in *Figure P 8*, (page 158) refers to this Roger MacMahon (son of Patrick MacMahon and a mother who was a Corravilla MacMahon), who was descended from Eoghan MacMahon of Dartry, and was likely born *circa* 1690 in Enagh, Co. Monaghan. In his later years, Roger was recorded as having erected a monument to his two late brothers on the Dawson Estate in Monaghan in 1750 (in Edragoole (*Ematriss*));¹³ these brothers had both been, successively, Bishops of Clogher and (later) Armagh. Interestingly, his oldest brother, Culagh, was recorded as having 'conformed,' presumably to hold onto the family estate. That particular brother's line (including his son Hugh) is thought to have eventually ended up in Dundalk (only 15 miles by road east of Carrickmacross) in the 19th century.

¹³ In the Barony of Dartrey, south-east of Clones

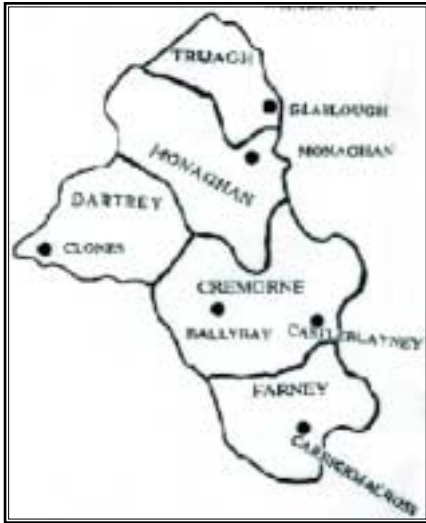


Figure 5: **Baronies of Monaghan**

Was this then a family in transition from landed gentry to something less? Could this 1690 Roger have gone on to father an as yet undiscovered William, who, in turn, fathered G5 Roger (the Chiseller) *circa* 1745? Or did Hugh father this later Roger, and name him after his own uncle, Roger of Enagh? Alternatively, 1690 Roger himself could have actually fathered G5 Roger *circa* 1735. If so, the socio-economic decline was precipitous. Admittedly, such speculation only borders on the possible, but in the absence of verifiable records, we can only surmise.

Of course, using the unusual name of Roger MacMahon provides but a flimsy basis for determining our line of descent, and relies heavily on the notion that the name would be passed down the line at least every second generation.¹⁴ Although this is stretching the facts to match the theory, it does fall within the realm of possibilities. Were it to be true, this would indeed allow us to claim a direct line of descent (and a royal one to boot) back to 1250 (*Annex P7*). It could also go some way to explain G5 Roger's apparent sense of grievance and entitlement, even as late as 1813.

The geographical distance from a purported place of origin near Clones in the Barony of Dartrey to Magheraclone in the Carrickmacross area in the Barony of Farney is only about 30 miles. A southward migration of that distance over one or two generations is not at all farfetched, and may well have been necessitated by the search for a suitable farm tenancy, especially in the case of a younger son.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to marry the two theories of descent, as the Tax Roll Roger of Dartrey (born 1615-25?) was likely to have been a couple of generations earlier than the 1690? Roger of Enagh in Dartrey, and was not his grandfather, although they were possibly related.

Nevertheless, absent evidence to the contrary, one or both of these Rogers may well offer tantalizing clues to a possible line of descent.¹⁵

¹⁴ If the name was interchangeable with Ruadhri, then the theory falls apart, as there were quite a few more of that name among the 17th century MacMahons.

¹⁵ This is presuming that the name 'Roger' was not merely an Anglicization of 'Rory,' of whom there were 8 in the Hearth Money Rolls

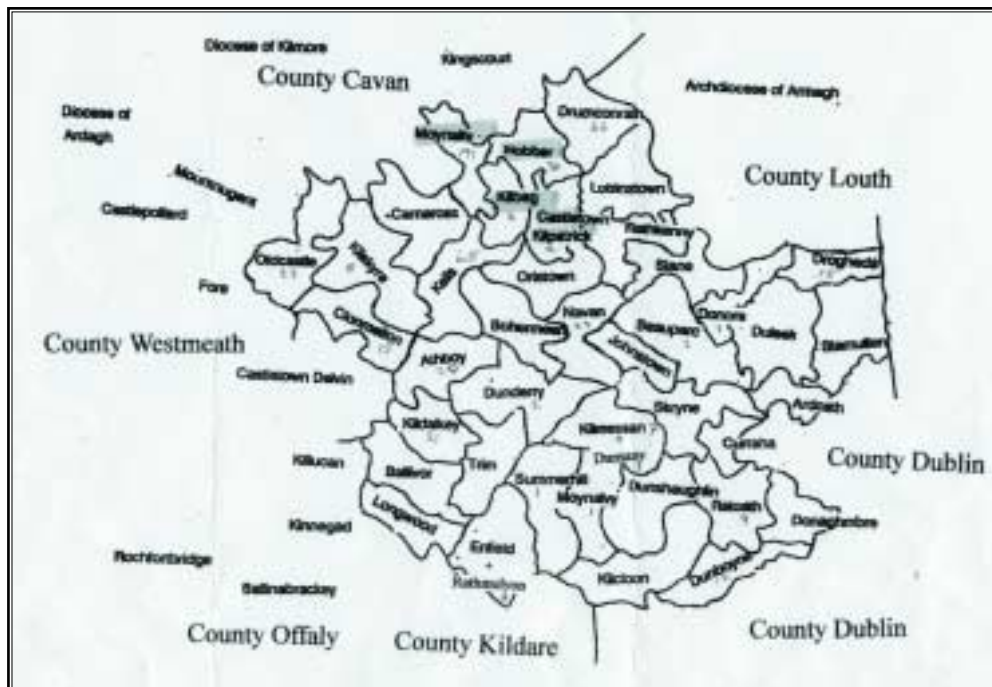


Figure 6: **Catholic Parishes in Co. Meath** (Number of births from Table B1 are shown penciled in)

4.6 Possible Earliest Ancestors in Meath

All our relations (dead and alive) that were found in Meath can be traced back to G7 James (son of G6 William and possible grandson of G5 Roger). If a surviving branch had split off in the previous generation and remained in the locality, it would be expected that a similar number of McMahons (and married relatives) who were not traceable back to G5 James would have been found by EM during his survey (*Ref. 1*). No such other McMahons were found but no doubt other branches did exist over time (such as the Kilskyre and Nobber McMahons) but had moved away, or died out and left no trace.¹⁶

The results from cluster analysis (*Annex B2*) indicated three significant population clusters over the recorded period. These were:

- 1 Moynalty/Nobber
- 2 Kells/Athboy
- 3 Drumconrath.

¹⁶ Think what would have happened to our branch if our Father had failed to marry!

By far and away the biggest concentration of McMahons in Meath, at 44%, was found in the Moynalty/Nobber cluster, with possible migration through Kilbeg/Castletown-Kilpatrick. There were 191 records for Moynalty (1830-1900), 30 for Nobber (1764-1899), 6 for Kilbeg (1819-1868) and 2 for Castletown-Kilpatrick (1830-1831); these last two parishes had lost all their McMahons by 1900 (*Table B1*). Virtually all of our known and proposed ancestors were found in the Moynalty/Nobber cluster. A more detailed examination of the Moynalty/Nobber data (*Annex B2*), where the family groupings in each generation were tabulated, is shown in *Table B2*. All that can be deduced from this is that the bulk of the recorded families were in Moynalty Parish in generations 8 and 9. The surrounding parishes had very few McMahan families, all of which had become extinct by 1900 except for two families, related to each other, in Nobber.

There was no evidence to connect any of our ancestors with either of the other two significant clusters (Drumconrath and Kells/Athboy). An early (as yet undiscovered) ancestor could have migrated from outside Meath or from one of these other clusters into the Moynalty/Nobber cluster. Interestingly, the earliest records to have survived indicate a significant number of McMahan births in the parishes of Athboy, Clonmellon, Kilmessan, Navan and Oldcastle for this period (1742-1808). This, in addition to the major clusters that were found (*Table B1*), indicate the widespread distribution of McMahons in Meath by the mid 18th century and support the idea of multiple family migrations from the Monaghan area in the early to mid 18th century.

The McMahons were heavily involved with Hugh O'Neill in the late 16th century and, a generation later, were up to their necks in the 1640's Rebellion. As a result, it is probable that they were dispossessed of their lands following both the Cromwellian settlement of the 1650's and the Williamite upheavals of the 1690's, thus necessitating migration away from the clan territory of Monaghan. It would appear from the available evidence (*Figure 6*) that migrations probably took place in a Southerly direction across a broad front with independent branches¹⁷ of the family settling in different parishes, presumably dependent on the availability of land tenancies. Some of these flourished over the generations and helped build up the concentrations in such areas as Moynalty, Kells, Athboy, Drumconrath and Navan while others, which were probably single families to start with, flourished for a few generations and then died away.

¹⁷ Many could have been related but after dispersal in Meath and the passage of time, knowledge of relationships would have faded.

4.7 Kilskyre McMahons

Another documented branch of a McMahon family which could qualify as our possible earliest ancestor in Meath was John McMahon of Kilskyre¹⁸ (southwest of Carnaross/Kells, (*Figure 6*). The record of his marriage to Mary Reilly in 1704 and a record of the confirmation in 1709 of two boys, Thomas and Peter, were both retrieved from microfilm of Kilbeg Parish records (*Ref. 12*). If we accept that very young children could have been accepted for confirmation during the unsettled and turbulent early period of the Penal Laws,¹⁹ these two boys were probably the children of John and Mary. These are plotted in *Figure D2* as a tentative G3 and G4 family tree together with estimated dates of birth. John could easily qualify as a potential G3 Williamite ancestor (*Ch 4.9.3*).

It is tempting to speculate that this earliest McMahon marriage record would fit the bill for our G3 ancestor (born *circa* 1680). Kilskyre, although the other side of Kells, is not so far from Kilbeg that one of his sons couldn't have moved from there to the Moate farm. There are Confirmation records for his presumed sons, Thomas and Peter (G4).

There are also much later records for Kilskyre McMahons (G6-G8), among whom are found two of the five Williams in the database (William could of course have become a popular name by this stage).²⁰ Continuing with the speculation, usage of the name could indicate a common Williamite ancestor; and this could well have been G3 John of Kilskyre.²¹

Of course, this may have been a totally separate branch of McMahons in Kilskyre that persisted through to generation 8 (with a gap in the records for generation 5). Three families were present in Kilskyre in generaton 6 (*Figure D2*):

¹⁸ There is some confusion over which parish John hailed from. The record was found under Kilbeg Parish but as this is a marriage record, Kilskyre could well be his spouse's parish

¹⁹ Alternatively, these could be protestant records.

²⁰ It is notable that the name "William" does not appear anywhere in the MacMahon lineage (Annex P:7)

²¹ If a McMahon ancestor had supported the Williamite cause, there was very little to show for it.

- 1 Hugh McMahon/Judith Reilly, and their children, Owen (1798), Thomas (1800), Peter (1801). Indeed, if Hugh died at a relatively young age, then his widow may well have been the Judith²² McMahon who married a Patrick Drake in 1811 (there is oral history concerning a Drake/McMahon connection in our family). One of the witnesses at that marriage was Thomas McMahon (Possibly the Thomas at number 3 below).
- 2 John MacMahon/Bridget Gilshenan, and their children Hugh (1809), Patrick (1815) and William (1821).
- 3 Thomas MacMahon/Bridget Boylan, and their children Anne (1809) and John (1818).

All three of these early 19th century Kilskyre families were contemporaneous with our direct ancestors, James McMahon/Anne Cahill of the neighbouring Kilbeg parish. It is possible that James was a brother or cousin of the three McMahons above, and also descended from the John McMahon/Mary Reilly of a century earlier. However, it is more likely that James came from a totally separate and unrelated branch, centred on Moate Farm. Interestingly, there was a William in each of generations 7 and 8 in this group of Kilskyre families.

4.8 Nobber McMahons

Another group of early McMahons for whom data exist are the Nobber McMahons. Three families are documented for generation 5, with decedents possibly up to generation 9 (*Figure E1*). Most of the townland addresses for these families are within a few kilometers of Moate/Ballintillin/Robertstown.

These were descended from either G3 John (through one of his sons, Peter or Thomas) or another unknown G4 ancestor. There were two James (1781 and 1785) in generation 6 who together with the James (estimated 1797) born to G6 William (*Figure E1*), were candidates to be our G7 ancestor. If neither 1781 nor 1785 James was our direct ancestor, they may nevertheless have been related to our branch.

4.9 Kilbeg McMahons

Only six records were found for Kilbeg Parish in the MHC database (*Appendix 1 to Annex A*. and *Table B1*). Three of these were the sons of G7 James: William (1819),

²² Judith was a very rare name in the database with only three instances being recorded.

John (1833) and Peter (1834). Three other families existed: Mary born to Peter²³ McMahon and Elizabeth Martin in 1868; Andrew born to Robert²⁴ McMahon and Anne Smyth in 1834; Bridget born to Thomas²⁵ McMahon and Mary Flood in 1829.

Unfortunately, there were no Kilbeg records for generation 7 and earlier so it was not possible to prove conclusively that G7 James was the son of G6 William and that his brothers were Peter, Thomas, John, Robert. From the various deductive methods employed, we are very confident that this indeed was the case (*Figure B 1, page 79*). The records are highly suggestive that there was just a single family grouping in Kilbeg consisting of the families of G7 James, Peter, Thomas and Robert who were in all probability, brothers. This lends credence to the idea that we are only related to other descendents of G7 James and not to the bulk of McMahons found in and around Moynalty in the 19 th and 20 th centuries. We were unable to trace any descendents of G7 Peter and Robert, but we may have found some for Thomas.

4.9.1 G6 William

Whereas Kilskyre McMahon and his descendants (G3-5) are possible earliest ancestors, G6 William (Tithe William) is most likely to be our ancestor. This is based largely on his proven location (Moate), and him being the first to bear the strong family name, William. Although no records could be found, it is possible that William was married to a Drake. Fr Paddy was positive about us being related to the Drakes but couldn't supply any information (*Ref. 13*). In this regard, the Mormon records list a Judith McMahon as having married a Patrick Drake in 1811 (*Ref. 12*). Another Patrick Drake of Drakerath, Co. Meath, died and left a will in 1789. We can speculate that either his sister or daughter could have married G6 William.²⁶ They, in turn, would then have begat James *circa* 1797, who later married Anne Cahile, with G8 William being their first-born in 1819.

²³ A G8 Peter; could have been 1834 'Big' Peter or a cousin.

²⁴ G7 and contemporary of G7 James (brother perhaps?)

²⁵ Contemporary of G7 James and probably his brother.

²⁶ Such a match would have been more acceptable to the Drakes if the McMahons still retained some vestiges of former gentry status from earlier generations of Roger MacMahons in Monaghan.

Valuation Table: Tithe Applotment Books					
1828 Moate	Second Quality	Third Quality	Fourth Quality	Total Yearly Payment	Half Yearly Payment
William McMahon	£8-0-0	£13-1-0	£1-0-0	£22-1-0	£10-13-7^{1/2}

Table 1: **Tithe Applotment Record**

4.9.2. **Applotment Record**

The Tithe Applotment Books for 1828 show a record indicating an annual farm valuation of £22-1-0 for William McMahon (*Table 1*). This farm was at Moate and close to the family burial plot in Robertstown Cemetery (*Figure 3*). It is known from a number of oral sources in the family that our branch of the McMahons was located at Moate prior to being re-located by the landlord to the farm at Trohanny.

4.9.3 **Alleged Williamite Connection**

This is one of the intriguing aspects of our presumed G6 ancestor. Fr Paddy, when asked about the origin of the family name, William, simply replied ‘the family was Williamite.’ without further explanation, and as if it were a well known fact. We can speculate that G6 William’s Great Grandfather might have been the assumed active Williamite (born *circa* 1672), i.e. the G3 ancestor or possibly an earlier G2 Roger McMahon (born *circa* 1635) from Dartrey, Monaghan (*Ch 4.4*). Alternatively, if we are descended from the Kilsyre branch, then G3 John McMahon (born *circa* 1680) or his G2 father might qualify. For the Enagh branch in Dartrey (*Figure P8*), a Williamite ancestor is even more unlikely, as it would have been Colla Dubh MacMahon (born *circa* 1640), whose theoretical great-grandson could have been the first (and unrecorded) William in the family.²⁷

There are only five incidences of the name ‘William’ in the database up to 1900. Two are direct descendants of G7 James, two in the Kilsyre branch (at the G7 and G8 level) and one in a second Rathbawn branch allegedly not related to our known Rathbawn relatives. The rarity of the ‘William’ name and its sudden appearance, for the first (recorded) time, in our branch is hardly (on its own) indicative of our alleged Williamite origins, especially given that Tithe William was born about 80 years after

²⁷ Apart from Fr. Paddy’s assertion and the sudden appearance of the Williamite name in the family, there are no historical grounds for asserting MacMahon support for William of Orange.

The Boyne. However, G7 James Christening his first born son, William, is certainly indicative of a possible lineage (provided the tradition of naming first born sons after the paternal Grandfather was being followed). In addition, results from the 'Age Fit' Model supported this contention (*Annex B. I*).

McMahons who were loyal Williamite supporters (soldiers or otherwise) could conceivably have been granted plots of land (in Monaghan or Meath) in lieu of payment following the Battle of the Boyne (which was close by). This could explain the use of the Christian name of 'William' in our family, but this unlikely historical scenario hardly constitutes compelling evidence of origins.

Of course, it is far more likely that Williamite soldiers (many of whom were continental mercenaries) being disbanded in the early 1690's would have been granted lands seized from the native Irish, including the McMahons (*Annex Q. I*).

Often, these disbanded soldiers had no real wish to remain in Ireland, and so their newly-acquired lands were often leased back to the original owners. In such a scenario, our earlier ancestors in Monaghan, whatever their religion or Christian names, would have been strong tenant farmers. Certainly, their chances of retaining that status would have been enhanced in the early 18th century had they converted to the state-established church, *i.e.* Church of Ireland.

Irrespective of religion, a family's position on the socio-economic ladder was largely determined by each particular generation's ability (in working a farm & keeping up rental payments) and the tenancy they acquired; there was no guarantee that the tenancy would be passed on to the next generation, and so family fortunes likely waned with the passing generations, regardless of professed religion. Large families would have seen the younger sons either emigrating to join the continental armies or the Church or else seeking tenancies wherever they could find them. In all likelihood, this would have resulted in a gradual descension down the socio-economic ladder.

There was also a general family belief that the Rev. Peter McMahon²⁸ was G6 William's brother. If the family had ever turned Protestant in line with the alleged Williamite connection, it must have been in the late 17th or early 18th century,²⁹ as Peter had obviously reverted to Catholicism by the time that he was ordained in 1788.

²⁸ Born *circa* 1761 in Robertstown; ordained in Navan by Dr Plunkett 1788; Parish Priest Moynalty 1801-1831 on his death.

²⁹ Reference the example with Cullough MacMahon of Dartrey (*Figure Pg*).

4.9.4 **Applotment Records for Moynalty**

These records consisted of names only of some of those living in Moynalty Parish who paid Tithes in 1828 (*Ref. 14*). These would have been contemporaries of our G6 William and included, among others, is his brother the Rev Peter McMahon.

There is also a record from the Farrell Estate in 1824 (*Figure E2, page 86*) showing a Father P. McMahon resident in Rathbawn who, it is assumed, was the same person. The site of Fr. Peter McMahon's church was adjacent to Joe McMahon's farm in Rathbane.

The John McMahon shown could have been a brother of the Rev. Peter or have been unrelated. Some of the other Tithe payer names that had associations with our family were: Caffrey, Cahill, Carolan, Fay, Gargan, Gauley, McGauley, McMahon, Maxwell, Monaghan, Mulvanny, Rountree, Sheridan, Yore.

5 G7-G9 McMahons

A generation after that of G6 William, there was a Peter McMahon of Moate listed in Griffith's Valuation of 1854 (*Table F2*).

5.1 Peter of Moate

This Peter, a possible brother of G7 James,³⁰ was recorded as having land at Moate, Ballintillin and Ardmagh Breague, and was most probably the son of G6 William and occupying the same Moate farm as his father had. There could of course have been more than one Peter; equally, the one Peter could have expanded the original farm by leasing extra land (these three townlands border each other). If the latter was true, then he managed to double the acreage of the farm (and rateable value) between 1828 and 1854. Running 70 acres of land would have made him a 'strong' farmer by the standards of the day. Our assessment was that G7 Peter was the brother of our documented G7 James.

There is a record for Kilbeg Parish of December 7 1820, 'Peter McMahon married Ejsy Fairs (*as best as I could decipher it - PM*): Witnesses: - James Weldon and O. Rogers'.

This could well be G7 Peter's marriage record (he would have been about 21 years old in 1820). Even though this is well within the recording period for Kilbeg, there is no evidence, or recollection in the family, of offspring. The counterargument is that Peter of Moate remained a bachelor; he was certainly still alive in 1854 (*Table F2*).

5.2 James McMahon and Anne Cahile

G7 James McMahon, was likely born *circa* 1797 (*Figure B1*). He and Anne Cahile (Cahill) gave birth to our Great-Grandfather (G8) William in 1819 (*Annex E1*). We are descended directly from this couple.

³⁰ There is no record of G7 James holding his own farm; he may simply have assisted his brother on the 70-acre Moate farm, when he was not philandering about the countryside.

A decade later, there are records to show that a James and Anne McMahon had a son Hugh (1830) and a daughter Margaret (1831) in the adjacent Parish of Castletown Kilpatrick. It is possible, though unlikely, that this is another couple.³¹ Anne Cahile died in 1837, while the date of her partner James's death is unknown. Her death post-dated her partner having a son Peter with Catherine Daly in 1834 (*Ch5.4*).

5.3 James McMahon and Rose Cooney

The records also indicate that G7 James fathered John (born 1823), whose Mother was Rose Cooney. He may well have been the John McMahon Jr shown by Griffith's to have been in Trohanny in 1854 (*Table F1*). He may also have been the John McMahon who later married Mary Finegan *circa* 1855, and had four children (Patrick (1856), Catherine (1859), Michael (1861) and John (1864). There is little further trace of them in the records,³² which may well indicate subsequent emigration.

5.4 James McMahon and Catherine Daly

There is another McMahon family that is definitely related to us, that of G11 Peter McMahon of Rathbane. This relationship has been recognized and acknowledged by both families. G11 Peter is descended from G10 Joseph, whose oral testimony (in 1976) confirmed that G9 Joseph was his Father and whose written testimony (*Annex R1*) confirmed that G8 Peter (Big Peter) was his Grandfather. G10 Joseph (1896) was the youngest of six, with the eldest, Catherine, being born in 1883. Our analysis indicated that G9 Joseph would have been born about 1856, with the absence of a birth record being best explained by the 7-year gap in the Kilbeg Parish records between 1852-1858. This would make G8 Peter (1834) the most probable candidate³³ to have been G9 Joseph's father.

However, the G.11 McMahons of Rathbane believe that their great-grandfather, G8 Peter, was born *circa* 1820. This assertion is based upon their belief (from their oral history) that Peter's son, G9 Joseph., was 80 years old at the time of his death in 1925; it would follow from this that his date of birth would have been 1845. The problem with this argument is that there is no written evidence to support it at all. Neither the Meath Heritage Centre records (*Ref. 3*) nor the church records show the birth of any other Peter born to a James, save the one in 1834. Indeed, this was the only Peter fathered by a James in all of North Meath in the entire database.

³¹ Fr. Paddy asserted that Hugh was not a family name, although the name appears in Gen.10 (Hugh Magee, gt.grandson of Gen.7 James McMahon).

³² Although there was a Michael McMahon of Moynalty who married Elizabeth Cole and had 3 children: Mary 1889, John 1891 and Catherine 1894. Michael was an unusual family name, and the dates fit.

³³ If it wasn't he, then we would be unrelated to the Rathbawn McMahons.

The Kilbeg Parish records stipulate that, for each of G8 William, John and Peter, the father was a James McMahon. In the absence of records for any other James, we must assume that it was the same man (G7 James) who was the common ancestor to both branches of the family.

We are assuming that Big Peter was not the Peter recorded in Griffith's Valuation of 1854 as having held land at Moate etc., as Big Peter would have been only aged 20 at that time. The prefix 'Big' was clearly used to distinguish him from the Peter who held the farm at Moate, who may indeed have been his uncle. Oral history has it that both Big Peter and his older half-brother G6 William were moved from Moate by the landlord, Jack 'The Leveller' Farrell.³⁴ Big Peter was settled on a farm in the Leitrim district of North Meath, and later moved to Rathbane. His half-brother, William, and his other half-brother, John Jr., were settled with their uncle John on the Trohanny (Maio) farm (*oral history and Table F1*).

5.5 Other G7 Siblings of James

The sparse records for Kilbeg Parish (*Ch 4.9*) indicate that James probably had two brothers in addition to those already described, Peter (*Ch 5.1*) and John (*Annex HI*). These were Thomas and Robert. Robert had a son Andrew but no trace of either of them was found in later records nor were they known family names. Thomas on the other hand was a family name, but we were unable to establish if the later Tommies were descended from him (but see *Ch 6.3.1* for additional information).

5.6 James's Occupation

The strange thing about G7 James is that the only records for him were for his children's baptisms. There are no records of him holding a tenancy, even a modest one, and no family recollections of him at all (Griffith's Valuation does, however, record in 1855 two James McMahons, one living in Moynalty and one in Carrigagh, Moynalty).

This has led us to the conclusion that he was not very successful in life (apart from siring children) and he may have laboured for his brother Peter on the Moate farm or for his various in-laws. Equally, he could have been even lower down the social scale and been a complete waster, thus accounting for the family amnesia. From our most recent analysis, it is possible to conclude that he abandoned his family and emigrated (or died) in or around 1834. The most telling evidence for this is that his known sons (William, John Jr and Peter) finished up being 'looked after' by 'Uncle' John in Maio (*Ch.H.1*).

³⁴ This piece of oral history may be inaccurate, as the landlords for the Moate & Maio Estates were the Marquis of Headfort and John Radcliff respectively.



Figure 9: G8 Great-Grandmother Jane (Monaghan) McMahon

6 McMahons of Trohanny

The McMahons were relatively late arrivals in Trohanny (*See Annex H6*), the first being G7 John and his nephew G8 William (our Gt Grandfather) in or around 1834. Before that, most of the townlands of Moynalty (including Trohanny) (*Figure 7*), were owned by members of the Betagh Family (*Ch 4.1*) and presumably numerous other later tenants after the Betaghs. The specific tenants who occupied the Maio farm immediately prior to the McMahons were named Gauley.

6.1 Maio

The name 'Maio' was always used as the farm address (which is at Grid N 723 892, *Figure 7*), even on official correspondence, despite it not being a townland name. The explanation for the name is that it was an ancient name for the townland used (officially) in the 1650s (*Ch 4.1*). This was reinforced by the discovery of 'Mayo House' on an 1830 O.S. Map. This was a substantial u-shaped dwelling consistent with it being a 'Manor House'. From the map location (Grid N718 915), it was only about 2.5Km north of the farmstead. At some stage, 'Mayo House' was probably 'The Big House' in the area and its owners farmed the land for several miles around as their Estate in the 17th century. Hence the names 'Moyo' (17th century), 'Mayoe', 'Mayo' or 'Maio' (the latter three spellings have been seen on legal documents) were applied to these estate lands and were kept in use by later generations right up to the present. By the 1830's, John Radcliff was the Landlord of the Maio Estate (*Annex L.3*). From the same O.S. map, the location of 'Maio School' was also found (about half a kilometre north of the farm, at Grid N722 898). Whether the occupants of Mayo House and lands were tenants of Radcliff or landowners, we could not establish. The Family living there in the early part of the 20th century were called Rountree.³⁵

³⁵ Griffith's Valuation (1854) showed Rountrees to be tenants of Radcliff in Golashane Townland, adjacent to Trohanny (*Ref 14*).



Figure 7: North-West Meath: Part of OS 1:50,000 Discovery Series 35.



Figure 8: **Maio farmhouse circa 1950 (left) and in 2007 (right).**

6.2 Occupation of Maio

The first McMahon occupant was allegedly G7 John ('Uncle John') who presumably acquired the tenancy sometime around 1830. He had no family of his own and took in his nephew, G8 William to help work the farm (*Ref. 13* and *Annex J4*). The original farmhouse was adjacent to the road and in the field above the backyard of the current house on the site.

6.3 Great Grandfather William (G8)

William began life in 1819, born to G7 James and Anne Cahile. It is assumed that he was living somewhere in Kilbeg Parish, possibly on Moate Farm, as his birth was registered in Kilbeg.

We have no knowledge where the family resided after that, other than the possibility that they were in the neighbouring parish of Castletown Kilpatrick between 1829 and 1831. This is based on the fact that a Hugh (1830) and a Margaret (1831) were born to a James and Anne in that parish (the assumption here being it was the same James and Anne who had earlier produced William in Kilbeg parish). The father James, seems to have also had a relationship with Rose Cooney and produced a son John in 1823 before resuming relations with Anne Cahill sometime prior to 1830. For his part, William, at age 20, may even have dallied with a Rose Clarke producing a son Patrick in 1839 in Moynalty; such a record exists but it may relate to one of the two (younger) Kilskyre Williams (1821 or 1823).

In 1851, (at age 32), William married Jane Monaghan (aged 25). Presumably, William had not yet taken over the Maio farm from his Uncle John, although he had



**Grandmother Margaret (Farrelly)
McMahon**

acquired his own tenancy. Griffith's valuation lists them both as being still resident in Trohanny and possibly living in the same house in 1854 (*Annex F2*). John and William between them had 52 acres, a sizable farm by the standard of the day.³⁶

William had a holding of more than 22 acres (including some bogland) in 1854. By that time, William and Jane had started a family and ultimately had seven children, with the last born being our G9 Grandfather, Patrick (*Table 2*). With a growing family, William found it necessary to take on a lease of extra acreage (*circa* 12 extra acres by our reckoning) in 1877 (*Appendix 1 to Annex H* on page 106). This extra acreage brought his holding up to 35 statute acres (*circa* 22 Irish acres), the maximum permitted by Landlord Radcliff; this was the amount inherited by

his widow Jane and subsequently their son Patrick (*Appendix 4 to Annex H, page 109*).

The leasehold agreements provide us with a perspective on farming conditions at that time and how landlords controlled the size of their tenant farms ensuring that few, if any, got above a maximum size (in Radcliff's case, 22 Irish acres in Trohanny Townland). The data examined indicated that this maximum acreage varied throughout the parish of Moynalty, being particularly low in Trohanny. William was reputed to be an entrepreneurial sort of guy. He expanded the farm by leasing extra fields, traded to Drogheda and Dublin, ran a shop in Maio, installed horse powered tread-mill machinery to the rear of the house,³⁷ bought the long case clock for £8 in 1868 (*Annex H3*) and even left £40+ in his will when he died in 1900 (*Appendix 5 to Annex H, page 110*). Even in his old age, he took the initiative in arranging his son Patrick's betrothal.

However, he was probably best remembered for his wake which he may even have arranged (*Appendix 3 to Annex H*). The main items that stand out in the bill were: 3 galls spirit £2-14-0; 4 lbs twist tobacco £0-14-0; 1 gross pipes £0-3-0, 10 long candles £0-1-8 and some bottles of claret and Port wine. Some party! (see *Table H2* for current values).

³⁶ From the 'Name Books' produced in Griffith's time (*Ref 14*), Trohanny means 'a poor morass'. Radcliff let the land at 21 shillings per acre in farms of 3,5 to 22 Irish acres.

³⁷ This was geared to run a shaft and pulley system within the creamery. As far as I (PM) can tell, this was used to drive a winnowing machine (precursor to a thrashing machine) and churning equipment for butter making. It was later donated to the Moynalty Museum of Farm Machinery by G10 Jim.

G 9	Occupation	Lived	Married	G10	
Bridget 1851	Housewife	?	William Smith	Michael William Mary Thomas John Jane Patrick	
Mary 1854	Housewife	Kilmainham Wood	Michael Magee	Frank Peter Maggie Jane Hugh Bridget Katy Mary	1891 1886
Jane 1856	?	Maio	Died 9 February 1897		
John 1859	Fireman?	New York	Mary McLaughlin	Jimmie Mary	? 1901
Peter 1863	Farmer	Maio	Mary Lynch	Mary Jane William Edward Patrick Peter Katie	1889 1891 1893 1895 1898 1900 1901
James 1865	Policeman	New York	?		
Patrick 1868	Farmer	Maio	Margaret Farrelly	William Eugene Jennie Jim Paddy	1902 1904 1906 1910 1912

Table 2: G8 William's Family and Descendants

6.3.1 G8 Cousins

A similar Will record for Thomas (Farmer) McMahon, 1913 of Carrickleck, Meath was also found in the Mormon archives (*Ref. 12*). This could well be an elderly brother (of which there is no record) or cousin of William. Incidentally, the designation ... (Farmer)... is unique to these two records, suggesting they were submitted by the same person (relative/landlord?) and that both William and Thomas were related. There is strong oral history to indicate a 'Tommy' relative. A contender could be Thomas (1867) born to Thomas and Mary Carolan.

Alternatively, it could be the Thomas (1845) born to John and Mary of Moynalty Parish. John and Mary also had two other sons, James (1833) and Roger (1843), the latter being favourite to have been the bare knuckle fighter (*Annex 13*). The odds are that this last holder of the name 'Roger' was some kind of cousin, and also descended from G5 Roger. If so, his father, John, may have been descended from an unrecorded brother (named Thomas) of G6 William of Moate.

6.3.2 The Baker McMahons (G9)

Grandfather Patrick and family were referred to as 'The Baker McMahons' (*Figure 10*).

Apparently, Grandfather Patrick as a youth (youngest in the family and without prospects), had migrated to Dublin where he worked in a shop (presumably a grocer's or bakery) before being recalled to do his duty on the farm about the time of William's death in 1900 (two of his older brothers, John and James, had emigrated to America long before this time). Peter, his remaining elder brother, had begat most of his family long before William's death (Peter's eldest was born in 1889) and presumably ran the farm in Maio until Patrick's return or until he had acquired the farm up the road at the back of Maio School. The 'Baker' name was to distinguish us from them and two or three other McMahon families living within a few hundred yards of the Maio farm (*Appendix 2 to Annex H*).

Shortly after his father's death, Patrick married Margaret Farrelly (Prior to then, practical considerations of available living space would have made it difficult to bring a bride into the Maio farmhouse). Margaret



Figure 10: G9 Patrick McMahon, wife Margaret and daughter Jennie, circa 1950

had been a teaching assistant at the primary school in Stradone Co. Cavan.³⁸

Apparently, Gt Grandfather (G8) William and Eugene Farrelly (Margaret's father) were friends and met up one day in Bailieborough (presumably in the late 1890's) and arranged (no doubt over a pint) that the returning Baker Patrick should have a wife to support him in his new farmer lifestyle (*Ref. 13*). Thus a deal was struck and Margaret was nominated to be his bride. As she lived and worked as a teaching assistant in Clifferna, Stradone, Co. Cavan, it wasn't practical to do much 'walking out'; besides, there wasn't a lot of time. In any event, Gt. Grandfather William died in November 1900 and his widow Jane signed over the farm lease to Patrick on 6 May 1901 (*Figure 11* and *Appendix 4 to Annex H*). Five months later, the marriage agreement previously arranged by the two drinking buddies was contracted when Patrick married Margaret on 3 October 1901. It does explain a lot though, and certainly the rather terse entry in the Grandmother's notebook... "Patrick McMahon married 3rd October 1901"... (no lovey-dovey nonsense here!). We know she was a tough woman but imagine meeting and marrying a stranger, and then having to live cheek by jowl with the mother-in-law as well for the next 13 years! But it worked!

Think of it this way – we owe our existence to this meeting in a Bailieborough pub in the latter part of the nineteenth century!

My (*PM*) recollection of the farm boundary in the 1940/1950s is indicated by the green tint on *Figure 12*; the farm had been increased to about 40 acres by this time. This is only approximate, as the map predates my time and some features may have changed. Other surrounding features are also indicated. Rose Yore told me (*PM*) that G10 William McMahon's family (her family) were known as 'McMahons in Maio on-the hill'.



Figure 11: **Cover of agreement**

³⁸ Her old English grammar book was discovered in the shed on the Maio farm, containing her signature and address of Clifferna, Stradone.



Figure 12: Boundary of Farm on 1:4000 OS Map of circa 1840

6.3.3 1901 Census

The 1901 Census records the residents of the Maio farmhouse in Trohanny as being: “Jane McMahon (aged 75), Patrick McMahon (aged 30),³⁹ grand-daughter Margaret McGee (aged 15), gt-grandson William Richardson (aged 6) and servant James Smith (aged 15).”

6.4 Neighbours also called McMahon

Griffith’s Valuation of 1854 showed 22 other McMahon holdings around the Maio farm (17 of these were in the same Parish of Moynalty) (*Table F3* and *Figure F1*). This showed an amazing distribution by any standard, especially having 11 of the 17 McMahon families in such a small area of Moynalty Parish (most are within half a day’s walk of each other). However, only the five shown in Trohanny were thought to be related.

