



THE NOLAN

The Newsletter of the O'Nolan Clan Family Association



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Childhood Reminiscences in Carlow

My father, Matthew Nolan or Matt as he was better known, was born in 1910, the eldest son of Michael Nolan, Ballaghmore (three miles from Myshall) Co. Carlow.

His chosen career was secondary teaching and as a result we spent three wonderfully happy months of every summer holiday during the 1940's and early 1950's in Ballaghmore. Matt was a historian and I'd like to share some of the stories he told me as a child.

Matt, his siblings and all the local children from neighboring farms and cottages around walked the three miles to school in Myshall every day. In winter they wore boots, in good weather they walked barefoot. Footwear was expensive and was often passed down, much repaired, from one child to the next. All the children did the same, whether from farms or labourers' cottages. Matt often boasted that as a result, they all had very healthy feet, no athletes' foot, etc.

He showed me the spot, near his own home, where in Penal times there was a hedge school and it was said about two thousand children over the years had attended it.

The population was much larger then and many eked out a miserable existence with their potatoes and whatever bit of seasonal work they could get from local farms. He pointed out the fields in his own farm, where, when ploughing, they had discovered the remains of the miserable homes of these poor and landless. These people

disappeared in Famine times, presumably with their passage paid to America by landlords wishing to clear the land. The landlords only wanted those who could pay rent!

Matt spoke with deep affection of the schoolmaster Mr. Molyneaux. This caring, scholarly man had a good knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek and was willing to pass on this learning to any interested child. Matt was one such child.

He stayed in every evening after school and by the time he was twelve, he had a good grasp of those languages then necessary for entrance to university.

As a result of these studies, he was awarded a scholarship to Knockbeg. His very religious mother would have had hopes of the priesthood. From Knockbeg, he got another scholarship to Rockwell and thence one to University College Dublin.

When he got his first scholarship, the old schoolmaster was so delighted, he carried Matt shoulder high around the school play yard.

Large families are a thing of the past. The roads and country lanes no longer ring with the voices of those barefoot children walking the miles to school. Mr. Molyneaux had long, long, even before I was born, gone to his reward.

Ar dheis De go rabh a anam.

Mary (Nolan) Fitzsimons

**O’Nolan Clan
Family Association**

**Chief – Mary
(Nolan) Fitzsimons**
"Orion", Crosschapple
Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Republic of Ireland

TEL: +44 (117) 9737992

**Secretary – Eamonn
Fitzsimons**
(same address as above)

eamon.fitzsimons@dit.ie

**Treasurers & Membership
– Sean & Mai Nolan**
Ardattin, Co. Carlow
Republic of Ireland

TEL: +353 (59) 91 55666

Editor - Roger Nowlan
222 Ave. De La Colline
Gatineau, Quebec
J9J 1T8 Canada
FAX : +1(819) 684-6321
nowlan@primus.ca

TEL: +1 (819) 684-2535
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this publication are not
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Greetings to all clan members!

Beannachtai na Feile Nollag,
is gach dea-ghui i gcomhair
na h-athbliana.

Christmas blessings and Best
wishes for the coming year.

Looking forward to keeping in touch
with you all in 2007.

From your Clan Chief,

Mary (Nolan) Fitzsimons



In Brief ...

In this Issue ...

The dominant theme of the current newsletter is our recollections of the past and the sense of union we feel with those who came before us. Our new chief, Mary Fitzsimons, provides us with some of her childhood reminiscences from growing up in Carlow and my cousin Paul, in “A Message through Time”, reflects upon the feelings that his emigrant ancestor might have felt upon leaving Ireland and settling in Atlantic Canada.

For my part, I have included a research article on the early history of the Shangarry Nolans of Carlow which I believe sheds new light on the origins of the three Nowlan brothers, John, James and William, who emigrated to Virginia around 1700.

This being Christmastime what would the Newsletter be without a good Christmas story and I am happy to oblige with a “A Christmas for Grandmother”, a wonderful story

written by Michael O. Nowlan, one of our members from Atlantic Canada. The New Year will also soon be upon us and, in that spirit, I have included a short reflection on living life to the fullest entitled “Now Never Waits”. It is not from me but it is one which my wife, Rosie, and I once clipped out of a school newsletter – source unknown.

A review of Nolans in Professional Sports by David Bryan Nolan, a primer on DNA Testing for Nolans by myself and a report on our September 2006 Clan Gathering round out the Newsletter.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the newsletter and that you will consider submitting an article for the next Newsletter. You will find my particulars in the border column on the left side of this page. In the meantime, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Roger Nowlan – Newsletter Editor



My Homeland

It is 1818, Spring time in Ireland

For the people of my village, this is just another day of spring
for me and my dear brother, it is the end, and the beginning
For on this day, we are bound to leave our home forever

At the very first sign of dawn, softly I tread across the floor of wood
Obeying an urge I'm drawn, to converse with the land of my childhood
I step outside, and wrap myself in a woolen sweater

The morning dew chills my bare feet, and outlines a web where it is hung
The air is crisp and moist and sweet, and feels so cool and fresh within my lungs
It carries forth, all the familiar scents of my homeland

I breathe in deep the morning air, and grow my chest beyond its measure
I hold it in this air of home, and long to take it with me for my treasure
Twenty-two years, it has sustained my life here where I stand

I gaze upon the deep green hills, the grass and stones, common things I'd ignored
I gaze intently at the land, as if my eyes had never seen before
This land in which my roots have grown, I know I shall not see again
For I must pull my roots where sown, and shake away the earth and chains

The Shamrock

As I displace my tender roots, I bring with me some shamrock too
I place them in a small clay pot, still fresh and wet with morning dew
I feel a comfort in my soul, to know they shall journey with me

I dream of planting them in soil, somewhere upon a brave new land
Their roots shall intertwine with mine, and there together we shall stand
Together we shall grow the roots, of a new Ireland o'er the sea

Within this fragile plant I bring, the symbol of this emerald isle
Within its leaves St. Patrick said, the trinity of God is filed
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shall guide me to my destiny



