

# Across the Atlantic

## Emigrating from Merville and Derry

Donegal County Council and Derry City Council



James Wannon made a  
licants for Emigration  
and as he was brought  
believe in would be for hi  
Retained they for that the  
did for depending on Sam  
1871



Evans  
24  
Dear Miss  
I have not heard from  
you for a long time. I hope  
you are well. I myself have  
not been so well for the last  
year and I have been in the  
Hospital from June until July  
12 but I am at home now and  
am getting well again. I have  
had some very serious  
long time. They do not give me



List of Emigrants  
All of the names out of  
have not had to take the papers in  
the names of the ship is the  
Number of Emigrants 1871  
1. John Wannon 18 1/2  
2. James Wannon 18 1/2  
3. John Wannon 18 1/2  
4. James Wannon 18 1/2  
5. John Wannon 18 1/2  
6. James Wannon 18 1/2



Niamh Brennan & Bernadette Walsh, Editors

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## Across the Atlantic - Emigrating from Moville and Derry Map



## Acknowledgements

Donegal County Council Archive Service and Derry City Council Heritage and Museum Service would like to thank all the authors who have contributed on a voluntary basis to this unique book of articles on emigration from the North West of Ireland.

We would also like to thank the National Library of Ireland for permission to use images from the Lawrence Collection, Derry City Central Library for use of its images from the Biggar/MacDonald Collection, and John McCorkell for images of the McCorkell line.

## Biographies of contributors

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**Bernadette Walsh** is the City Archivist for Derry City Council's Heritage and Museum Service. Bernadette has a wide range of experience in the curatorial and archival sector with previous employment positions with the National Library of Ireland and the Heritage Service of Ireland. Bernadette was intrinsically involved in the recent development of the Tower Museum. She also acts as an advisor for other cultural and heritage products in the city including the Museum of Free Derry, the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall and St Columb's Cathedral. Bernadette has a degree in history and a professional postgraduate qualification in Archival Studies.

**Denis Noel** is the Sound and Moving Images Archivist at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Denis has a particular interest in Irish heritage and genealogy and has worked on a number of projects to promote the links between North West Ireland and Eastern Canada. He is a regular visitor to Ireland, contributing to travelling exhibitions, conferences and seminars.

**Seán Beattie** graduated from University College Dublin in history and languages. He worked as a guidance counsellor at Carndonagh Community School. He is the author of a number of books on Donegal history including "Ancient Monuments of Inishowen", "Book of Inistrahull" and "Donegal in Old Photographs". He is currently engaged in post-graduate research at Magee College, Derry on the work of the Congested Districts Board in Donegal between 1891 and 1923. He is a member of the executive committee of County Donegal Historical Society and is Editor of the Society's journal, Donegal Annual.

**Mickey McGuinness** After working at various skilled jobs locally Mickey McGuinness gained a history degree, as a mature student at the University of Ulster, followed by a Diploma in Continuing Education. He has, for over 16 years, acted as coordinator of The Community History Project, which has initiated projects and supported groups and individuals with local history and environmental interests.

Convinced that community history studies would be enriched by examining the concept of, “extended communities” overseas, he responded to invitations to deliver lectures at the Miramichi Irish Festival in New Brunswick, Canada, on the topic of historic links between the North West of Ireland and Canada, and particularly the province of New Brunswick. He was a prime instigator in a trip to New Brunswick in 2007, which involved representatives from Inishowen Rural Development, Derry City Council and the University of Ulster.

**Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald** is Lecturer and Development Officer with the Centre for Migration Studies at the Ulster-American Folk Park. Since 1996 he has been teaching a Queen’s University Belfast MSc. in Irish Migration Studies. In 2008 he co-authored with Dr. Brian Lambkin (CMS Director) *Migration in Irish History, 1607-2007* (Palgrave, Houndmills).

Since 1982 **Brian Mitchell** has been researching family, local and emigration history in the wider Derry area. As manager of the Inner City Trust’s genealogy project he supervised the creation of a database of over one million records, dating from 1642 to 1922, which were extracted from the major civil and church registers of County Derry and Inishowen, County Donegal. He is currently assisting Derry City Council, to bring this database and a family history research service within the Heritage and Museum Service at the Harbour Museum. He has edited three books of passenger lists for the time period 1803 to 1871, naming emigrants from Derry and Inishowen to North America, which were published by the Genealogical Publishing Company of Baltimore, USA.