Moving on 70 years, we learnt from Fr.Paddy of the other McMahon lines that had existed about half a mile from the Maio farm and had not been listed by Griffith in 1854.

There was ‘Johnny in-the-hollow’ (whose father was ‘Joe in-the-hollow’ (G8), allegedly not related to us and living opposite Caffreys (*Appendix 2* to *Annex H* on page 107). There was also a ‘Johnny-the-rock’ (across the river from the farm), related to Johnny-in-the-hollow but not to us according to Paddy. They, on the other hand, claimed that they were related to us at the G6 level (*Annex II*).

6.5 Close Relatives

The records of descent through G8 William (1819-1900)/Jane Monaghan (1826-1914) are much clearer. We can trace four distinct and prolific lines of descent through four of their seven children (*Table 2*)

³⁹ He was in fact born in 1868; this would make him aged 32-33 in 1901.

6.6 Other McMahons of Maio

Certainly, the family surname appears very frequently in the birth records for the district of Maio during the latter part of the 19th century. There were many more recorded for Moynalty Parish (without giving the townland name) some of whom could also have been in Maio. There were at least three other main Maio McMahon families for whom it was not possible to detect any relationship with our branch. These were:

Joseph McMahon/Bridget MacCormick: producing 8 children (1865-80)

Joseph McMahon/Mary Clarke: producing 5 children (1871-81)

Owen McMahon/Rose Englishby: producing 5 children (1881-91)

The duplication of Christian names in such a small area could only have been confusing, especially when you consider that our family branches would also, at the same time, have had members named Joseph, Patrick, Peter and James living close by, and apparently unrelated to these other close neighbours of the same names.

7 G10 McMahons

By this generation, the known family members could be divided into five branches. These were:

- 1 Descendants of G9 Patrick and Margaret Farrelly
- 2 Descendants of G9 Peter and Mary Lynch
- 3 Descendants of G9 Brigid McMahon and William Smith
- 4 Descendants of G9 Mary McMahon and Michael Magee
- 5 Descendants of G9 Joesph and Rose Daly.

Patrick, Peter, Brigid and Mary, were siblings and Joesph was their first cousin (*Figure E3*).

7.1 Patrick's Family

Patrick and Margaret reared their family (*Figure 13*, *Figure 14*) on the Maio Farm. Eugene and Paddy both spent their early years working on the farm and later training as farm managers before moving away; Eugene moved to university in Dublin, Paddy to the Oblates in Piltown and then to Natal, South Africa. Jim remained on the farm and took over its running *circa* 1950. Margaret died in 1951 and Patrick in 1952. Jim and Jennie remained on the farm until they retired to Kells in 1980.

G10 Eugene (*Figure 14*), after attending secondary school in Mullingar, trained as a farm manager. Afterwards, he attended U.C.D, where he was active in the Agricultural Society (*Figure 15*). His subsequent teaching career was in the UCD Faculty of Agriculture



Figure 13: (l to r) Grandmother Margaret, son Jim, Grandfather Patrick, son Paddy, daughter Jennie circa 1940.

G 10	Occupation	Lived	Married	G11	
William 1902	Died young	Maio			
Eugene 1904	University Lecturer/ Professor	Maio/ Dublin	Florence Doyle Dublin	Patrick Larry Eugene Mary Brendan	1937 1941 1943 1945 1949
Jennie 1906	Housekeeper for brother	Maio	–		
Jim 1910	Farmer	Maio	–		
Paddy 1912	Priest	Maio/ South Africa	–		

Table 3: G9 Patrick’s Family and their G11 descendants



Figure 14: Eugene McMahon, circa 1932.

at Albert College in Glasnevin (site of the present day DCU). His research training was in entomology where he specialised in the study of nematodes and wheat midge. He ultimately became a Statutory Lecturer, and later Professor, in entomology.



Figure 15: Founding members of Agricultural Society, 1929

G 10	Occupation	Lived	Married	G11	
Mary 1889	Housewife	Ireland	Frank Byrne	?	
Jane 1891	?	Ireland	?	?	
William 1893	Farmer	Maio/ Carlanstown	Kathleen Gallagher	Mary Peter Rose Paddy	1930 1932 1934 1937
Edward 1895	?	Ireland	–	?	
Patrick 1898	Farmer	Newcastle	M. Russell	?	
Peter 1900	IRA	Maio/ Laytown	–	–	
Katie 1901	Housewife	Navan	Michael Hilliard	Cormac Ben Oliver Mary Nancy Colm	Enda Kathleen Ronan Sr Attracta Sr Fidelis

Table 4: G9 Peter's Family and their G11 descendants

7.2 Peter's Family

G9 Peter (1863) raised his family on a farm (Maio-on-the-hill) about half a mile from Patrick's farm. His son, William took over the running of the farm and had his family there. In the 1940's, William and his family moved to a farm in Carlanstown and his brother Peter continued on the farm. Patrick (Red Paddy) married Margaret Russell and farmed in Newcastle. Peter, for services to the State, was rewarded with a better farm in Laytown. Katie married Mick Hilliard (who became Minister for Posts and Telegraphs 1959-65 and Minister for Defence 1965-69); they had 11 children.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Their son, Colm was the Fianna Fail TD for Meath 1982-97.

G 10	Occupation	Lived	Married	G11
Michael 1907	?	?	?	Tom Son Daughter Daughter
William	?	?	?	?
Mary	?	?	Richardson	William 1895-
Tom	?	?	?	?
John	?	?	?	?
Jane	?	?	?	?
Patrick	?	?	?	?

Table 5: G9 Brigid's Family and their G11 descendents

7.3 The Smiths

G9 Brigid (1851), eldest sister of our Grandfather, married William Smith and had seven children and five known grandchildren. Little else is known of this family.

G 10	Occupation	Lived	Married	G11	
Frank	?	?	?	?	
Peter 1891-1971	Farmer	Kilmainham Wood	Margaret Coleman	Pascal Paddy Jane Edmund Philomena Mike Myra Esther Greta	
Maggie 1886	?	?	Tavis	?	
Jane	?	?	?	?	
Hugh	?	?	?	?	
Brigid	?	?	?	?	
Katie	?	?	?	?	
Mary	?	?	Riordan	Evelyn	

Table 6: G9 Mary's Family and their G11 descendents

7.4 The Magees

G9 Mary McMahon (1854), second eldest sister of our Grandfather, married Michael Magee and had eight children. Again, little else is known to the authors about this family other than the fact that they were frequent visitors to the Maio Farm.

G 10	Occupation	Lived	Married	G11	
Catherine 1883	?	Ireland	?	?	
Peter 1885 1885-1945	Garda	Dublin	Yes	Rosie m. O'Mahony Daughter Daughter	
Bernard 1887	?	U. Leitrim Meath	Tavis	?	
Anne 1889	?	Ireland	?	?	
Mary Agnes 1893	?	Ireland	?	?	
Joseph Jr. 1896	Farmer (Died 1986)	U. Leitrim & Rathbawn	Mary Reilly	Rosaleen Kathleen Mary Peter Annette Celine Margarete Joan	1943 1945 1946 1947 1948 1949 1951 1957

Table 7: G9 Joseph's Family and their G11 descendants

7.5 G9 Joseph's Family

Big Peter McMahon (half-brother of G8 William) had two children that we know of: G9 Joseph (1856) and Brigid. Brigid Married John McCormack, and had seven children. G9 Joseph married Rose Daly and had six children (*Table 7*).

8 G11 and G12 McMahons

8 G11 and G12 McMahons

The five G10 branches of the family, descended from generation 9, who went on to produce the future generations are described in Chapter 7. In this chapter, the G11, G12 and in some cases the G13 descendants are tabulated.

8.1 G10 Eugene's Family



Figure 16: **G10 Eugene McMahon and wife Florence Doyle on their wedding day, 8 August 1934.**

G10 Eugene was the only member of G9 Patrick and Margaret's family to have married and produced children. The G11 members of his family, together with their children and grand-children, are shown in *Table 8*.



Figure 17: **(l. to r.): Uncle Desmond Doyle (about 5 yrs), John Brady (best man), G10 Eugene, Mrs Brady to rear, G10 Jennie McMahon (holding Joan Doyle), Florence (Doyle) McMahon, Pearl Halpin?, Grandfather Laurence Doyle, baby Uncle Fergus Doyle, Grandmother Tessie (Mulligan) Doyle (holding Fergus), Olive Halpin?, sister of Tessie Mulligan (either Mol or Maggie), 8 August 1934.**

G 11	Occupation	Lived	Married	G12	G13
Patrick 1937	Geneticist/ Operational Analyst British Ministry of Defence	U.K	Grania Claffey	Caroline (UK) Brian (UK) Eoin (UK)	Iain Sarah Ciaran
Larry 1941	Marketing Consultant IMI / Hypno- therapist	Ireland	Heidi Grabinger	Peter (Ger) Katie (USA)	Maximillian (Ger) Michael (USA)
Eugene 1943	Secondary School Teacher and Union President	Canada	Anne Gouldsbury	Rob (Toronto) Fiona (Paris) Colin (Toronto)	
Mary 1945	Community College Teacher	Ireland	Peader Mulligan	Sheelagh (Irl) Eugene (USA) Sinead (Irl) Patricia (Irl)	Nova, Lara, Kate Delta (Skerries)
Brendan 1949	Diplomat Irish Foreign Service	Dublin/ Abroad	Irene Farren	Stephen (Aus) Sarah (UK) Elizabeth (UK)	Hanah, Ellie (Melbourne)

Table 8: Generation 11 and beyond for G10 Eugene's Branch of the Family

G10 Eugene married Florence Doyle on the 8th August 1934 (*Figure 16, Figure 17*) and produced the five of us as shown in *Table 8*. We lived in Hampstead Park, Glasnevin, Dublin.

During World War 2, transport was difficult in Dublin. Our Father's solution to the problem of visiting the Doyles in Rathgar is shown in *Figure 18*. This was sufficient novelty at the time for an *Irish Times* photographer to take the shot and publish it.

Figure 18: **Family on wheels, 1942 (*Irish Times*). G10 Eugene and Florence with G11 Patrick (crossbar saddle) and Larry (in trailer).**



Figure 19: **G11 Eugene, Mary, Brendan, Patrick, Larry in Rathgar circa 1950**



Patrick and Grania receiving the Silver Tea Service





Figure 20: (l to r) G11 Peadar Mulligan, Grania, Patrick, Heidi, Larry, Brendan, Mary Mulligan and G10 Mother at 80th birthday party in Tramore, March 1992.



Figure 21: **Some G12 cousins (l to r) Katie, Stephen, and Sarah McMahon; Sinead, Eugene and Sheelagh Mulligan; Brian McMahon.**

G 11	Occupation	Lived	Married	G12	G13
Mary 1930	Housewife	Carnacross	Michael Yore	Michael Eugene Liam Mairead Paraic Domenic Francis	Katie Laura Gavin Caolan Rose Anthony Megan Mark Colin Aoife Cian Shane Eadaoin Cormac Oisin Leonne Michael
Peter 1932	Farmer	Carlanstown	Brigid Price	William	Aimee
Rose 1934	Housewife	UK and Kells	Bernard Yore	Mary Theresa Ann Bernard	Jack Daniel Niamh – Ellen –
Paddy 1937	Businessman	Moynalty	Philomena Flanagan	Assumpta Mark Hilda Paula Padraig	– David Ronan Darrel Shauna Hazel Lauren – –

Table 9: **Generation 11 and beyond for G10 William's Branch of the Family**

8.2 G10 William's Family

G10 William, the son of G9 Peter and Mary, married and produced four children. The G11 members of his family together with their children and grand-children are show in *Table 9*.

G 11	Occupation	Lived	Married	G12	G13
Cormac	Br Benignus	Dublin	-	-	-
Ben		Navan	Kathleen Deane	?	?
Oliver		Navan	Eilis Swan	Simon Steven Enda Damien	? ? ? ?
Mary			Tom Locke	Tony Mary Campbell	? ? ?
Pauline			Cathal O'Farrell	?	?
Monica			Terry Stapleton	Mary	?
Nancy	Sr Pauline				
Colm		Navan	Margy Quinn	Kevin Fergus Ursla Dara	? ? ? ?
Enda		Navan			
Kathleen			Tom Hughes	Cian	?
Ronan		Navan	Marie Murtagh	Paul Brian Sue Jane	? ? ? ?
?	Sr Attracta				
?	Sr Fidelis				

Table 10: **Generation 11 and beyond for G10 Katie's Branch of the Family.**

8.3 G10 Katie McMahon-Hilliard's Family

Katie, G10 William's youngest sister, married Mick Hilliard and had the family shown in *Table 10*. The family was remarkable not only for its size but also for the high proportion that entered religious orders.

G 11	Occupation	Lived	Married	G12	G13
Rosaleen 1943		Rathbawn	John Kingham	David Elaine	
Kathleen 1945		Rathbawn	Tom Corcoran	Mark Niall	
Mary 1946		Rathbawn			
Peter 1947	Farmer	Rathbawn	Phyllis Fagan	Dawn Fergal Karl Peter	Joe
Annette 1948		Rathbawn			
Celine 1949		Rathbawn	Mansfield	Emma	
Margarete 1951		Rathbawn			
Joan 1957		Rathbawn			

Table 11: Generation 11 and beyond for G10 Joseph's Branch of the Family.

8.4 G10 Joseph's Family

G10 Joseph (1896, son of G9 Joseph) married Mary Reilly and had the family shown in *Table 11*.

G11	Married	G12
Pascal	B. Walsh	Maureen Peggy Peter Kevin
Paddy		Paul Angela Peter Mary Sylvia Ray
Jane	N. Rennick	Sue Patrick Declan Debra Emmett
Edmund	D. Proudfoot	Niall Enda
Philomena	M. Costello	Dolores
Mike	M. Sheehy	Cliona Dave Ronan Rachel
Myra	B. Hunt	Jeremy Shona
Esther	L. McDermot	Tom Noleen Gabriel Grania Caitrona
Greta	P McGloughlin	Peter

8.5

G10 Peter Magee's Family

G10 Peter Magee (1891, son of G9 Mary (McMahon) Magee married Margaret Coleman and had the family shown in *Table 12*.

Table 12: Generation 11 and beyond for G10 Peter Magee's Family.

9 Line of Descent

Combining information from the early genealogical records for the McMahons of Monaghan and our direct endeavours, we can deduce the following three levels of certainty for the family line of descent.

Possibly from:

G1 Roger McMahon of Killynenagh/Kilnanaw in Currin, Dartrey (born 1615-25)

or

G1 Colla Dubh MacMahon *circa* 1630-1695 of Dartrey

G2 Patrick MacMahon (born 1655?) in Dartrey (he was not the son of G1 Roger)

G3 Roger MacMahon (born 1690?) of Enagh/Eliz.Beatie?+ Culagh MacMahon (brother)

G4 A speculative William MacMahon (born 1715?- 1795?)...or Hugh MacMahon (son of Culagh) *circa* 1704.^{40, 41}

Seemingly from:

G5 Magheraclone Roger McMahon of South Monaghan/Moate (1735?-1813?)

G6 William McMahon of Moate (*circa* 1763/1773 – *circa* 1852)/Drake?

⁴⁰ One alternative line of descent is shown in Fig B1, page 79.

⁴¹ A speculative royal line of descent is shown in Annex P7, page 154.

Definitely from:

- G7** James McMahon (1797-1877?)/Anne Cahill (18?-1837) of Moate, Kilbeg Parish
- G8** William McMahon (1819-1900)/Jane Monaghan (1826-1914) of Trohanny/Maio, Moynalty
- G9** Patrick McMahon (1868-1952)/Margaret Farrelly (1871-1951), Trohanny/Maio, Moynalty
Of their five children (Willy died at birth), only our father, Eugene married:
- G10** Eugene McMahon (1904-1978)/Florence Doyle (1912-1992) of Dublin.
- G11** Their 5 children (Patrick, Larry, Eugene, Mary and Brendan) all married and had children as shown in *Table 8*.

The above scenario cannot include both Roger McMahon (1615-25) and Roger McMahon (*circa* 1690), as the earlier one is not the ancestor of the later one. If we choose 1690 Roger, then the direct line of descent would stretch back to Eochaidh in 1250 A.D (*Annex P7 and P8*).

Going forward, 1690 Roger could be: a) the father, b) the grandfather or c) the grand-uncle of Maheracloone Roger. If, instead, we select 1615-25 Roger, then he remains our 'ultimate ancestor.' In this case, we are left to account for two or three missing generations before we get to Maheracloone Roger (born 1735?).

10 Conclusions

10.1 Direct descent

We have concluded with some confidence that the family originated in Co. Monaghan and the earliest named ancestor was possibly a Roger from the Barony of Dartrey. His possible descendant, Roger (from Magheraclone Parish near Carrickmacross, South Monaghan) could have moved from there into North Meath in the late 18th century or very early 19th century.

The earliest known member of our family line started with a Roger (*circa* 1735-1813). Wherever he came from (Magheraclone or otherwise), this G5 Roger left his indelible mark on a tombstone in Robertstown cemetery. Roger was probably the first family member to be interred in Robertstown, sometime around 1813 or shortly thereafter. We have further concluded that Roger was the father of William of Moate (*circa* 1768), Peter (*circa* 1761) (who later became the P.P. in Moynalty) and possibly a John.

G6 William (*circa* 1768) had at least three sons, Peter (*circa* 1799), James (*circa* 1797), John (*circa* 1805) and possibly a fourth, Thomas (*circa* 1802), and maybe even a Robert. Peter took over the family farm at Moate from his father and may have expanded it to about 70 acres. He didn't produce any recorded children, although he may have been the Peter who married Ejsy Fairs in 1820. Many years after Pete's death, *circa* 1870's-1880's, the ancestral Moate Farm came back into family hands when it was purchased by our grand-uncle, G9 James, upon his return to Ireland in 1927 (*Ref* page 112).

G7 James (*circa* 1797) was our direct ancestor who, with Anne Cahile, produced our Great Grandfather William, as recorded in Kilbeg Parish in 1819; he also sired at least two other sons, John (1823) and Peter (1834), the latter giving rise to the Leitrim/Rathbane branch of the family.

In about 1834, Great Grandfather William joined his Uncle John (born *circa* 1805) on his farm in Trohanny, Moynalty. He eventually (by 1854) acquired a 22 acre (Irish measure) tenancy of his own. This then became the family homestead of Maio for the next 141 years until it was first set and then sold for IR£30,000 by our Uncle (G10) Jim to the Sheridans *circa* 1995.

In 1851, William married Jane Monaghan (1826-1914) and went on to produce

seven children. Their eldest, Bridget, married William Smith and produced seven children; Mary married Michael Magee and had eight children; Jane died 1897; John and James emigrated to the USA (John may have had at least one child, Jimmy); Peter (1863) and Patrick (1868) farmed adjacent holdings in Trohanny (Peter married Mary Lynch and had five children). Patrick married Margaret Farrelly in 1901 and between them produced William (1902) who died in infancy, Eugene (1904) (our Father), Jennie (1906), Jim (1910) and Paddy (1912).

Eugene moved to Dublin and went on to further education, becoming a Statutory Lecturer, and later a Professor, in the Faculty of Agriculture, UCD. Paddy became an Oblate Priest and served as a missionary in Natal, South Africa from 1946 to the present day. Jim and Jennie remained unmarried and occupied the farm until the late 1980s when they retired to Kells. Jennie died in 1987 and Jim in 2000.

Eugene married Florence Doyle from Dublin in 1934 and they produced Patrick (1937), Laurence (1941), Eugene (1943), Mary (1945) and Brendan (1949). Their details are outlined in *Table 3*, page 39.

10.2 Carlanstown Family

G9 Peter (1863) and his son G10 William (1893), farmed in Trohanny at first but moved to a farm in Carlanstown in the 1940s. Peter's son, G10 Paddy, moved to a farm in Newcastle and his third son, G10 Peter, remained in Trohanny. G9 Peter's daughter, Katie, married Mick Hilliard and his other daughter, Mary, married Frank Byrne (*Table 4*).

10.3 Rathbane Family

This was the earliest other known branch in the family. It occurred in generation 8, with 'Big Peter' (1834) producing a son, G9 Joseph, and two daughters, Brigid and Mary. Brigid married John McCormack and Mary married an O'Brien. Joseph went on to sire a large family which, together with the next generation, are summarised in *Table 7*, page 48. Some oral history for this branch is provided in *Annex R1*.

10.4 Current Generations

The current Generation 11 families are widely spread and are descended from:

- ◆ Eugene McMahon's Family – shown in *Table 8*, page 50 (detail in *Annex M*).
- ◆ William McMahon's Family – shown in *Table 9*, page 52 (detail in *Annex N*).
- ◆ Joseph Jr. McMahon's Family – shown in *Table 11*, page 55 (detail in *Annex O*)
- ◆ Katie (McMahon) Hilliard's family – 11 children in Gen.11
- ◆ Magee family – Mary (McMahon) Magee had 8 children in Generation 10 and 10 known grandchildren in Generation 11.
- ◆ Smith Family – Brigid (McMahon) Smith had 7 children in Gen.10 and 5 known grandchildren in Generation 11.

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27	Pocket Guide to Irish Genealogy	Mormon Library
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A Annexes

A.1 Written Records

One of the main problems with this analysis was the absence of crucial parish records. This was primarily due to the repression of the Catholic Church in the 18th century. It was only towards the latter part of that century that church buildings and established clergy at the parish level became the norm.

Table A1 shows the dates for which records were available in the relevant parishes. Other missing data is from the four censuses, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891 which were destroyed by government order.

For Births and Deaths	From
Moynalty	1830
Kilbeg	1817 with a gap 1852-1858
Nobber	1764
Kildalky	1785
Kells	1792
Drumconrath	1811
Navan	1782

Table A1: Earliest Parish Records

A.2 Generation Mapping

The frequent use of a limited number of common Christian names and the absence of a second Christian name, made it very difficult to attribute some offspring to particular families. As an aid to minimise this type of confusion, the time period covered was arbitrarily divided into generations. These generation intervals were either 30 or 40 years, the particular interval chosen being the one that best fitted the ancestral data. *Table A2* shows the scheme adopted. G1 to G13 are used as labels throughout the text to indicate the generation being described. This nomenclature is intended as a convenience in

Generation	Years		
G1	1610	To	1639
G2	1640	To	1669
G3	1670	To	1699
G4	1700	To	1729
G5	1730	To	1759
G6	1760	To	1789
G7	1790	To	1819
G8	1820	To	1849
G9	1850	To	1889
G10	1890	To	1929
G11	1930	To	1959
G12	1960	To	1989
G13	1990	To	2020

Table A2: Generations used

referring to people who are obviously in different generations; it is calibrated around our most recent known family members. Thirty years is the usual interval that biologists use but there were exceptions.⁴² It is inevitable that some offspring in the larger families will stray across the line; these were placed in the generation where the majority of their siblings were found.

A.3 The Database

The bulk of records used in this analysis were supplied by Meath Heritage Centre. In all there were 525 total births listed for MacMahon in Co. Meath. This listing was compiled from all existing parish records in Meath up to 1900. A subset of this listing was entered into an Excel database for use in this study.

Following the cluster analysis (*Annex B2*), and the earlier work (*Ref. 1*), it was established that there were no known family links beyond the Moynalty/Kilbeg/Nobber cluster. Consequently, it was the data from these and some adjacent parishes, supplemented by Mormon data, which were used in the working database.

The data could be sorted by any of the column headings; the particular example shown in *Appendix 1 to Annex A* was sorted by Generation and by Family association. A number was assigned (in the order in which they were discovered) to obvious family groupings (*i.e.* where more than one child was attributed to the same parents). No numbers were assigned to singletons.

⁴² It was observed that in generations 9 & 10, the main ancestors were 30+ before they sired offspring; consequently these two generations were defined as 40 years.

Appendix 1 to Annex A

Table A3: Spreadsheet of McMahon Births in Meath, 1706-1900

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
3	1680	John*	Unknown	Unknown		Kilskyre	LDS
4	1706	Peter**	John +	Mary Reilly		Kilskyre	46
4	1708	Thomas**	John +	Mary Reilly		Kilskyre	46
5	1735	Michael***	Unknown	Unknown	Ardamagh	Nobber	
5	1735	Roger #	Unknown	Unknown		Monaghan?	
5	1740	Manus***	Unknown	Unknown	College	Nobber	
5	1750	Patrick***	Unknown	Unknown	Clocmacoo	Nobber	
6	1762	Bridget	Manus+	Anne Ward		Nobber	1
6	1764	Mary	Manus+	Anne Ward	College	Nobber	1
6	1769	Anne	Manus+	Anne Ward	College	Nobber	1
6	1765	James	Michael +	Catherine	Carolan	Nobber	2
6	1774	Margaret	Michael+	Catherine	Ardamagh	Nobber	2
6	1785	James	James +	Mary	Cruisetown	Nobber	3
6	1788	John	James +	Mary	Cruisetown	Nobber	3
6	1788	Terence	Patrick+	Mary Devine	Sarahstown	Clonmellon	50
6	1768	William#	Unknown	Unknown		Monaghan?	
6	1764	Catherine	Patrick +	Frances Plunkett	Nobber		
6	1774	Jane	Patrick+	Jane	Ardamagh	Nobber	
6	1781	Bridget	Patrick+	Anne Lynch		Nobber	
6	1781	James	Patrick+	Margaret	Clocmacoo	Nobber	
7	1811	Peter	Patrick+	Margaret Fairchild	Kells	4	
7	1813	Thomas	Patrick+	Margaret Fairchild	Kells	4	
7	1817	Bridget	Patrick+	Margaret Fairchild	Kells	4	
7	1797	James	Bernard+	Bridget Maron		Kildalkey	5
7	1799	Thomas	Bernard+	Bridget Maron		Kildalkey	5
7	1814	Catherine	Bernard+	Bridget Maron		Kildalkey	5
7	1817	Bernard	Bernard+	Bridget Maron		Kildalkey	5
7	1819	William	James+	Anne Cahil		Kilbeg	6
7	1798	Owen	Hugh +	Judith Reilly		Kilskyre	47
7	1800	Thomas	Hugh +	Judith Reilly		Kilskyre	47
7	1801	Peter	Hugh +	Judith Reilly		Kilskyre	47
7	1809	Hugh	John +	Bridget Gilshenan		Kilskyre	48
7	1815	Patrick	John +	Bridget Gilshenan		Kilskyre	48
7	1809	Anne	Thomas +	Bridget Boylan		Kilskyre	49

* Earliest recorded McMahon – not a birth record but deduced from marriage date of 1704. Married 1704 to Mary Reilly.

** Confirmation date 1709. Date of birth estimated from presumed parents 1704 marriage.

*** Existed but dates deduced.

Date of birth estimated from age fit model. Assumed our direct ancestor who possibly migrated from Monaghan.

The McMahons of Trohanny

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
7	1818	John	Thomas +	Bridget Boylan		Kilskyre	49
7	1790	Bridget	Patrick+	Mary Devine	Newtown	Clonmellon	50
7	1810	<i>Robert?</i>					
7	1795	Catherine	John+	Bridget Farrell		Clonmellon	
7	1797	James*	William+	Unknown	Moate	Kilbeg	
7	1799	Peter+	William+	Unknown	Moate	Kilbeg	
7	1802	Thomas+	William+	Unknown	Moate	Kilbeg	
7	1805	John+	William+	Unknown	Moate	Kilbeg	
7	1792	Anne	Bryan+	Mary		Nobber	
7	1814	Mary	Patrick+	Margaret	Clocmacoo	Nobber	
8	1829	Patrick	Patrick+	Margaret Fairchild		Kells	4
8	1830	Hugh	James+	Anne		Castletown Kilpatrick	6
8	1831	Margaret	James+	Anne		Castletown Kilpatrick	6
8	1823	John	James+	Rose Cooney		Kilbeg	6
8	1834	Peter	James+	Catherine Daly		Kilbeg	6
8	1829	Michael	James+	Catherine	Rath	Nobber	7
8	1843	Anne	James+	Catherine	Rath	Nobber	7
8	1848	Thomas	James+	Catherine Farrelly	Rath	Nobber	7
8	1836	Laurence	Edward+	Bridget Colerick		Moynalty	10
8	1842	Philip	Edward+	Bridget Colerick		Moynalty	10
8	1837	Hugh	James+	Catherine Garrigan		Moynalty	11
8	1840	Margaret	James+	Catherine Garrigan		Moynalty	11
8	1837	Laurence	James+	Catherine Haulton		Moynalty	12
8	1839	Bryan	James+	Catherine Haulton		Moynalty	12
8	1841	Margaret	James+	Catherine Haulton		Moynalty	12
8	1845	Thomas	James+	Catherine Haulton		Moynalty	12
8	1848	Rose	James+	Catherine Haulton		Moynalty	12
8	1843	Philip	Hugh+	Eleanor Clarke		Moynalty	13
8	1847	Margaret	Hugh+	Eleanor Clarke		Moynalty	13
8	1849	Mary	Hugh+	Eleanor Clarke	Carrigagh	Moynalty	13
8	1833	James	John+	Mary		Moynalty	14
8	1843	Roger	John+	Mary		Moynalty	14
8	1845	Thomas	John+	Mary		Moynalty	14
8	1836	Patrick	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
8	1842	Mary	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
8	1844	Bridget	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
8	1846	John	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
8	1832	Laurence	James +	Rose Clarke		Moynalty	18
8	1846	James	James+	Rose Clarke		Moynalty	18
8	1834	Owen	Joseph +	Bridget Gargin		Moynalty	21

* Date of birth estimated from age fit model; our direct ancestor.

+ Date of birth estimated from age fit model. Assumed brother of James.

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
8	1836	Joseph	Joseph +	Bridget Gargin		Moynalty	21
8	1840	Peter	Joseph +	Bridget Gargin		Moynalty	21
8	1832	Patrick	Michael +	Margaret Clinton		Moynalty	24
8	1834	John	Michael +	Margaret Clinton		Moynalty	24
8	1838	Michael	Michael +	Margaret Clinton		Moynalty	24
8	1837	Patrick	Michael +	Mary Colerick		Moynalty	25
8	1840	Elizabeth	Michael +	Mary Colerick		Moynalty	25
8	1843	Anne	Michael +	Catherine Tully		Moynalty	27
8	1843	James	Michael +	Catherine Tully		Moynalty	27
8	1847	Catherine	Michael +	Catherine Tully		Moynalty	27
8	1842	James	Oliver +	Frances Howe		Moynalty	28
8	1845	Margaret	Oliver +	Frances Howe		Moynalty	28
8	1842	Bridget	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
8	1843	Philip	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
8	1845	James	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
8	1846	Owen	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
8	1848	Catherine	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
8	1836	Philip	Patrick+	Bridget Williams		Moynalty	34
8	1839	Bridget	Patrick+	Bridget Williams		Moynalty	34
8	1841	Michael	Patrick+	Bridget Williams		Moynalty	34
6	1845	George	Patrick+	Bridget Williams		Moynalty	34
8	1846	Margaret	Patrick+	Bridget Williams		Moynalty	34
8	1848	John	Peter+	Mary Murtha		Moynalty	36
8	1838	Mary	Peter +	Catherine Reilly		Moynalty	37
8	1846	John	Peter +	Catherine Reilly		Moynalty	37
8	1849	Catherine	Peter +	Catherine Reilly		Moynalty	37
8	1830	Michael	Peter +	Catherine White		Moynalty	38
8	1833	Francis	Peter +	Catherine White		Moynalty	38
8	1821	William	John +	Bridget Gilshenan		Kilskyre	48
8	1830	Anne	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1832	John	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1834	Bridget	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1836	Patrick	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1840	Thomas	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1844	Christopher	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1846	Elizabeth	Thomas+	Elizabeth Barnwell	Archerstown	Clonmellon	51
8	1846	James	Daniel+	Bridget Anderson		Clonmellon	
8	1834	Christopher	James+	Mary Smyth	Gehanstown	Clonmellon	
8	1824	Michael	John+	Mary Callaghan	Clonmellon	Clonmellon	
8	1846	Thomas	Thomas+	Anne Reilly	Kinahan	Clonmellon	
8	1829	Bridget	Thomas+	Mary Flood		Kilbeg	

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

The McMahons of Trohanny

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
8	1834	Andrew	Robert+	Anne Smyth		Kilbeg	
8	1823	William	Thomas+	Catherine Farrelly		Kilskyre	
8	1831	Patrick	Patrick+	Catherine Kangley		Moynalty	
8	1832	Peter	John+	Mary Malone		Moynalty	
8	1832	Michael	Peter +	Anne Cleary		Moynalty	
8	1833	Hugh	Bernard+	Judith Mulligan		Moynalty	
8	1838	Edward	Bernard+	Bridget ill.		Moynalty	
8	1838	Michael	Michael +	Catherine Mathews		Moynalty	
8	1839	Patrick	William +	Rose Clarke		Moynalty	
8	1842	Patrick	John+	Anne Gauran		Moynalty	
8	1843	Owen	Owen +	Mary Shaffry		Moynalty	
8	1843	Philip	Philip +	Elizabeth		Moynalty	
8	1845	Bernard	John +	Anne Govern		Moynalty	
8	1824	Patrick	James+	Jane	Rath	Nobber	
9	1851	Catherine	James+	Catherine Farrelly	Rath	Nobber	7
9	1858	John	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb		Nobber	8
9	1860	Bridget	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Muff	Nobber	8
9	1862	Anne	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Muff	Nobber	8
9	1864	James	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Muff	Nobber	8
9	1866	Eugene	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Nobber	Nobber	8
9	1875	Elizabeth	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Nobber	Nobber	8
9	1878	Mary	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Nobber	Nobber	8
9	1884	Catherine	Michael+	Elizabeth Lamb	Nobber	Nobber	8
9	1895	Anne	Thomas+	Alice Burns	Nobber	Nobber	9
9	1898	Thomas	Thomas+	Alice Burns	Nobber	Nobber	9
9	1899	Patrick	Thomas+	Alice Burns	Nobber	Nobber	9
9	1850	Eleanor	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
9	1853	Robert	James+	Mary Reilly		Moynalty	15
9	1856	Patrick	John+	Mary Finegan		Moynalty	16
9	1859	Catherine	John+	Mary Finegan		Moynalty	16
9	1861	Michael	John+	Mary Finegan		Moynalty	16
9	1864	John	John+	Mary Finegan		Moynalty	16
9	1888	Anne	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
9	1889	Patrick	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
9	1892	Eleanor	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
9	1896	Catherine	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
9	1898	Eugene	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
9	1871	Mary Anne	Joseph +	Mary Clarke		Moynalty	19
9	1874	Michael	Joseph +	Mary Clarke		Moynalty	19
9	1875	Patrick	Joseph +	Mary Clarke		Moynalty	19
9	1878	James	Joseph +	Mary Clarke		Moynalty	19

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
9	1881	Patrick	Joseph +	Mary Clarke	Maio	Moynalty	19
9	1883	Catherine	Joseph +	Rose Daly	Cormeen	Moynalty	20
9	1885	Peter	Joseph +	Rose Daly	Leitrim	Moynalty	20
9	1887	Bernard	Joseph +	Rose Daly	Leitrim	Moynalty	20
9	1889	Anne	Joseph +	Rose Daly		Moynalty	20
9	1893	Mary Agnes	Joseph +	Rose Daly	Leitrim	Moynalty	20
9	1896	Joseph	Joseph +	Rose Daly	Leitrim	Moynalty	20
9	1865	Rose	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1866	Michael	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1867	John	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1870	Patrick	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1872	Margaret	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1874	Peter	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1876	Thomas	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick		Moynalty	22
9	1880	Mary	Joseph +	Bridget MacCormick	Maio	Moynalty	22
9	1865	John	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1866	James	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1868	Patrick	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1869	Mary	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1870	Hugh	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1872	Bridget	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1874	n/r	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1876	Patrick	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1877	Anne	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1879	Bernard	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1881	Laurence	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan	Carrigagh	Moynalty	23
9	1883	Rose	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1884	Joseph	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan	Carrigagh	Moynalty	23
9	1888	Philip	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan		Moynalty	23
9	1890	Eleanor	Laurence +	Bridget Dolan	Carrigagh	Moynalty	23
9	1889	Mary	Michael +	Elizabeth Cole		Moynalty	26
9	1891	John	Michael +	Elizabeth Cole		Moynalty	26
9	1894	Catherine	Michael +	Elizabeth Cole	Rosemount	Moynalty	26
9	1878	Michael	Owen +	Rose Inglesby		Moynalty	29
9	1881	James	Owen +	Rose Englishby	Maio	Moynalty	29
9	1884	Thomas	Owen +	Rose Englishby	Feagh	Moynalty	29
9	1886	Owen	Owen +	Rose Englishby		Moynalty	29
9	1889	Philip	Owen +	Rose Englishby		Moynalty	29
9	1891	Edward	Owen +	Rose Englishby	Feagh	Moynalty	29
9	1863	Mary	Owen +	Judith Tully		Moynalty	30
9	1865	Catherine	Owen +	Judith Tully		Moynalty	30

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
9	1869	Michael	Owen +	Judith Tully		Moynalty	30
9	1874	Mary	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty		Moynalty	32
9	1876	Owen	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty		Moynalty	32
9	1880	Bridget	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty		Moynalty	32
9	1882	Catherine	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty	Druminiskin	Moynalty	32
9	1886	Elizabeth	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty	Druminiskin	Moynalty	32
9	1889	Joseph	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty		Moynalty	32
9	1891	Rose	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty	Druminiskin	Moynalty	32
9	1893	Patrick	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty		Moynalty	32
9	1896	Anne	Patrick+	Catherine Geherty	Druminiskin	Moynalty	32
9	1850	Anne	Patrick+	Anne Reilly	Cormeen	Moynalty	33
9	1852	Eleanor	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
9	1854	Rose	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
9	1856	Patrick	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
9	1861	Mary	Patrick+	Anne Reilly		Moynalty	33
9	1889	Mary	Peter+	Mary Lynch	Maio	Moynalty	35
9	1891	Jane	Peter+	Mary Lynch		Moynalty	35
9	1893	William	Peter+	Mary Lynch	Maio	Moynalty	35
9	1895	Edward	Peter+	Mary Lynch	Maio	Moynalty	35
9	1898	Patrick	Peter+	Mary Lynch	Maio	Moynalty	35
9	1850	Margaret	Peter+	Mary Murthagh		Moynalty	36
9	1850	William	Peter +	Catherine Reilly	Rathbawn	Moynalty	37
9	1853	Thomas	Peter +	Catherine Reilly		Moynalty	37
9	1856	Philip	Peter +	Catherine Reilly		Moynalty	37
9	1852	Bridget	Peter +	Catherine White		Moynalty	38
9	1858	Mary	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1860	Eugene	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1863	Elizabeth	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1865	Michael	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1867	Bridget	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1870	Joesph	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1878	Philip	Philip +	Mary Halton		Moynalty	39
9	1865	Laurence	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1867	Mary Anne	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1870	Thomas	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1872	Charles	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1874	Mathew	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1875	Francesca	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1878	Michael	Richard +	Frances Farrelly		Moynalty	40
9	1881	Richard	Richard +	Frances Farrelly	Petersville	Moynalty	40
9	1888	James	Robert +	Margaret Sheridan		Moynalty	41

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

Generation	Year	Birth Name	Father	Mother	Townland	Parish	Family
9	1888	Mary	Robert +	Margaret Sheridan		Moynalty	41
9	1890	Thomas	Robert +	Margaret Sheridan		Moynalty	41
9	1892	Bryan	Robert +	Margaret Sheridan		Moynalty	41
9	1890	Mary Anne	Ross +	Anne Lynch	Cormeen	Moynalty	42
9	1891	Catherine	Ross +	Anne Lynch		Moynalty	42
9	1857	John	Thomas +	Mary Carolan		Moynalty	43
9	1859	Elizabeth	Thomas +	Mary Carolan		Moynalty	43
9	1861	Peter	Thomas +	Mary Carolan		Moynalty	43
9	1863	Sarah	Thomas +	Mary Carolan		Moynalty	43
9	1867	Thomas	Thomas +	Mary Carolan		Moynalty	43
9	1877	James	Thomas +	Catherine Lynch	Bawn	Moynalty	44
9	1879	n/r	Thomas +	Catherine Lynch		Moynalty	44
9	1851	Bridget	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1854	Mary	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1856	Jane	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1859	John	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1863	Peter	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1865	James	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1868	Patrick	William+	Jane Monaghan		Moynalty	45
9	1850	Catherine	James+	Mary Dowd	Gehanstown	Clonmellon	
9	1868	Mary	Peter+	Elizabeth Martin		Kilbeg	
9	1879	Patrick	ill.+	Rose Inglesby		Moynalty	
9	1880	John	Peter+	Bridget Daly		Moynalty	
9	1886	Thomas	Thomas +	Bridget Dolan	Carrigagh	Moynalty	
10	1900	Hugh	Thomas+	Alice Burns	Nobber	Nobber	9
10	1900	Philip	James+	Mary Reilly	Leitrim	Moynalty	17
10	1900	Julia	Patrick+	Mary Byrne	Nobber	Nobber	

Data sorted by generation and family association, known/presumed family members in bold

Table A3: Spreadsheet of McMahan Births in Meath, 1706-1900

B Models

B.1 Age Fit model

This is a small feasibility model in Excel (*Figure B1* page 79). Its purpose is to link known data with earlier generations (for whom there was no birth data) and deduce possible ranges for dates of birth and likely age ranges for when they produced sons. The only assumption necessary when running the model, and this only applied to generations 0 to 5, was that a generation was 32 years.⁴³

The aim of the model is to produce consistency and balance through the generations and avoid showing nonsense such as ancestors producing children at 12 years of age. This balance is achieved by varying the four inputs (shown in yellow) until the figures made sense.