Leaving

As a young boy yes I was taught, a man must be so brave and strong
For years I covered up my tears, with a false smile and cheerful song
But on this day, I weep

I hold my mother close and tender, feel her clinging her eldest son
Her tears and mine flow together, upon our cheeks they mix as one
one river of sorrow, that runs so deep

Then from the timbers of the ship, we wave but cannot speak a word
Their faces fade to memory, their voices now no longer heard
The sea and waves my tears do swell, beyond the sea she fades away
That emerald isle I know so well, surrendered on this fateful day

Letting Go

We cannot stop the hands of time, the wheels of change and life and death
We cannot chain the souls we love, we cannot hold the land and breath
We are mere stewards chosen by God, to work the land but for a while

That fateful day I let all go, and trusted God to guide my way
I found a soil so rich and pure, I found a love that blessed my days
I found a land where shamrock grew, my children ran and sang and smiled

And here today two centuries past, I speak to you through my descendant
And from afar I raise a glass, and send a toast from God's great banquet
I Peter, son of Ireland
I Peter, son of God

Paul Nowlan ~ August 2006



Paul Nowlan

Paul, a communications architect working in Moncton, New Brunswick (NB), Canada, gives free-hand to his artistic side in his spare time, creating for example, the above poem about his emigrant ancestor, Peter Nowlan who left Ireland in 1818 with his brother Edward. Both brothers settled in the area of Buctouche, NB. The drawing accompanying the poem, albeit small as shown here, originally formed the background for the poem written on document paper and framed for presentation as a door-prize during a recent reunion of descendants of Peter Nowlan which took place in Moncton, NB, in August 2006.

Shangarry Nolans – an ocean apart, 300 years ago ...

By Roger Nowlan

Introduction

This article deals with the Shangarry Nolan family of County Carlow and explores the historical context which led to the emigration of three Nowlan brothers to the English Colony of Virginia around the year 1700. Based upon information found in the Nowlin-Stone genealogy published in America in 1916 by a descendant, James Edmund Nowlin, and new information found in the Nolan book by Father John Nolan and Art Kavanagh published in

2000 it is now possible to reconstruct the likely events which led to the eventual emigration of the three brothers.

The article also documents, for future research, an updated genealogy for the Shangarry O’Nolans starting with an O’Nolan chief in the early 1500s and ending with the first generation in Virginia and the cousins in Ireland

Historical Context

In Ireland, the early 1500s was a time of transition which saw the old concept of tribal lands disappear to be replaced by that of land ownership and stewardship as practiced in England. After centuries of fighting, the Gaelic lords, seeking to alleviate the hardships endured by their people, finally agreed to surrender their lands to the Crown and have them regranted under the terms of a Treaty of Peace signed in 1536 by the McMurrough (Charles McInnycross Kavanagh), “principal captain of his nation” (Leinster) and Lord Grey, the king’s “Deputy” in Ireland. However, an undesirable side-effect of the introduction of land ownership was the climate of competition and open hostilities that it created. In Carlow, the two main parties seeking to acquire land were the Earl of Kildare (the Fitzgeralds) and the Earl of Ormonde (the Butlers).

The early Plantations, mostly in northern Ireland, did not have any significant impact on life in County Carlow, however, in the 1620s, the Plantation of much of the north of Wexford had a direct impact. Many of the dispossessed (e.g. Murphys, Kavanaghs, Hanricks, Keoghs, etc.) fled to the “Mountains” then still under the control of the Donal “Spainnaech” Kavanagh and his band of rebels. Moving into areas like Clonmullen, Barragh, Kilbranish and Myshall, the displaced put pressure on the already established local population and local economy. Unhappy with the general state of affairs, the native chiefs who had lost so much in so short a time soon revolted. The Irish Uprising of 1641 marked the beginning of years of civil war which would only cease in the mid-1650s after the incursion into Ireland of Cromwell’s forces, and much devastation.

The early 1500s also saw the beginning of the Protestant Reformation and, by the mid 1500s, the concept of planting English settlers in Ireland had become widely accepted, Queen Elizabeth I being one of its chief proponents. Church lands, crown lands and the lands of presumably disloyal subjects were confiscated and used to settle new arrivals from England and Scotland, thereby displacing people who quite often had been in possession of their lands since time immemorial.

At the cessation of hostilities, trials were held and anyone found to have been a party to the killing of Protestants or Englishmen was executed. Irish landlords, who were not found guilty of murder but who had actively rebelled against government forces, were ordered, under the Resettlement Act of 1652, to leave their lands and move to Connaught. Only those landlords and tenants who could prove that they had not taken part in the rebellion or had been

too young at the time to have participated were allowed to hold on to their lands.

Cromwell died in 1659 and soon afterwards, in 1662, Charles II was restored to the English throne. For many Irish this brought new hope, hope that old wrongs would be righted, hope that religious discrimination would become a thing of the past. Their hopes, however, would soon be dashed. The soldiers, adventurers, and others who had been granted lands in the mid 1650s, fearing that they would be driven from their lands, petitioned the king directly to leave things as they were, and their petition seems to have had the desired effect. Out of the thousands of petitions for the restoration of confiscated lands to former Irish landowners

Early Family History

According to the Fitzgerald rent book of the early 16th century, Murrough 'ne dowre' O'Nolan was "captain of his nation" in 1518, in other words Chief of the O'Nolans, more popularly referred to as "The O'Nolan" or simply "O'Nolan".

Based upon the information found in the Nolan book, it would further appear that Murrough 'ne dowre' had two sons, Edmund and Donough, who were alive in the early to mid 1500s.

Edmund, presumed to have succeeded his father as "The O'Nolan", had three sons:

- Cahir of **Ballykealey** who had 10 sons all born during or before the mid 1500s: Gerald, Brian, Teig, Donough, Edmund, Muiris, James, Phelim, Shane Duff and Owen
- William of **Kilbride** who had 7 sons: Fiach, Cahir, Lesagh, Maurice ne Dower, Thady, Murrough ne Dower and Dermot.
- Rosse of **Kilknock** who had one son: William

less than 900 were successful and this usually after years of wrangling in the courts.

