

Vision for Nolan Family Research

I believe that it is possible to overcome many of the "brick wall" problems faced by Nolan family researchers through collective effort.

The magic ingredient required to make this possible is a common will and determination to succeed.

Nolans everywhere are reminded of this magic ingredient for success in the family motto itself:

“One heart, one way”
(Cor unum, via una)

The vision is the way. Unity of heart is what we need to succeed.

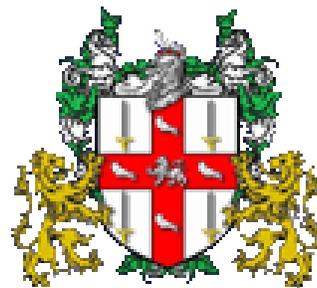
We should not be discouraged by our perceived individual inadequacies for it is through communion in spirit that we will achieve the right balance of input from all to achieve success. We are called upon to recognize our individual strengths and to contribute wherever we see a need that we can fill.

A vision is only that, a vision, but it can become a reality if we all pitch in. Some people are familiar with technology. Some have information. Some are good communicators. Some are good organizers. Some know what it takes for a good party.

Together we can make the vision a reality. The global Nolan family (aka the Nolan diaspora) is not some nebulous thing out there somewhere. It is made up of people like you and I, a living entity whose life depends upon the actions of those who are a part of it.

To successfully tackle the many "brick walls" facing Nolan family researchers, I would propose the following four foundational pillars:

- 1. a shared repository of Nolan-related information**
- 2. good communication amongst Nolan family researchers**
- 3. cooperation and industry in achieving our goals**
- 4. fellowship and celebration as one people, the Nolans.**



In the following pages I expound further on my vision for the four pillars.

A Shared Repository

For those of Irish descent living abroad, there are many resources available (genealogists, online databases, microfilms, etc) which enable them to trace their individual ancestry back to some “first family” with roots in Ireland and many researchers have already done this.

For Nolans living in Ireland, the desire to trace one’s ancestry is generally not as strong since most can probably tell you where their ancestors lived 200 years ago and what they did and experienced.

However, one thing that both Nolans in Ireland and abroad share is a passion for their history, a history for which there are chapters missing which can only be written by combining the stories of those who stayed and those who left.

The period from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s is where the lives of most of the individual researchers' ancestors intermingled and where we find common ground.

It is here that we must focus our efforts piecing together, bit by bit, the stories of those early Nolan families where our ancestors were brothers and sisters.

Although such an undertaking can be daunting, the key to success is perseverance and, above all, **making a start**.

I would propose that we begin our journey by compiling, analyzing and documenting all known pre-1850 records relating to Nolans in Ireland, for those Counties where there is the greatest concentration of Nolans i.e. Carlow, Galway, Mayo, etc.

Starting with my first visit to Ireland in 1997 I began this process for County Carlow (my ancestral homeland) and now have posted at this website (NolanFamilies.org) about 90-95% of all known Nolan tombstone inscriptions for County Carlow and adjacent towns in neighboring counties. This is just one effort. Just think what we could achieve if we pooled the results of each of our individual efforts in one centralized repository. My website is a first effort in creating such a central repository.

Recognizing that the community of interested Nolan family researchers spans several generations, several countries and many individual preferences, I would also propose that the information placed in this central repository be made available in various medium, as required, e.g. in paper form, in digitized form, in online databases, etc.

Good Communication

As individuals, we each have our preferred methods of communication. Some like to tell stories in an informal setting, some like to E-mail, some like to Blog, others like to talk on the phone, others like to write letters, etc. All forms must be accommodated and, in the process, information of interest to current and future generations must be captured whether it be a piece of information gleaned from family stories or a critical family linkage uncovered in some online database. Newsletters in paper and now in digitized form such as the one put out by the Nolan Clan, can serve to reach all interested parties, young and old, the technically literate and not so literate, etc.

Cooperation & Industry

I am of the opinion that we all have our strengths and our weaknesses, but that, together, we are capable of much more than any one of us is capable.

It is in this spirit that we must look to the future, helping each other with our quests and search for understanding.

Celebration

I think that most people don't need much convincing to have a party.

We should therefore seek opportunities to come together and celebrate. To this end I would propose membership in the Nolan Clan which organizes, every second year, a Clan Gathering for its members in Ireland, the ancestral homeland for most Nolan families.

Those who have had the privilege of attending a Gathering have no doubt taken home with them a stronger sense of identity and bonding with other fellow Nolans from around the world.

As a people with a rich history of trials and tribulations Nolans everywhere need to celebrate the sacrifices of their ancestors, their strength in the face of adversity, their lessons learnt, their wisdom.

We also need to celebrate life today, our joys and successes, our achievements, each other.

Roger Nowlan
(28-October-2006)

NolanFamilies.org webmaster
& Nolan Clan Newsletter editor