The model starts with two inputs (can be varied) which are reasonable ages for G7 James fathering his youngest son, G8 Peter in 1834. The values shown in the particular snapshot in *Appendix 1 to Annex B* are 35 to 39. This produced the reasonable age range of 20-24 for when he fathered his eldest, G8 William. The output from the model at this level was that the average date of birth was 1797 for G7 James. All dates and ages are then related automatically backward, with ranges given to cover uncertainty.

The only date pertaining to G6 William was the Tithe record of 1828. The remaining two inputs were guesstimates of his age in 1828. Different values were tried until the model balanced. All inputs were varied until the fathering ranges for G6 William and his son James were in fecund years. For inputs of 55 to 65 years of age in 1828, the output was that the average date of birth of 1768 for G6 William (*Appendix 1 to Annex B*). Roger was treated in two ways, either belonging to G6 or G5. If in G6, the model predicts he would have been between 40-50 in 1813, the date of the tomb inscription, which may have been the year of his death. If, as seems more

⁴³ This value was not critical, it simply gave the best fit of the first five generations to that shown in *Figure B 1*.

plausible, he was in G5 (and probably the father of G6 William), the model indicates that his approximate date of birth was 1736 and he would have been between 72 and 82 years old in 1813, presumably the year of his death.

The final use made of the model was to match candidate Rogers (from Monaghan) to the earlier generations. The Roger from Magheraclone matched our G5 Roger well and could have been the same person.

The Roger (from Dartrey), who was recorded in the Hearth Rolls in 1665 and presumably would have been born *circa* 1615-1635, would fit our G1 band (*Ch 4.4*).

Alternatively, the Roger from Enagh in Dartrey would have been born *circa* 1690, and would fit our G3 band. (His nephew, Hugh *circa* 1704?, would fit our G4 band). Given the above assumptions, and regardless of which of the two Dartrey Rogers we select, the model of the known data and suggested ancestors fit together very nicely and are supported by the family burials in Robertstown over the generations.

B.2 Cluster Analysis

The birth records for MacMahon in Meath were supplied by Meath Heritage Centre (MHC) and consisted of 525 entries sorted by parish and occasionally by townland. All of the dates were the earliest records to survive in each parish up to 1900. Parishes for which there were birth records are shown in *Table B1*. Parishes not listed had no records.

- Cluster 1 Could represent a migratory route into the surviving Athboy/Kells cluster.
- Cluster 2 Moynalty/Nobber - the largest with possible migration through Kilbeg/Castletown-Kilpatrick.
- Cluster 3 Large and persistent – could be part of even larger one in Louth/Monaghan.
- Cluster 4 Navan.
- Cluster 5 St Mary's Drogheda and surrounding parts of Louth.
- Cluster 6 Not a real cluster as most are transient or small in number and probably represents a migratory route going further south.

Examining the Moynalty/Nobber cluster further (Cluster 2), produced the distribution shown in *Table B2*. The data was sorted by family groupings of McMahons found in each of the parishes for each generation. The results showed that the majority of families were to be found in Moynalty for generations 8 and 9 (1820-1889) and very few were found in the adjacent parishes.

Because of the missing data, it wasn't possible to establish if the Moynalty population had developed from previous generations (by subdivision of tenancies for example) or had suddenly appeared there as a consequence of opening up the land to new tenancies. During this period there would likely not have been much free movement of people, but rather it would have been largely dictated by landlords and their agents. This could account for the rather skewed data shown in *Table B2*.

Parish	Earliest Record	Latest Record	Number of Births	Status*	Cluster**
Athboy	1796	1900	20		1
Beaupark	1822	1862	2	T	4
Castletown-Kilpatrick	1830	1831	2	T	2
Clonmellon	1788	1850	15	T	1
Donore	1877		1	T	4
Drumconrath	1811	1900	66		3
Dunboyne	1804	1839	12	T	6
Dunderry	1838	1841	2	T	1
Dunsany	1838		1	T	6
Kells	1792	1900	65		1
Kilbeg	1819	1868	6	T	2
Kildalkey	1785	1877	21	T	1
Kilmessan	1742	1761	7	T	6
Kilskyre	1798	1821	8	T	1
Monalvy	1817		1	T	6
Moyalty	1830	1900	191		2
Navan	1782	1899	23		4
Nobber	1764	1899	30		2
Oldcastle	1789	1847	23	T	1
Rathmolyon	1881	1886	4		6
Rathoath	1861	1897	9		6
St Mary's Drog	1836	1894	15		5
Summerhill	1859		1	T	6
Total			525		

Table B1: Distribution by Townland of Birth Records

- * If no record after 1870 (1 Gen below 1900) then cluster classified as transient (T) and usually extinct by 1900.
 ** Possible clusters around the densest populations.

Parish	Generation	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kilskyre		1			3	(1)	
Nobber			1	4		1+(1)	2+(1)
Castletown						1	
Kilbeg					1	1+(1)	(1)
Moyalty						17+(11)	21+(3)

= Generations for which no data was available. () = Singletons.

Table B2: Distribution of cluster 2 Family groupings by Parish and generation

Appendix 1 to Annex B

GENERATION

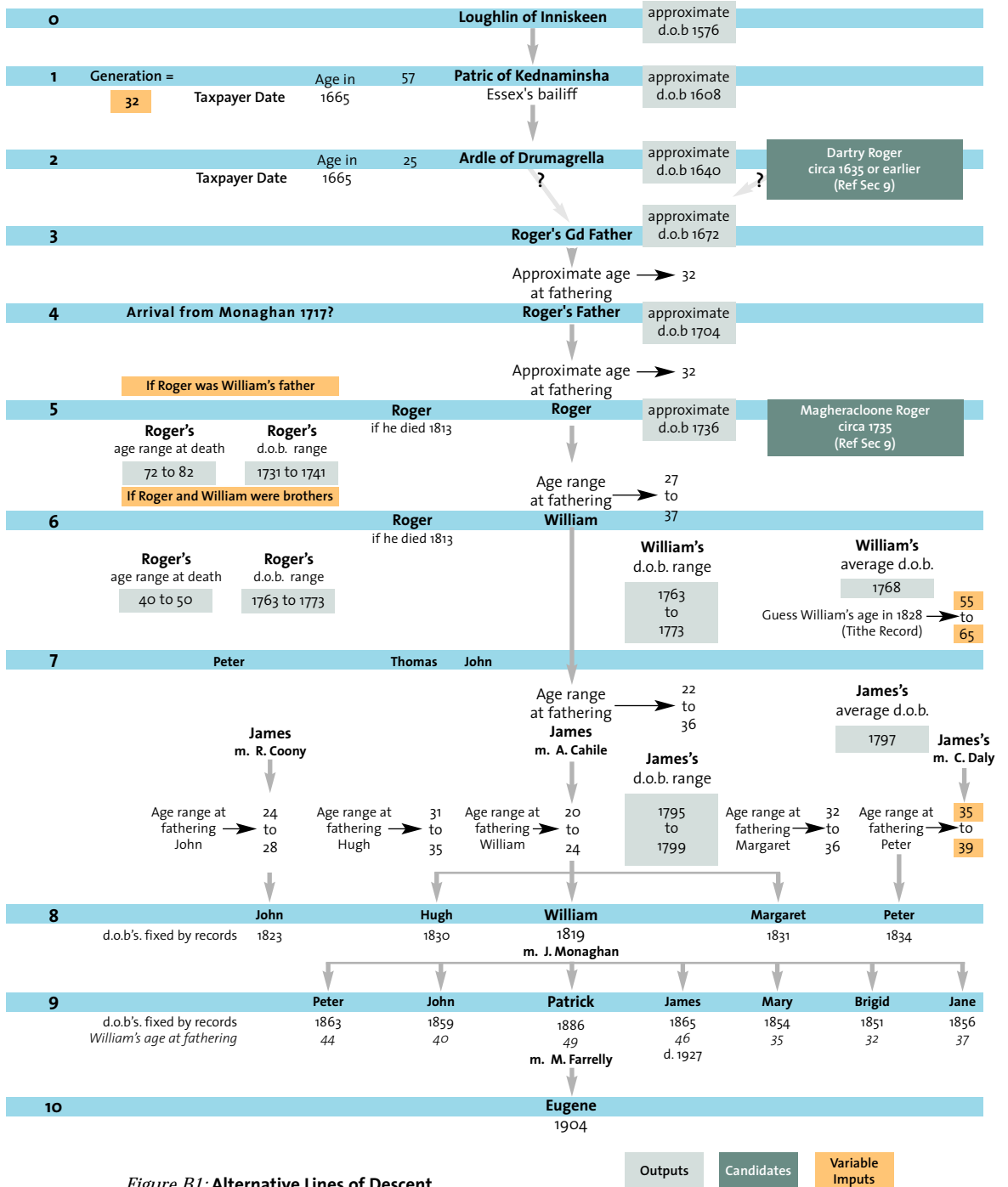


Figure B1: Alternative Lines of Descent.

C Robertstown

Robertstown townland is in the Parish of Kilbeg, 5 Km to the west of Nobber Village and bordered by the townlands of Moate, Ballintillin and Cruicetown. Today the most notable feature is the ruined fortified house at Robertstown Crossroads (*Figure 3, Chapter 4.2, page 15*) and from the family's point of view, the nearby cemetery.



Figure C1: Robertstown Castle

C.1 Castle

The fortified house is known as Robertstown Castle, grid reference (N53.80128° W6.80881°). This early-17th century house was three storeys high with attics. There were projecting turrets carried on corbels at the SW and NE corners. They are very similar to those found on Scottish castles. They have very fine small keyhole-shaped defensive loops. Another wing was added at a later date. The ground floor was a series of vaulted rooms and the first floor was divided into three rooms. This may have belonged to either the Plunkett or the Barnewall families.

C.2 Cemetery

Robertstown Cemetery is situated at grid reference (N53.80338° W6.80591°), about 300 metres north of Robertstown Castle; it is about 2-3 km from the townlands of Moate, Ballintillan and Ardmaghbreague. It is a small cemetery of about two acres and is used

to this day by several families. It is reasonable to assume that in the 17th century it was associated with the Castle, then possibly occupied by the Barnwall and/or Plunkett families at different periods. Now that the vegetation has been cut back, it is possible to see the outline of a small ruined chapel which could have been the Castle's Private Chapel. The McMahon plots are inside this ruin at its north end. The slab tombs (*Figure C2* and *Figure C3*) could have been vaults inside the chapel (the caretaker said they were connected underground!).

The family must have had influence at some stage in order to grab these prime locations. I, (*PM*) remember seeing the two slab graves when the Grandparents (G9) were buried (1952 and '53); one was the Roger one, and I am sure the other one was an even older Plunkett stone (they were nearly at ground level, horizontal and legible then but are no longer).

Given G5 Roger's claim to the site on behalf of his posterity, we must assume that he himself and at least some of his G6 sons were buried somewhere in the immediate vicinity.

I, (*PM*) was certainly given



Figure C2: Barnwall/1813 Roger's Slab Tomb shown on the left and G11 Peter, to the right.



Figure C3: Plunkett Tomb to the right of G11 Peter



Figure C4: G9 & G10 Trohanny McMahons to the left and G10 Carlanstown McMahons to the right. (Slab tombs are to right of path).



Figure C5: This is the only visual evidence of repossession of the Barnwall tomb. Above, the inscriptions on the Barnwall/McMahon Slab Tomb. 'Rog.' is just discernable on the right hand side (above right) and '1813' is legible (inset) on the stone.

the impression (in 1951-52) that the plots contained the remains of earlier McMahon generations - old plots were certainly re-used for the grandparents' burials (I remember old bones coming up when they were opening the graves). I also seem to recall being shown (American) G9 James's plot.

There was enough space in the McMahon plot to allow about 100 years (2-3 generations) before re-use of the plots. It was a very selective burial place shared with a number of other local families.⁴⁴ As for the McMahons, only descendents of G7 James (and possibly James himself), i.e G8 William (documented) and later generations, used it. I don't recall ever hearing whether or not Rathbawn Joe or G8 Tommy's descendents were buried there.



Figure C6: Stone to left of G9 McMahons with 'ELIZ (?) aged 29'

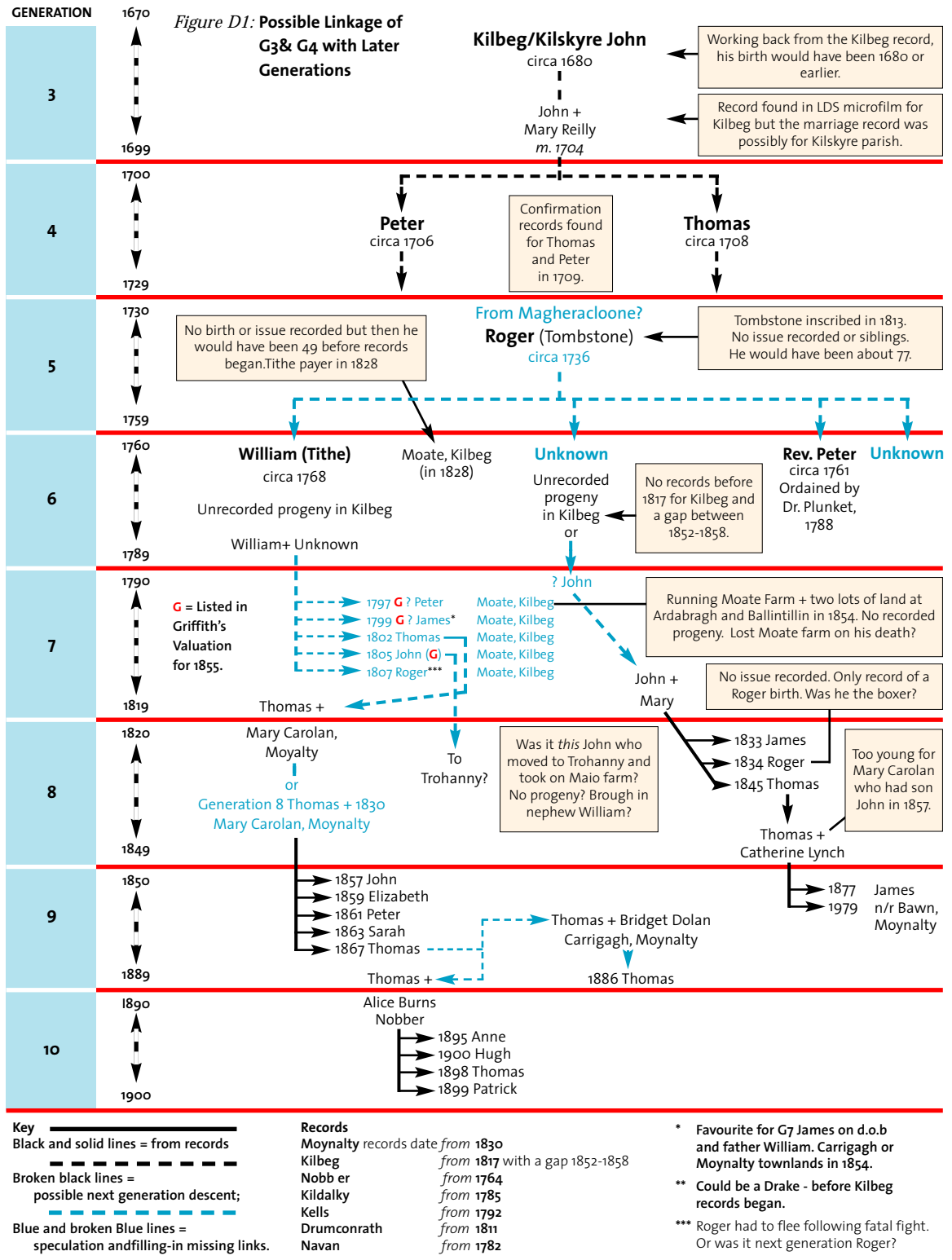
Figure C6 shows a very old headstone adjacent to where G10 Jennie is buried. It is very badly encrusted and the most I (*PM*) could make out was possibly 'Elizabeth ...aged 29'. Assuming this is a McMahon grave, then there were three possible contenders in G9 (none in G10 or G11). In descending order of relationship, these were:

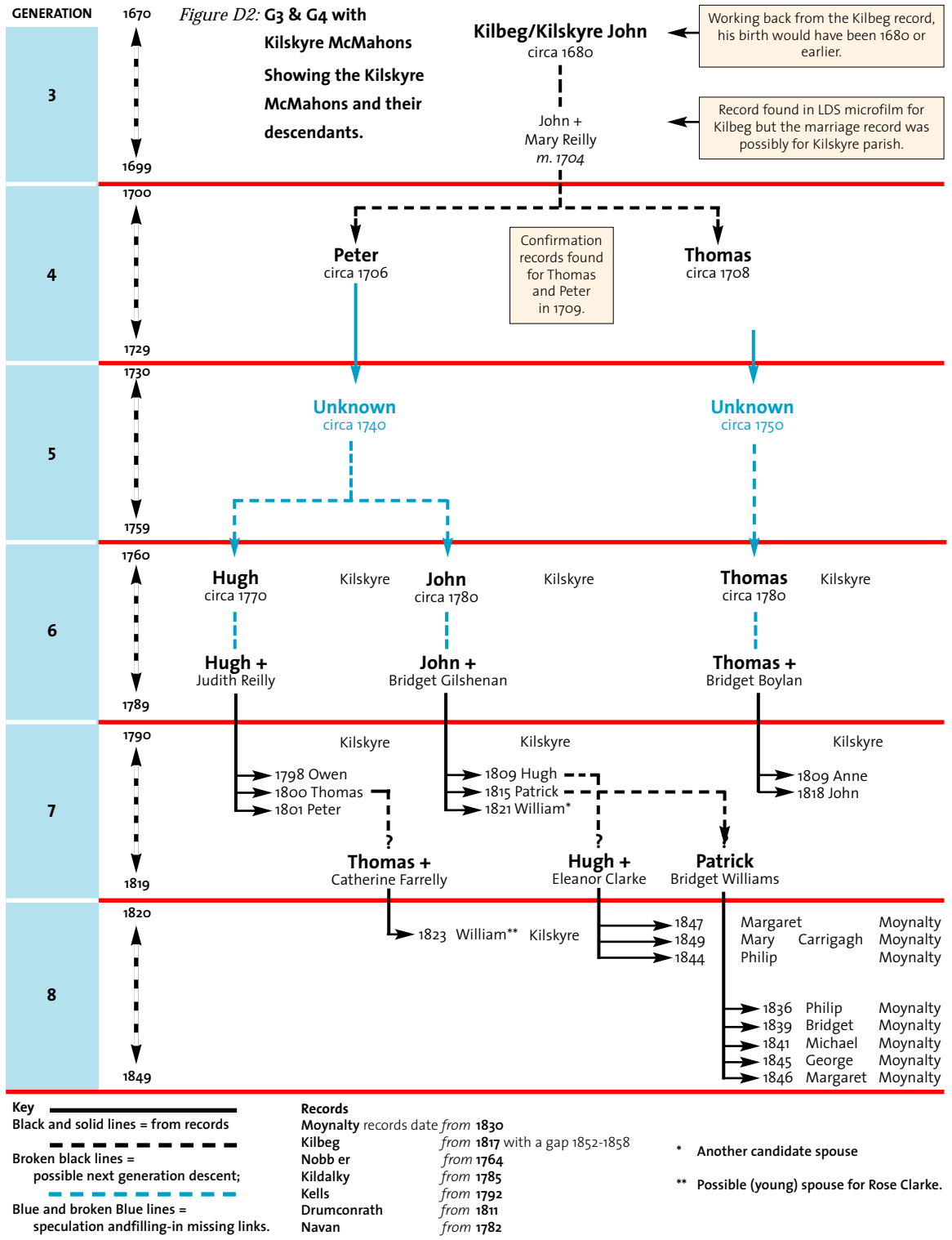
- 1 Elizabeth born to Thomas and Mary (*nee* Carolan) in 1859 in Moynalty,
- 2 Elizabeth born to Michael and Elizabeth (*nee* Lamb) in 1875 in Nobber,
- 3 Elizabeth born to Patrick and Catherine (*nee* Geherty) in 1886 in Druminiskin, Moynalty.

⁴⁴ It is certainly in use today by many families, judging by the number of modern headstones.

D G3 and Later McMahons in Kilbeg/Kilskyre

Mapping of known and proposed interrelationships for the Kilbeg/Kilskyre McMahons and later generations are shown in *Figure D1*. This shows Thomas McMahon/Mary Carolan producing five children. G8 Thomas could have been a brother, or even a G7 uncle, of G8 William.





E G₃ and Later McMahons in Nobber/Moynalty

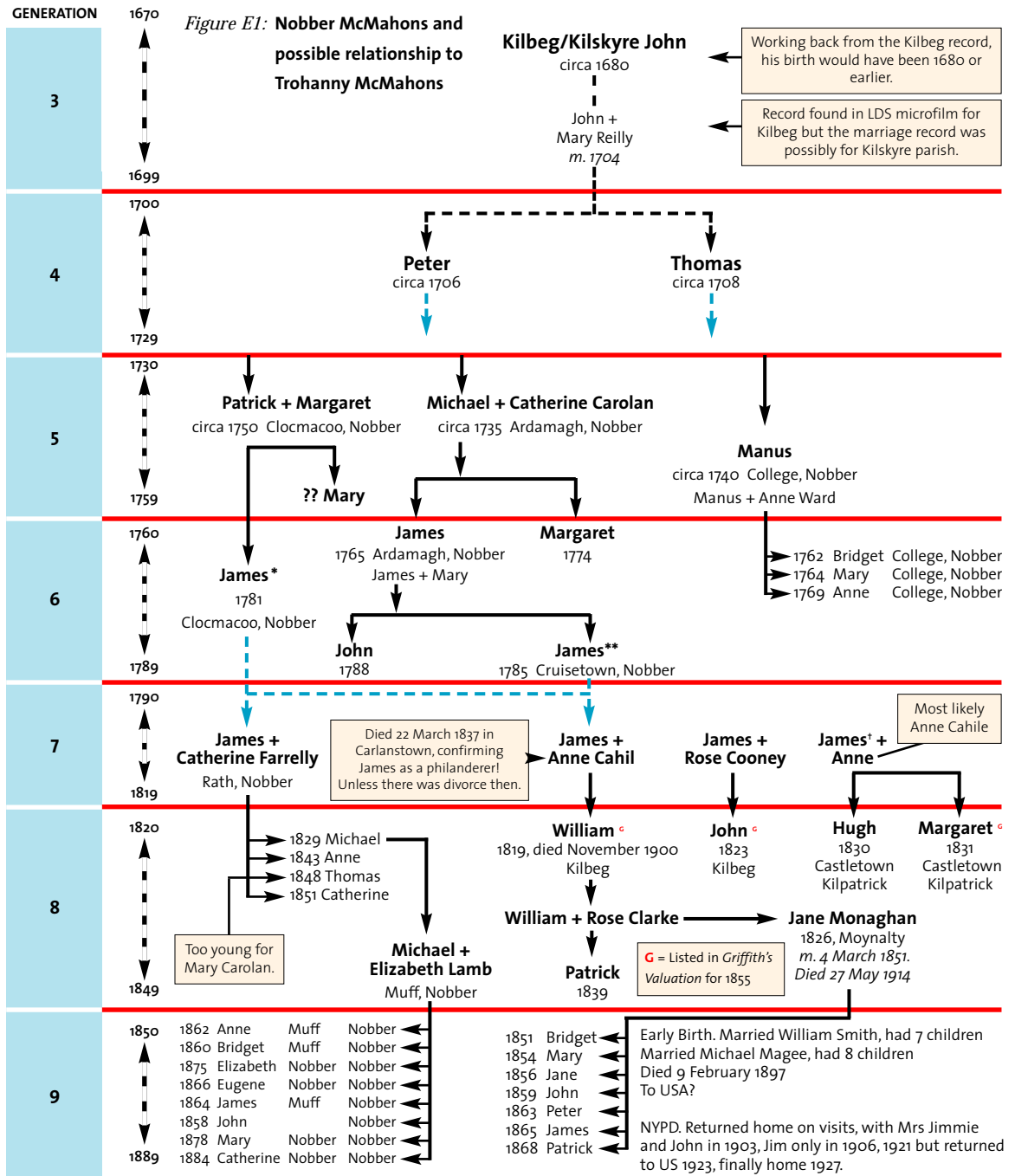
E.1 G₃ McMahons (Nobber/Trohanny)
Mapping of the early generations of the Nobber and Trohanny McMahons is shown in *Figure E1*.

E.2 McMahons in Moynalty
The Farrell Estate Records for 1824 are shown in *Figure E2*; these were copied from *Ref. 14*. These records firmly place the Rev Peter McMahon in Rathbawn in 1824. They also place a John McMahon there who could have been a brother of Peter, or else an unrelated McMahon:

In 1824 the new landlord was in possession of an estate that contained 2654 statute acres, 1638 Irish. The following is a list of his tenants at that time together with their acreage in Irish measure. It must be remembered that most, if not all, of these will have had undertenants of their own. It is also worth noting that the previous owner, Lord Farnham, continued to hold the lease of the quarry in Moynalty townland.

Philip Smith, Lands in Moynalty with mill and other small holdings	98	2	35
Reilly's of Reillystown	42	3	20
John Rubbery, what is now Lower Clooney	9	1	20
Thomas Barnes (Junior), Land at Salford	29	0	15
Lord Farnham, Quarry in Moynalty	3	1	38
Patrick Tinnelly, House and lands in Moynalty, at the back of present Orchard House	14	2	19
Patrick Tinnelly, Land in Walterstown where McKennas now are (This may be a different Pat Tinnelly)	14	1	25
Reps. of William Barrett, Land on which Moynalty House and farmyard are now built	7	1	3
Patrick Keaneey, Land in Moynalty	25	1	8
Land in Rathbawn around site of old Chapel	56	2	20
Part of Walterstown	37	0	15
Robert Kellett, Part of Walterstown, including Walterstown House	150	1	15
Rev. William Kellett, The Glebe, and other lands in Shancaman	54	2	10
Reps. of Dr. Britt, Lands in the part of Shancaman between Walterstown and Moynalty	66	2	0
William Bryan (ancestor of Mr. Billy O'Brien), Lands in Shancaman	110	0	16
John Maxwell (of Maxwell's Cross)	119	1	27
Reps. of William Smith, Lower end of Shancaman	76	0	0
Fr. P. McMahon, Lands in Rathbawn	20	0	0
John McMahan, Rathbawn	37	3	34
Patrick Giveney, Rathbawn	13	3	0
Charles Fitzsimons, Rathbawn	8	1	35
Felix Farley, Rathbawn	5	1	25
Matthew Kearney, Rathbawn (including large house) and Shancaman	108	0	00
Hugh Fox, Shancaman (Red Bog)	17	2	30
John Carlen, Shancaman	1	0	34
Thomas Kearney, Part of Walterstown	45	2	0
James Smith, Part of Walterstown (ancestors of present Paddy and Pezey)	20	1	39
Joseph Walsh, Part of Walterstown facing Bawn and Curraghtown	45	1	34
Andrew Cahill, Walterstown	14	3	32
Charles Reilly, Bawn (Reillys of Kilbeg)	144	3	6
Rathmasoe	239	0	15

Figure E2: Tenants of the Moynalty Farrell Estate 1824



Key
 Black and solid lines = from records
 Broken black lines = possible next generation descent;
 Blue and broken Blue lines = speculation and filling-in missing links.

Records
 Moynalty records date from 1830
 Kilbeg from 1817 with a gap 1852-1858
 Nobber from 1764
 Kildalky from 1785
 Kells from 1792
 Drumconrath from 1811
 Navan from 1782

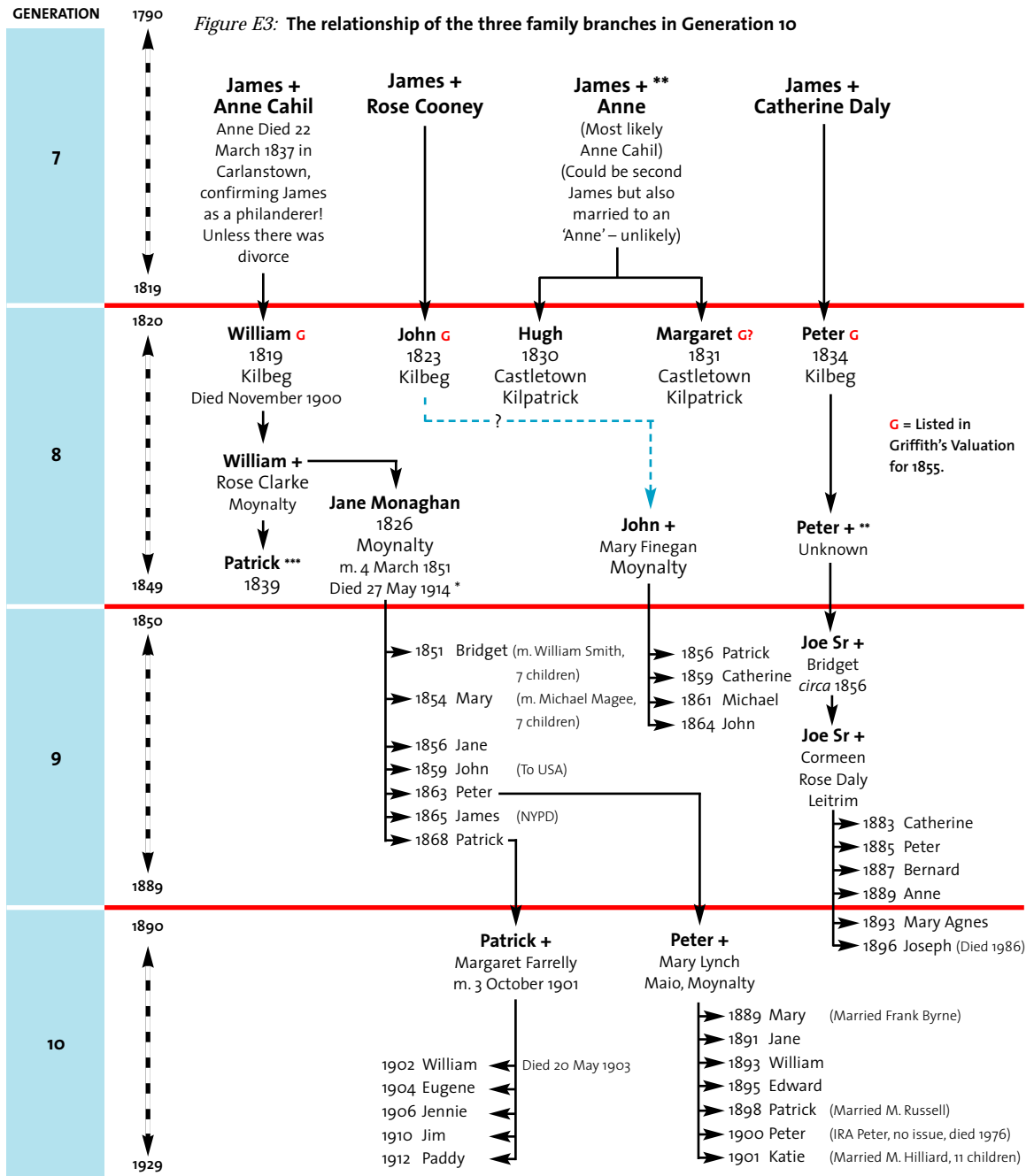
* Equal probability for G5 James
 ** Equally probable candidate with 1781 James for our G5 James and also with a speculative one circa 1799. If this is our G5 James, where was he between 1805-1818? King's shilling perhaps!
 † Could be a second James but also married to an Anne!! Unlikely but possible.