The bureaucratic climate of petitions and long drawn-out court hearings was the perfect opportunity for those familiar with the court system to acquire even more land. The Earl of Ormonde, created Duke of Ormonde in 1661 and thereby the de facto governor of Ireland, was one of the first former landlords to regain his family's (Butler) lands confiscated in the mid 1650s. By 1670, in County Carlow, he and his third son, Richard, who later became Viscount Tullagh (sic Tullow) and Earl of Arran, had acquired ownership of most of the Barony of Forth including the lands of Shangarry.

Donough had at least one son Donal, who in turn appears to have had 2 sons:

- Morgan of **Rosslee** from whom are descended the Nolans of Ballaghmore, Cappawater and Rosslee
- Hugh of **Shangarry** from whom are descended the Nolans of Shangarry, Knockendrane, Ballinrush and Tinnaclash; he had four sons: Cahir, Donell, William and Hugh.

Donell/Daniel (c1592-1647) seems to have inherited half of Hugh's Shangarry lands while his brother Cahir inherited the other half. Daniel had at least two sons:

- Edmund (????-1647), by his first wife
- Patrick (c1600-c1670), by his second wife, Anastace Byrne.
[Note: The Nowlin-Stone genealogy gives her name as Anastase O'Brien.]

Prelude to Emigration

In September 1640, by “enfeoffment”, Daniel settled Patrick, a son by his second marriage, on lands he held in Shangarry. In the course of the following year Daniel seems to have participated in the Uprising of 1641 and, in October 1641, was seized in fee of the lands he held in the Barony of Forth, Co. Carlow. This would seem to imply that he had not given all his lands to Patrick.

During the ensuing civil war which lasted into the mid 1650s, Donell and his two sons, Edmund and Patrick, actively opposed the government forces. In 1647, Donell and Edmund were killed. Edmund’s son, James, stationed at Clonmullen and later known as Captain James, was also quite active finally accompanying the king into exile as part of Captain Daniel Kavanagh’s regiment after the defeat of the royal forces in 1652.

Sometimes after the Restoration to the throne of Charles II (1662), Captain James, believing that he had a legitimate claim to lands in Shangarry which formerly belonged to his grandfather Donell, leased them out to tenants. However, in 1664, during a court review of the extent of the lands owned by the Duke of Ormonde, the Shangarry lands were judged to belong to the Duke. Patrick Nolan, the former landowner and Captain James’ uncle, even testified to that effect. The legal argument used was that Patrick, having taken lands in Connaught in exchange for his lands in Carlow, no longer had a right to his former lands in County Carlow. Captain James, however, doggedly believed that he had a rightful claim on parts of the Shangarry lands and continued to lease to tenants until 1669 when he allegedly murdered a Thady Nolan and fled to England.

A year later, in 1670, Captain James appealed to the Duke of Ormonde for the return of his lands but was summarily dismissed with an offering of eight Guineas and told to go back to Ireland. Staying on in London, at the urging of a Colonel Talbot, James petitioned the king directly for the restoration of the Shangarry lands. His petition was referred to the courts and, after first

reading, the case dragged on for 7 weeks but, in the end, the case was dismissed due to lack of evidence. Captain James, wanting to be given the opportunity to bring forward credible witnesses, asked leave of the king to have his case heard in Dublin but was refused. At the time of the case, Captain James was married with 9 young children and reportedly destitute.

Captain James’ cousin, John, son of Patrick Nowlan, does not seem to have had as much trouble recovering his part of the Shangarry and Ballinrush lands, probably arguing that he was an “innocent”, too young at the time of the civil war to have participated in it. In 1669, Richard, Earl of Arran and son of the Duke of Ormonde, leased the lands of Shangarry and Ballinrush to Thomas Bagenal to hold “in trust” for a John Nowlan. This was probably an arrangement made just before Patrick’s death (circa 1670 according to the Nowlin-Stone genealogy) securing lands for his presumed eldest son John.

Based upon an analysis of the information in the Nolan book, Patrick seems to have had 2 sons:

- John Nolan of Shangarry and Ballinrush who, in 1669, was granted a lease of 3 lives on the lands by Richard, the Earl of Arran
- James Nolan of Tinnaclash whose will was proved in 1742; this will is assumed to be the one by which Luke, a great-nephew, inherited Tinnaclash “from an uncle James”.

In 1700, a Lawrence Nowlan, presumed to have been John’s eldest son, was occupying the Shangarry and Ballinrush lands and was forced to forfeit the lands, seemingly for having been a soldier in King James’ army during the Williamite wars. This is probably when the three brothers, brothers of Lawrence, left for Virginia.

However, within the year, John, the father, appealing the forfeiture based upon the 1669 lease for 3 lives he held from the Earl of Arran, was able to regain possession of the lands he and his son Lawrence had been occupying.

Combining the information available from the Nolan book and the Nowlin-Stone genealogy, it now seems that John Nowlan of Shangarry and Ballinrush had four sons:

- Lawrence (c1670), the eldest son, who apparently took care of the Shangarry and Ballinrush lands for his father but, in 1700, was mistakenly forced to forfeit them because of having been a part of King James' army during the Williamite wars; his father, John, still holding the original lease of 1669 for the lands in question, was successful in recovering the lands
- James (1685) who, around 1700, went to Virginia, indenturing himself to an Englishman by the name of Ward, to pay for his passage to America

- John (1677-1700) who, around 1700, went to Virginia and then "Up North"; *he seems to have eventually made it back to Ireland and is believed to be the John Nolan (1677-1770), gentleman, who is buried in the Tinnaclash burial plot of the Templepeter cemetery in County Carlow*
- William who, around 1700, went to Virginia and then to "New England"; one possibility is that he went to Maine where, prior to the American Revolution, a Richard Nowlan was living; in 1783, he went with his family to Port Roseway, Nova Scotia (now Shelburne, NS); a Patrick Nowlin of Horton, NS, is believed to have been his son. For now this is only conjecture and requires further research.