E.3

G7 McMahons and Later

The main players in generations 7 and 8 were James, Peter, John, Thomas and their descendants, as shown in *Figure E3*

Figure E3: The relationship of the three family branches in Generation 10



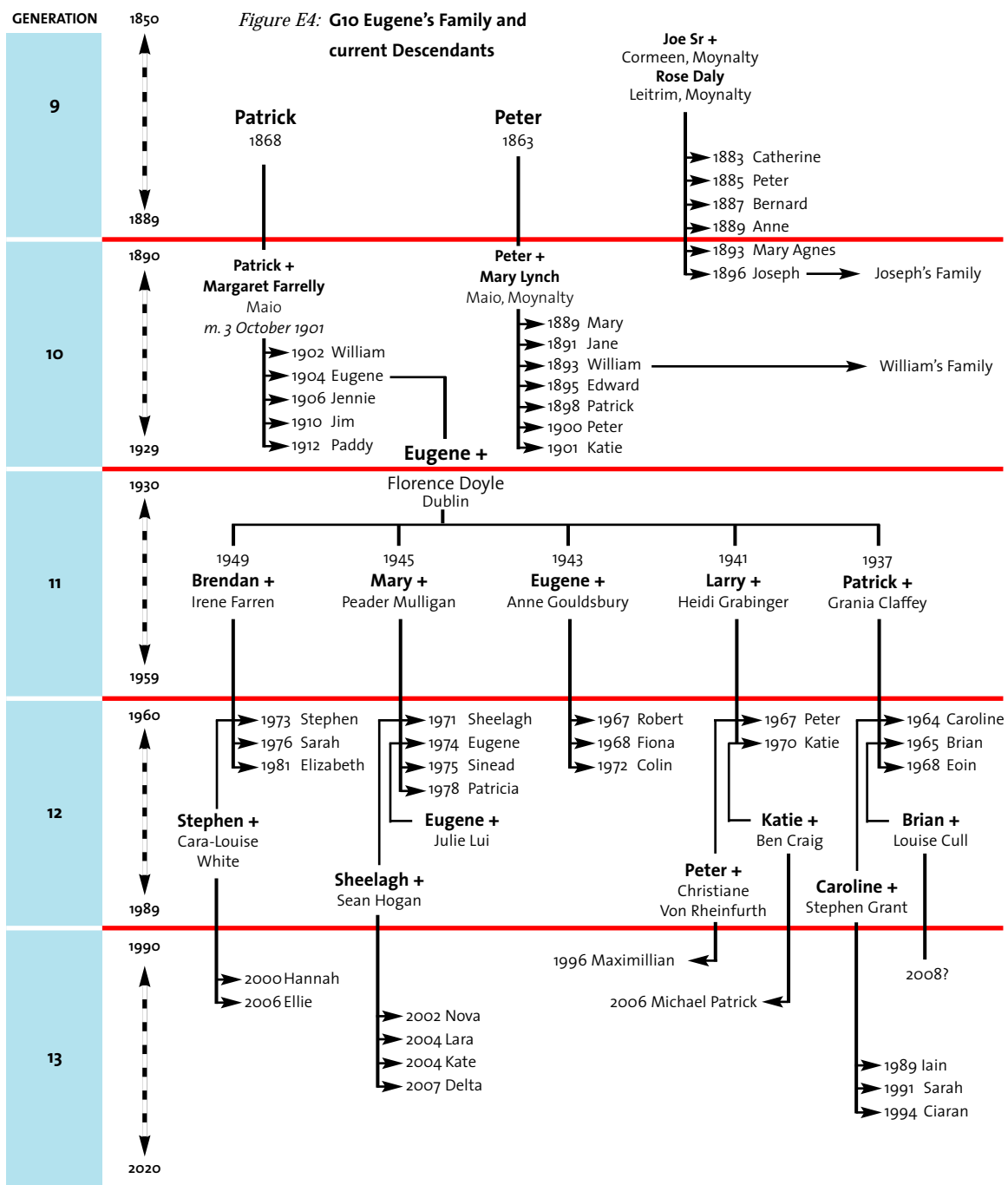
* Grandmother's notebook

** In Trohanny in 1854, then to Upper Leitrim where Joe Sr born (?1852-1858) and eventually to Rathbawn

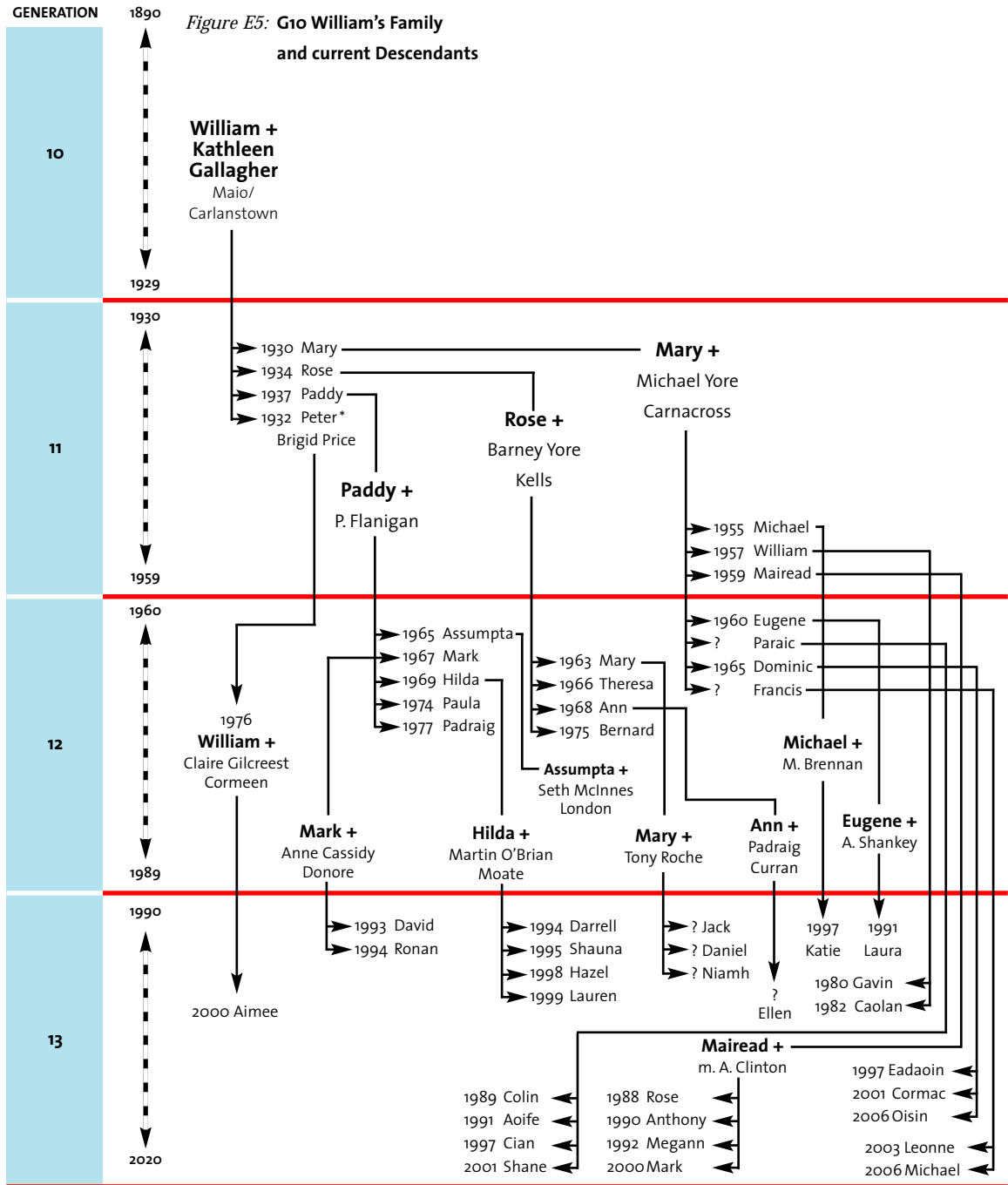
*** An early indiscretion perhaps? Died before next Patrick? Or another William?

**** NYPD. Returned home on visits, with Mrs Jimmie and John in 1903, Jim only in 1906, 1921 but returned to US 1923,

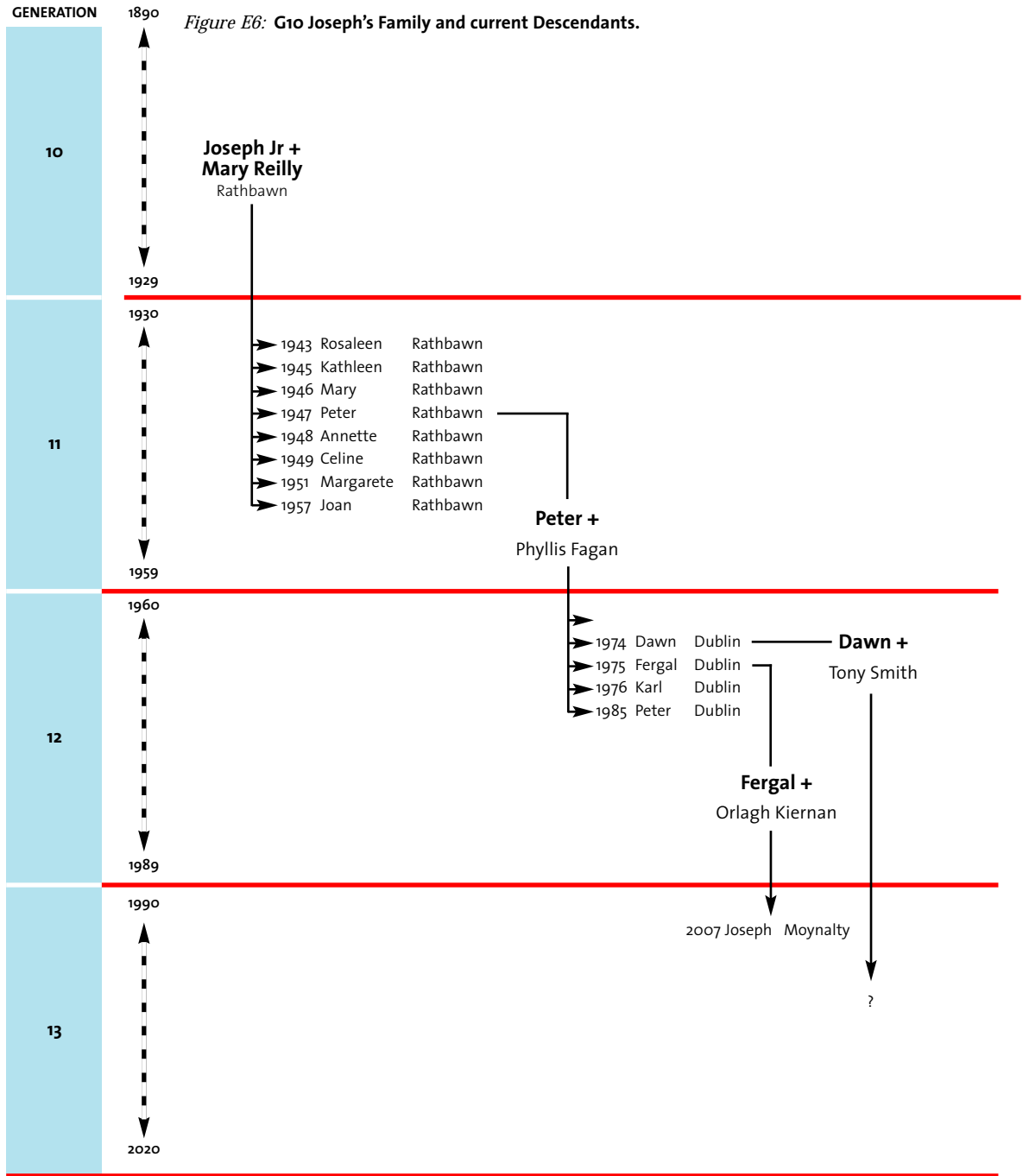
The Descendants of Generation 10, Eugene's Family, are shown in *Figure E4*



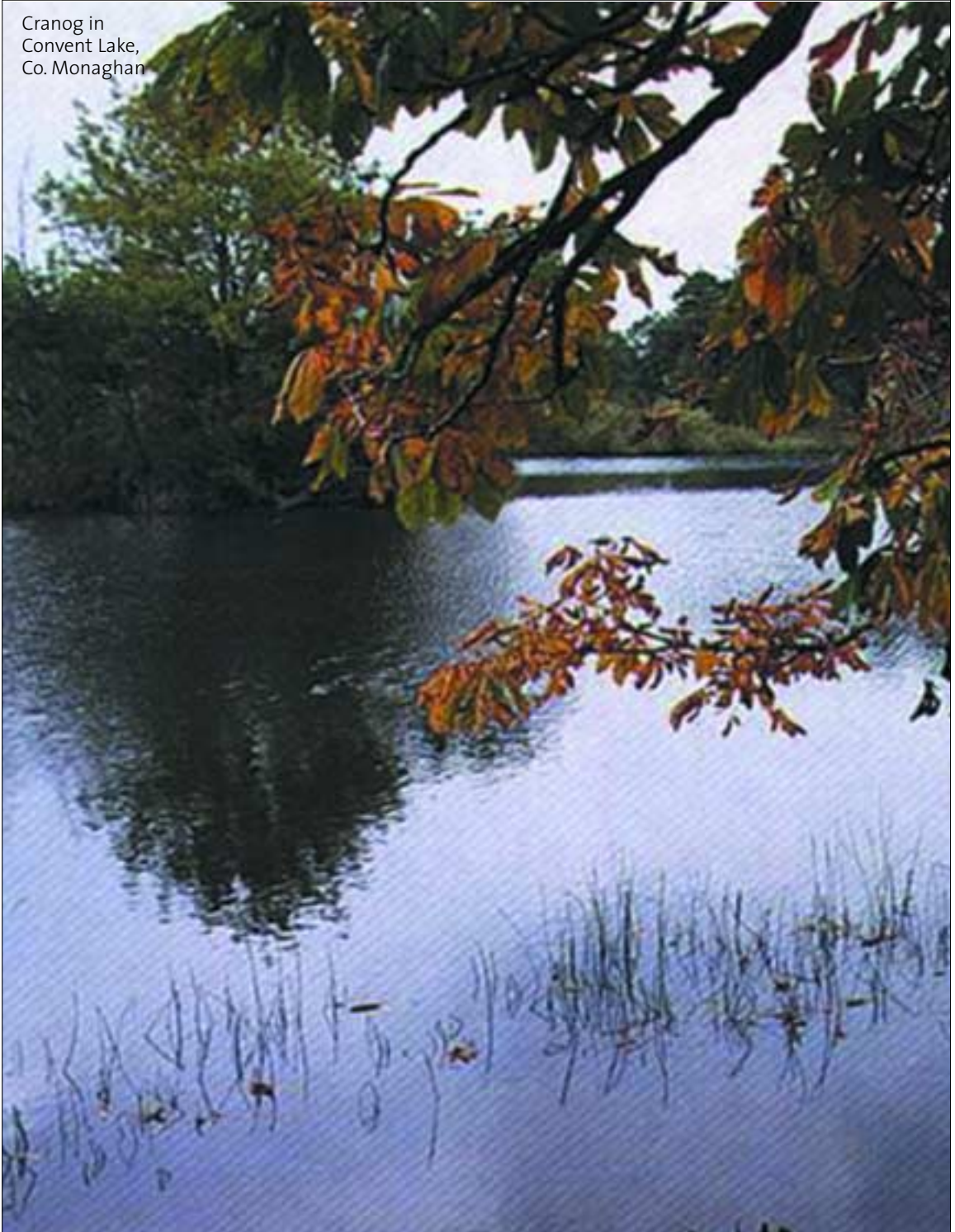
The Descendants of Generation 10, William's Family, are shown in *Figure E5*



The Descendants of Generation 10, Joseph's Family, are shown in *Figure E6*



Cranog in
Convent Lake,
Co. Monaghan



F Griffith's Valuation

Griffith's Valuation records 24 male McMahon entries, mainly in the Parish of Moynalty, not all of whom were thought to be interrelated. There were six McMahons present in Trohanny Townland *circa* 1854, namely John, John Jr, Laurence, Margaret, Peter, William. These were most likely distributed in at least two but possibly three home-steads. We can exclude Laurence as a blood relation, as he belonged to the Murchan branch, i.e. the Monaghan/Clare mixture that settled in the area in 1780⁴⁵ (*Ref. 11*).

The 18 townlands (containing McMahons) shown in *Table F1* are plotted on an Ordnance Survey Map (*Figure F1*). This is an amazing distribution by any standard, especially having 11 of the 18 in such a small area of Moynalty Parish (most are within half a days walk of each other). As few of these McMahon families were related to each other, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that they were intentionally concentrated in this way, according to surname, by the landlord.

It is possible that the William living in Kells could have been G6 William, who would have been 86 years old (there is a history of longevity in the family). He would have handed on Moate Farm to his son Peter long before that and may well have moved into Kells in his declining years.

It boggles belief that 10 of the 16 leaseholders would finish up in an area approximately 5x2 Km by 'natural' means (*Figure F1*). This contention is supported by:

- ◆ the skewed family distribution in Table B2;
- ◆ the firm family conviction that most surrounding McMahons were unrelated to us.

⁴⁵ The original McMahon in this branch arrived from Co. Clare into the Moynalty area c. 1780. He seems to have had four sons, Thomas (Bishop), Philip (Rev.), Patrick and Laurence. Laurence fathered Richard McMahon, whose children were Laurence (1865), Mary Anne (1867), Thomas (1870), Charles (1872), Matthew (1874), Francesca (1875), Michael (1878) and Richard (1881). A member of this branch later married a MacMahon from Monaghan, who arrived in North Meath in 1888. This latter family settled in Kilmainhamwood, where a Eugene McMahon still resides (his sister is Mary Murchan in Moynalty).



Figure F1: The Distribution of McMahan holdings from the Griffith's Index.

McMahons	Map No	In Townland	Parish	Comment
John	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	The Uncle –brother of G7 James?
John Jr	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	Son of G7 James & Rose Cooney?
Laurence	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	The teacher?
Margaret	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	William's sister?
Peter	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	William's half brother (Daly) 21yrs
William	1	Trohanny	Moynalty	G Grandfather (mother Cahile) 35yrs
Peter	2	Rathbane	Moynalty	Unrelated Peter
Sally	2	Rathbane	Moynalty	Wife (Maxwell?)
Patrick	3	Ughtyneill	Moynalty	
Patrick	4	Lr. Leitrim	Moynalty	
John	4	Lr. Leitrim	Moynalty	
Ellen	4	Lr. Leitrim	Moynalty	
Patrick	5	Feagh	Moynalty	
Michael	5	Feagh	Moynalty	
Patrick	6	Cormeen	Moynalty	There are two Cormeens in the parish!
Laurence	7	Quigelagh	Moynalty	
Laurence	8	Coolnahince	Moynalty	
Joseph	9	Druminiskin	Moynalty	
James	10	Moynalty	Moynalty	Could this be G7 James?
James	11	Carrigagh	Moynalty	Or this? Approx-57 yrs
Peter	12	Ballintillan	Kilbeg	Son of G6 William
Peter	13	Moate	Kilbeg	Son of G6 William
No McMahons in Robertstown etc. nor Barnwalls or Drakes			Kilbeg	
No McMahons, or Drakes for that matter!		Drakestown		
Peter		Back Street	Kells	2 Barnwalls in Kells
William		Church Lane	Kells	G6 William <i>circa</i> 86 yrs??
Thomas	14	Carrickleck	Enniskeen	Our missing Tommy ?
Rose	14	Carrickleck	Enniskeen	Wife or Sister?
Patrick	15	Carnacully	Kilmainham	Only one left here
John	16	Losset	Moybolgue	
John McMohon	17	Tirachorka	Moybolgue	
Peter	18	Ardmaghbreague	Nober	Son of G6 William

6 Peters, 5 Johns, 5 Patricks, 3 Laurences, 2 James, 2 Williams, 1 Joseph, 1 Thomas, 1 Michael

Table F1: Index of McMahons in Meath – by Griffith's Valuation 1854

Map Reference	Townland occupier	Lessors	Description	A-R-P	Rateable Value
3	Ballintillin Peter McMahon	Marquis of Headfort	Land	11-1-39	£5-15-0
5a	Moate Peter McMahon	Marquis of Headfort	House, offices, land	37-2-14	£25-10-0
23a	Ardmagh Breague	Marquis of Headfort	Herds, house, lands	22-1-28	£12-0-0

Table F2: McMahon Land Holdings in Parish of Kilbeg, 1854

F.1 Kilbeg Land Holdings: 1854

Griffith's Valuation also specifically records lands leased by a Peter McMahon in the parish of Kilbeg (*Table F2*). This we have deduced was G7 Peter.

F.2 McMahon Land Holdings in Parish of Moynalty: 1854

All land holdings by related and unrelated McMahons in Moynalty are shown in Table F3. Sub-tenancies are also shown. If the main McMahons in Trohanny (ie. John, John Jr, William and Peter) were all 'family,' then they had over 87 statute acres⁴⁶ between them. John had the largest area and the best house! (what must the others have been like?). William may have been taken in by John (in about 1834) but by 1854 he was 35 years old, married with two daughters and had acquired a tenancy of his own for another 22 acres but no house (unless he had sub-let it to Betty Bowens). The John Jr could have been William's half brother (age 32), with similar acreage to William but with a poor house. The Peter could have been William's half brother (age 20) with the smallest holding (14 acres), transiting through on his way to Lr Leitrim, or possibly unrelated.

Margaret is another mystery. She had a house and enough land to make a living from but there is no record of a Margaret McMahon who could have been a widow. The only qualifier would have been William's sister Margaret (born in Castletown Kilpatrick) but aged only 23 and presumably, in that day and age, unlikely to be granted a tenancy. If that was the case, then in all probability she was unrelated.

The Rathbane family is another mystery. It looks as if Sally (who could well have been a widow (and possibly nee Maxwell), sub-let a very poor quality cabin and garden to her son Peter (unless of course she had thrown out her husband Peter into the equivalent of the garden shed!); alternatively, she could have sub-let to the recently arrived Peter (born 1834), who may have been related.

⁴⁶ As far as we can tell, Griffith's army surveyors measured in statute acres whereas landlords used Irish Plantation Measure (1 Irish acre = 1.62 statute acres approx)

Occupier McMahon	Townland	Lessors	Description	A-R-P area	Value land	Value Bldg
James	Carrigagh	Thomas Bligh	House,offices, land	21-2-0	£9-5-0	£0-15-0
Laurence	Coolnahinch	Anne Henzill	House,offices, land	39-1-22	£25-5-0	£1-15-0
Laurence	Coolnahinch	Anne Henzill	Land	10-4-0	£7-10-0	
Patrick	Cormeen	Kemp Sturgeon	House,offices, land	47-0-34	£23-10	£5-0-0
Joseph	Druminiskin	Terence Geary	House			£0-5-0
Michael	Feagh	Thomas Bligh	House,offices, land	11-3-7	£6-0-0	£0-10-0
Patrick	Feagh	Thomas Bligh	House,offices, land	4-0-34	£2-0-0	£0-15-0
Patrick	Lr. Leitrim	Kemp Sturgeon	Land	8-1-31	£4-0-0	
Patrick	Lr. Leitrim	Kemp Sturgeon	House,offices, land	9-3-13	£5-10-0	£0-10-0
John	Lr. Leitrim	Patk McMahon	House			£0-5-0
Ellen ,	Lr. Leitrim	John King	House			£0-7-0
James	Moynalty	Rev Kellett	House, garden	0-0-30	£0-5-0	£0-10-0
Laurence	Quigelagh	Anne Henzill	Herd,house, land	8-2-21	£11-11-0	£0-9-0
Sally	Rathbane	J Farrell	House,offices, land	13-0-2	£8-10-0	£1-0-0
Peter	Rathbane	Sally McMahon	House, offices, garden	0-0-12	£0-2-0	£0-10-0
Peter	Rathbane	Sally McMahon	Land	3-0-8	£2-5-0	£0-5-0
William	Trohanny	John Radcliff	Land	20-3-33	£10-10-0	
William	Trohanny	John Radcliff	Land and bog	1-1-37	£0-10-0	
Betty BOWENS	Trohanny	William McMahon	House			£0-10-0
Vacant	Trohanny	William McMahon	House,garden	0-0-8	£0-1-0	£0-8-0
Peter	Trohanny	John Radcliff	House,offices, land	13-3-38	£7-0-0	£0-14-0
Peter	Trohanny	John Radcliff	Bog	1-0-4	£0-1-0	
John Jr	Trohanny	John Radcliff	House,offices, land	22-2-8	£11-10-0	£0-15-0
Laurence	Trohanny	John Radcliff	Land	5-2-7	£3-0-0	
Laurence	Trohanny	John Radcliff	Bog	3-1-16	£0-10-0	
Margaret	Trohanny	John Radcliff	House,offices, land	19-1-4	£11-2-0	£0-18-0
Vacant	Trohanny	Margaret McMahon	House			£0-8-0
Jane Rea	Trohanny	Margaret McMahon	House			£0-7-0
John	Trohanny	John Radcliff	House,offices, land	30-0-3	£13-5-0	£1-5-0
Patrick	Ughtyneill	Ed Smith	House,offices, land	33-1-11	£17-10-0	£1-0-0

Table F3: McMahon Land Holdings in Moynalty Parish, 1854

G Kilbeg Parish Records

Table G1 lists the only baptismal records found for Kilbeg Parish. These Parish records were kept in the Moynalty Parish church, where, courtesy of the Parish Priest, I (*EM*) viewed them *circa* 1976. Perhaps the Kilbeg church predated that in Moynalty. Certainly, Moynalty did not appear to have any records of its own for the early 19th century. In any event, when the Kilbeg Parish church ceased to function and its functions were assumed by the Moynalty Parish church, the records were transferred over. These were the only McMahon entries during the first half of the 19th century.

Record	Date	1 st Party	2 nd Party	Sponsors
Marriage	December 7, 1820?	Peter McMahon	Ejay Fairs	James Weldon & O.Rogers
Death	March 7, 1834	Anne McMahon	Carlanstown	
Baptisms & Parents	February 28, 1819	Wm.McMahon Born to:	James McMahon & Anne Cahile	John Lynch & Ann Murphy
Baptisms & Parents	February 18, 1822	John McMahon	James McMahon & Rose Cooney	Matthew Lynch & Ann Reilly
Baptisms & Parents	April 11, 1834	Peter McMahon	James McMahon & Catherine Daly	John Dolan & Mary Daly
Baptisms & Parents	November 1, 1834	Andrew McMahon	Robert McMahon & Ann Smyth	D.McGlaughlin & Ellen Boyce
Baptisms & Parents	October 29, 1830	Bridget McMahon	Tom McMahon & Mary Flood	James Dolan & Betty Dolan ⁴⁷
	August 24, 1842	Unknown Morris		Rose McMahon
Records Gap	1852-58			

Table G1: Entries found for the Parish of Kilbeg

⁴⁷ The reappearance of the Dolan name strongly indicates that James & Tom were brothers.

H Trohanny and Maio Farm

H.1 'Uncle' John

This John was unmarried (in 1854, at any rate) and took in William as if he were a son.⁴⁸ Given Fr. Paddy's take on him, this 'Uncle' John may not have been a true McMahon (possibly adopted or a maternal uncle, or illegitimate?) nor of the true faith (*circa* 1805). Regardless, he was treated as a brother of William's father, G7 James. He may well have been the John McMahon who later married Mary and fathered Roger in 1843. Uncle John would have been 29 and William 15 in 1834, which would lend credence to the oral history.

As there is no evidence of G7 James ever holding a tenancy, but there is evidence of him producing a son (Peter) with Catherine Daly in 1834, it is entirely possible that he had abandoned his other partners (Anne and Rose) and sons (William and John Jr.) by this stage.

Twenty years later, Griffith's Valuation in 1854 (*Table F1*) showed a John, John Jr, Laurence, Margaret, Peter and William residing in Trohanny. Laurence was probably the (unrelated) school teacher living in Maio school. John and William were as described above. John Jr was likely William's half brother (mother Cooney), now also seeking a livelihood. Margaret could well have been William's sister (from Castletown) and Peter his other half brother (mother Daly). Their approximate ages would have been, John (49), John Jr (32), Margaret (23), Peter (20) and William (35). They resided on four separate farm holdings. By this time, William was married to Jane Monaghan and had two children (Brigid and Mary). Peter moved at some stage after this to Lr Leitrim and eventually to Rathbane.

⁴⁸ Possibly in 1834, *i.e.* 3 yrs before the 'night of the big wind' destroyed the farmhouse in the field above the current location.

H.2 Great Grandfather William

Working backwards from the death of our Great-Grandfather William on 26th November, 1900 was no easy task. Apart from the various documents amassed by his daughter-in-law, Margaret Farrelly, and stored in a tin box up the chimney of the farmhouse in Trohanny, official records are few and far between.

H.3 The Long Case Clock

One of the more interesting acquisitions of Great Grandfather William's was that of a long case or grandfather clock. This, I (*PM*) was told was bought from a passing trader for £8 in 1868 (*Ref. 13*). It does seem strange that such a luxurious item should be purchased to go into a fairly spartan homestead (see *Table H2* for today's equivalent purchase cost).

Perhaps William was flush with money at this time or it was purchased to honour the birth of his youngest son Patrick in that year. Of course in practical terms, there was no other way for a household to have reliable timekeeping in the 19th century, other than by a long case pendulum clock such as this. As long as it was wound regularly once a week, kept in a fairly regular environment (as the farm kitchen was with a fire kept going day and night), it would keep time to +/- a minute/week, as it does to this day. Given their isolation, time keeping was important, especially for Sunday church attendance.

Given the mechanism⁴⁹ and the clockmaker's name,⁵⁰ this clock was probably about 150 years old by the time it came into Great Grandfather William's possession. His Grandson (Fr Paddy) recalled it as being "dark and very ornate." The clock was thought to have fallen into disrepair by the early 20th century, and the case had decayed so badly that it had to be destroyed. A new case was built by Fr Paddy and the movement was repaired by our Father, Eugene. The clock continued to run well for the rest of the 20th century. I (*PM*) acquired the clock following G10 Jim's death in 2000. The only parts of the original case to have been incorporated by Fr Paddy into his case was the door and back boards. The door was made of mahogany and its



Figure H1 & H2: Left: **The clock in 2000 showing the stripped door**, and Right: **The rebuilt clock today.**

⁴⁹ This was an early 'count-wheel' movement that was in use from late 17th century.

⁵⁰ John Crampton of Dublin who was a Warden of The Irish Goldsmiths Company, 1716-1719.

design was typical of the period. In 2001, I (*PM*) decided to rebuild a new case from scratch and restore the strike mechanism. The design I adopted was that of a 'country style' long case clock based around the original door, the 13 inch square dial and a height to allow it to run for 8 days. Proportions were derived using the 'Golden Rule' (5:8 ratio) and the case was built in Utile (*Figure H2*).

H.4 Documentation

Surviving family documents included:

- ◆ Indenture of Agreement between John Fay of Mayoe and William McMahon of Mayoe for the purchase of a half-year tenancy (for 16 pounds sterling) of 'the Bull Field' and the two bottom meadows adjoining same and also the field next the house, dated 1877 (when William was aged 58) (*Appendix 1* to *Annex H*, page 106). From *Appendix 2* to *Annex H*, I (*PM*) estimate this to be about 12 acres; the rent was considerably higher than what Radcliff had charged in the 1850s (21 shillings an acre then, *Ref. 14*).
- ◆ Half-yearly farm rental receipts dated 1882-3, 1892, 1902 and 1906 issued by Landlord George E. Radcliff (example at *Figure L1*, page 123).
- ◆ Poor Rate receipt to William McMahon, dated 1900.
- ◆ The grocery receipt (page 108) issued (by a Farrelly relative) to William's sons Patrick and Peter, for their father's wake and hearse to Robertstown (their brothers, James and John, were away in the U.S.).
- ◆ Legally witnessed deed (*Figure 11*, page 38, *Appendix 4* to *Annex H*, page 109) transferring land-holding rights from Jane to her son, Patrick (our grandfather), dated 1901, and witnessed by Joseph McMahon (Patrick's half-cousin, G9 Joseph) and Peter Monaghan (Patrick's uncle?).
- ◆ Post Office savings receipt for 20 pounds, made out to Margaret McMahon (paternal grandmother)
- ◆ Irish Land Commission receipt (page 124) for purchase of lands in Trohanny from George E. Radcliff, dated 1929. This purchase was spread over 40 years.

H.5 Statement of Probate

In the Mormon archives, we were able to find the statement of probate issued, following the death of our Great-Grandfather William (G8) in 1900. It listed the value of his worldly assets as 41 pounds, 15 shillings sterling. It also listed his widow, Jane (Monaghan), as the inheritor. The wording of the will is reproduced on page 110.

The amount left by William would have been regarded as a tidy sum and was probably made up of a valuation of goods, chattels, farm stock and cash but no property. We have attempted to equate £41 to today's values in *Table H2*; it would certainly have been enough for either a year's rental of the farm or eight good Wakes!

H.6 Oral History

Oral history also has it that the Maio farmhouse was preceded by another farmhouse in the field above it and close to the road, but that this was destroyed on the 'night of the big wind,' presumably in 1837. As there is a strong family history of this event, it is probable that the family was present in Trohanny by that date. Great-Grandfather William would have been 18 at the time, and was thought to have been sent with his younger brother John from Moate to help their uncle John run the farm at Trohanny. Much difficulty attached to the fact that the thirteen separate McMahon families in the locality were not all necessarily related. Indeed, the family located behind the Maio farm and across the river was a totally separate family line (originating from the marriage of a Monaghan McMahon and a Clare McMahon in the late 18th century, (*Ref 11*). Descendents of this family line at the time of writing include Eugene McMahon (aged 77) of Kilmainhamwood and his sister, Mary Murchan (aged 70 +) of Moynalty.

More recently, Fr Paddy informed us of two further unrelated McMahon families that were in very close proximity to the Maio Farm, *i.e.* across the road from the Caffreys.

H.7 Pre-famine in Moynalty

One of the main farming problems in pre-famine Ireland was the subdivision of land holdings into ridiculously small holdings, such that a family could not rise above the poverty level nor even survive on the farm produce alone. Matters were not helped by the attitudes of the landlords' agents, who often viewed the poorest tenants as being responsible for their own predicament (*Annex Q.3*).

Naturally, these tenants were the most vulnerable when famine struck. In most cases the men (and often the women too) had to go labouring for others. A good example of this is shown in *Figure H3* where only 6 to 10 tenants would be able to scratch a living from the land alone, and this would only be in good years. Having 51 acres made Widow Lynch the richest tenant followed by Martin with 31 acres. Having much below 20 acres for survival from farming alone would be borderline.

AN ESTATE IN HERMITAGE, BALLYMACAIN AND LIGHTYNELL.

In July 1821 a gentleman by the name of Anthony Clarke had his estate in these townlands surveyed and mapped by a surveyor called Patrick Plunkett. The following is the information the survey gives.

The surname of Screebogas hill is called "Finn's Children". Tullypote is the possession of Rev. Moore Smith, Petersville belongs to Martin Tucker, Carrickspingon to the Provost of Trinity College, and Screebogas to Thomas Bligh.

The following is a list of Clarke's tenants in the three townlands with the area allotted in acres, rods and perches.

Lightynell		Hermitage	
Widow Lynch	51 2 25	Widow Lynch	1 0 23
T. Smith and L. Martin	3 0 7	Terence Clarke	1 3 14
Laurence Martin	31 0 0	Terence Clarke (gardens)	0 0 26
Thomas Smith	17 3 25	Joseph Clarke	8 2 30
Sarah Galvey	1 3 13	Philip Fitzpatrick	3 1 30
		Michael Fox	7 1 14
Ballymacale		Joseph Clarke	3 0 5
Richard and Brian Brady	18 2 8	Patrick Fitzsimons	2 0 10
James Farrell	7 0 30	Miles Tennyell	5 1 24
Christopher Grogan	9 2 35	Widow Gaynor	7 2 27
Owen Grogan		Patrick Fitzsimons	3 2 20
Philip Clarke	4 0 32	James Reilly	8 2 30
John Gollagher	4 3 30	James Reilly	5 0 15
Richard Brady	0 2 30	Patrick Mallon	4 3 26
John Smith	23 3 32	Patrick Mallon	4 1 35
Thomas Smith	12 1 8	Philip Clarke	12 0 9
Edward Rogers	13 2 10	Edward Flood	25 2 4
Christopher Grogan	1 2 10	James Tobin	9 0 14
Richard Brady	3 2 4	Patrick Barrett	31 2 15
Philip Clarke	1 2 4	Widow Plunkett	1 0 0

Figure H3: Estate Tenancies 1821

H.8 The Famine

Like everywhere else in Ireland, the population of Moynalty declined after The Famine (1845-47). Strangely, there was no family history of hardship during this period; with mixed farming, it would have been tough without the potato crop but not fatal to those with decent tenancies (however, the Kells workhouse and fever sheds were full by late 1846). The population statistics (*Table H1*) show that this decline was not evenly spread over the townlands, with Trohanny showing no decline by 1851. Most of the population drop occurred in the following 10 years, presumably due to emigration rather than mortality.

Our ancestors moved into the townland at a time when it was densely populated (1834?). As a consequence, competition for tenancies would have been keen and the farms small.

With the subsequent drop in population after The Famine, it would have become easier to rent extra acreage in the latter part of the 19th century. However, the family oral history has it that (G8) William did not acquire the Maio farm in Trohanny directly but rather through his uncle John.

While still a young man in his twenties, G8 William would have seen first-hand some of the deprivation and hardship caused by The Great Famine, even in relatively prosperous Meath. This was followed by a precipitous decline in the local population, and this must have been seriously disruptive to what would have been a close-knit farming community. The aftermath of the Famine probably accounted for William marrying at 32 years of age, a little later than the norm.

H.9 Family Feud

Firstly, I (*EM*) got the story about a family feud confirmed by G10 Joseph. This one involved the McMahons of Rathbane and the Carolans of Maxwell's Cross. Apparently, the landlord was about to give the tenancy to the McMahons, when this blow-in, Carolan, put the word out that McMahon was untrustworthy and would never pay the rent. As a result, the landlord gave the tenancy to Carolan, but only found out afterwards that he had been lied to. The two families never spoke for a generation, even though they lived quite close to each other. When I asked G.11 Peter McMahon of Rathbane about a Generation 8 Tommy McMahon⁵¹ having later married into the Carolans, he had never heard about him (although he was aware of the bad blood story). He had, however, heard of G.9 Sarah McMahon (who was the daughter of this Tommy). Sarah had four siblings: John, Elizabeth, Peter and Tommy. We can only speculate as to whether or not these five McMahons were related to us, *i.e.* first cousins of G9 Patrick and G9 Joseph, respectively.

⁵¹ Either a brother of Big Peter of Rathbane and William of Maio, or else a son (b.1845) of James McMahon (and Catherine Haulton) who was unrelated.

Population Change In Moynalty During The Famine Years

Townland	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Ballair	43	30	30	27	20	23	15
Ballinclieve	169	99	84	76	69	42	51
Ballymacain	191	118	67	77	80	58	60
Billywood	243	153	156	127	79	99	56
Carrickspringen	577	398	280	237	206	189	158
Coolnahinch	197	124	84	79	63	60	47
Cormeen	271	132	113	110	106	98	76
Carnaville	178	109	94	97	88	80	72
Dirralagh	169	67	67	70	56	47	50
Donore	194	109	90	79	69	61	86
Feagh	426	222	169	160	175	133	118
Fertagh	104	65	52	60	66	43	42
Leitrim Upper	177	120	94	74	79	70	64
Leitrim Lower	103	97	53	52	69	52	50
Moynalty Village	135	92	173	146	105	54	165
Newcastle	307	166	164	154	123	113	116
Quigelagh	130	108	88	87	84	84	68
Rathbawn	85	65	61	57	46	42	30
Rathstephen	41	32	29	21	6	7	4
Shancaman	115	115	80	60	65	59	46
Skearke	94	94	93	102	102	86	74
Trohanny	250	250	118	117	112	104	96

Combining all the townlands of Moynalty, the overall population fell by around 2500 between 1841 and 1851.

Table H1: Famine statistics for the Parish of Moynalty

Equivalent £ sterling in 2005 calculated by:

Year	Rent per acre	RPI	GDP Deflator	Average Earnings
1854	£1-1-0	£65	£98	£637
Half yearly Rents				
1863	£5-10-1	-	£497	£3,157
1877	£16(Fay)	-	£1,459	£7,414
1901	£16-6-0	-	£14,86	£6,272
1901	£20-12-0	-	£1,879	£7,927
G8 William's Will				
1901	£41-15-0	-	-	£16,252
Long case Clock				
1868	£8	-	£705	£4,244
G8 William's Wake				
1901	£5-8-0	£390	£492	£2,078
Hire of Hearse				
1901	£1-5-0	£90	£113	£481

Table H2: Estimated Costs in Today's Currency (£ sterling)

H.10 Economics of the Time

Throughout this study, various amounts of money are quoted for rent etc. In order to get a feel for what these amounts equate to in today's currency, we have used a currency converter (*Ref 16*) to get today's values.

Some of the £sterling amounts used in the report and their equivalents are shown in *Table H2*. It is difficult to establish which computation method is appropriate for each item but it would seem average earnings might be best. The definitions of the methods used in *Ref 16* are shown below.

- ◆ The **retail price index** (RPI) shows the cost of goods and services purchased by a typical household in one period relative to a base period. It is best used when the monetary amount is the cost or price of a simple product, such as a loaf of bread or a pair of shoes.
- ◆ The **GDP deflator** is an index of all prices in the economy. It is a good measure for complex products, such as personal computers, or commodities purchased by businesses, such as machinery.
- ◆ **Average earnings** are a logical measure for computing relative value of wages, salaries, or other income or wealth.

Appendix 1 to Annex H

An Indenture of Agreement
made and entered into between John Fay of
Wayce in the County of Meath Tenant of
the one part and William McMahon of
Wayce in said County of the other part
whereas in consideration of Renewal of
Agreement - and payment of sixteen Pounds
Sterl by the said William McMahon to the
said John Fay, he the said William
McMahon is to have hold and enjoy the
Field known as the Bull field and the two
Bottom Meadows adjoining same also
the Field next the House as grazing
ground or Pasture the terms of this
Agreement is Tenancy to continue from
the present time - until the first day
of November One thousand eight hundred
and seventy eight

Dated the 18th September
1877

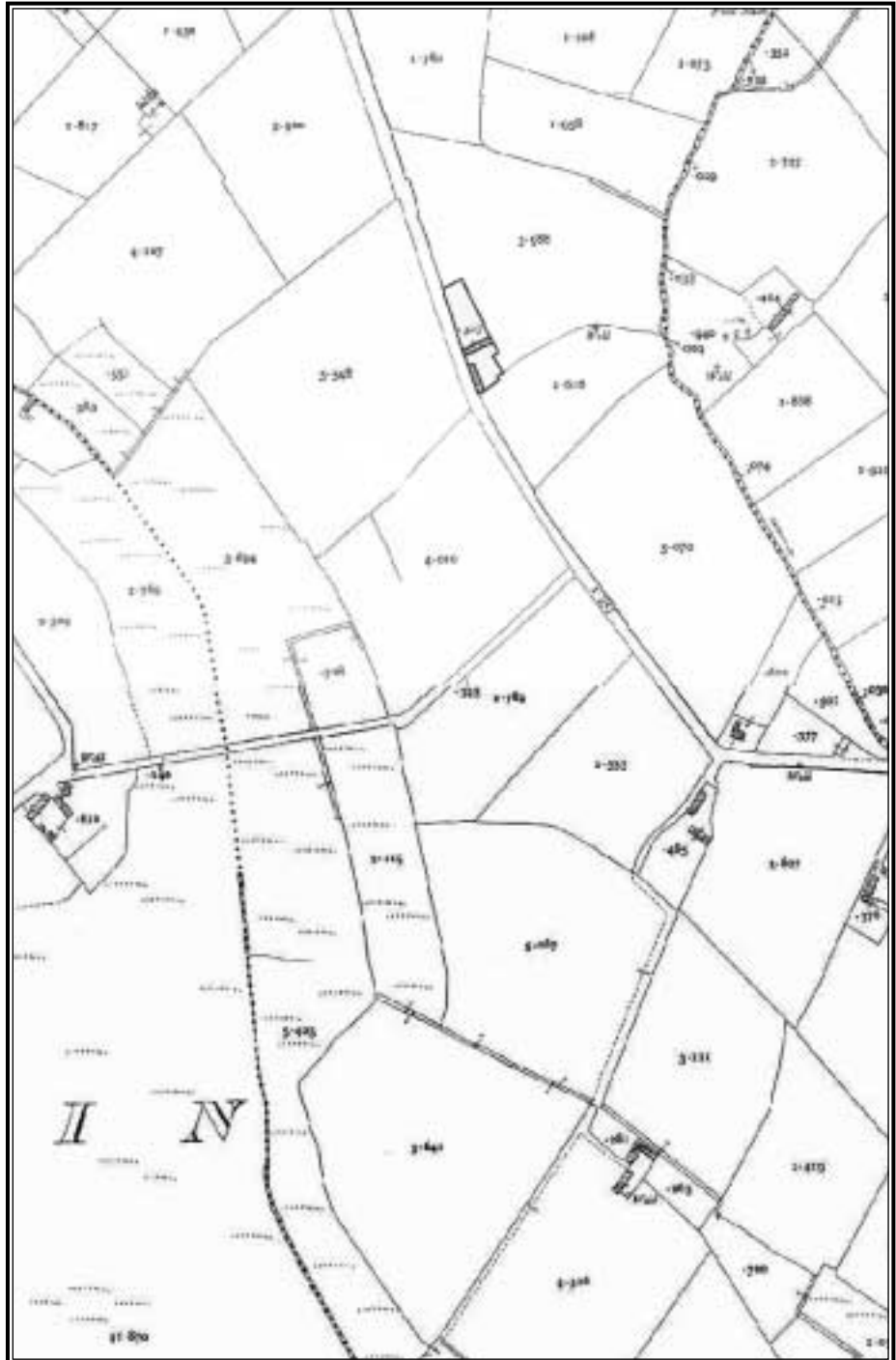
Witness present } William McMahon

1877 Leasehold Agreement between William McMahon & John Fay

Appendix 2 to Annex H

Map of Maio farm in the mid-19th century

The Farmstead is on the east side of the road about a third of the way down from the top of the map. In the early 20th century, 'Johnny the Rock' McMahon lived to the east of the farm. Following the road south, the first exit west is the bog road leading to Carolans. Continuing south and on the east side of the road is the Caffrey cottage and opposite, is where 'Johnny in the Hollow' McMahon lived. The next farm on the west side of the road was Fay's.



Appendix 3 to Annex H

Bailieborough 11th or Dec^r 1900

Capt Peter W. Mahon
 & Patrick W. Mahon
 To Elizabeth Farrelly Dr

1900	3 falls spirits @ 12/-	2	14	0
"	2 do @ 20/-	2	0	0
"	4 bottles port wine	"	12	0
"	2 do claret	"	5	0
"	4 lb twist tobacco	"	14	0
"	1 gross pipes 10 Candles	"	14	8
"	1 pot jam, 1 lb sugar	"	7	4
£ 6 14 0				
by	1 gallon spirits @ 1.0.0			
"	2 bottles wine @ 0.6.0	1	6	0
£ 5 8 0				
The hearse to Robertstown		1	5	0
1901			6	13 0
Oct. 2 nd by C			6	13 0
with thanks	£		"	" "

Bill for G6 William's Wake and Hearse to Robertstown

Appendix 4 to Annex H

This Agreement made and entered into this sixth day of May in the year of Our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one between Jane McMahon of Mayo in the Parish of Moynalty, Barony of Lower Kells and County of Meath widow of the one part and Patrick McMahon of same place and son to the said Jane McMahon of the other part, Whereas the said Jane McMahon is seized and possessed of part of the lands of Mayo aforesaid containing twenty two acres be the same more or less Irish Plantation measure held under George radcliffe Esquire at the newly judicial rent of twenty pounds twelve shillings sterling payable halfyearly on every first day of May and first day of November in each and every year Now this Indenture Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings in hand well and truly paid by the said patrick McMahon unto the said Jane McMahon the receipt whereby is hereby acknowledged and the further consideration of the love and affection which the said Jane McMahon hath and bears for her said son Patrick mcmahon she the said Jane Mcmahon doth hereby set, sell, makeover and convey and by these previously hath set, sold, made over and conveyed unto the said Patrick McMahon after her deceased all that and those that twenty two acres of the lands of Mayo aforesaid with the houses and buildings thereon and with the appurtenances thereunto belonging together with two horses, one cow, six yearling calves, five sheep with lambs at foot, one sow with litter of young, farming implements and all the house furniture at present on said farm and premises To have and to hold to him the said Patrick McMahon his heirs and assigns from the first day of May last past subject however to the said yearly rent and taxes as they may become due and payable.

And the said patrick McMahon paying the said yearly rent and taxes as they accrue due, shall and may quietly have hold occupy and enjoy said premises without let or hindrance of the said Jane McMahon or any person acting for, through or under her. In witness whereof the parties aforesaid have put their hands the day and year first hereby written

*Witness present being
first and second*

Joseph McMahon⁵³ Peter Monahan⁵⁴

her mark⁵²

*Jane X McMahon
Patrick McMahon*

Transfer of Maio Farm

⁵² Note the 'X' marks on documents. Neither William in 1877 nor his wife Jane in 1901 appeared to be literate.

⁵³ Patrick's first cousin from Rathbane.

⁵⁴ Either Jane's brother or nephew.

Appendix 5 to Annex H

*In the High Court of Justice in Ireland---Queen's Bench Division
(Probate)*

Administration intestate

The Principal Registry

Be it known that on the 14th day of January 1901, letters of administration of the personal estate of William McMahon late of Trohanny, Moynalty in the County of Meath, farmer, Deceased, who died on or about the 26th day of November 1900 at the same place Intestate, were granted by the aforesaid court to Jane McMahon of Trohanny aforesaid, widow, the widow of said deceased

She having been first sworn faithfully to administer the same

And it is hereby certified that an Affidavit for Inalnd Revenue has been delivered wherein it is shown that the gross value of the personal estate of the said deceased within the United Kingdom (exclusive of what the deceased may have been possessed of or entitled to as a Trustee and not beneficially) amounts to £41-15-0.

Hiurel. Warren

Statement of Probate, 1901

I American Relatives

Grandfather Patrick had three elder brothers. Two of them, James born in 1865 and John born in 1859, emigrated to the USA. Jim spent his adult life in New York and never married (*Figure I 1*). John, the other brother, was married (probably in 1900) and had a family; his son died in his early twenties (*Ref. 13*). According to G10 uncle Jim, this son was named Jimmie (*Ref. 10*) who is also referenced in our Grand-mother's notebook (*Figure I 2*). John may have possibly been a fireman and was a branch Treasurer of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He was shot while attempting to stop a robbery of AOH funds.

Our grandmother noted a visit home from the U.S. in July 1903 by "John McMahon & Mrs. & Jimmie and Jim" (*Fig I 2*). John would have been aged 44 at that time, so I suppose that it is possible that Jimmie was his baby son. It is passing

strange that the 'Mrs.' in question was not given a name, but we have deduced that she was named Mary (see below). Jim also came home again (on his own) in July 1906 (which was also a bit strange in those days of expensive ocean travel).

Two life insurance documents indicated that a Mary McMahon bought life insurance policies in New York for her niece and nephew, the children of Anna



Figure 11: James, the New York policeman

McLaughlin.⁵⁵ We must assume that Mary McMahon (who must have been Anna's sister) had become Mary McMahon when she married John; they possibly adopted Anna McLaughlin's children thereby bringing about a surname change. Surprisingly, the expired insurance documents were in the possession of Mary's presumed brother-in-law, John's younger brother, James, at the time of his death in Ireland in 1940. Given the early death of John's son, Jimmie, and his own possible demise following his shooting, it is possible that his widow Mary had died or moved away from the family home prior to 1927, leaving Jim in possession of the family papers.

James (the Jim above, *Fig. I 1*), was born in 1865. He emigrated to the U.S. and joined the New York police force in 1896, at age 31. His certification as a policeman was signed by the then New York Police Commissioner/President, Theodore Roosevelt (*Fig. I 3*). He purchased a lot in Westchester County in 1901 and sold it to the church in 1927 (*Fig. I 4*). This property was sold⁵⁶ to the Church of St. Gregory the Great for \$6,500.00.⁵⁷ Following the sale, he returned to Ireland, where he attempted to court a widow but was unsuccessful. He bought the old McMahon farm⁵⁸ at Moate (*Ref. 13*) in which he was still resident in 1929⁵⁹ (*Fig. I 5*). He later sold the farm and bought a shop in Moynalty (*Ref. 13*).

In 1929, at age 64, he applied to the American Consul in Dublin for permission to re-enter the US. However, at that time the regulations only permitted American non-nationals to be out of the country for no longer than a specific period, which James had exceeded. So, despite having served as a policeman in New York for 31 years, he was denied re-entry to the U.S. (*Fig. I 5*). Oral history (from the Yores) has it that he finally retired to his brother, Peter's farm in Trohanny, which was then

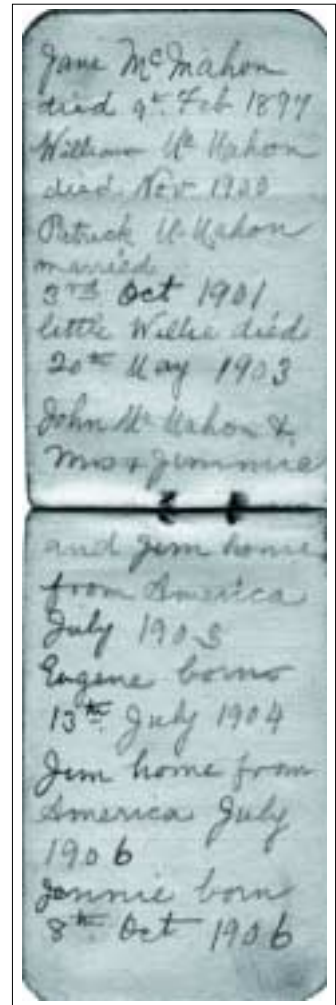


Figure 12: Grandmother's Notebook

⁵⁵ The policy documents were signed on July 13, 1903 on behalf of James McLaughlin (age 2) and Mary McLaughlin (age 1). The beneficiaries were named as Anna McLaughlin, mother and Mary McMahon, aunt.

⁵⁶ James is designated in the contract as being unmarried.

⁵⁷ About \$245,000 at today's value.

⁵⁸ Confirmation of the family origins in Moate.

⁵⁹ It is probable that he bought Moate farm with the proceeds of his American sale.



Figure I3: Police Academy Graduation Diploma, 1896
 (Note: Attached to the upper left corner of the diploma was James McMahon's card, giving his address (in 1896) as: 72 b) East 12th St., N.Y. City.)

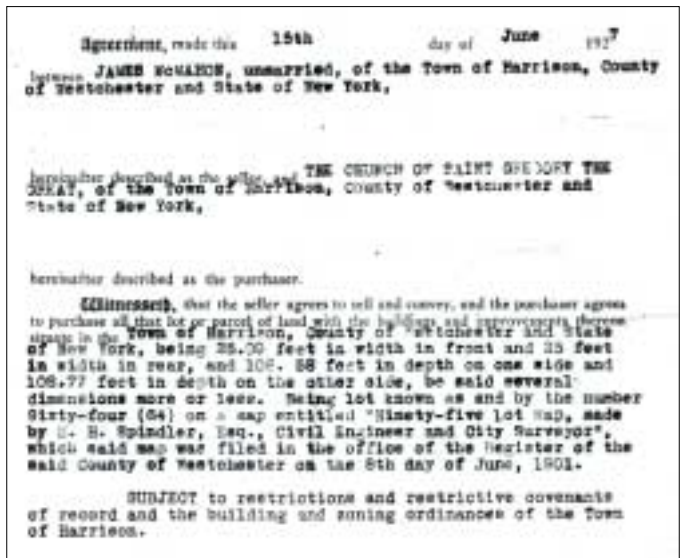


Figure I4: Contract for sale of N.Y. property, 1927.

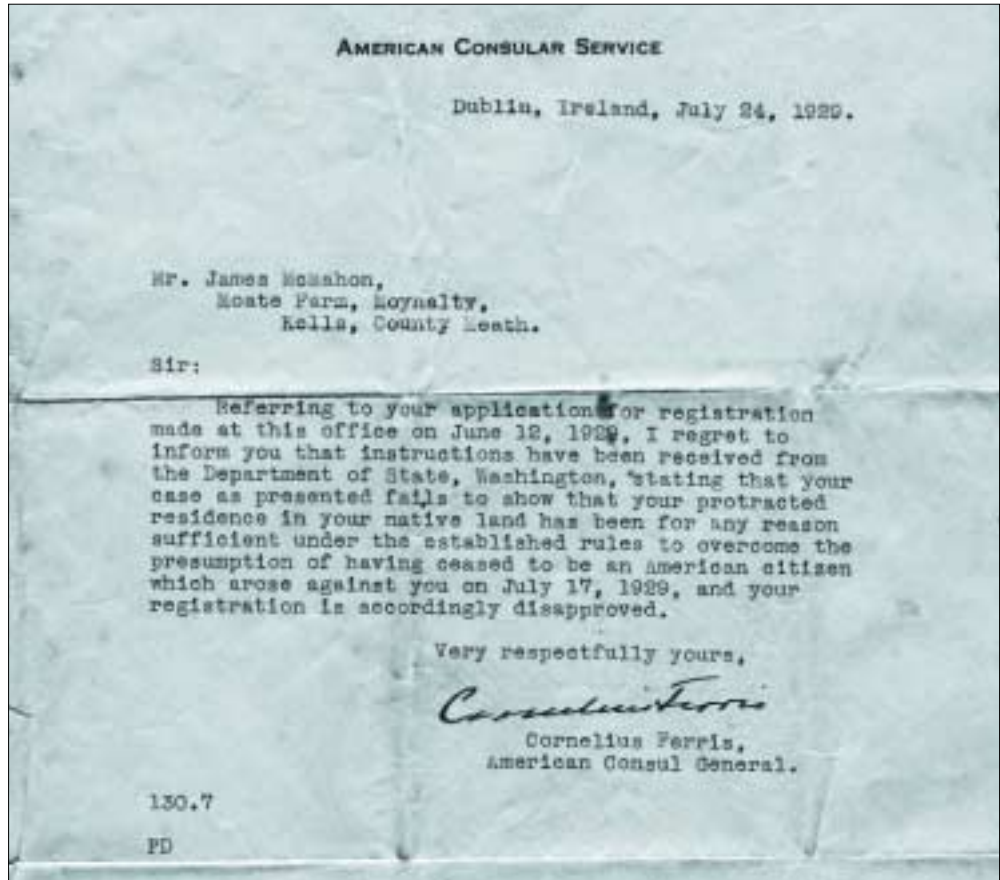


Figure 15: Denial of permission to re-enter U.S., 1929

being run by his nephew, G.10 William, when William lived in Maio-on-the-hill and before he moved his family to Carlanstown. He died penniless in 1940⁶⁰ and was buried in Robertstown (*Ref. 13*).

⁶⁰ Except for a couple of expired 10,000 Deutchmark bills.

J Anecdotes (as related by Fr Paddy)⁶¹



Figure 11: Fr. Paddy McMahon

He basically stated that he had no interest in the family when he was growing up. He was very hazy on some details (as you might expect at age 94) but nevertheless came up with some interesting items.

- **On Great Grandfather G8 William (born 1819).**

'He drank you know...', according to his grandson, Fr. Paddy. That might well mean that he was a normal social drinker or alternatively, it might mean he had a drink problem. There was, in the family, a great fear of the demon drink presumably dating from this period. One thing Paddy was insistent upon was that William did not acquire the Maio farm directly but rather through his uncle John. This John was unmarried and took in William as if he were a son. This John may not have been a real McMahon (a step-uncle or a maternal uncle?) nor a Catholic.⁶² The records certainly show a John McMahon in Trohanny in 1854.⁶³ G5 James could have had an unrecorded brother John, and maybe John Jr. was William's half-brother (aged 22)? Or, as alluded to earlier, maybe the elder 'Uncle' John was the last surviving member of the Gauley family (previous tenants of the Maio farm).

⁶¹ These were obtained in August 2006 when he was 94 years of age.

⁶² The previous occupiers of the farm were Gauley or McGauley; could one of these have been the 'Uncle'?

⁶³ Griffith's valuation (for McMahons) showed a John, John Jr, Peter and William residing in Trohanny Townland in 1854.

- **Maio**
Fr Paddy had nothing to add to the origin of the name Maio other than agreeing with my (*PM*) suggestion that the area was once part of the Maio Demesne.⁶⁴ In his day, very wealthy Protestants called Rountree lived there.
- **The Family Curse:**
Apparently at some stage (he thought in Gt Grandfather William's time), the family evicted an old woman (sub-tenant, possibly Betty Bowens, *Table F3*, page 97) who promptly cursed the McMahons... 'that the time will come when no McMahon will set foot in Maio'and so it came to pass.
- **The Big Romance**
Now this really was amazing. Following the betrothal arranged by G8 William and Margaret Farrelly's father, when do you think Grandfather Patrick and Grandmother Margaret first met and went 'walking out'?

Answer: Their Wedding Day!!! How about that?

J.1 **The 'Baker' and Other McMahons**

The 'Baker' McMahons were Grandfather Patrick's family living on the Maio Farm (7.1, page 43). Other unrelated McMahons also lived close by. There was 'Johnny in-the-hollow,' (whose father was 'Joe in-the-hollow') opposite Caffreys and 'Johnny the-rock' (across the river from the farm), related to each other but not to us, according to Paddy. They, on the other hand, claimed they were related to us through a common ancestor at the G6/7 level.

J.2 **Origins**

This was more difficult territory. He knew nothing at all of his Great Grandfather (G7 James) even though this is well documented in parish records. There would appear to be total amnesia at this point from all branches of the family.

It really is quite simple: a James with Anne Cahill begat our G8 William in 1819 in

⁶⁴ The old Ordnance Survey maps (*circa* 1830) showed a large house named Mayo House about 2km north of the farm.

Kilbeg Parish; the problem was that he went on to beget John⁶⁵ with Rose Cooney in 1823 and Peter⁶⁶ with Catherine Daly in 1834 also in Kilbeg. Certainly, descendents of William and Peter continue to regard each other as cousins.

Anne (Cahill) McMahon died in March 1837. The amnesia might be attributable to James being a philanderer and possibly not of the true faith (it was customary for children to be baptised Catholic from such unions). It is certainly possible that he had a brother or brother-in-law John (the uncle who took William onto the Maio farm); Griffith's shows a John Sr. residing in Trohanny in 1854 who would fit.

He wasn't able to add anything about G7 James or James's parents other than to confirm Moate as their location. He didn't recognize Hugh and Margaret⁶⁷ as being family; he stated Hugh wasn't a family name. The only name that struck a chord with him was Roger.

J.3 The Rogers

Roger was spoken of as a bit of a rogue/hero in the family. There were only two Rogers⁶⁸ recorded who qualified and he was unable to say which one he was referring to. The later G8 Roger (son of John), could have been a Gt. Grandson of the Chiseller. That would mean that his father, John, would likely have been a brother of G7 James (thus making G8 Roger a first cousin of G8 William).

The story goes that a Roger was involved in a bare-knuckle fight where he knocked his opponent over the parapet of a bridge and killed him. He then had to flee the country, or else was caught and transported to the colonies.

This would have to have been after 1813, when G5 Roger was still living in North Meath, so I doubt if Roger the Pugilist was an elderly man born as early as 1763. More likely than not, this was the later Roger (born 1843). Indeed, Paddy thought the Roger in question was an uncle⁶⁹ of G8 William.⁷⁰ That could also explain why the story about the fatal fight was still known by Paddy's generation (This later Roger would have been the son of Paddy's Great-Grand-Uncle, or indeed his grandfather's first cousin; whereas any such energetic exploits of Roger the Chiseller would have to have been three generations further back).

⁶⁵ Paddy didn't recognize any possible descendents of John as relatives.

⁶⁶ He confirmed that this branch was the Leitrim and Rathbawn relatives.

⁶⁷ Born to a James and Anne (1830) in adjoining parish. There was a Margaret living in Trohanny in 1854!

⁶⁸ The earliest (G5) Roger (c.1735) had repossessed the Barnwall Tomb in Robertstown for the future use of his posterity in 1813. The other (Gen. 8) Roger was born to a John and Mary in 1843 in Moynalty.

⁶⁹ I (PM), personally feel that the Roger in question was the one born in 1843; Fr.Paddy spoke of him as if the incident was within living memory (i.e. about 40-50 years before he was born).

⁷⁰ It would make more sense if he was a first cousin

J.4 Religion

Fr Paddy was very vague on this, despite being quite positive on a previous visit that the family was Protestant at one time. The only one he seemed sure was Protestant was this uncle (or uncle-in-law) who took our Gr Grandfather William onto the Maio Farm (sometimes brothers-in-law from the previous generation are referred to as 'uncle'). When I asked him about the origin of the family name William, he simply said the family were Williamites, as if this were common knowledge. It might have been, if they were indeed Protestant in the 18th century. If not, it makes the use of William as a family name even more puzzling, unless they fought (or were at least supporters) on the Williamite side⁷¹ at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

He said that the family was Protestant when in Monaghan (he didn't say how he knew this) and that there were relatives in Carrickmacross (he called them Newtown McMahons).⁷² Newtown is outside Carrickmacross and is not too distant from Dundalk, where we know that Hugh MacMahon from Dartrey ended up. It is conceivable that G5 Roger was the son of Hugh and was named after Hugh's Uncle Roger (of Enagh). G5 Roger possibly married a Catholic and the Protestant connection was severed. Indeed, it may have been severed even earlier, especially if this was the same Hugh MacMahon who had subscribed to the Troy Bible in 1794 (which was a Catholic enterprise). In any event, the name Hugh reappears when G5 Roger's grandson, G7 James (and Anne), had a son of that name in 1830.

J.5 Connections and Christian names

- a There are also some hints of possible family connections along the way to the Drakes and the Plunketts.
- b There was a William Richardson (age 6) living with Great Grandmother Jane and her son (Grandfather) Patrick on the night of the 1901 census. He was a Grand-nephew of William and Jane.⁷³
- c Grandfather Patrick was named after his maternal grandfather, Patrick Monaghan, and our Father after his maternal grandfather, Eugene Farrelly.

⁷¹ This could well have been the case since Continental wars fought in Ireland tended to have both religions on both sides.

⁷² *Figure P8* shows a Dartry McMahon (Culagh of Rockfield, brother of 1690 Roger MacMahon) who "conformed", and whose Protestant family (including son Hugh) ended up in Dundalk in the early 18th century. This type of 'conversion' was done for the very practical reason of retaining the right to own and/or buy landed property, and was generally insincere (two of Culagh's brothers went on to become Catholic Archbishops). We can wildly speculate that Protestant Hugh's family (which may have included G5 Roger the Chiseller) could have moved down the road to the Carrickmacross area (15 miles away) by the late 18th century. Certainly, the Troy Bible subscribers list of 1794 for Co. Monaghan (*Annex Q.7*) includes a Hugh McMahon. G5 Roger may have been a member of Hugh's family who went on to father G6 William.

⁷³ William and Jane's eldest, Bridget, married William Smith who had a daughter Mary who gave birth to William Richardson (two doses of William in this family!).

J.6 Plunkett Connection

Fr Paddy claimed that we were related to the Plunketts through marriage to the Cahills (who were Catholic).

The Plunkett connection was likely through the Cahill family; both families recorded burials in Robertstown Cemetery in the 18th century.

One Anne Cahill was buried in Robertstown in 1764. It is possible that her maiden name was Plunkett and that she was the grandmother of the subsequent Anne Cahill (*circa* 1790 – 1837) who later partnered our Gt-Gt-Grandfather, G7 James. If this were indeed the case, we would have a G2 ancestor named Plunkett (born *circa* 1660)!

By that time, the Plunketts (who had been a prominent Anglo-Irish family in the Meath-Louth region) were being penalised for their Catholicism.

Note also the location of a Plunkett tombstone immediately adjacent to the McMahon plots in Robertstown (*Figure C3*, page 81). This all adds an interesting dimension to and possible explanation for G5 Roger's apparent sense of entitlement to the Robertstown burial plot for him and his posterity.

K Additional Genealogical Records

K.1 Irish Flax Growers of Monaghan, 1796

When the Register of Flax Growers in Monaghan in 1796 was analysed, the 71 holders of the McMahon surname were broken down by the frequency with which 'family' Christian names appeared and gave the result shown in *Table K1*.

The complete absence of the name 'William' is notable in that it was obviously not a favoured name among the McMahons of Monaghan.

The other name of interest (Roger) appears 3 times. The holders of this Christian name were found in 3 distinct civil parish locations within the county (*Figure 4*, page 19): Centre (Kilmore), South (Magheraclone) and South-East (Donaghmoyne). The Magheraclone location is the one closest to Carrickmacross, where our Newtown McMahon relations allegedly resided, and this makes him the odds on favourite to be the Roger McMahon who migrated into North Meath (with Donaghmoyne Roger holding second place in the favourites stakes).

Patrick	11
James	8
Peter	7
Owen	6
Hugh	6
Thomas	3
Ross	3
Roger	3
William	0

Table K1 **Frequency of family Christian names in 1796 among the Flax Growers of Monaghan**

K.2 Hearth Money Roll: Currin Parish, Dartrey, Monaghan

The Hearth Money Rolls were lists of taxpayers whose houses were assessed for taxation on the basis of how many chimneys they had. Presumably, only those with some degree of wealth and socio-economic standing would possess a house with such a convenience.

The name 'Roger' appears only twice in the Hearth Money Rolls for the entire county and both entries are specifically found in the far western corner of the county

(Table K2). Disconcertingly, the name 'Rory' also appears there four times, and appears to be interchangeable with 'Roger' in at least the Killynenagh townland. 'Rory' also appears elsewhere in the county (6 times) in the 4 civil parishes of Tehallen, Magherross (father and son), Killany and Aughnamullion.

The Tehallen entry can be discounted, as it is in the north-east of the county, but the other 'Rory' entries are found in the southern half of the county and could well be on the migratory path from Dartrey.

This leaves us with the unenviable task of not knowing how much weight to attach to the anglicized name of 'Roger,' but it is all we have to go on if we wish to postulate descent from the 17th through to the 19th century.

Townland	Taxpayer 1663	Taxpayer 1665
Cavany		Coll McMahan
Creeran		Patrick McMahan
Drumavan		Bryan McMahan
Drumaveale	Patrick McMahan Hugh McMahan	Hugh McMahan
Killark	Rory McMahan	Rory McMahan
Killynenagh	Rory McMahan Collough McMahan	Roger McMahan
Kilnanaw		Roger McMahan Coll McMahan
Lattascrossan	Owen McMahan	
Skerrick		Hugh McMahan
Tallaghaloyst		Rory McMahan

Table K2 **Hearth Money Roll, 1663-1665**

L Landlords

L.1 Marquis of Headfort

The Sixth Marquis of Headfort died in 2006, at the age of 73. He was a descendent of Thomas Taylor, who arrived in Ireland in 1653 on the Down Survey mapping project. In 1660, Taylor sold his own estates in England and purchased about 21,000 acres in Ireland, of which 7,443 acres were in Meath, including Kells. The Sixth Marquis sold the estate in 1981 to a Canadian named Bill Kruger. His eldest son, Christopher, who lives in England, succeeded to the title upon his father's death. The only tenancy of his held by the McMahon family was for Moate Farm.

L.2 Farrell

According to Fr Valentine Farrell, author of *Reference 14*, the Farrells were Catholic and their wealth was created by James, a brewer and occasional money-lender from Blackpitts, Dublin. By this account, James Farrell had become a successful brewer and business man by 1790, acquiring on the way membership of the RDS in 1780 and graduating to living in Merrion Square; on the money-lending side, Lord Gormanstown was in debt to him to the tune of £1500 in 1782. Following the repeal of the Penal legislation in 1782, which among other things prohibited Catholics from holding freeholds, James Farrell was able to buy land as easily as a Protestant, which he did in 1790. The parcel of land acquired for £34,500 (serious money then), (originally belonging to the Betaghs but granted to the Cromwellian, Hugh Culme in 1666), consisted of the townlands of Moynalty, Walterstown, Rathbawn, Rathmanoe, Rathstephen.

James Farrell had two sons, Thomas and John. He bought an Estate in Robertstown for Thomas and handed over the Moynalty Estate to John in 1820. John Farrell was responsible for building Moynalty Chapel and re-building much of the village (1826-1837). In 1843 he was made High Sheriff of the County. His eldest son John Arthur was educated at an English Catholic school and took over running the Estate in the mid 19th century.

L.4 Barnewall Family

Strictly speaking, these were no longer landlords in North Meath, at least by the 19th century. They were, however, well established in Trimlestown Co. Meath by the 15th century.

In 1568, a branch of the family, headed by Alexander Barnwall, was granted title (by the crown) to what had previously been MacMahon lands in the Moate/Robertstown area of North Co. Meath, presumably to provide some kind of protection against MacMahon raids into the northernmost sections of The Pale.

This inimical family association possibly accounts for the forcible repossession of the Barnwell (Barnewall) Family Tomb in Robertstown Cemetery by Roger McMahon in 1813 for the future use of his descendents, and would seem to indicate an ongoing sense of grievance and entitlement.

Irish Land Commission.

LAND PURCHASE ACCOUNT, No. 3.

Receivable Order Number } *7662/32*
County } *Meath*

LAND ACTS, 1923-1927—Payment in lieu of Rent.

Estate *Refs 400 E Rudolff* Lands *Trohanny*
Tenant *Palucke Mc Mahon*

Half-yearly Amount, £ 7 11 8 **B**

The Bank of Ireland will receive on or before, but not after the 14th May and the 14th November, in each year, the Amount due as stated above: failure to pay the amount due within the time mentioned will render the tenant liable to legal proceedings without further notice.

The amount, together with this Receivable Order, may be lodged in any Bank for advice to the Bank of Ireland.

JOHN T. BRENNAN, Secretary, Irish Land Commission, Dublin.

Due 1st Mar., 1929.	Due 1st Mar., 1930.	Due 1st Nov., 1930.
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW 10 1929</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Irish Land Commission</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">PAID (L)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAY 14 1930</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Irish Land Commission</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">PAID (D)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAY 16 1930</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Irish Land Commission</p> </div>
Due 1st Mar., 1931.	Due 1st Nov., 1931.	Due 1st Mar., 1932.