Two Shangarry Nolan Brothers – an ocean apart, 300 years ago

Lawrence Nowlan of Lisgarvan (c1670), son of John Nowlan, continued to live on the Shangarry lands with his father until 1713 when the lease expired; he then moved with his father to a farm at Lisgarvan where John died; Lawrence had 3 sons:

- Luke (1704-1770) of Tinnaclash who, presumably went to live with his great-uncle James at Tinnaclash and then inherited the estate when he died; Luke married late and had only one son, James (1743-1828).
- Lawrence (1713-c1746) of Lisgarvan, then Knockendrane, who married Anne Wright (????-1776), a Quaker, turned Catholic, of Lisconnor, Fenagh; after being evicted from Lisgarvan in 1760, the family moved to Knockendrane; they had 4 sons, James (1745/54), Edmond (1755), Lawrence (1755) and John (1765) and 2 daughters,

Anna (1761) who married a Sinnott of Buntawn, Co. Kildare, and Mary (????) who married Patrick Byrne of Ballyraggett

- John (1714) "The Poet" of Ballinvalley who had 2 daughters, Ann (1740-1797) who married Brian O'Brien of Ballinvalley.

James Nowlin of Virginia (1685-1750/51), son of John Nowlan, arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, sometimes around 1700 and after a few years married his master's daughter, Catherine Ward, believed to have also been born in County Carlow. They settled on Beaverdam Creek, Goochland County, Virginia, where their son James Nowlin II was born. From family tradition, it is believed that they had a large family but so far only a Daniel Nowlin has emerged as a possible sibling to James Nowlin II. The first James Nowlin may also have married a second time, marrying a Sarah Wade.

Epilogue

Given the limited amount of source material available for events which happened some 300 years ago, every attempt has been made to avoid jumping to conclusions. Where there is doubt the language has been chosen to reflect this.

It is hoped that this review of the Shangarry Nolan family will help to unite long-lost relatives from both sides of the Atlantic and form the basis for further research into the early beginnings of the Shangarry Nolans.

A Christmas for Grandmother

By Michael O. Nowlan.



Grandmother lived alone. In Jeff Blaine's memory - he was only 14 - she had always lived alone in that old white house well up a lane from the highway.

The people of Millbank called her grandmother, even to her face. In fact, that is all Jeff ever heard her called.

Jeff did not doubt she was a grandmother. There were times, however, when he wondered who her grandchildren were. From her rural mailbox, he knew she was Mrs. Maud Wilsil. But there were no other Wilsils in Millbank; nor was he aware of anyone by that name in the neighbouring communities.

“Funny thing,” he thought one day, “she never seems to have any visitors. She must be lonely there by herself.”

In recent years, Jeff probably knew her better than anyone. Although he had had a crippling disease that left him with a very noticeable limp when he was four years old, he cut her grass during the summer and he did other odd chores her throughout the year. He liked doing this, because grandmother made the best molasses cookies he ever tasted. She paid him too. Even though not much, it was enough to keep a 14-year-old in spending money; and he even managed to save some to buy Christmas presents.

In early October when Jeff started thinking about the big December celebration, he grew very concerned about grandmother. What does she do for Christmas? he muttered to himself. *There are no lights or decorations and I never saw a tree. Christmas must be terrible for her.*

To all the youngsters of Millbank, grandmother was the ‘queer old lady.’ Since he was the only one ever to get beyond her back porch, they often teased Jeff. Actually, she lived almost like a hermit, seldom leaving the house except to display and sell her quilts at the annual community bazaar. That she made exquisite quilts was widely known. People would come from

widely distant points to get a “Grandmother Quilt.” Even though the texture and patterns of her work often varied, every year she had one quilt with a special Christmas design which featured a cluster of bells. This one always brought a high price because it was one of her own creations. Having seen that particular quilt at a bazaar, Jeff knew she thought about Christmas. Yet the feast was never marked at the old house.

Apart from the fair, she was rarely seen beyond the mailbox at the road. She phoned and received delivery orders from Snow's store, and from the size of parcels the mailman frequently left, she did her other shopping from mail-order catalogues.

Few people were ever seen around grandmother's unless they were providing a service, such as delivering oil or reading the light meter. Only the ‘little lame boy,’ as some called Jeff, went there regularly. As far as he was concerned, then, Christmas had to be terrible in that old house.

For Jeff Blaine, the 25th of December was many things, especially the gifts and the food. Since his family were strong believers in the true meaning of the feast, the focal point was midnight at All Saint's Church. Nevertheless, deep inside, Jeff really put the material things first. The candy, the tree, special cakes, and the brightly wrapped packages were pleasures to which he gave special emphasis. Christmas was smells and tastes; sights and feelings.

As his worry for grandmother at Christmas increased, he knew something had to be done. That October evening as he stared over the great river beyond his house, something took hold of him. He was determined to find out more about grandmother and why Christmas never seemed to enter her house.

“No one can live without Christmas!” he shouted into the night. With that, he turned to the path that led from the river to his house.

As he walked, he mused, “Why all the secret?” No one had ever told him about Mrs. Wilsil. He'd asked before, but neither his father nor his mother wished to talk about it. There was definitely a big, dark secret. Once more he would try to get some answers.

He hurried now, eager to get on with his scheme. He reached the house and was disappointed to find Ruby O'Neil in the kitchen with his mother. There was no way he would ask about grandmother with her there.

In the morning after breakfast, Jeff made the plunge. “Really, who is Mrs. Wilsil, Mom? Why is there such a secret about her?”

“Now, son, I've told you never to get too curious about that old lady. It's enough that you do chores for her.”

“But Mom, she never does anything for Christmas. She told me before she might go away, but she said that last year and the year before. Christmas must be awful in that old house.”

“You just leave that old lady alone, Jeff. Don't go getting' us all tearin' up the past.”

“What do you mean, Mom?”

“That's enough! I'll hear no more.”

Jeff knew it was useless to continue. He had been through all this before, but his mother had never been so upset other times. As well, he knew his Dad would be of no help because he never talked about grandmother. He was even disturbed that Jeff “was over there so much.”