IMPORTANT:—Read carefully the Notes on back of Order.

90, 90A-100, 91/92, 93A, B, & C, 140—Group 21, 22, 23

Figure L2: Earliest Record of purchase from Land Commission

M Descendents of G10 Eugene's Family

M.1 Patrick's Family

Patrick Ciaran McMahon – born 10th September 1937 in Dublin. Graduated from UCD in 1959 and TCD in 1962 (MSc Genetics). Worked initially as a Research Assistant in Sheffield University – then as a Senior Scientific Officer, and later as a Principal Scientific Officer, with the UK Ministry of Defence – changed from Genetics to Operational Analysis in 1979 and became an Electronic Warfare Analyst. Lived in Sheffield, Salisbury and Tonbridge. Retired to Gorey, County Wexford, in 1997. Married 1963 in Dublin to:



Figure M1: L to R; G12 Brian McMahon, G11 Grania (Claffey) and Patrick McMahon, G12 Eoin McMahon and in front, G12 Caroline (McMahon) Grant (Evesham 2003).

Grania Anne (nee Claffey) – born 20th October 1939 in Dublin. Worked in Dublin, Sheffield and Tonbridge, Kent. They have three children.

Caroline Judy McMahon – born 22nd April 1964 in Sheffield. Caroline is married to Sephen Grant, a General Practitioner and they live in Evesham, Worcs. They have three children, Iain Alexander Grant – born 12th June 1989, Sarah Louise Grant – born 16th September 1991 and Ciaran Edward Grant – born 16th September 1994.

Brian Patrick McMahon – born 16th May 1965 in Sheffield. Brian is a detective with the London Metropolitan Police and is married to Louise (*nee* Cull). They live in Bromley, Kent.

Eoin Roger McMahon – born 3rd August 1968 in Salisbury, Wilts. Eoin graduated in Mathematics from Oxford University. He lives in Oxford and works in the field of computer design.

M.2

Larry's Family

Laurence Peter (Larry) McMahon – born 1st August 1941 in Dublin. Worked initially as a brand manager with Unilever – then as a management trainer with the Irish Management Institute in Dublin. In later years, lived in Ballinskelligs, County Kerry, working as a Hypnotherapist. Married in 1966 in Stift Neuburg, Germany to:



Karin (Heidi) Heidrun (nee Grabinger) – born 13th May 1941 in Ragnit, East Prussia

(then part of greater Germany, but now part of Russia, and referred to as the Kaliningrad enclave). Towards the end of the Second World War, the Russian Army advanced into this area, conducting the mass murder or expulsion of all of the native German population. Heidi's mother took her westwards, fleeing as refugees and settled in Edingen, near Heidelberg. Later, she worked in both Cambridge and Paris (where she met Larry). They settled in Ireland. She later became an Irish citizen. They have two children:

Figure M2: 1 to r: G7 Beethoven, G11 Larry and Heidi (Grabinger) McMahon, G12 Peter and Katie McMahon (Dublin circa 1987).

Peter Eugene McMahon – born 29th March 1967 in Glasgow. Peter is a theatre producer, now based in Hamburg. He is married to Christiane (Chris) Rheinfurt and have one son, Maximilian (Max) McMahon – born 26th July 1996.

Katharina Erika (Katie) McMahon – born 9th March 1970 in Dublin. She was the original lead singer in "Riverdance." She now lives in Minneapolis. Katie continues her singing career there – giving concerts and making records, with her own band. She is married to Ben Craig (a U.S. citizen) and they have one son, Michael Patrick – born 16th January 2006.

M.3

Eugene's Family

Eugene Vincent McMahon – born June 16, 1943 in Dublin. Graduated from UCD as a secondary school teacher and taught in Tanzania and Dublin before emigrating to Hamilton, Ontario in 1969. Purchased a house in Kerry in 1988. Was President of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers union local in Hamilton from 1987 to 1999, a Governor of



Figure M3: l to r; G12 Colin, G11 Anne (Gouldsbury) McMahon, G12 Fiona, G12 Rob and G11 Eugene McMahon, 2007.

the Ontario Teachers' Federation from 1991-1992 and was actively involved in union politics at the Provincial level. Married in 1966 to:

Anne (nee Gouldsbury) born 1st October, 1945 in Dublin. Employed in Aer Lingus before marriage to Eugene in 1966. Lived in Tanzania 1966-68 and in Howth 1968-69. Emigrated with Eugene to Canada 1969. Lived in Dublin 1981-82, before returning with Eugene to Canada, where she was employed by McMaster University 1984-2000. They have three children:

Robert John – Born in Dar-Es-Salaam on 5th November, 1967. Graduated with a B.A. from McMaster University in Hamilton and a Diploma in Film from Concordia University in Montreal. He later acquired a Master's degree in Fine Arts from York University in Toronto. Currently employed as a film producer by Book Television in Toronto.

Fiona Anne – Born 17th December, 1968 in Dublin. Graduated with a B.A. from McMaster University and an M.A. from Universite de Montreal. Subsequently acquired a Phd in English Literature from the Sorbonne. Married to Philippe Clemenceau from 1997-2007. Currently lives in Paris and teaches English Literature at the University of Burgundy (Dijon, France).

Colin David – Born August 19, 1971 in Hamilton, Ontario. Graduated with a B.A. from McMaster University (and the University of Toronto) and an M.A. from Concordia University in Montreal. Currently reading for a Phd in History from York University in Toronto (where he also teaches), and where he will complete his dissertation in 2008. Lives with his partner, Colleen Wormald, in Toronto.

M.4

Mary's Family

Mary Therese McMahon – born 7 July 1945 in Dublin. Worked in the ESB as a shorthand/typist from 1963 to 1966; graduated with a B. Comm. from UCD 1969; worked as a secretary until early 1971. Started lecturing in Letterkenny Regional Technical College from September 1972 until 1980. Worked part-time and full-time as a lecturer in the CTI (Central Technical Institute) and WIT (Waterford Institute of Technology) from 1980 to retirement in October 2006. Married 1969 in Dublin to:



Figure M5: 1 to r; G12 Sheelagh and Sean Hogan, G11 Mary (McMahon) Mulligan, G12 Eugene & Julie Mulligan, G11 Peadar Mulligan, G 12 Richard Cowman and Trish Mulligan, G12 Sinead Mulligan.

Peter Celestine (Peadar) Mulligan, born 19 May 1943 in Ballybofey, Co. Donegal. Worked In Ulster Bank in Dublin, Kilkenny and in various jobs in England; graduated with a B. Comm. from UCD in 1968 and an MBA in 1970. Worked in IBM and the IDA until 1971. Peadar was a lecturer in RTC Letterkenny from 1971 to 1980, and in WIT from 1980 to 2006. Now living in Tramore, Co. Waterford. They have four children:

Sheelagh Florence Mulligan FCAI, MIIA, born 19th April 1971 in Dublin. Sheelagh is now working in the IDA as the Internal Auditor and is married to Sean Denis Hogan (BA, MA) and they live in Skerries, Co. Dublin. They have four children, Nova – born 7th December 2002, Lara – born 31st July 2004, Kate – born 31st July 2004 and Delta – born 14th October 2007.

Eugene Patrick Mulligan (BA) born 10 June 1974 in Dublin. Eugene works as an Editor with a PR Company in New York. He is married to Julie S. Lui (BA, Boston) from San Antonio, Texas. They live in Brooklyn, New York.

Sinead Mary Mulligan (BA) born 27 December 1975 in Dublin. Currently works for Waterford County Council, and teaches part-time in Adult Education. Now living in Tramore, Co. Waterford.

Patricia (Trish) Mulligan (BSc) born 27 July 1978 in Dublin. Worked in London with Barclays Investment Bank and Limit Underwriting Ltd. Now working for the TSSG in the WIT and living in Tramore, Co. Waterford.

M.5

Brendan's Family

Brendan Martin McMahon – born Dublin 17th June 1949 in Dublin, graduated from UCD in 1970, worked as a teacher and civil servant and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1974. As a member of the Foreign Service, lived in the USA from 1976-1980 (first in San Francisco as Vice Consul and then at the Mission to the United Nations in New York);



Figure M6: G11 Brendan McMahon, G12 Cara-Louise and Stephen McMahon, G11 Irene (Farren) McMahon, G12 Sarah and Elizabeth McMahon.

lived in Nairobi Kenya from 1983-1987; London 1991-1993; then as Ambassador to Nigeria and Ghana from 1994-1998; Ambassador to the Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna from 1998-2002; and then as Ambassador to Hungary, Romania and Serbia based in Budapest from 2002-2006. Married to:

Irene Farren – born in Dublin 6th October 1950. Graduated from UCD in 1970, then employed as a Social Worker with the Eastern Health Board. They have three children:

Stephen Nicholas McMahon – Born Dublin 15th July 1973, graduated from UCD and now working as a journalist in Melbourne, Australia. Married Cara-Louise White – born in Dublin 20th September 1973 and also a graduate of UCD. They have two children, Hanah McMahon – born in Dublin 18 August 2003 and Ellie McMahon – born in Melbourne 30th June 2006.

Sarah Elizabeth McMahon – born in San Francisco 12th October 1976. Graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London and now working as a freelance musician (Cellist) in London.



Figure M7: Presentation by the Hungarian President of the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit to Irish Ambassador, Brendan McMahon at the end of his tour in Budapest (2006).

Elizabeth Alice McMahon – born in Dublin 10th July 1981. Graduate of the Dublin Institute of Technology and now working in the field of design in London.

N Descendants of G10 William's Family

N.1 Mary's Family

Mary McMahon – born 25th December 1930 in Trohanny, Moynalty (*Figure N1*). Works as a housewife in farming and lived in Loughan, Moynalty and Cornasaus, Carnaross. Married 23rd June 1954 in Staholmog to Michael Yore – born 28th July 1925 in Rathendrick, Carnaross. They have seven children:

Michael Gerard Yore – born 27th April 1955 in Loughan, Moynalty. Michael is married to Margaret Brennan and they live in Cabragh, Carnaross. They have one child, Katie Louise Yore – born 13th March 1997.

Eugene Joseph Yore – born 12th July 1960 in Loughan, Moynalty. Eugene is married to Angela Shankey and they live in Cornasaus, Carnaross. They have one child, Laura Mary Yore – born 18th July 1991.

William Oliver (Liam) Yore – born 11th September 1957 in Loughan, Moynalty. Liam is married to Carmel McCabe and they live in Ennistown, Kilmessan. They have two children, Gavin Yore – born 11th December 1980, Carolan Yore – born 1st October 1982.

Margaret Mary (Mairead) Yore – born 28th June 1959 in Loughan, Moynalty. Mairead is married to Anthony Clinton and they live in Moynalty Village. They have four children, Rose Clinton – born 19th February 1988, Anthony Clinton – born 11th October 1990, Megan Clinton – born 21st April 1992, Mark Clinton – born 20th January 2000.

Patrick Martin (Paraic) Yore – born 23rd September 1967 in Loughan, Moynalty. Paraic is married to Anne Reilly and they live in Cornasaus, Carnaross. They have four

children, Colin Yore – born March 1989, Aoife Yore – born June 1991, Cian Yore – born 31st December 1997, Shane Yore – born 27th June 2001.

Dominic Thomas Yore – born 12th June 1965 in Cornasaus, Carnaross. Dominic is married to Sandra Gillic and they live in Mountainpole, Carnaross. They have Three children, Eadaoin Yore – born 29th October 1997, Cormac Yore – born 6th March 2001, Oisin Yore – born 12th May 2006.



Figure N1: l to r; G11 Rose (McMahon) and Bernard Yore; G10 Fr Paddy (descended from G9 Patrick); G11 Mary (McMahon) Yore.

Francis Peter Yore – born 25th November 1967 in Cornasaus, Carnaross. Francis is married to Marie Glennon and they live in Leitrim, Carnaross. They have two children, Leonne Yore – born 28th October 2003, Michael Yore – born 29th April 2006.

N.2 Petie's Family

Peter (Petie) McMahon – born July 1932 in Trohanny, Moynalty; died in 1998. Worked in farming. Lived in Trohanny, Moynalty, Gravelstown and Drakerath (*Figure N 2*). Married in 1973 to Bridgid Price. They had one child.

William McMahon – born October 1976 in Drakerath, Carlanstown, Kells. William is married to Claire Gilcreest and they live in Cormeen, Moynalty. They have one child, Aimee McMahon – born 16th November 2005.



Figure N2: G11 Petie

N.3 Rose's Family

Rose McMahon – born 21st August 1934 in Trohanny, Moynalty (*Figure N1*). Works as a housewife. Lived in Maio, Moynalty; Gravelstown, England and Kells. Married in 1962 in Kilbeg to Bernard (Barney) Yore – born 13th November 1926 in Carnaross. They had four children.

Mary Yore – born 29 th June 1963 in Birmingham (UK). Mary is married to Tony Roche and they live in Carnaross, Kells. They have three children, Jack Roche, Daniel Roche and Niamh Roche.

Theresa Yore – born 18th March 1966 in Birmingham (UK). Theresa was married to Vincent Cantwell and she now lives in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. They have no children.

Ann Yore – born 17th July 1968 in Birmingham (UK). Ann is married to Pdraig Curran and they live in Ballinsloe, Co. Galway. They have one child, Ellen Curran.

Bernard Yore – born 27th March 1975 in Drogheda. Bernard is married to Terri Deasy and they live in Cork. They have no children.

N.4 Paddy's Family

Patrick (Paddy) McMahon – born February 1937 in Trohanny, Moynalty. Worked in farming and now in the antique business. Lived in Maio, Moynalty – Gravelstown, Carlanstown, Kells. Married in 1964 in Staholmog to Philomena Flanagan – born October 1940. They had five children.

Assumpta Cath McMahon – born August 1965 in Drogheda. Assumpta is married to Seth McInnes and they live in London. They have no children.

Mark Anthony McMahon – born February 1967 in Drogheda. Mark is married to Anne Cassidy and they live in Donore, Moynalty. They have two children, David McMahon – born 7th January 1993, and Ronan McMahon - born 20 th Sept 1994.

Hilda Maria McMahon – born 6th June 1969 in Drogheda. Hilda is married to Martin O'Brien and they live in Moate, Kilbeg. They have four children, Darrel O'Brien – born 11th January 1994, Shauna O'Brien – born 5th April 1995, Hazel O'Brien – born 2nd June 1998 and Lauren O'Brien – born 23rd October 1999.

Paula Bernadette McMahon – born 8th June 1974 in Drogheda. Paula is unmarried and lives in Navan.

Pdraig McMahon – born 15th September 1977 in Drogheda. Pdraig is unmarried and lives in Cormeen, Moynalty.

O Descendants of G10 Joseph's Family

O.1 Known Descendents

Rosaleen McMahon – born 1943 in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Married John Kingham. They had two children: David and Elaine.

Kathleen McMahon – born 1945 in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Married Tom Corcoran. They had two children: Mark and Niall.

Mary McMahon – born 1946 in Rathbawn, Moynalty.

Annette McMahon – born 1948 in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Works as a civil servant and lives in Dublin.

Celine McMahon – born 1949 in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Married to Mansfield and had one child: Emma.

Margarete McMahon – born 1951 in Rathbawn, Moynalty.

Joan McMahon – born 1957 in Rathbawn, Moynalty.

O.2 Peter's Family

Peter McMahon – born 1947 in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Works as a Farmer and lives in Rathbawn, Moynalty. Married to Phyllis Fagan. They had four children:

Dawn McMahon – born 1974 in Dublin. Dawn is married to Tony Smith and they live in Moynalty. They have no children.

Fergal McMahon – born 1975 in Dublin. Fergal is married to Orlagh Kiernan and they live in Moynalty. They have one child, Joe McMahon – born 2007.

Karl McMahon – born 1976 in Dublin. Karl lives in Moynalty.

Peter McMahon – born 1985 in Dublin. Peter lives in Rathbane.

P Early History of the McMahons

P.1 Medieval Period

Prior to the 10th century, common surnames were generally not used in Ireland. Instead, loose tribal groupings of inter-related people were denoted by the prefix “Ui”. Our own ancestors were part of the Ui Chremthinn in south-central Ulster. They, in turn, subdivided into four divisions. One of these was the Ui Nadsluaig (Fir Fernmaige), which as early as 700 A.D. ruled the little kingdom of Fernmag, based at Lough Ooney near Smithborough (midway between the modern-day towns of Clones and Monaghan).

By the 11th and 12th centuries, the Ui Nadsluaig began to expand southeastwards at the expense of weaker groups. The most prominent members of the expansionist Ui Nadsluaig were the O’Carrolls, who eventually ended up controlling most of Monaghan and Louth.

Those of the Ui Nadsluaig who remained at Lough Ooney were descended from Mathgamhain (the bear-like person) who was slain in battle in 1022, and they came to be known as MacMathghamhna (son of Mathghamhna), i.e. the MacMahons. Some of the other Monaghan families that later appeared on the scene may have been actual offshoots of the MacMahons. These were MacPhillip, MacArdle, McGeogh, Hughes, Fitzpatrick, McElroy, McNally, McCarvill and perhaps O’Connolly.

In unfolding the story of our family over most of the following centuries, we must necessarily confine our narrative to the exploits of the upper classes, as virtually nothing is known about the rest of the population. That being said, we are also operating on the assumption that all bearers of the family surname share a common line of descent from the original clan leadership. As we proceed down through the generations, however, the MacMahon family repeatedly hived off into multiple parallel lines of descent. Some idea of their genealogical complexity can be derived from a viewing of the various royal lines in *Annex P.7*. It unavoidably remains an open question as to which of these separate lines we are descended from.

The MacMahons' first stronghold was a crannog⁷⁶ on Lough Leck (near Corcaghan in the modern-day parish of Kilmore), a few miles from Lough Ooney. Their small kingdom would have been known as a "Tuath", and contained other families that were subordinate to the ruling family. The Ri tuatha was basically a political/military commander who negotiated alliances with other Tuatha and submitted his own Tuath, in turn, to the relevant Tuath mór. The king was selected from the Tuath's royal family, i.e. those who had a common great-great-grandfather! This rather awkward arrangement virtually ensured on-going competition among countless brothers, half-brothers, cousins and half-cousins for the kingship/chieftainship. To avoid such disputes, the reigning king often nominated a tanaiste from the royal family to succeed him, but this did not always stop the competition.

The other nobles in the Tuath were those (related to the king or not) who were wealthy enough to have clients, i.e. herdsmen to whom the nobles would rent their land and cattle and receive in exchange animal and farm produce, together with military service when required. In short, it was a form of feudalism. However, as the years went by and successive generations of nobles died off, their lands were progressively and evenly divided between their respective sons. In this way, men who had originally hailed from noble families eventually could not afford to take clients, and so lapsed into a state of clientship themselves. Nevertheless, a typical herdsman (*bo-aire*) was usually well off. He might have had land to the value of 21 female slaves, 20 cows, 2 bulls, 20 sheep, four domestic boars, 2 sows, a riding horse, 16 sacks of seed in the ground, etc. His relative status was indicated by his 'honour price', which was 5 milch cows while that of his king was 49 (*Ref 6*).

However, the vast majority of the people were not kings, nobles or herdsmen. They were crofters, labourers or slaves. The crofters (*bothaigh*) were tenants-at-will who, in exchange for small plots of their own, gave many days of service to their respective masters each year. Beneath them in status were the labourers or serfs (*sen-chleithe*) who went with the land. Below them again were the slaves.

Women had virtually no status, and many nobles and kings had a plurality of wives. This would have helped ensure a plentiful supply of future warriors, together with a surfeit of eligible candidates for the next chieftainship. As these candidates were often only half-brothers, half-uncles or even half-cousins, this might help explain why ambition often seemed to trump family ties.

Cattle rearing dominated the rural economy, but owing to the difficulty of feeding them over the winter, beef formed a large part of the winter diet, while dairy products were relatively plentiful during the summer. Because cattle played such a central role in the economy and the social order, it made the nobles highly vulnerable. Whenever disease broke out among the herds or losses were suffered following raids by rival

⁷⁶ An island fortress on a lake.

clans, it could have a negative domino effect on peoples' socio-economic status, at least until such time as a counter-raid redressed the balance.

The rise to prominence of the MacMahons would have to await the fall of their distant kin, the O'Carrolls, whose regional dominance came under increasing threat with the arrival of the Normans in the late 12th century. When DeCourcy and DeLacy pushed northwards into Louth in 1194, the O'Carroll king was captured and hanged. This left a political vacuum in Monaghan. The MacMahons were an opportunistic lot who were quite ready to take advantage of the situation, and even occasionally ally themselves with the Normans, whenever it was to their immediate advantage. In 1196, for instance, Niall MacMahon joined DeCourcy in a raid on Louth, where he proved to be an unusual kind of ally. "MacMahon was entrusted with the command of two forts, which, on the first change of fortune, MacMahon utterly destroyed; and when questioned on his breach of faith, answered that he was not engaged to keep stone walls; that he scorned to confine himself within such cold and dreary enclosures while the native woods were open for his reception and security" (*Ref 6*, p.44).

Within a very short time, Norman aggression had spilled over from Louth into Monaghan, where, by the very early 13th century, they had established forts at Donaghmoynne in the southeast and Clones in the west. The only Gaelic rulers to survive this onslaught were the Mac Murchadha of Truagh in the north and the MacMahons in western and central Monaghan. Even so, the MacMahons now had to withstand considerable pressure from the Normans, before they would be able to credibly claim the title of Ri Airgialla (King of Oriel).

As it was, mid-13th century Oriel did not stretch much further than the MacMahons' original western stronghold, together with a large chunk of central Monaghan.

Nevertheless, they were now considered important enough to receive (in 1244) a request from the English King asking for help against Scotland. By 1264, Eochaidh MacMahon (1250-1273) was even strong enough to resist Aodh O'Neill when he tried to claim the overlordship of Airgialla. Over the following 99 years, the families of Eochaidh's three sons, Brian, Mealsechlainn, and Roalbh, competed for the chieftainship, and divisive as this may have been, it certainly nurtured a warrior culture. By 1297, Eochaidh's son, Brian MacMahon, Lord of Oriel (1273-1311), had established a fort at Lough Leck (On the adjacent Hill of Leck, the MacMahon chieftains' inauguration stone remained in use right up to 1595).

As the 13th century drew to a close, a MacMahon noble, Aonghus, was granted the regality of part of Cremorne by the Anglo-Norman, Ralph Pipard. In truth, the Normans' own tenuous hold on power in Monaghan was already beginning to slip, and nearly all of Monaghan was now under some loose form of MacMahon control. Gradually, the MacMahon centre of power shifted from Lough Leck, first to Tullybryan, and some time after 1365, to the crannog of Rath Tully on Convent Lake (*Ref*. page 92) near the modern-day town of Monaghan.

P1.1 Conditions in South Monaghan

Roalbh of Dartree's grandson, Brian Mór, gained the chieftainship in 1372. During the reign of Brian Mór MacMahon⁷⁷ (1372-1403), the MacMahons also became well established in a fort at Lurgans, near Carrickmacross. Brian Mór was succeeded by his son, Ardghal MacMahon (1406-1427).

Following the death of Ardghal in 1427, the line of descent seemingly split into the lineages of his ten sons (*Figure P11*), from only one of whom, Ruaidri (1427-1446), all subsequent clan chieftains are descended.⁷⁸

Of Ruaidri's 17 sons, only three produced lineages with subsequent claims to the Chieftainship. These were Aodh Ruadh (Red Hugh) of Farney, Eoghan (Eugene) of Dartrey and Redmond of Lucht-tighe (Central Monaghan). Their competing lineages are outlined in *Figure P9*, *Figure P8*, *Figure P10* respectively.

Over time, the MacMahon claim to lands extended over four⁷⁹ of the five Tuatha (kingdoms) in what later came to be known as County Monaghan. In 1460, for instance, the MacMahons took over the Boylan⁸⁰ crannog of Rooskey, near Newbliss (east of the modern-day town of Clones). This gradual ascendancy of the MacMahons occurred despite the nearly constant territorial pressure from its surrounding neighbours. Quite apart from the aggressive Normans in Louth and Meath, the O'Neills of Tyrone, the MacMurchadha of Tyrone and Truagh, the Maguires of Fermanagh and the O'Reillys of Cavan would periodically attempt to nibble away at the fringes of MacMahon power. Military raids by one party or the other generally took the form of glorified cattle raids, coupled with a heavy dose of burning and pillage. Fortunately, these 'military' forays would have been necessarily limited in scope by the difficult terrain throughout much of Monaghan.

Despite these difficulties, the MacMahons were able to successfully establish and maintain their supremacy throughout most of Monaghan from about 1250 to the early 1600's. Nevertheless, at no time during this long period did the area enjoy any kind of lasting peace. Indeed, "the MacMahons apparently believed in the philosophy that attack was the best means of defence". We find them constantly fighting with their neighbours, both Irish and Anglo-Norman. Battle follows battle and raid follows raid. Treaties and alliances are frequently patched up only to be broken and dishonoured. And as the centuries rolled on, much of the warfare took place between the various branches of the MacMahons themselves. They fought among themselves over many issues, but the dominant issue was the possession of the kingship (*Ref 6*, page 61).

⁷⁷ Gt.Grandson of Eochaidh and Grand-nephew of Brian, Lord of Oriel

⁷⁸ We must presume that these other nine sons, in turn, gave rise to myriad generations of other MacMahons. While not in the running for the chieftainship, members of these parallel branches would nevertheless have contributed to the growing size of the clan.

⁷⁹ Corresponding to the later-established Baronies of Dartrey, Cremorne, Monaghan and Farney

⁸⁰ Formerly an important and powerful clan

In 1331, for instance, Sean MacMahon of Farney, with the aid of the Normans, attacked and slew his cousin, the King of Oriel, Murchadh Mór MacMahon (1311-1331). Sean MacMahon (1331-1342) then seized the Chieftaincy and held it for ten years. Then in 1342, Sean was expelled from Oriel by another cousin, Hugh MacMahon (1342-1344), son of Ralph of Dartrey, who then made himself chieftain.

He was succeeded by his cousin Murchad MacMahon (1344-1372), before the chieftainship reverted back to Hugh's son, Brian Mór MacMahon (1372-1403).⁸¹

When not feuding over the kingship, raiding the Pale for cattle and other plunder became fashionable among the MacMahons in the 14th century. A relatively short distance to the east was Ardee, where there was a fortress garrisoned by the English to protect the northern borders of The Pale against incursions and/or cattle raids by both the MacMahons and the O'Reillys (*Figure P2*).

This raiding habit persisted till the end of Gaelic rule in the early 17th century. As the successors of the O'Carrolls, the MacMahons probably felt that the northern Pale was theirs by right, and the English of the northern Pale (*i.e.* Louth and northern Meath), in turn, were sometimes prepared to pay the 'cíos Mhic Mathghamhna' for protection. This irregular levy was generally in the form of goods, *e.g.* wine, fine cloth, malt, geese and, of course, cattle.

Meanwhile, the internecine rivalry between various branches of the MacMahons continued. By the reign of Brian MacMahon (1416-1442) (son of Ardghal MacMahon, 1406-1427), three principal power points were emerging under the rule of three brothers: Brian in the centre (Monaghan town area), Rory in Dartrey (Newbliss) and Manus in Farney (Lurgans) (*Annex P.7*). Brian and Manus in particular were not loath to employ the English as allies against each other, which amply illustrates the argument that they acted from very limited and local perspectives and utterly failed to see the long-term dangers of disunity in the face of English advancement.

When Rory of Dartrey succeeded to the Chieftaincy in 1442, he brought with him the makings of a royal dynasty. As mentioned earlier, nearly all of the subsequent MacMahon chieftains were descended from three of his seventeen sons! Each of these chieftains in turn had to wrestle with the same dilemma, namely, whether to support O'Neill to the north or the English to the south. Were one to support O'Neill, the English could support a rival puppet in Farney. Alternatively, were one to shun O'Neill, that chieftain could support a rival claimant for the MacMahon chieftaincy. As it was, throughout the second half of the 15th century, raids followed counter-raids between the ruling cousins in central Monaghan and those in Farney to the south, occasionally reinforced by incursions by interested parties from either the south or the north.

⁸¹ With respect to the precise length of each chieftain's reign, there was some difficulty in reconciling the dates supplied by Peadar Livingstone and those indicated in the charts. In two instances on the chart (Murchad and Brian Mor) the designated date of death may actually be the starting date for the individual's reign.

P.2

The Tudor Period

In the late 15th century, Gerald Fitzgerald of Kildare (The Great Earl) created alliances (sometimes through intermarriage) with many of the Ulster chieftains, including The O'Neill and The MacMahon. Accordingly, at the Battle of Knockdoe against Burke of Clanrikarde in 1504, The MacMahon provided assistance to the Great Earl in the form of 160 gallowglass mercenaries.⁸² Interestingly, another of the Great Earl's allies at that battle was Christopher Barnewall, Second Baron of Trimlestown, Co. Meath (*Annex O*).

As the 16th century opened, it could be argued that there were not one but three MacMahon kingdoms in Monaghan. This situation persisted throughout the century. The leaders of the three branches, Monaghan, Dartrey and Farney were virtually independent of one another. 'The MacMahon' title was the symbol of an ideal unity which simply did not exist. Instead, the objects of each MacMahon captain were "self-advancement, independence within his kingdom, freedom from tributes and an opportunity to raid his neighbours" (*Ref. O*). Therefore, even though the central Monaghan branch monopolized the kingship title from 1513 to 1589, it is doubtful if 'The MacMahon' received any tribute from his cousins. Meanwhile, of more immediate concern to each branch of the MacMahons was the overlordship of the O'Neills, rather than any real apprehension of the longer-term danger presented by the growing English presence in Louth and North Meath.

Indeed, much changed with the fall from power of the Great Earl in 1534, and even more so with the defeat of his son, Silken Thomas, in 1537. None of the MacMahon captains seemed to realize that a full-scale English conquest was under way, particularly after Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1533. It was not so obvious to them that the English aim was to replace one way of life by imposing another. "Nor did they immediately perceive that the English conquest would ultimately abolish their rights, their privileges, their laws, their customs and their culture. In addition, the fact that the conquerors aimed at substituting the Protestant religion for their own Catholic faith does not seem to have troubled them. The aims of the MacMahons were more immediate and, as they saw it, more practical. They wanted to be left alone. In particular, they wanted to be freed from the burden of paying tribute to their overlords, the O'Neills of Tyrone". (*Ref O*, page 61).

For the Farney MacMahons, things were somewhat different. Owing to their vulnerable position on the actual borders of the Pale, they at least were aware that some serious accommodation with the English appeared to be necessary. This was especially evident after 1538, when English forces defeated O'Neill and his MacMahon allies at the Battle of Bellahoe (modern-day Ballyhoe) on the Monaghan-Louth border.

⁸² McCabes

P.3

Elizabethan Era

By the reign of Elizabeth I (1557-1603), political power in Ulster had gravitated back to the O'Neills,⁸³ to whom the MacMahons owed fluctuating allegiance.⁸⁴ However, with the assassination of Shane O'Neill in 1567, an opportunity was provided to the English to reassert their claims in Ulster and its border regions. Accordingly, in 1568, Elizabeth granted lands in north Meath bordering the MacMahon lands to Alexander Barnewall of Robertstown "for strengthening of these borders of the county against O'Reyley and MacMahon."

A few years later, in 1576, the Barony of Farney was 'officially' taken from the MacMahons and granted by Elizabeth I to Walter Devereux, the First Earl of Essex.⁸⁵ This 'grant' was aspirational in nature and changed nothing on the ground. In any event, Essex died within a few months of receiving the 'grant.' Nevertheless, his family did not abandon their hopes of someday making good on this grant.

Then in 1579, in an obvious effort to ingratiate himself with the English, Ever MacMahon of Farney became the first of his family to introduce English customs and language into his household. This was clearly an attempt to solidify his status as a burgeoning English-style squire, not to mention strengthening his ancestral entitlement to the lands of Farney. He had apparently sniffed the wind, but such efforts at accommodation were to be eventually overtaken by the advancing tide of history.

Others too had sniffed the wind but had drawn quite a different conclusion. There were, by 1580, Irish lords and Anglo-Irish lords who saw beyond their local patrimonies. They saw their whole world being threatened by a nation that was fast becoming the most powerful in the world. They saw too that their Catholic religion was under threat. This perspective was being strengthened through increasing contacts with a continental Europe that was in the throes of the counter-reformation.

Nevertheless, when the Lord Deputy, Sir John Perrot (natural son of Henry VIII), visited Newry in 1584, the principal O'Neill and MacMahon leaders prudently went to meet him and swore loyalty to the Queen. These included Ross Bui MacMahon of Monaghan, Ever/Eimhir MacMahon of Farney and Brian Mac Hugh Og



*Figure P3: Walter Devereux,
First Earl of Essex.*

⁸³ Who were by then related through marriage to the Fitzgeralds.

⁸⁴ Sometimes cemented by marriage.

⁸⁵ Essex had waged a brutal military campaign against the O'Neills and their allies in 1573-75, but died within 3 weeks of his return to Ireland in 1576.

MacMahon of Dartrey . Of these three, the one who was least susceptible to English influence was Brian Mac Hugh Og MacMahon of Dartrey,⁸⁶ who later married one of Hugh O'Neill's daughters.

Traditionally, the Dartrey MacMahon was Tanaiste to the clan chieftain in Monaghan, but Ross Bui was determined to thwart Brian's succession to the title. To this end, he surrendered the land of Monaghan to Queen Elizabeth and received it back as a royal gift. This was too much for O'Neill, who then paid Ross Bui a threatening visit, after which the recently arrived English garrison in Monaghan was sent packing. This caused the new Lord Deputy, Fitzwilliam, to invade Monaghan in 1589, forcing Ross Bui to capitulate and seek pardon. But Ross Bui died within the month and the issue of succession had to be quickly addressed. English law and Brehon law indicated rival candidates, with Ross's brother, Red Hugh MacMahon, being nominated by the English in opposition to Brian MacMahon of Dartrey. Ultimately four candidates surfaced, and Fitzwilliam hoped to divide the MacMahon lands between them. When agreement could not be had, Fitzwilliam tried to install Red Hugh by force. With O'Neill's help, Brian of Dartrey defeated Red Hugh and the English at Clones in 1589. This settled nothing however, and the separate MacMahon principalities continued to somehow co-exist.

Eventually, even Red Hugh had a falling out with the English when he conducted a cattle raid on Farney. Fitzwilliam then had him hung, as he was now being viewed as a hindrance to Fitzwilliam's original scheme to subdivide the county lands and weaken the clan. Consequently, in 1591, Fitzwilliam granted all of the church lands of Monaghan to various English nominees from the Pale, while the rest of the land outside Farney (which had already been granted to Essex) was granted to six chief members of the MacMahon family and Patrick McKenna (in Truagh). In an unusual twist, each was given both a private estate and an estate to be let to tenants. The six MacMahon grantees were Patrick Dubh who got 5,500 Irish acres, Ever Mac Con Uladh who got 10,920 acres (in compensation for losing Farney), Brian Mac Hugh Og who got 10,240 acres in Dartrey, Patrick Mac Art Moyle who got 3,840 acres in the Barony of Monaghan, Ross Ban (uncle of the executed Red Hugh) who got 9,100 acres in the Barony of Monaghan, and Brian Og (brother of the executed Red Hugh) who got 3,840 acres in Truagh.

In the meantime, the greatest of the Ulster lords was Hugh O'Neill, who subsequently attained (under Brehon Law) 'The O'Neill' title in 1593. Hitherto he had been the Queen's appointee to the Earldom of Tyrone, and his original objective was merely to establish himself as the ruler of a virtually autonomous Ulster. But as his contacts with the continent increased, he saw the possibility of setting up (with outside help) an independent Catholic Ireland.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Later titled Sir Brian na mBarrog.

⁸⁷ In a Papal Bull of 1555, the Pope had conferred the title "King of Ireland" on Philip II of Spain.

In the same year, the newly appointed Bishop of Armagh arrived from the continent with promises of military help from both the Pope and Spain, and many of the Gaelic leaders went to meet him.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the 1591 subdivision of the MacMahon lands, some of the MacMahon leaders swore to support any Spanish landing in Ireland.

The following Nine Years War of 1594-1603 was preceded by a very confusing series of skirmishes, which saw a number of clashes between rebel Maguires (with Dartrey MacMahon allies) and other MacMahon forces that were actually allied with the English. Even Hugh O'Neill, in his role as the Earl of Tyrone, assisted the English forces in quelling this mini-rebellion by Maguire and O'Neill's own son-in-law, Brian Mac Hugh Og MacMahon of Dartrey! Nevertheless, it appeared that O'Neill was simply biding his time and quietly building a host of alliances with the smaller chieftains in Ulster. Ultimately, he was even successful at times during the 1590's in getting all of the MacMahons to fight on the same side against the English. In 1595, O'Neill supported Brian Mac Hugh Óg MacMahon's inauguration as the MacMahon chieftain (otherwise known as Sir Brian na mBarrog). This followed a twenty-three year period in which there had been no universally accepted MacMahon chieftain, although there had been lots of pretenders. Later that year, another O'Neill invaded Farney and reinstated Ever Mac Con Uladh in his ancestral home. However, the central Monaghan branch of the MacMahons, under Patrick MacArt Moyle MacMahon, continued to support the English garrison in Monaghan monastery. However, he quickly changed sides after O'Neill defeated the English at the Battle of Clontibret later that year. That particular battle might well have gone the other way had Captain Seagrave's⁸⁸ solitary charge against O'Neill succeeded. After breaking their lances and unhorsing each other, the two wrestled in the mud. Seagrave was the bigger man and had O'Neill pinned to the ground. In desperate straits, O'Neill managed to pull a knife and plunge it under Seagrave's breastplate. Scrambling from underneath, O'Neill remounted and led his forces to final victory.