As Jeff went toward the road to wait for the school bus, he thought of Mrs. Curran. *She'll tell me. I must drop by there after school.*

That afternoon, Jeff had no idea what to expect when he knocked at Mrs. Curran's door. She was a lady whom everyone loved. Being kind and forceful she was always a leader in arousing community spirit. In short, she was the indomitable spirit of Millbank activity.

“Jeff, boy,” she said in her quiet voice. “It's time you knew the whole story about grandmother. I know your parents won't approve but it won't do

you any harm. Someone's going to tell you sooner or later.”

Jeff listened intently as she went on to detail how Mr. Wilsil had been killed in an explosion at the mill years before. At the time, the Wilsil's had one son, Tom, who grew up to be “a shiftless vagabond.” He had married, much to the sorrow of his mother. After a few months a son Jeremy was born. Within a month of birth, Tom was arrested for bank robbery and attempted murder. When he was found guilty, he was sentenced to prison. Two months later, he was killed trying to escape. When the ruckus was over, Tom's wife took Jeremy and went to Boston where she had an aunt.

Neither she nor Jeremy ever returned because it was made plain they were not wanted. From experience, grandmother went into seclusion, which was partly forced, partly voluntary.

“She was ashamed to face us, Jeff. And some - you know people - were very unkind. Mind you, she is a very fine lady who suffered much through the years. I slip her cakes and a jar of preserves now and then.”

After a moment of silence, Jeff asked “Wouldn't be great if Jeremy could come home for Christmas this year? grandmother needs a real Christmas. People here don't know what suffering is.” And Jeff moved his lame leg to a more comfortable position.

“You could try, Jeff. But I doubt he would come.”

“Who know's his address? I'll write.” Jeff was enthusiastic.

Mrs. Curran shuffled through a drawer and picked out a small piece of paper. “This is where they lived 10 or 15 years ago. If I were you, Jeff, I'd leave well enough alone.” Secretly though, she knew he would write.

“Thanks for telling me about this, Mrs. Curran. Grandmother will have a Christmas this year.”

That night, Jeff wrote a long, pleading letter to Jeremy Wilsil. He knew Jeremy would be at least 30 years old, but he was a grandchild. He also knew Jeremy would probably scoff at the idea. In any event, grandmother had to have

a Christmas. She had to have someone to share it with.

When he mailed letter, Jeff had a feeling. What if he failed! What if Jeremy didn't answer! What if grandmother left Millbank for Christmas! If Jeremy did come, would the people of be angry with him! Would they run him out of community on Christmas Eve! Jeff wished he were strong and not handicapped.

Two weeks later, he got his answer. Jeremy would come to Millbank for Christmas on the condition that it would be a surprise for grandmother. That's just the way Jeff wanted it too.

What could spoil a Christmas for grandmother? It would be perfect. At least he hoped.

Throughout November, grandmother kept telling Jeff she might go away for Christmas, and he was afraid this would be the year. Nevertheless, he did not tell her. He told no one since the day his mother scolded him for "writing that letter." On the other hand, she had told Ruby O'Neil, so soon the whole village knew. Since grandmother lived so much alone, he hoped his secret would be safe.

When he was in Snow's store the day before Christmas Eve, several men who gathered around the checkerboard took him to task for inviting that "jailbird's son" here for Christmas.

"Spoil everything for all of us," chided Joe Smith.

Jeff was angry. He wasn't exactly afraid of these men, he never faced them like he did now.

"When you know the whole story about Jeremy Wilsil, and when you see how happy

grandmother will be tomorrow, you'll change your minds."

He never knew where the courage came from to say what he did. The men were all stunned. There was a pin-drop silence as Jeff turned and limped out.

The next afternoon, Jeff's mother reluctantly drove him to the airport. When Jeremy Wilsil was carried from the plane and put into a wheelchair, Mrs. Blaine gasped.

"I knew, Mom. Jeremy told me he had polio when he was 14. I know how he's suffered. After you made such a fuss over that first letter, I told him to send letters to me at the school in care of Mr. Dorn's classroom."

When they arrived at grandmother's, the old lady was overcome with emotion. She could hardly believe what was happening.

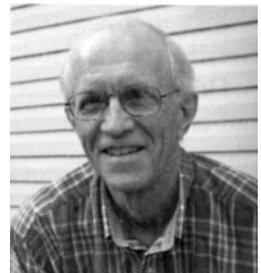
"I have no Christmas tree," she said. "I need a tree! Why didn't you tell me? What will I do? I knew Jeremy would come back some day." She was confused and excited, but she was happy.

"Don't worry, grandmother," Jeff said. "I have a tree out behind the shed. Got it last week. And Mom and me will help you put it up right now. Won't we, Mom?"

That Christmas, many Millbank citizens dropped in at Wilsil's to welcome Jeremy and to assure grandmother she was still a part of the community. "And to think," said Ruby O'Neil, "if it hadn't been for Jeff, that little lame boy. Did you hear about the way he talked up to them men at the store? I guess we all had a lesson comin'." ##

Michael O. Nowlan

Michael was born at Chatham, N.B. and educated at St. Thomas College High School, St. Thomas University and the University of New Brunswick achieving a Masters degree in education. He worked in the public education system of New Brunswick for 33 years before retiring in 1994. As a freelance writer for more than 30 years, he has published hundreds of articles and reviews as well as books, among them *Stubborn Strength*, an anthology of New Brunswick short stories published in 1983. He has lived in Oromocto since 1965.



(A Christmas for Grandmother first appeared in *The Atlantic Advocate*, December 1979. It was later reprinted in Michael O. Nowlan's *The Last Bell; Memories of New Brunswick Christmas*, New Ireland Press, 1992.)



*May God's Blessings
be upon you and your family
throughout the New Year*

NOW NEVER WAITS! - a reflection on everyday life (source unknown)

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will live through the next twelve hours and not tackle all my life's problems at once.