Three years later, in 1598, O'Neill and his allies achieved an even more decisive victory at the Battle of the Yellow Ford.



*Figure P4: Hugh O'Neill, The Great Earl:
1540-1616*

⁸⁸ From Cabra, just outside Dublin

A series of convenient truces alternating with renewed warfare characterized the Nine Years War (1594-1603).⁸⁹ During this war, O'Neill's greatest victory (with MacMahon help) occurred at the Battle of the Yellow Ford in 1598. Regardless, the feuding between the various MacMahon factions never seemed to let up, and Patrick Mac Art Moyle MacMahon was now claiming the title of The MacMahon in opposition to Brian Mac Hugh Og.

Following O'Neill's victory at the Yellow Ford, the Second Earl of Essex (*Figure P5*) was dispatched by Queen Elizabeth to restore order in Ireland. Both militarily and politically, he proved to be no match for Hugh O'Neill, who soon beguiled him into a truce. As a result, Essex was recalled to London in disgrace, and was imprisoned in the Tower of London.



Figure P5: The Second Earl of Essex

Following Essex's attainder, he lost his lands in Farney and was beheaded in the Tower on 25th February, 1601. In the meantime, Ever Colla MacMahon had prudently applied to the Crown to have his own de facto occupation of Farney legitimized.

Meanwhile, the war dragged on and by early 1601, some of the MacMahons sued for peace with Mountjoy, the new Lord Deputy. But then everything changed later that year, when reinforcements of 3,500 Spanish landed at Kinsale. After making arrangements for the defence of Ulster in his absence, "on 9th November, O'Neill left Dungannon, took command of his army, and accompanied by Maguire, O'Reilly, the MacMahons and others, marched south" (*Ref. 15*).

The fight to save the old Gaelic order was eventually lost at the Battle of Kinsale. Many of the Irish forces⁹⁰ were not fully engaged in that confusing battle, and were thus able to retreat to Ulster, albeit in some disarray. Nevertheless, the pivotal moment was lost and the balance of power had now shifted with the defeat at Kinsale and the subsequent loss to O'Neill of prestige and authority.

Most of the Ulster Chieftains now sought terms, but Mountjoy was holding out for unconditional surrender, practically. At last, in March 1603, Brian Mac Hugh Og of Dartrey, the last MacMahon chieftain, surrendered to Mountjoy. In their defeat, the various MacMahon factions now began to slowly recognize the significance of their

⁸⁹ Fake (and very temporary) submissions to English rule were often made at particular times of the year in order to facilitate planting and/or harvesting.

⁹⁰ There was only lukewarm support given by many of the Gaelic chieftains of Munster, most likely because of O'Neill's assistance to the English in suppressing the Second Desmond Rebellion in 1580.

common Irish identity. But by then it was too late. The English conquerors saw their mission simply as that of establishing a new order of things in a primitive, war-ravaged and underdeveloped country, and they felt that the Irish lords had no real part to play in the pioneering work of building a new society. Despite this drastic turn of events, the conquest left the MacMahons (and the McKennas) still in nominal possession of most of Monaghan.

Within two years, most of the Gaelic lords in Ulster had been confirmed in their lands, but under restrictive conditions. The Gaelic lords chafed under these conditions, and were made increasingly aware of the incessant English designs on their land titles. Unease soon turned to mistrust and fear for their personal safety, culminating in the flight of the principal lords and their families to the continent in 1607, where they continued to lobby for military support to reclaim their lordships in Ireland.⁹¹ The MacMahon, however, chose not join this exodus.

P.4 Stuart Era

At the start of the 17th century, Monaghan was a bleak enough place. There were no towns to speak of and the routes across the county were of a primitive nature. The war had disrupted the simple agricultural economy of the county. Cattle had been either stolen or killed, while cropping was virtually impossible. Those MacMahons who still held title to land did so at the whim of the English conquerors, and were now required to somehow find the means to pay annual cash rents in a hitherto cashless economy. The Brehon Law system had broken down, and the English soon set about the establishment of their imported system of courts and juries. Because of the shortage of English settlers on the ground, this transition to an English way of life necessarily took a couple of generations. Compounding the problem from an English perspective was the language barrier.

What partly saved Monaghan from being 'planted' like the other Ulster counties was the fact that the MacMahon leaders did not join the Flight of the Earls in 1607.

Besides, there were still a fair number of MacMahon families who could point to loyal, if not too consistent, service to the Crown. In fact, the new division of the land did not differ basically from the previous division of 1591. Although the MacMahon lands at Farney were returned to the Devereux family by James I, Ever Colla McMahon was retained as the principal tenant until 1620. Construction was begun on Essex Castle on the site of what was to become Carrickmacross, but the fortifications were not completed until 1630.⁹² Meanwhile in Dartrey, Brian Mac Hugh Og MacMahon was restored to virtually all of his lands.

⁹¹ Most of the exiles lived in Spain, where The O'Donnell was seemingly assassinated within 2 years. In the meantime, O'Neill had moved to Rome, where he continued to lobby for Papal assistance to mount a military expedition to Ireland.

⁹² The Devereux family died out in 1646, leaving no male heir. The vast estate in southern Monaghan then passed on (through a sister's marriage) into the Shirley family, and was later subdivided into the Shirley and Bath estates.

Five generations later, the Dartrey line was to record the only instance of a Roger MacMahon⁹³ appearing in any of the many royal lineages (*Annex P.8*).⁹⁴ As our own family is immediately descended from a Roger McMahon (*circa* 1735-1813), this is of particular interest to us. If we operate on the principle that particular Christian names tended to reappear in every family (sometimes skipping a generation in the process), we can make an otherwise unsubstantiated and highly speculative claim to royal descent from this earlier Roger MacMahon, who was himself the great-great-great-grandson of the last official MacMahon chieftain, Brian MacHugh Og MacMahon/Sir Brian na mBarrog MacMahon (died 1622).⁹⁵

In the meantime, the MacMahons and the other Irish families (some of whom were related to the MacMahons) still owned 61% of County Monaghan in 1606 (*Ref 6*, page 101). This was not to last, as they had no experience in administering an estate in accordance with English laws and customs. They particularly failed to properly understand, accept and comply with the obligation to pay regular rents (to the government or even to each other) under the English system. Ultimately, in order to meet their cash obligations in what was still a cashless society, many of them ended up selling off or leasing out much of their acreage over the following couple of generations. Indeed, by 1640, native Gaelic ownership of land had fallen to 43%. Among the few MacMahons who successfully adapted and did not sell off their lands were Colla Mac Brian of Farney (born 1590), Hugh (Aodh) Mac Patrick Duff and Hugh Mac Art Mac Rory.

In addition to a mounting sense of grievance over the ongoing threat to land titles⁹⁶ the Catholic Irish (both native Irish and Anglo-Irish) were also aggrieved over their ongoing persecution on religious grounds.⁹⁷ However, despite the common concerns of both groups over religion and land titles, it soon became obvious that the Anglo-Irish lords had no interest in reversing the Ulster Plantation of the early 1600's.

Resentment festered and grew over the succeeding generation and, by the late 1630's, the leading families among the native Irish were turning their thoughts to rebellion. The chief leaders were Rory O'More and Sir Felim O'Neill, while the most

⁹³ Of Enagh in West Monaghan

⁹⁴ The Gaelic form of that name, Ruadri can also be found in parallel branches that were also descended from their common ancestor, Ardgall (d.1427). The name Ruadri occurs 5 times among the Farney MacMahons, 4 times among the Dartrey MacMahons, 9 times among the central Monaghan (Lucht-tighe) MacMahons and 3 times among Clan Ardgall MacMahon, while the more anglicized version, Rory, appears only once in Farney and once in Dartrey. There is only a single instance of Roger (born sometime in the late 17th century in Dartrey).

⁹⁵ Sir Brian lived to a ripe old age and, in furtherance of assorted political alliances, had 3 wives (Maguire, O'Reilly and O'Neill). Between them, he sired 5 sons and 3 daughters.

⁹⁶ The rules for this were set by English common law, as opposed to Gaelic custom. Even long-standing occupancy did not guarantee security of tenure for the native Irish landholders

⁹⁷ This often took the form of fines for non-attendance at Sunday service in the Anglican churches. Also, it became increasingly difficult for Catholics to either hold legal office or acquire land.

prominent of the MacMahon leaders who were involved were Colla Mac Brian MacMahon (grandson of Ever of Farney and nephew of Bishop Eugene/Eoghan MacMahon), Hugh Óg MacMahon of Dartrey (born 1606, a lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish army, son of Sir Brian na Mbarrog and a grandson of Hugh O'Neill) and Bishop Heber/Eimhir MacMahon).



Figure P6: Owen Roe O'Neill: c.1590-1649

A target date of 1641 was set, and a plan was set in motion to recapture lost estates throughout Ulster, while simultaneously seizing Dublin Castle.

To this end, Lord Conor Maguire, Hugh Og MacMahon⁹⁸ and some others, journeyed to Dublin, where Hugh met up with his foster-brother, Owen O'Connolly. After an evening spent drinking with Hugh in a Dublin tavern, Connolly repaired to Dublin Castle, where he betrayed the plot. Shortly thereafter, Maguire and McMahon were arrested and transported to the Tower of London. They eventually managed to escape but were recaptured in London. They were later tried and hanged at Tyburn in 1644.

Although Dublin Castle with its armoury of 9,000 guns had not been seized, the rebellion broke out all across Ulster, and thousands of planter families were driven from their homes. Within one day of the start of the rebellion, all of County Monaghan lands were in rebel hands. The rebels then invaded Louth and captured Dundalk. However, by the following year, most of these gains had been reversed. But then Eoghan Rua O'Neill landed in Ireland (*Figure P 6*).

O'Neill, a nephew of The Great Earl, had returned to Ireland in 1642 from a successful military career with the Spanish armies in the Netherlands. He assumed command of the Gaelic forces. Meanwhile, many of the Anglo-Irish lords sought common cause with the rebels, but their concerns were largely confined to protecting their religion and the related aim of helping Charles I in his fight against the Parliamentarians. Consequently, they refused to entrust their own forces to O'Neill's command and instead conferred command on one of their own, General Preston.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, a formal system of alternative governance for the country was established through the Confederation of Kilkenny in 1642. Despite this apparent façade of unity, the period from 1642 to 1649 was characterized by disunity between the Anglo-Irish and the Gaelic factions, and this doomed the effort from the start.

Throughout these seven years, O'Neill conducted a series of successful military campaigns, although he was hampered by a lack of reliable support from the Anglo-

⁹⁸ The last putative clan chieftain. He was born in Co. Monaghan in 1606, served in the Spanish army and returned to Ireland in 1641.

⁹⁹ Also a returned officer from the continental wars and, interestingly, father-in-law to Sir Phelim O'Neill.

Irish lords, who dominated the Confederation of Kilkenny. The Papal Nuncio, however, was decidedly more supportive of O'Neill's efforts. Overshadowing all was the role of the powerful Anglo-Irish Earl of Ormonde, the King's Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, who hugely influenced the Anglo-Irish lords and opposed any break with the monarchy's interests.

Then, following O'Neill's premature death in 1649,¹⁰⁰ the leadership of the native Irish forces in Ulster passed to Bishop Heber MacMahon (1600-1650).¹⁰¹

With the arrival of Cromwell in Ireland in 1649, some of the Confederate forces were besieged in towns such as Wexford and Drogheda. After the sack of Drogheda, Anglo-Irish resistance fizzled out. The native Irish forces, under O'Neill's nephew, Hugh Dubh O'Neill, achieved one small military success at Clonmel, but otherwise a general sense of impending defeat began to prevail. Finally, the dwindling native Irish forces remaining in Ulster were defeated at Scariffhollis, Co. Donegal in 1650.

Bishop Heber MacMahon escaped to Omagh, where he was betrayed and captured two days later. He was subsequently executed by Coote, after which his head was stuck on a spike at Enniskillen Castle and his trunk was buried (by some sympathetic Catholics) on Devinish Island in Lough Erne.

By 1646, Robert Devereux had died, and the estate in Farney, Co. Monaghan passed via his sister to the Shirley family, who were unable to actually take possession until the rebellion was finally smashed by Cromwell in 1650.

The rebellion was crushed, and now general starvation and disease gripped the devastated countryside. By this time, most of the remaining Gaelic nobles were either dead, had fled the country or, in some cases, taken to the woods and mountains to become tories and rapparees. Some of the lesser nobility, of course, elected to remain on their lands in a diminished capacity as tenant farmers to the newly established owners.

Much of the land belonging to the native Irish 'rebels' was confiscated and generally deeded or sold to Cromwellian troops, existing British settlers or speculators who had helped finance the war. In Dartrey and Cremorne, for instance, Cornet Richard Dawson obtained possession in 1654 of 31 townlands, of which 25 were in the parish of Ematris, 1 in Currin and 5 in Aughnamullen (*Figure P1*). More than likely, much of this had been MacMahon land, and the acreage was considerable. The estate in Ematris, for instance, amounted to 2000 acres and covered a number of townlands, including Enagh.¹⁰² By 1667, in the reign of Charles II, Dawson obtained a

¹⁰⁰ Once suspected to have been by poisoning, but now believed to have been more likely due to tetanus.

¹⁰¹ Son of Turlough MacMahon and Eva O'Neill, and nephew of Sir Patrick MacArt MacMahon. In the early 1600's, his family had lost their lands in Monaghan by a bill of attainder and they were forced to flee to Donegal. Studied at Douai and Louvain, and was ordained in 1625. Later consecrated Bishop of Clogher and was a staunch supporter of Owen Roe O'Neill. (*Figure P7*).

¹⁰² The future birthplace of a later Roger MacMahon (*circa* 1690) of the House of Dartrey and his two brothers, future Bishops of Clogher.

patent confirming to him a total estate in Co. Monaghan amounting to over 4000 Irish acres (*Annex Q1*).

The one MacMahon exception was Colla Mac Brian MacMahon, who had his lands outside Shantonagh (north-west of Carrickmacross) restored to him after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Nevertheless, most of the native families in Monaghan (presumably including our own ancestors) managed to hang on as tenants on lands that they had formerly owned, despite Cromwell's edict of "To Hell or Connaught". This is borne out by the fact that the Hearth Roll Tax Lists of 1663 and 1665 (*Table K2*) listed many MacMahon families still occupying reasonably substantial properties in Monaghan.

However, analysis of this taxpayer data reveals that, between 1663 and 1665, the number of MacMahon families of substance declined from 91 to 82. Interestingly, there was a 50% decline in their numbers in the southern Barony of Farney, and only a 20% decline in the westerly Barony of Dartrey. Perhaps it was easier for the native Irish to retain leaseholds on the poorer land. Nevertheless, by 1665, there were still 23 MacMahon families of substance left in Farney and 29 in Dartrey (including that of a Roger MacMahon).¹⁰³

A measure of the continuing Gaelic presence on the land can also be gleaned from the 1659 census. The census tells us that there were 4,084 heads of households in Monaghan (of whom 3,649 were Irish), which would suggest a total population of around 20,000. Between the two Hearth Tax Lists, 2,600 taxpayers are named, very many of whom had Gaelic names. If we presume that these separate counts were totally accurate, the discrepancy between the census and the two lists perhaps indicates that there were 1,484 other heads of households whose cabins were so wretched that they had no chimneys!

In short, there does not appear to have been any mass exodus of MacMahons from Monaghan after 1650, although a smattering of younger sons would have left to either join one of the continental armies or to attend religious seminaries.¹⁰⁴

The following 150 years would have seen five succeeding generations in our MacMahon Family. The best that we can do is to make an educated guess as to how they fared during this period, prior to the family migrating into North Meath c.1800. Undoubtedly, they would have moved down the socio-economic ladder during this protracted period, but it is still quite remarkable that they somehow managed to emerge as relatively comfortable tenant farmers on Moate Farm in the early 19th century. No doubt this had required no small degree of tenacity, determination and pragmatism (and possibly a change of religion).

¹⁰³ The Anglicization of names is noteworthy by this time.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Roger of Enagh's uncle Hugh was ordained on the continent in the late 1600's, while his two brothers, Bernard and Ross were ordained on the continent in the early 18thc.

P.5 The Jacobite Period

Indeed, farm life in late 17th century Monaghan would have been hard, but probably not that different from that prevailing over the preceding centuries. Although the ownership of the land had now been taken from the MacMahons and the other Gaelic families, the rents that they were now supposed to pay rarely got paid. In many cases, it took years to sort out estate titles and organize estate management along English lines. Even when this was done, the new owners often sold their holdings or parts of them, and then titles and deeds had to be re-arranged all over again. Language and cultural barriers further slowed things down, as did the settlement of vague boundaries. As a result, even by as late as 1700, the rent from the vast Blaney estate did not exceed 30 pounds (*Ref 6*, page 124.).

When the Williamite Wars erupted in 1689-1691, there was little real military action in Monaghan itself, although two Jacobite regiments were recruited by Col. Art MacMahon and Col. Hugh MacMahon. When the "Patriot Parliament" sat in Dublin in 1689, Monaghan was represented by Brian MacMahon and Hugh MacMahon, both of whom had previously sat in the parliament of 1681. Naturally, their primary concern lay in the restoration of lost lands, and their efforts initially bore some fruit. In 1689, King James yielded to pressure and consented to an Act of Attainder which would have confiscated the estates of a large number of settlers unless they swore loyalty to James. The relevant Monaghan list had 153 names on it, and it can be safely assumed that none of these were in receipt of any rents during the short reign of King James. It can be equally assumed that many of the Irish participants'¹⁰⁵ loyalties in the approaching conflict owed more to a concern over land titles than religion.

Native Irish hopes were quickly dashed, however, with the Orange victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Following the even more tragic defeat at Aughrim and the formal surrender of the Jacobite forces at Limerick the following year, most members of the MacMahon regiments headed for the continent, although presumably some individual soldiers did trickle back to Monaghan. For those MacMahons who had sided with the Jacobites, their land-holding problems were surely compounded in the post-1690 period. If they had not been pushed out by the Cromwellian settlement of the 1650's, the final pressure would have come from the land grants given out to the disbanded Williamite forces and others after 1691.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Many of the professional troops (on both sides) at the Battle of the Boyne were imported from the European continent.

¹⁰⁶ Inniskeen in S.E. Monaghan became the Bath Estate in 1692 (*Ref.33*)

P.6 The 18th Century

Over the four generations (131 years) that would elapse between the Hearth Money Roll of 1665 and the recording of the 71 McMahon flax growers in 1796, we must assume that a decline in socio-economic standing occurred among the native Irish, including the Roger MacMahons of Dartrey (*Figure P8*). Nevertheless, it is probable that those who had forfeited gentry status as a result of rebellion would have desperately clung to whatever vestiges remained of their former station in life.

Certainly, in the case of the Dartrey MacMahons, the Church continued to provide an appealing avenue to respectability and distinction. While large landed estates were a thing of the past, it was no small distinction to have three Bishops of Clogher (and subsequently Armagh) in the family!

Quite apart from the insecurity of farm tenure during the 17th and 18th centuries, matters would have been made more difficult for demographic reasons alone. The number of MacMahon descendents would have multiplied over the course of four generations.

In any case, as the 18th century progressed, a shortage of available land would have inevitably led to a rapid descent from freehold farmer status to that of tenant farmers.

Some younger sons in each succeeding generation would have chosen military service abroad and others would have joined the priesthood. Some others, such as a Roger MacMahon of Ballybay (*see below*), may have taken up a trade. The less enterprising may even have been reduced to landless labourer status.

Regardless, farm life in Monaghan continued much as before. It was a subsistence economy, where the farmers reared cattle, sheep and horses, and grew whatever crops were required for their own use. The daunting task facing the new British owners was that of introducing a market economy. Their preferred route would have been to plant British settlers on their estates, but it proved difficult in the early 18th century to attract them in any great numbers. There had been a fall-off in the demand for beef throughout Europe and, to protect their own farmers, the English had forbidden the importation of Irish cattle. In addition, this was a time of periodic harvest failures and animal diseases in Ireland. In these kinds of circumstances, prospective British tenants would often have been reluctant to enter into long-term leases. Irish tenants were less reluctant, but the new landlords doubted both their intentions and their willingness to pay. Nevertheless, desperate landlords often granted leases under favourable conditions. Such conditions included 'fee farms,' where a portion of each farm was granted in perpetuity at a fixed rent or, alternatively, on a 'lease of three lives,' where three people were nominated and the lease continued until all three died. Other arrangements were for leases of 21-31 years.

In Farney, whence our own Roger (The Chiseller) McMahon presumably came, the bulk of the farmers held their land from middlemen for much of the early 18th

century. Because these farmers did not hold direct leases, they had no security and were unable to build up enhanced value in their farms. Meanwhile, as the 18th century progressed, both trade and farming practices improved throughout the county. By 1739, the rearing of sheep, horses and cattle had given way to tillage, particularly on the better lands of Farney. Of course, greater income from farm produce resulted in ever higher rents, especially given the competition for land from a growing population.

Gradually the county was given a system of roads that linked the towns and gave access to large tracts of hitherto inaccessible land. The great-grandfather and grandfather of Roger MacMahon (1764-1843) of Ballybay (central Monaghan) were among those employed as road surveyors in 1751. His family was definitely Jacobite and royal (an ancestor had died at the Boyne). Intriguingly enough, he was roughly contemporaneous with our own Roger the Chiseller, was descended from a father and great grandfather who were both named Roger, but unfortunately does not appear to be related to our own family (his last male descendent, John James, died in 1886). He may, however, have been one of the three Roger McMahons listed as flax growers in Monaghan in 1796 (*Annex KI*).

After 1760, the number of labourers and cottiers rapidly increased. Because of population growth, land was becoming an increasingly scarce commodity. As the flow of money increased, many small farmers began to negotiate their own leases directly with the landlords. These farmers began to bid up the rents so high on one another that it then became imperative to work each farm to its full capacity. This, in turn, necessitated the hiring of cottiers, each of whom would get about a half acre set aside for his own use. The cottier worked for the farmer and was paid, at most, one new penny a day. There was, of course, a definite difference in rank and standard of living between the tenant farmer and the lowly cottier. If nothing else, the tenant farmer ate well, enjoyed a certain amount of respectability and was expected to marry into farming stock.¹⁰⁷ Understandably, it was easier to sink to the level of cottier than it was to rise to the rank of tenant farmer. Even those who succeeded in securing good tenancies found that they were never secure, and they were certainly not guaranteed to pass from one generation to the next (*Annexes Q2* and *Q3*).

Nevertheless, our own ancestors seemingly managed to somehow maintain the rank of tenant farmer throughout the century, given that this was apparently their status when they first migrated into North Meath.

¹⁰⁷ Not unlike conditions prevailing on the Maio farm two centuries later.

P.7 Royal Pedigree of Clann Mac Mathghamhna

The information presented here was obtained from Reference 18 which in turn was based on authenticated information from surviving Irish Annals and historians (*Refs 6, 17, 20, 30, 31, 32*). A Royal pedigree is postulated (*Annex P.8*) going back to Eochaid Mac Mathghamhna, 1250-1273 some of whose descendents formed the 'Clan Arghal McMahan'. Some of Arghal's descendents were known as the Dartrey McMahons (*Ref 9*). Here the rare name, Roger, shows up as an 18th century Dartrey McMahan.

Roger's uncle Hugh (born 1660) and his brothers, Bernard (born 1680) and Ross Roe (born 1698), were sequentially Bishops of Clogher from 1707-1747 and later Bishops of Armagh. Hugh's generation was born in Cavany, Co. Monaghan. Bernard and Ross Roe were born in Enagh,¹⁰⁸ Co. Monaghan, although it appears as if their mother was a MacMahon from Corravilla, Co. Cavan.¹⁰⁹

Beside the name of Roger's third brother, Cullagh, is the notation of 'conformed.' This possibly means that he turned Protestant in order to retain title to what was left of the family estate. There is no indication of how Roger himself earned a living.

The evidence seems to indicate that most of the remaining Dartrey MacMahon lands were lost following Cromwell's conquest in 1650. Some of these lands were acquired by Cornet Richard Dawson during the period 1654-59, whose descendents later became Earls of Dartrey and Viscounts Cremorne (page 161).

¹⁰⁸ This may have been the townland of Enagh in Rockcorry, Enagh in Lisnaveane, Enagh in Magheraclone, Carrickmacross or (most likely) Enagh in Ematrix.

¹⁰⁹ Hugh – Clogher, 1707-1715. Armagh, 1715-1737.
Bernard – Clogher, 1715-1737. Armagh, 1737-1747.
Ross – Clogher 1737-1747. Armagh 1747-1748.

P.8 Line of Descent: (25 to 26 generations)

From *Figure P7* and *Figure P8*, it was possible to propose an extra 12 generations¹¹⁰ of MacMahons prior to our defined Generation 1 (1610-1639) as follows:

G-11	Eochaid 1250-1273	G?	<i>(William? circa 1715-circa 1780 (possible intervening generation or Hugh, son of Culagh)</i>
G-10	Roaibh, Lord of Dartree died 1314	G5	Roger of Magheracloone (The Chiseller) <i>circa</i> 1735-1813: moved to Moate, Co. Meath
G-9	Aodh died 1344	G6	Tithe William <i>circa</i> 1765- <i>circa</i> 1840 (m. Drake?)
G-8	Brian Mór died 1372	G7	James (m. Anne Cahill) <i>circa</i> 1795- <i>circa</i> 1870, Rev. Peter, Thomas?, John?, Robert?
G-7	Arghal died 1427	G8	William 1819-1900 (m. Jane Monaghan), Peter 1834-, John 1822-, Hugh 1830-
G-6	Ruairi died 1446	G9	Patrick 1868-1952 (m. Margaret Farrelly), Peter 1863-1939, Jim 1865- <i>circa</i> 1940, John 1859-
G-5	Eoghan of Dartree died 1467	G10	Eugene 1904-1978 (m. Florence Doyle), Jennie 1906- 1987, Paddy 1912-, Jim 1910-2000
G-4	Sean Buí died 1492	G11	Patrick 1937-, Larry 1941-, Eugene 1943-, Mary 1945-, Brendan 1949-
G-3	Aodh died 1505	G12	Caroline 1964 -, Brian 1965 -, Peter 1967-, Robert 1967-, Eoin 1968 -, Fiona 1968-, Katie 1970 -, Colin 1972-, Sarah 1976-, Steven 1973-, Elizabeth 1981-
G-2	Aodh Óg died 1577	G13	Maximilian 1996-, Hannah 2003-, Ellie 2006-
G-1	Sir Brian na mBarrog died 1620/1622 (m. daughter of Hugh O'Neill)		
Go	Art Óg died 1634, Lord of Dartry (m. daughter of Ever MacMahon of Monaghan)		
G1	Patrick <i>circa</i> 1610-1635		
G2	Colla Dubh (m. niece of Owen Roe O'Neill) <i>circa</i> 1630- <i>circa</i> 1695 (contemporary with Dartry Roger of the 1665 Hearth Rolls)		
G3	Patrick <i>circa</i> 1655- <i>circa</i> 1725 ¹¹¹ (married a McMahon from Corravilla, Co. Cavan)		
G4	Roger of Enagh, Dartrey <i>circa</i> 1690- <i>circa</i> 1760 ¹¹² /Eliz. Beatie?+ Culagh of Rockfield		

¹¹⁰ Shown as generations G-11 to Go

¹¹¹ Had two other sons, Bernard and Ross, who in the period 1715-1748, successively became Bishops of Clogher and Armagh. The senior line of this family were living in Dundalk a century later. This was presumably the descendents of their first son, Colough of Rockfield (who 'conformed'), and his son, Hugh.

¹¹² It may be stretching it a little, but why couldn't G.6 William have been named after someone in the maternal line, e.g a G.5 cousin, a G.4 maternal grand-uncle or even a G.3 gt-grandfather? If so, it is possible that *the Beatie family, who were definitely Church of Ireland, could provide the linkage back to The Boyne. When Elizabeth Beatie married G.4 Roger MacMahon in 1718, the wedding list could well have included a nephew, a brother or a father named William*.

Some difficulty was encountered in attempting to tailor the earliest generations (G-11 to G1) to the format outlined in *Table A2* (page 67), where a 30 year time frame was postulated for each generation. Whereas the dates shown for each name in the later historical period from G2 to G10 show the actual or estimated life-span in each of these generations, the dates shown for the preceding generations (G-11 to G1) merely represent their dates of death (except in the cases of G-11 and G1, where the dates presumably represent their reigns). Strictly speaking, Eochaidh was likely born before 1250, and should therefore fall into G-12. It also seems likely that G1 Patrick and G2 Colla Dubh were actually born in G0 and G1 respectively. However, for simplicity's sake, we have retained and labeled them in their historical sequence as heads of the family for each successive generation.

G? William is entirely speculative. If he did not exist at all, then we could entertain the following scenario:

G4 Roger of Enagh: – born *circa* 1690 – married a protestant, Eliz. Beatie, in 1718
– settled in the Carrickmacross area
(where they became known as the 'Newtown McMahons')
– begat their youngest protestant son, Roger of Magheraclone,
circa 1735
– died *circa* 1760 (aged 70)

Magheraclone Roger became a tenant farmer on the Shirley estate *circa* 1855

In the 1790's, G.5 Roger migrated with his family into North Meath, where he acquired a tenancy in Moate (the farm was later taken over by his son, G.6 William).

G5 Roger died *circa* 1815, and was buried in Robertstown.

Note That the elapsed time between G.4 Roger's birth *circa* 1690 and G.5 Roger's death *circa* 1815 is 125 years. This would not be unreasonable, if G.5 Roger was indeed G.4 Roger's youngest child. Indeed, the passing of a century or more could well explain the absence of any folk memory of the family's presumed former status as gentry in Dartrey in the late 17th century. In fact, yet another century would have passed by the time that our father, G.10 Eugene was born in 1904. In the circumstances, it would be surprising had any such folk memory survived the interceding six generations. On the other hand, the family's presumed Protestantism would likely have been relinquished at a much later date, and was therefore retained in the folk memory by at least one member of the G10 generation.

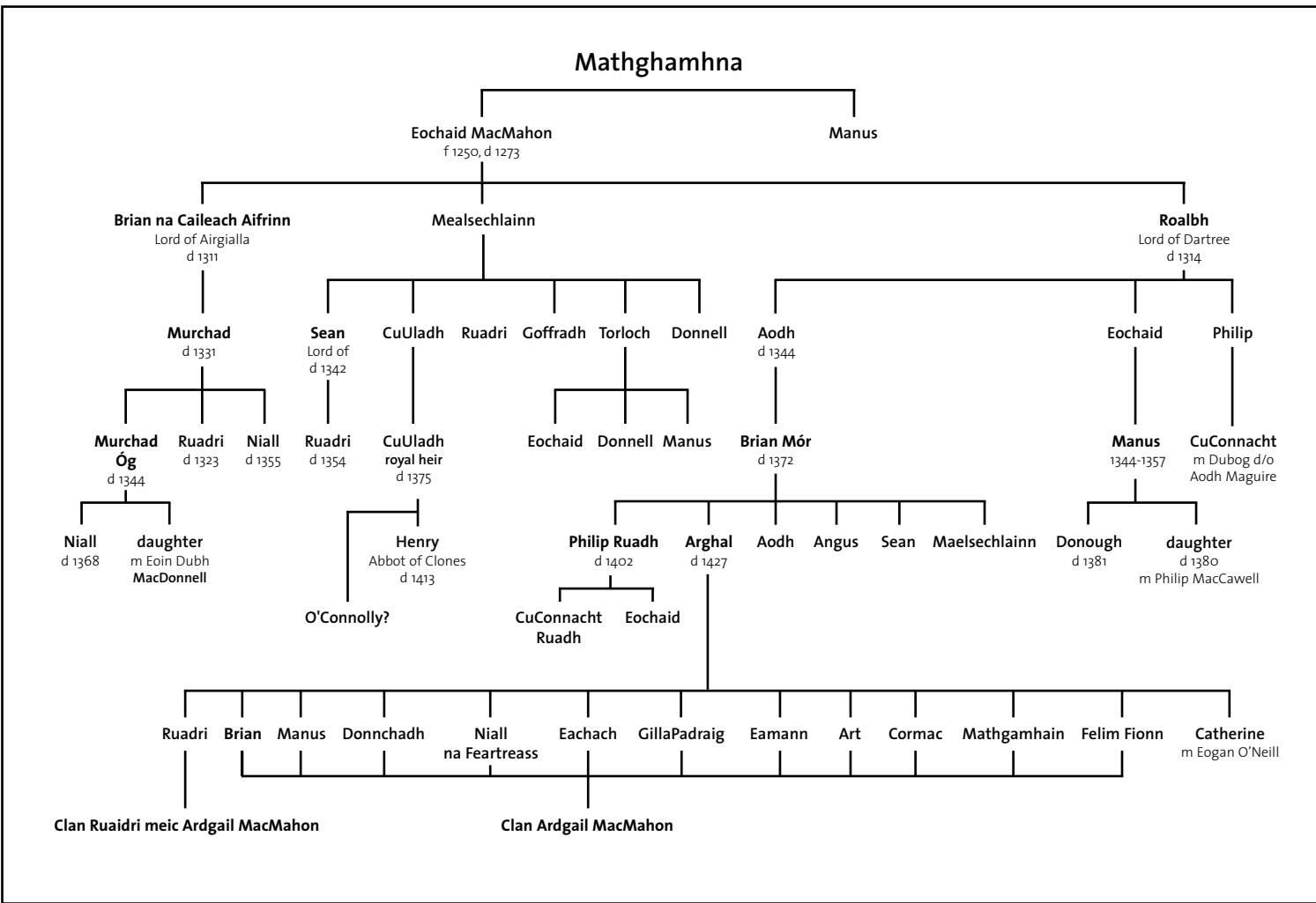


Figure P7: Linear Descent from Eochaid MacMahon, King of Oriel, d. 1273.¹¹³

¹¹³ The MacMahon Kings of Oriel are shown in bold.