JUST FOR TODAY.. In one thing I know I am equal with others - TIME. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes and hours.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. It usually doesn't. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will stop saying, "If I had time..." I know I never will "find time" for anything. If I want time, I must make it.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will improve my mind. I will learn something useful. I will read something that requires effort, thought, and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will be agreeable. I will look my best, speak in a well modulated voice, and be courteous and considerate.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will not find fault with friends, relatives or colleagues. I will not try to change or improve anyone but myself.

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will have a program. I will save myself from two enemies - hurry and indecision.

*JUST FOR TODAY.. I will exercise my character in three ways:
I will do a good turn and keep it a secret. (If anyone finds out, it won't count.)
I will do two things I don't want to do, just for exercise.
I will be unafraid. Especially will I be unafraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and believe that as I give to the world, the world will give to me.*

JUST FOR TODAY.. I will be happy.



Nolans in Professional Sports

By Dave Nolan



In recent years Nolans have distinguished themselves as athletes and coaches in the world's most prestigious and lucrative athletic leagues.

The Liverpool, England born Kevin Nolan currently captains the Bolton Wanderers in the British Premier League. The midfielder, who became a professional footballer (soccer player) at age 17 in 1999, may have to choose between playing for the Irish national team of his ancestral lineage or the English national team in the 2010 World Cup competition.

The Belfast, Ireland born Owen Nolan began playing professional soccer at age 18 and is now in his seventeenth year in the National Hockey League (NHL). The Right Winger for the Phoenix (Arizona) Coyotes has an astounding 349 goals and 387 assists in 920 NHL games. Brandon Nolan, new to the NHL, plays Center for the Vancouver Canucks.

Gary Lynn Nolan helped pitch his Cincinnati Reds baseball team to a 1975 World Series Championship. He compiled a low 3.08 career earned run average with 110 victories and 70 losses in steady major league performance from 1967 through 1977.

Dick Nolan was a defensive back for the 1958 world champion New York Giants of the

National Football League (NFL). After his eight year playing career, he coached the San Francisco 49ers and the New Orleans Saints. He was honored as NFL Coach of the year in 1970 for a compiling a 10-3-1 season for the 49ers. His son, Mike Nolan was drafted by the Denver Bronco's and thereafter coached successfully in the NFL for 25 years. Today Mike is in his second year as head coach for San Francisco 49ers, the organization his father successfully took to conference championship games in 1970 and 1971.

Deanna Nolan, as the five foot, eleven inch point guard for the Detroit Shock, led her team to 2005 and 2006 Women National Basketball League (WNBA) titles. The six-year profession drafted from the University of Georgia is regarded by many to be the fastest player in the fourteen team league. In the 2006 victory season, she averaged 13.8 points, 4.5 rebounds, and 3.6 assists per game.

Ted Nolan born in 1958, on the Garden River Ojibwa Nation Reserve outside of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, is currently the Head Coach of the New York Islanders. Nolan, a retired Canadian professional hockey Left Winger played 3 seasons in the National Hockey League (NHL) for the Detroit Red Wings and Pittsburgh Penguins. He also coached for 2 seasons in the NHL for the Buffalo Sabres, after serving as assistant coach for one season with the Hartford Whalers.

David Brian Nolan

Dave, a Nolan with roots in Galway, has been an active member of the Clan since 1998, having submitted several articles for publication. He and his wife Cheryl live in Alexandria, Virginia, where he practices law.

DNA Testing – for Nolan Families

Introduction

In the last few years, DNA testing in support of family history research has become more popular and affordable. However, despite several success stories published in the open literature, for most people, the value and applicability of DNA testing to one's own family research remains a matter for debate. Another matter for debate is its applicability to researching early family history as is the case in a clan context. The current article is a rudimentary attempt at clarifying the science behind DNA testing and pondering how DNA testing might help to answer some questions about one's own family ancestry or, more generally, help shed some light on the early family history of the various branches of Nolans spread around the world.

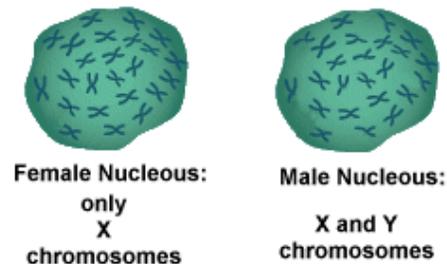
DNA Testing – the fundamentals

[Source: <http://www.worldfamilies.net>]
“DNA is the carrier of our genetic information, and is passed down from generation to generation.

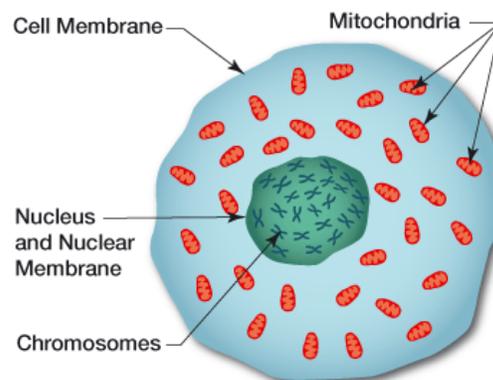
All of the cells in our bodies, except red blood cells, contain a copy of our DNA.

At conception, a person receives DNA from both the father and mother. We each have 23 pairs of chromosomes. Of each pair, one [chromosome] was received from the father and one was received from the mother. These 23 pairs of chromosomes are known as nuclear DNA because they reside in the nucleus of every cell (except red blood cells).

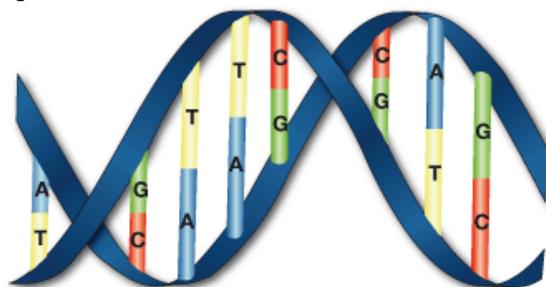
The 23rd chromosome is known as the sex chromosome. As with the other chromosomes, one is inherited from the father, and one from the mother. The 23rd chromosome from the mother is always an X. From the father, a person either inherits an X chromosome or a Y chromosome. The chromosome inherited from the father determines their gender. An X from the father would result in an XX combination, which is a female, and a Y from the father would result in an XY combination, which is a male.