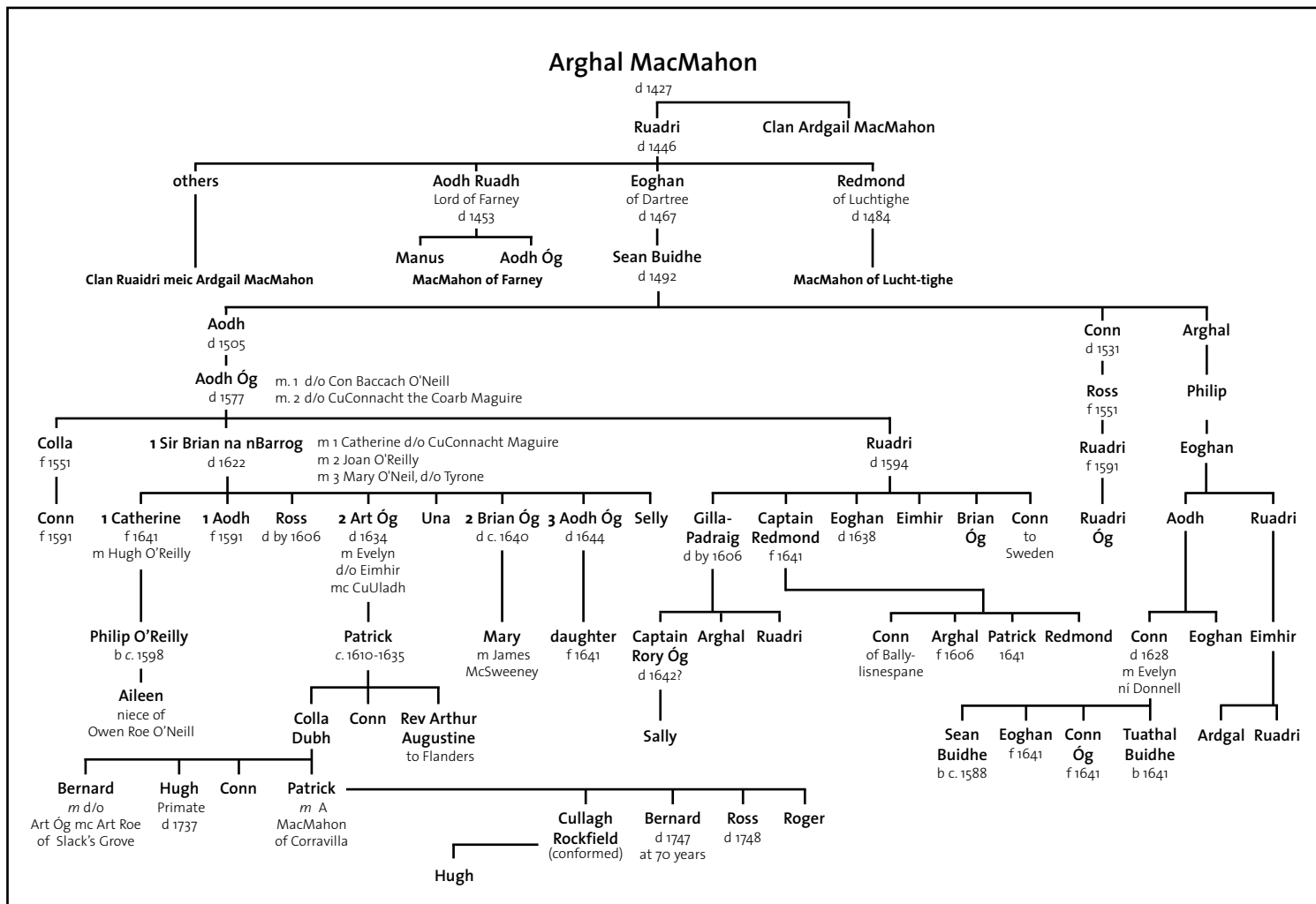


Figure P8: Dartree MacMahons

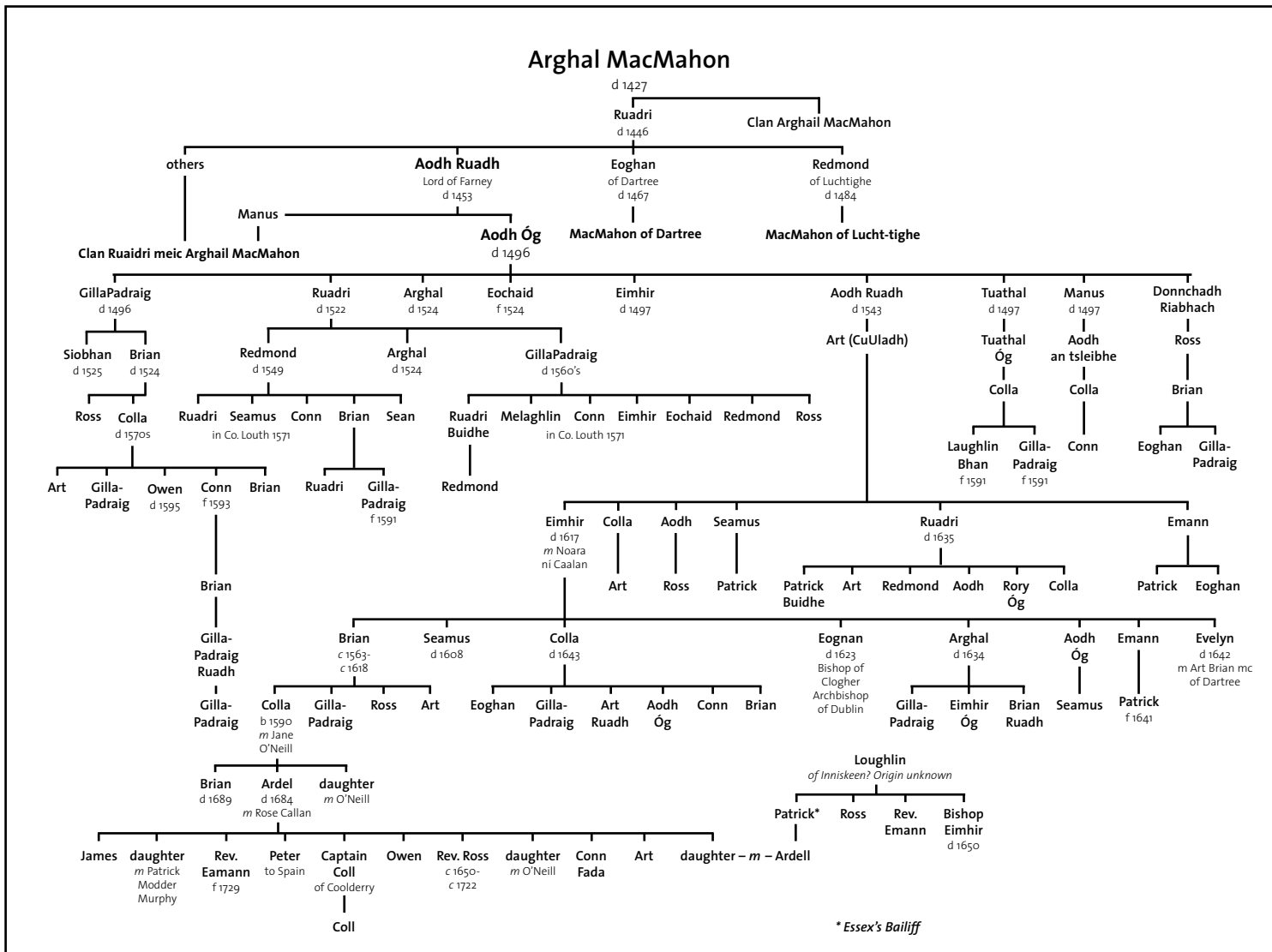


Figure P9: MacMahon of Farney

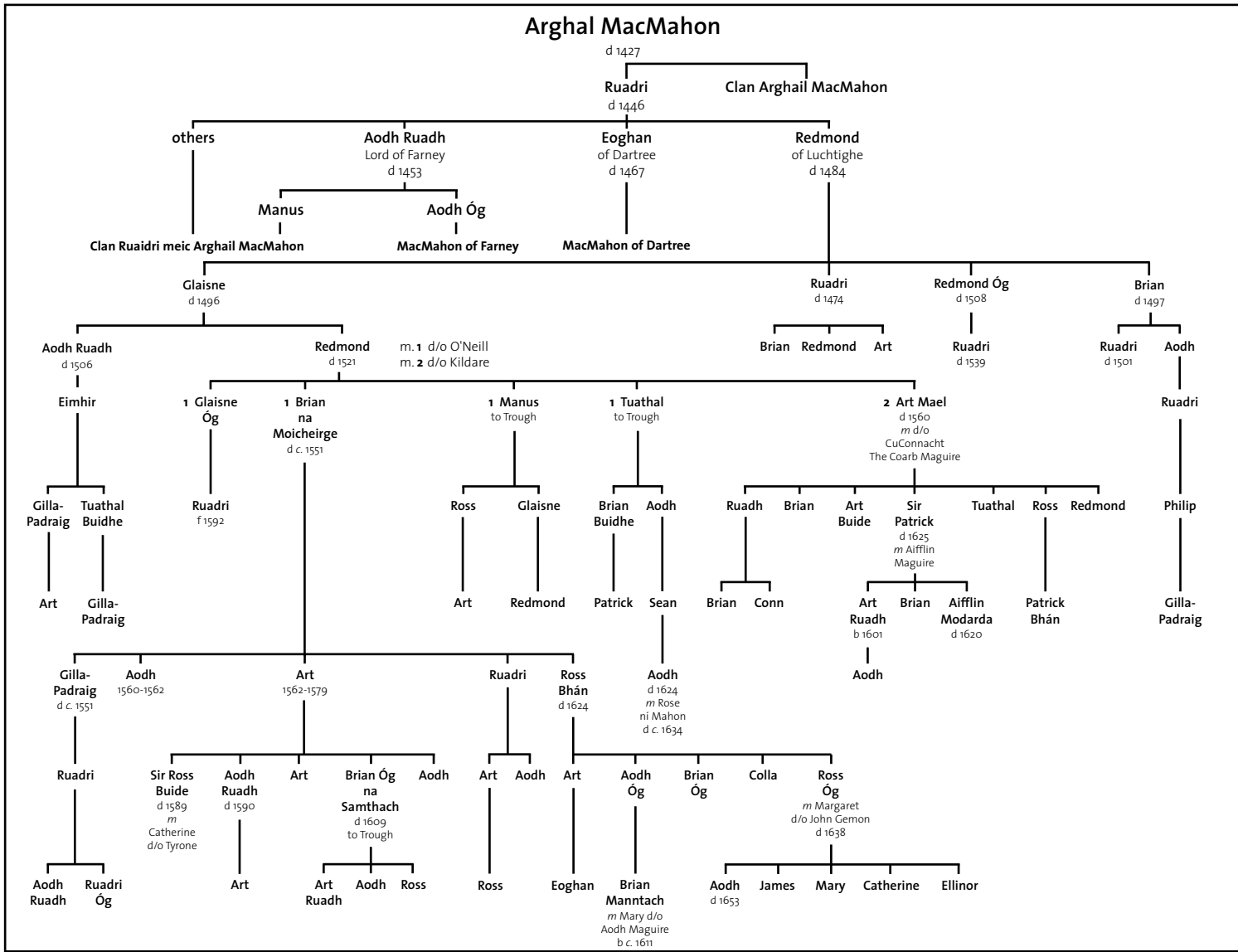


Figure P10: MacMahon of Lucht-Tighe

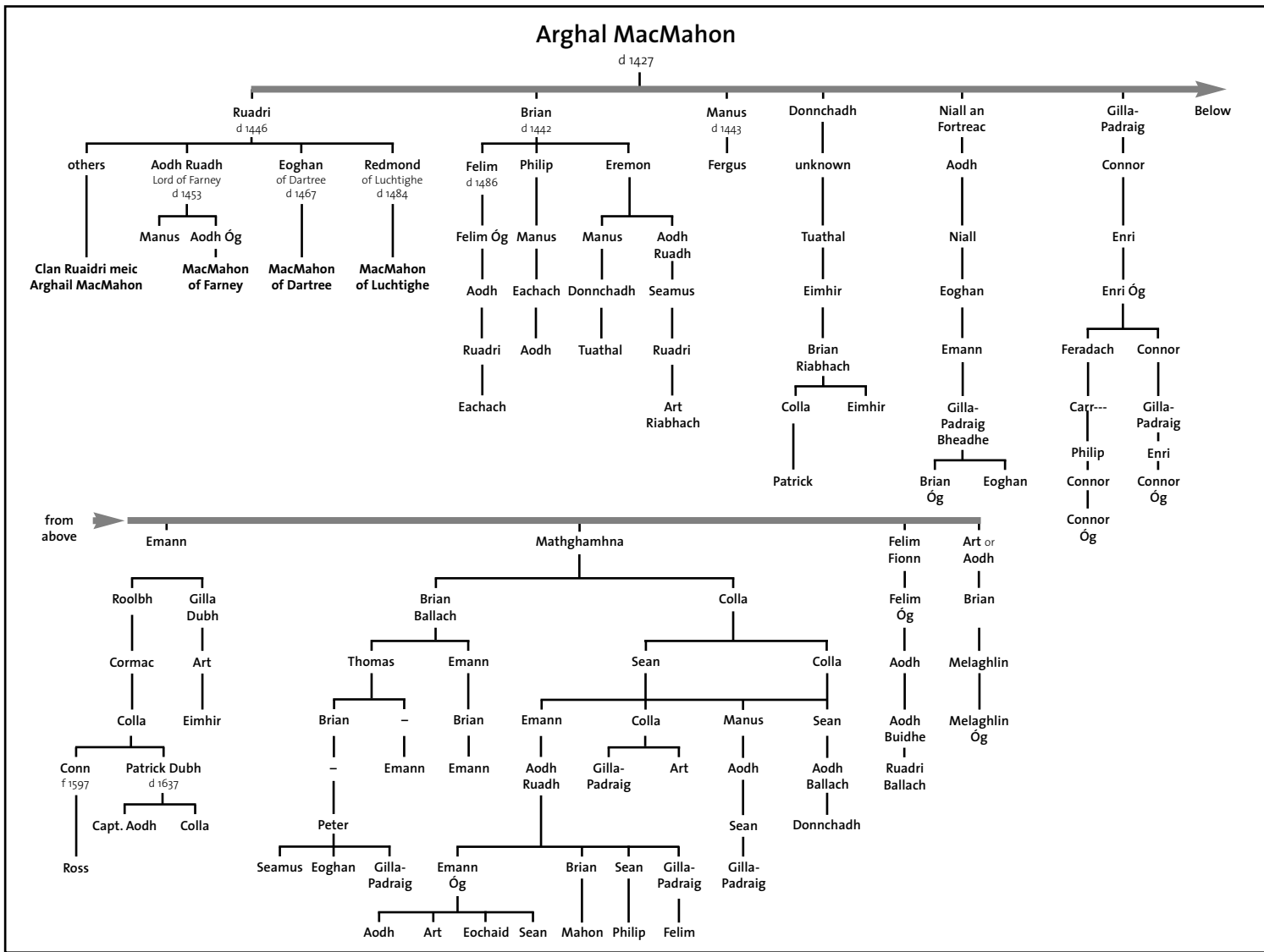


Figure P11: Clan Arghail

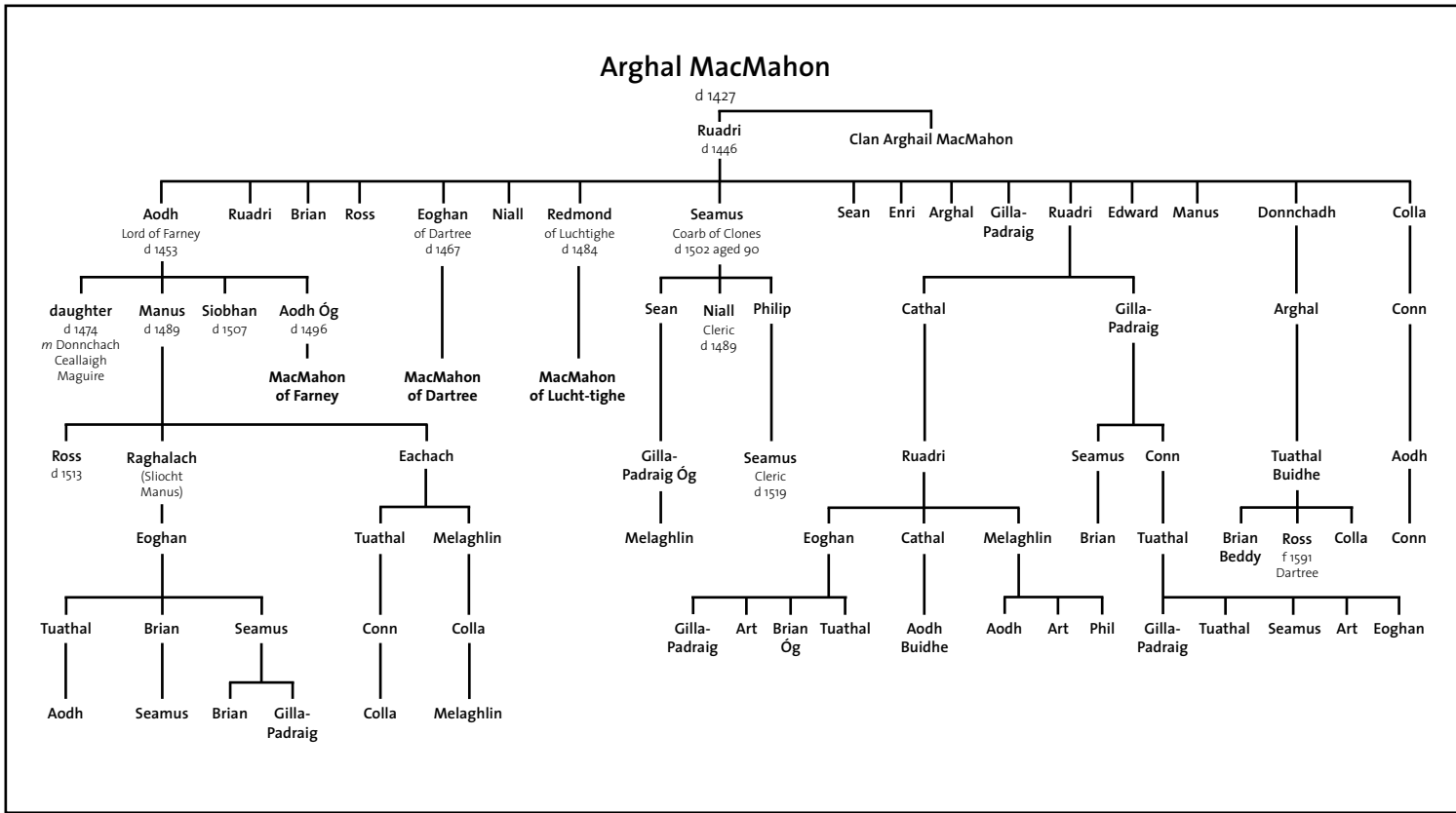


Figure P12: Clan Ruaidri

Q Socio-Economic Conditions in South Monaghan in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries

Extracts from a variety of sources on conditions pertaining to South Monaghan are set out in this Annex.

Q.1 Confiscation of MacMahon Lands in Dartrey

Cornet Richard Dawson's patent of 1667(D/3053/5/1-6): "Lists deeds of sale to Cornet Richard Dawson and his fellow soldiers of debentures for lands in the Baronies of Dartrey and Cremorne 1654-59: power of attorney to Cornet Richard Dawson from members of Col. Robert Venable's troops of horse, authorizing him to act for them in respect of their claims for payment in land, 1661, with a copy of the claim and a statement of the lands earmarked for Venable's troops, 1662, and further sales of lands to Dawson, 1662-66; patent confirming to Dawson lands in the Baronies of Dartrey and Cremorne, 1667" (*Ref 17*).

The Dawson Estate was enlarged to 17,415 statute acres by the mid-1800's and a family seat was established at Dawson's Grove, in Kilcrow, where Richard Dawson¹¹⁴ settled on the banks of that chain of lakes which separate Cavan and Monaghan. Ultimately, the family acquired the titles of Earl of Dartrey and Viscount Cremorne.

Q.2 Political Unrest on Shirley estate, 1793

Extract from a letter from John Campbell, assistant agent for the Shirley Estate, to the landlord, Evelyn John Shirley, in 1793:

"(The Defenders) have carried their outrages to great extremity, and as they were all Roman Catholics and the Protestants alone were the objects of their fury, there was not a Protestant house in the country that they had not stripped of its arms and other weapons of defence, and after nightfall it was at the peril of his life for a Protestant to

¹¹⁴ Possibly the family after whom Dublin's Dawson Street is named

stir out of his dwelling. The few on your estate about the lands of Shangus suffered much from them, and about Magheracluone, where they are all papists, there was scarce an inhabitant who was not a Defender... They began to hint in very strong terms that no cess or tithes should hereafter be paid, and the next that followed would inevitably be the rent... The Protestants and the Presbyterians having united, begin now to retaliate on the catholics, and indeed have dispersed the greatest part of the Defenders. Some of the people of Magheracluone (not your tenants, but those on the Church lands) have suffered, which probably will keep the remainder quiet”.

Q.3 Insecurity of Tenure on Shirley Estate, 1778

Extract from a letter from James Goldfrap (an agent in the Carrickmacross area) to George Shirley in 1778, complaining about the results of mismanagement by the former agent:

“Mr. Taylor, when he set the estate, would not grant leases to many of the former tenants. I suppose he found out better people. But so it is that the old tenants still keep possession..., and will not suffer the new lessees to enter upon their lands. Of course, no rent is paid by either party. I ought not to receive it from the former, and the latter will not pay until they are put into possession”.

Q.4 Projected Expiry of Leases on Shirley Estate, late 18th century

Following the death of Goldfrap (see above), the new agent, Arthur noble, wrote to George Shirley Jr. in 1788 as to how he could extract more rental income from the tenants:

“Mr. Taylor, who was sent to Ireland by your father to let the estate, was perfectly ignorant of the value of the lands in this country. The tenants, however ignorant they may be in many instances, had cunning sufficient to make their advantage of this circumstance, and he perfected leases to them of 21 years at the yearly rent of 8,652 pounds (in total). Was the estate to let at this time, it would let for 12,000 pounds a year...But most of the tenants have nine years of their leases to expire from the first day of May next (1789), some 12 or 13, and some 19 (the tenants in Carrickmacross)...

My proposal to you and the other proprietors of the estate is, that I will become your tenant for the whole estate from the first day of May next, and pay you yearly 10,000 pounds English, which is 10,833.6.8 pounds Irish...I just calculate that I shall be able to pay you the rent I propose, and have 500 pounds a year for my trouble...”

Ten years later, a letter from Norman Steele in 1798 to Evelyn Shirley makes comment on the source of much of this rental money:

“The linen manufacture...is a principal source of the rents of your estate”.

Q.5 **List of Tenancies on Shirley Estate, 1771**

Among the contents of The Shirley Papers are isolate rentals for 1726 and 1771, as well as those for the period 1800-1940.

For instance, the rental for 1771, which is described as “Rental of Hon. George Shirley’s estate”, gives denominations, tenants’ names, area, terms for which held, and half-yearly rent; besides an alphabetical index of tenants, notes on Irish Acts affecting the relations of landlord and tenant, and general memoranda about the estate.

Q.6 **Description of Rural Poverty on Shirley Estate, 1843**

As written (from a paternalistic perspective) by the agent, W.S.Trench:

“On this property there are many tenants’ houses where there are neither windows, bedsteads, tables nor chairs, and hundreds destitute of one or more of these comforts, I might rather call them necessaries. How can they have any idea of the value of comfort and decency? It is true they are accustomed to no better, but still they feel their misery; and being destitute, without any prospect of alleviation, and without knowing how to remedy it, they are servile and fawning whilst under restraint, and wild and reckless and savage whenever that restraint be from whatever cause removed. A decent habitation cannot be had without windows, diet will not appear detestable unless there be good light in the house to point it out. Windows should I think be given to all proper well-conducted tenants, on condition that other improvements be made...you will seldom see a man who has his house and homestead decent who will leave his Land in weeds and neglect.”

Q.7 **Subscribers to the Troy Bible, 1794**

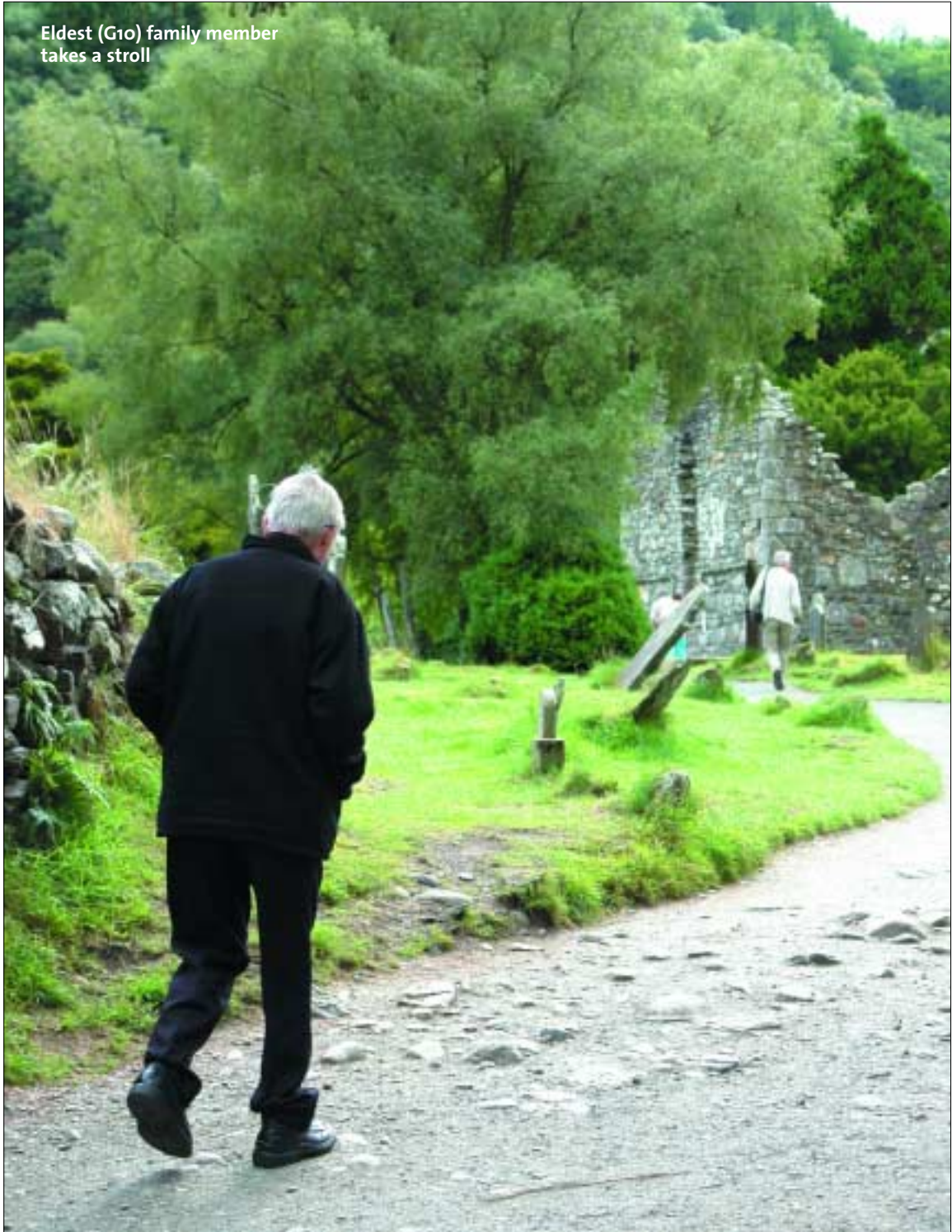
This subscribers’ list for a Catholic bible contains the name of a Hugh McMahon. The subscribers would in all likelihood have been elderly and quite religious.

We are surmising that Hugh may have been the son of Cullagh MacMahon of Dartrey (who had turned Protestant in order to retain title to the family estate) and nephew of Roger MacMahon of Dartrey.¹¹⁵ If so, two others of his uncles were Catholic bishops, so it would not be at all surprising to see Cullagh’s children return to the Catholic faith in later years.

If this is the same Hugh McMahon who had as a young man moved from Dartrey to Dundalk (where he went into business), it is possible that he had eventually settled in the Carrickmacross area in his later years. If such were the case, we could also surmise that he was the father (or uncle) of Roger McMahon of Magheraclone (born *circa* 1835) who was named after his uncle (or father). The latter Roger could then have migrated into North Meath *circa* 1800 to establish our family in the Moate-Robertstown area.

¹¹⁵ Roger of Dartrey (possible uncle, father or grandfather of G.5 Roger) was still alive and well in Monaghan in 1750, when he dedicated the tombstones of his two late brothers, the Bishop MacMahons of Clogher.

Eldest (G10) family member
takes a stroll



R Reminiscences

“So you’re writing a book, are you? Good man yourself. You should go and see so and so, he’d have a lot to tell you.” Remarks like these greeted Valentine Farrell from all sides as he researched his book (*Ref 14*). He interviewed many people and one of these, Joe McMahon, he has reported in the speaker’s own words. The following extract (R.1) was taken from Reference 14. Less detailed recollections of one of the authors (*PM*) are shown at R.2.

R.1 “The Way We Were”: Joe McMahon, Rathbawn

I was born in 1896. Father Mullen baptised me. They say he was a very saintly man, never had any money because he gave it away to the poor. I went to school in Cormeen as we lived in Leitrim at that time. It was Master Rogers that was teaching in it. It was an old school, two storeyed. Mrs. Rogers taught the girls upstairs and we were taught downstairs. Then I went to Kileeter school because there was a good teacher called Master Sheridan. He was a brother of old Mrs. Murchan. Rogers was getting careless in his latter days and some of the time I was teaching the younger lads. So when the school was being moved up to Newcastle chapel yard, I never went. I went to Kileeter. The new school that replaced my old school at Cormeen was built in 1912. It has since been closed and was up for sale, but I never heard tell of anyone buying it.

There were six of us in the family, three boys and three girls. I’m the youngest. The eldest boy joined the Dublin police. He died when he was sixty. He was with the police during the Troubled Times. They were not like the RIC. They did not come under the lash of the IRA. They were paid by the Dublin Corporation. We had to work very hard when we were young. There were very bad prices for everything. Those without land were worse off. They just had an existence. My father used to employ an odd casual worker, planting potatoes and cutting hay with scythes. But sure all they had was twelve bob a week It was great to be able to pay them twelve bob at the time. They were glad of it



Figure R1: Moynalty village about the time of the First World War.

The land we had we bought off people by the name of Cahill.¹¹⁶ My grandfather, Peter McMahon, was a dealer – he used to buy oats and eggs. He wanted a place along the road for his business, that's why he bought it.

There were twenty seven statute acres in it and all he gave for it was £200. Still, it was supposed to be a good price at the time. He got it with the good will of the people.

There was a lot of emigration. Sure I think they nearly all emigrated when I was young. Any of them that had money to go to America, went to it, and more of them would go to Glasgow. You could get from Belfast to Glasgow for seven and sixpence (37^{1/2}p).

Some few of them might stay at home and hire with farmers, but it was slave labour. All they'd have is £5 or £6 for the half year, and working hard at that. A lot of them worked their passage to America. It was taken as part of life. They didn't resent it. The only thing then was, I suppose, that after a time they sent home a few bob to cheer up their parents. Most of the emigration was around the year 1900 and on that time.

¹¹⁶ Perhaps related to his grandfather, Big Peter's sister-in-law, Anne Cahill (our gt.gt.grandmother).



Figure R2: Moynalty Village as it is today (2007).

I was telling you that Fr. Mullen baptised me. Well, after that there was Fr. Kenny. He didn't stay long. He was supposed to be a gentleman's son. There was some dispute in the parish at the time over land and some of them called him a yellow beggar to his face.

He was asking on the altar one Sunday for subscriptions and offerings and he said, "I hope, my dear people, you'll do what I'm asking you, even if I am a 'yellow beggar.'"

Fr. Brogan came after that and I'm telling you he didn't take any backlash from them. He was tough, but to tell the truth he wanted to be tough. They'd rub their feet in a priest they wouldn't give him any offerings. He made them pay up. The people were afraid of him and still withall I never was afraid of him.

Them times there used to be stations in the houses. They'd be twice a year in our place.

He'd come once and the curate would come the second time. It was to give people that could not go to the chapel a chance to get Confession and Holy Communion. Fr. Brogan used to come at 8 o'clock sharp, but the curate wouldn't come until 10 o'clock He was a man called Fr. O'Connor. He was a jolly sort of man.

The stations were popular. The people would crowd in for them. But then it came that you had to ask to have stations and after a while they finished.

I remember the time when a person would die, the Mass would be offered for them in the house, and the person would be 'waked' in the house for three days. The funeral would be from the house and the priest would come and raise the offerings on a table in the yard. I often saw the corpse 'waked' outside in the barn. I served Mass for Fr. O'Connor in a barn. We'd spread 'ould' oat bags on the ground not to have him kneeling on the dirt. It wasn't the rule at the time that they'd go to Church.

Then that was changed altogether and I think it was a good rule. It seems to have come from the Penal Times when they had no other alternative but to have Mass at home. I didn't hear all that much about the Penal Times when I was young. I did hear that there was a hedge schoolmaster about Tiercork someplace. There was supposed to be £5 on a schoolmaster's head and £10 on a priest's head.

You'd hear all kinds of yarns long ago. There were stories about the forts. There was a fort over there in the field and they used to say that an army would gather up there in the evening and march underground across the country to McCarthy's fort. It was your ancestors that owned the land at the time, the Farrells. And there was another army, we believed in Shancarnan and the two would have a row underground. We believed that at the time. I mind one time I was coming over across the field and there was a fellow from the Government surveying the land – they called him a Sapper or something. He was going over across the fields anyway and he says to me, "I suppose you get them cobbling shoes up in that fort yet." "Oh, they're there every night," says I. The leprechauns, you know.

They used to have football when I was young, but sure there was no law or order over it. They'd just gather up in a field and play. I played myself. Sure they'd have nail boots on and kick the shins off each other, no rules at all. There was no one over it. It only got organised after the IRA times. The Black and Tans wouldn't allow it.

I remember the making of the roads. They were on contract. Some man would put in for making the road. The gravel would be put on in patches here and there. On a bike you'd have to be in and out between the dumps. Old Johnny Reilly, the father of the Johnny that died lately, they called him Johnny 'Johnty,' he used to do a lot of contracting. They used to plough along the side and put an edge to it with a shovel.

Then it went to direct labour employed by the council. Then they started to do an odd bit of tarring, a mile here and there, and that was a great thing in those days. That started about 1914 or 1916.

I never learnt any Irish when I was at school. The only one who taught any Irish then was a man called Dan Lynch. He had an Irish class in Moynalty at one time, outside school hours of course. The teachers had to go off to learn Irish at one time. Then there was a Master Wren in Cormeen after Master Rogers. He started a night school below in Newcastle, in the hall. I went. I thought he was a great teacher. He was from Clare.

I remember your grandfather coming home from Australia. I was very young at the time. They used to say he was the first man that ever brought a motor car into Moynalty parish. I heard it said that he was coming down Screeboge hill in it one day and that it went out of control and he couldn't stop it. He cut across Carrick cross nearly without seeing it. But sure there was very little traffic in those days. He wouldn't do it today. He was 'fond of a drop' and they say that field above Moynalty, 'The Clooney,' sure he had it mortgaged to Smith for beer. A lot of us bought land at his auction at the time and some people didn't like it and we were put down as land-grabbers.

But before the Farrells came here I can tell you who was here. They were people by the name of Carney that lived in the Steward's place, where Bradleys are now. There were more Carneys here in Rathbawn – they built that big house, and more again in Rathstephen. The big house in Rathbawn was built with the stones of the chapel in Rathbawn. Carney knocked it down. The priest wanted him to leave it as a landmark, but he knocked it. It is said that there was someone in with Fr. McMahon, in where Collins is living now, and they heard the church being knocked. When the priest heard it he said the day would come when there wouldn't be the name of a Carney in the parish. But sure maybe that's not true at all.

I'll tell you a story about the Maxwells of Maxwell's cross. They had a pub there, and they had a golden goose and five golden eggs. But they came into financial trouble and they had to sell the goose and the eggs, and they sold them to your family, the Farrells. Well, they were sold again when John Arthur's effects were sold off after he died. I don't know where they are now. Maxwell's Cross will always be known as that because it's on the map. The stagecoach horses used to be changed there on their way from Dublin. There was a livery stables there. Well, that's the whole 'pots and pans, ifs and ands' of it. Is that enough for you?

R.2 Childhood Recollections of Patrick McMahon

As a child, from the mid 1940s to early 1950s, I spent many of my summer holidays on the Maio farm and can remember those experiences vividly. Indeed on one occasion, during a prolonged National School strike, I was there for nine or ten months and, had the strike continued, was about to attend the local school. My grandparents were in their late seventies by this time but I can still remember my grandmother mashing huge cauldrons of potatoes (about four times the size of the one outside the door on the book cover) to feed the pigs. It was run as a mixed farm and appeared to me at the time to have been an efficient self-sufficient operation. They ran sheep, cattle (about six cows and their calves), plough horses and a pony for the trap, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and geese. They cropped wheat, oats, barley, hay, potatoes, root vegetables and flax for the linen industry at one stage. They cut and dried turf from their own piece of bog (about half a mile down the bog road). In the

cottage, there was a traditional Irish farm kitchen with an ingle-nook fireplace with cast iron fittings, bellows and, as I remember it, sides of bacon being smoked in the chimney. There was again, a traditional settle-bed along one wall and next to it, the long case clock. In the dairy, then attached as a separate room at the end of the house, our grandmother churned butter for family use; she sold any surplus butter and eggs to the travelling shop. All in all, very much 'The Good Life' style of living which some people hanker after today. It was definitely 'organic' as pesticides etc had not been invented then – the one exception was copper sulphate for the prevention of potato blight. Strange as it may seem to some people today, who might think this was an ideal lifestyle, to my grandparents, uncle and aunt, it was hard back-breaking work which they had little choice but to do in order to survive. They certainly didn't see it as an idealistic lifestyle.

Up to the 1950s, little had been done to the house since it was built over a 100 years before, except for the change from a hard-baked earthen floor to a concrete one laid by my father Eugene and his brother Paddy. Uncle Jim (and my grandfather before him) lacked any ambition to improve the place but people didn't then in case the landlord would be tempted to increase the rent. Uncle Jim was notorious for being the last in the district to agree to electrification, thus depriving the whole area of electricity until the mid fifties. When I knew it, the house had no electricity, no pumped water and no toilet facilities at all. Water was carried, usually by my aunt, from the well half way down the field – until it went dry – then from a well near the bridge about three-quarters of a mile away.

Improvements were instigated, and usually carried out by my other uncle, Fr Paddy on his five or ten-year returns from the mission fields. His improvements included installing a kitchen range, building a porch and installing an Elsan (a chemical toilet).

In the late fifties or early sixties, a combination of cost and the non-availability of thatchers in the area may be the reasons for the replacement of the thatched roof by corrugated iron. *Figure 8* gives some idea of what the original was like (the thatch did not extend to cover the parlour then). What I can say is that the cottage never looked as well as it does today, following its restoration by the present owners.



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