We also inherit our mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from our mother, and none from our father. mtDNA is located outside the nucleus of the cell.



DNA is made up of four bases: adenine (A), cytosine (C), thymine (T), and guanine (G). The order of these bases is called the DNA sequence.



Thymine (Yellow) = T Guanine (Green) = G
 Adenine (Blue) = A Cytosine (Red) = C

Whenever a particular base is present on one side [of the DNA helical structure], its complementary base is found on the other side. In the example above, [note] how the bases always occur in complementary pairs. Guanine (green) always pairs with cytosine (red) and thymine (yellow) always pairs with adenine (blue). So we can write the DNA sequence by listing the bases along either one of the two sides. In the example shown, one side [following one ribbon] reads: T G T T C G T C etc.”

Based upon the above short exposé on DNA and its inheritance from generation to generation, we can see that the Y chromosome and the Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) carry information of potential use to genealogical researchers.

Testing the Y chromosome inherited from the father provides information about the patri-lineal side of one’s family, going back to the father, his father, etc. The locations tested on the Y chromosome DNA structure are called “markers” and are essentially places where a specific pattern of bases repeats itself a number of times, sort of like a stutter. Each such repeating pattern, called a “Short Tandem Repeat” (STR), identified by the scientific community has been given a

designation such as DYS#391, DYS#439 or GATA H4. For a given family, the number of repeats, called “alleles”, at marker locations is typically the same. For example, on a 25-Marker Y chromosome test, a descendant of the Shangarry Nolans (a branch of the County Carlow Nolans) might expect the following results:

Marker #	DYS #	Alleles (# of repeats)
1	393	13
2	390	25
3	19	14
4	391	11
5	385a	11
6	385b	13
7	426	12
8	388	12
9	439	12
10	389-1	13
11	392	14
12	389-2	29
13	458	17
14	459a	9
15	459b	10
16	455	11
17	454	11
18	447	26
19	437	15
20	448	18
21	449	29
22	464a	15
23	464b	16
24	464c	17
25	464d	17

However, occasionally, approximately once in every 500 generations, the number of repeats found at a marker location does mutate. As it turns out, this predictable rate of mutation is actually useful and enables genealogists to establish how closely related two male individuals might be. In essence, when comparing two test results, the number of marker locations where the number of repeats differ gives us an indication of how far back in time a common male ancestor is likely to have lived.

The other sort of DNA testing useful to family researchers is mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) testing. In this case, the DNA of interest is inherited from the mother and provides information about the matri-lineal side of the family, going back to the mother, her mother, etc. Testing in this case consists of comparing two highly-variable segments of the mtDNA sequence against a reference sequence, the Cambridge Reference Sequence, and noting the differences.

An exact match between the test results for two individuals indicates that they share a common female ancestor, but because mtDNA mutates extremely slowly this common female ancestor could have lived thousands of years ago. Matches which are similar are further classified into broad groups, known as haplogroups e.g. R1B1, the haplogroup for most of the Nolan families who have had DNA testing done so far.

Because of its applicability to shorter time frames, Y chromosome testing generally

DNA Testing – the larger context

So far we have seen how DNA testing could be used to determine if we might or might not have an ancestor in common with someone within the last 400 years or so. This is certainly a valuable piece of information for the family concerned but, from the clan perspective, many questions still remain unanswered.

Based upon currently available DNA test results for Nolan families, few as they are, (e.g. those at www.worldfamilies.net), it is already evident that there are possibly dozens of distinct Nolan “blood lines”, some known to have originated in County Carlow and others with uncertain origins.

To understand how this could be, it is instructive to look back in history and

yields more information of interest to genealogists and, in this regard, given that the cost of Y-Chromosome testing increases with the number of markers being tested, it becomes important to know what is likely to be a sufficient number of markers for testing a hypothesis about one’s male ancestry.

Following is a table showing the number of markers required on a Y chromosome test if testing for a common male ancestor at so many generations back.

Y Chromosome Test to check for Common Ancestry with 90% certainty	
No. of Generations Back	No. of Markers Req’d
23	12
10	25
5	37
4	67

consider how such blood lines might have originated. A good place to start is about a thousand years ago when surnames began to be adopted throughout Europe. At that time, we know that descendants of Eochaidh Fionn Fothairt, the 2nd century warrior prince, and, likely their extended families, began using O Nualláin as a surname. Currently, with so few Nolan families having had their DNA tested, it is hard to estimate what the number of different “blood lines” might have been for the Carlow Nolans around 1000 but a conservative estimate might be 10 or so. From this point onward, the number of blood lines would have increased century by century each time an adopted or foster child took on the name of his adoptive parents, each time a child born out of wedlock took

on the Nolan name, each time a family changed its name to Nolan for social, financial or political reasons, etc. Following this line of thinking, one can see that, again conservatively speaking, by the early 1600s, when emigration and internal migrations within Ireland were more prevalent, the number of Nolan blood lines could have reached 20 or so.

Over time as more and more Nolans with genealogically proven Carlow roots have their DNA tested, a better estimate of the number of Carlow Nolan sub-septs should emerge.

So far we have only considered Nolan blood lines originating in County Carlow but there are indeed others, related to at least two other known Gaelic septs, the Ó hUllacháins (Holohans) of Laois and Offaly and the Ó hUltacháins (Hultaghans) of Fermanagh. For example, with regards to the Ó hUllacháins, it is known that in 1582 a certain Tomhas Ó hUallacháin, a sub-sheriff of county Mayo, acquired land at Crevagh, County Mayo, but who, in subsequent land dealings, including the acquisition of the castle of Ballinrobe, County Mayo, adopted Nolan as his family name.

Besides Ireland, there were other places in Europe where, over the centuries, the Nolan surname or one of its variants surfaced, names like Nollent, Knollin, Knowling or Nolin. Descendants of these families may, in the course of history, have changed their name to Nolan, Nolen or something similar.

There may also be other family names, as yet unrecognized, e.g. Van Neuweland, who have a link back to Ireland and the Nolans but who have not yet been recognized as such due to language differences. Given the many major events which impacted Irish life over the past thousand years, early Irish Nolan ancestors for these families cannot be ruled out. Hopefully, over time, as members

of these families have their DNA tested, some light can be shed on their early family roots and the possibility of a link back to Ireland and Irish Nolans families such as:

- The Nolans of County Carlow dating back to the 2nd century with their many different blood lines
- The Kerry Nolans, descended from a Lucius (Luke) O’Nolan of Carlow who resettled to Laois in the mid 1500s and whose descendants then resettled to Kerry in the early 1600s
- The Nolans of Loughboy, believed to be descendants of Carlow Nolans who resettled to Connaught after the arrival of the Normans in 1169
- The Nolans of Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, descendants of a Thomas Nolan (alias Tomhas Ó hUallacháin) who died in 1628 and is believed to have originally come from Co. Kilkenny.

For most of our clan members, there is likely no question as to their Nolan ancestry and association with the 2nd century warrior prince, Eochaidh Fionn Fothairt who settled in County Carlow. For others, however, there may still be a nagging uncertainty about the family’s Nolan ancestry. Conventional genealogical research may provide some answers but, in the absence of specifics such as names, dates and locations, DNA testing may be the avenue open to them.

As the number of DNA test results for Nolans increases, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the history and migration of the various Nolan lines will emerge.

Roger Nowlan - Newsletter Editor

2006 Nolan Clan Gathering – A New Beginning

On the morning of Saturday, September 16, 2006, Nolan Clan members with family and friends from Ireland, England and Canada met at the Mount Wolseley Hilton Hotel in county Carlow to renew old friendships, make new ones and catch up on items of common interest. After a bit of socializing over coffee and biscuits, the group moved on to Rathwood House, near Tullow, for lunch.

In the afternoon, attendees branched out in groups each according to their own preferences, including visits to local sites of interest.

In the early evening, the group reassembled at the Talbot Hotel near Carlow town for coffee, cake and general socializing. Executive members of the clan also had a chance to catch up on outstanding issues.

After a report from the treasurer the outgoing Chief proceeded to thank all who helped with clan activities over the past two years and appointed Mary Fitzsimons (née Nolan) of Blessington, Co. Wicklow, the new Chief. Pa Nolan of Dublin was appointed Tanaiste (chief-in-waiting) and Sean and Mai Nolan of Ardattin volunteered to continue on as joint-treasurers. Roger Nowlan volunteered to continue on as Newsletter editor but relinquished his role as secretary in favour of Eamonn Fitzsimons, the new Chief's husband, whom he felt would be in a better position to assist the Chief in her duties over the next couple of years.

The goals and aspirations of the Clan were also revised to more properly reflect the nature of the Clan as a Family Association, dropping assistance with genealogical research from the list of benefits of membership. When such assistance is needed, it is expected that members will help each other as has been done in the past, for example by Roger Nowlan through his website [Editor's Note: For those without Internet access, Roger's mail address and full particulars are to be found on page 2].

The revised goals and aspirations of the Clan are now as follows:

- To organize a Clan Gathering every two years, providing members with the opportunity to meet and socialize with Nolans from Ireland and around the world
- To publish a Clan Newsletter at least once a year, containing articles of interest to those with a Nolan family heritage and providing a vehicle for members to share news and facts of common interest.
- To preserve the history and oral tradition of Nolan families, regardless of their origins; a recent example of this sort of effort is the book entitled "O Nolan - the History of a People" written under the sponsorship of the Clan.

After some discussion, to better serve the interests of the clan, Roger Nowlan, proposed that the current <http://onolanclan.org> website return to its original status prior to 2004 i.e. a personal "personal" website. The new revised website, while still maintaining a section reserved for the posting of information about the Nolan Clan and for archiving past Newsletters, would continue with its focus on genealogical research and the documentation of early Nolan family stories. [Editor's Note: The new website is up and running and is found at <http://nolanfamilies.org>]

To facilitate membership renewals it was also agreed that the membership fee for those outside of Ireland and the UK should be fixed as opposed to dependent upon the currency market. The membership renewal fee due January 1st, latest March 17th, is still 10 Euros for those in Ireland and the UK. For members in the US, Canada and Australia, the one-year renewal fees are \$13 USD, \$15 CAD and \$17 AUD respectively. [Editor's Note: For your convenience, a membership renewal form included is attached to the newsletter.]

A Few Pictures from the 2006 Clan Gathering



Mary, the new Chief, with Judith



Judith, Mary and Pa Nolan, our Tanaiste



2006 Nolan Clan Gathering Attendees

O'Nolan Clan Ò Nuallàin



Membership Application / Renewal Form

I wish to join (*or renew my membership # _____ in*) the O'Nolan Clan, a voluntary, non-profit organisation, relying upon its members for fund-raising, organizing clan activities and recruiting new members.

I understand that membership is open to anyone who supports the goals and aspirations of the clan:

- To organize a Clan Gathering every second year
- To publish a Clan Newsletter at least once a year
- To preserve the history and oral traditions of Nolan families, regardless of their origins.

I also understand that membership dues are to be paid upon joining and, thereafter, at the beginning of each calendar year, prior to March 17. The yearly membership fee per household, in known **local currencies** of interest, is currently 10 Euros, \$13 USD, \$15 CAD or \$17 AUD. For other local currencies, the membership fee is the equivalent of 10 Euros in that currency. To save on postage and service charges, I may also choose to pay for more than one year at a time.

Enclosed is a **personal cheque in my local currency made out to "Sean Nolan - Nolan Clan"** in the amount of _____ as payment for _____ year(s) membership in the clan.

For clan records and to help with administration, my particulars (*or revisions thereto*) are:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Co./State/Prov. _____ Country/Postal/ZIP Code _____

Age _____ Telephone _____ E-Mail Address _____

Other family members _____

Post To:

**Sean Nolan
Rathnarrin,
Ardattin, County Carlow
Republic of IRELAND**

***** Thank You for your Support! *****

Date: 2006-12-06