**Locky Morris’s** work has been exhibited widely, including “Directions Out” at the Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin 1987, the British Art Show touring Britain in 1990, New North 1990 and Strongholds 1991, both at the Tate Gallery in Liverpool, Kunst Europa in Germany in 1991, L’Imaginaire Irlandais in Paris 1996, The Puffin Room in New York in 1998, the Ellipse Arts Centre in Washington in 2000, Something Else touring Finland in 2002/3, The Trouble with Talkies at the ADI space in London 2005 and the Czech Museum of Fine Arts in June 2006. Throughout his career, his engagement with Derry City and its changing character has shaped his work, often showing in community centres and the street. For a number of years in the late nineties he concentrated solely on making music with his band Rare. In recent years he has been expanding his practice from object making to include text, sound and digital media.

**Declan Sheehan** is Public Art Assistant with Donegal County Council. Previously he was the director of the Context Gallery, Derry, and independent curator of visual art projects. He has been published in art journals including Circa, Frieze, Paris Photo, Film West; and in catalogues for galleries including the Project, Dublin and the Gallery of Photography, Dublin.

**Berni Campbell** is a Senior Library Assistant at the Central Library, Letterkenny. She has a strong background in local studies and family history. Berni has regularly contributed to the Ask About Ireland website [www.askaboutireland.ie](http://www.askaboutireland.ie), focusing on Donegal’s historical and literary tradition.

**Dr Niamh Brennan** is the Archivist for Donegal County Council’s Archives Service. She has managed the service since its inception in 1999. She previously worked as an archivist in University College Dublin Archives Department, and in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. She has a degree in History and English, a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Archival Studies, and a Ph.D. in Modern Irish History, from UCD. Contributions to journals include to *Irish Historical Studies* and *the Donegal Annual*. She is a member of the executive committee of Donegal Historical Society.

## Foreword from the Mayors of Donegal County Council and Derry City Council

On behalf of Donegal County Council and Derry City Council we are delighted to have this opportunity to introduce this fascinating collection of articles relating to the history of nineteenth and twentieth century emigration from Derry and Merville to the 'new world', in particular Canada, and the parallel growth in the shipping industry in the north west.

In 2007 representatives from Derry City Council, Inishowen Rural Development, the University of Ulster, the Ulster American Folk Park and local community groups visited New Brunswick, Canada, to explore the cultural and historical links between the north west of Ireland and Canada. The composition of the delegation which visited New Brunswick was based on the waves of emigrants who left Derry and Merville and who landed in the New Brunswick area and beyond, in the nineteenth century.

This publication consists of a number of short articles written by some well-known local historians and academics. The breadth of these articles demonstrates the connections and links evident between the people of New Brunswick and the North West of Ireland. The publication was put together by the archivists from Donegal County Council and Derry City Council's Heritage and Museum Service, who have also contributed articles on the sources available for tracing one's ancestors, particularly in relation to emigration. The images selected for each article in this publication demonstrate the many different faces of emigration from Donegal and Derry.

Cooperation between the participants and institutions will allow work to continue on a number of tangible projects which will demonstrate further links and connections between the two regions. The archive collections, of Donegal and

Derry Archives Services and of The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, allow members of the public an opportunity to access a huge wealth of information, which is of great value and importance to those people with descendants who left the city many years ago.

The new sculpture by artist Locky Morris, The Fid-Merville Emigration Monument which has been erected on Merville's old stone pier, represents Merville's maritime history and the legacy which emigration has left on this town and community. Because of the region's pivotal role in emigration, we can, with the appropriate resources, attract a major number of new visitors from the Irish and Ulster Scots Diaspora who wish to trace their roots.

[Councillor Brendan Byrne, Méara Chontae Dhún na nGall / Mayor of the County of Donegal.](#)

[His Worship, the Mayor, Councillor Paul Fleming, Derry City Council.](#)



Cooley Cross, Moville.  
Donegal County Archives



Skull House, Moville. Donegal County Archives

## The Town of Moville

Ciara Joyce

The picturesque town of Moville lies on the western banks of Lough Foyle, County Donegal, where the Bredagh River flows into the sea. The name Moville has two possible Gaelic origins, translated from Bun a Phobail, meaning 'Foot of the Parish' or Magh Bhile, meaning 'Plain of the Ancient Tree'.

Until the mid 18th century the area consisted of undeveloped agricultural land with the exception of a number of ancient earthworks. Cooley Cross and Skull House are remnants of an early Christian monastic settlement on the outskirts of Moville, attributed to St. Finian. The cross is a simple undecorated stone high cross located in Cooley graveyard. The Skull House, a small stone constructed building at the rear of the graveyard, is believed to have been used as an oratory and a mortuary.

The area surrounding Moville was occupied by branches of the Cenél Eógain family in the 15th century and later by Scots Gaelic speaking settlers in the 17th

century<sup>1</sup>. The whole of Inishowen was granted to the Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester in 1609<sup>2</sup>, following the death of Cahir O'Doherty. It passed from the Lord Deputy to his nephew Arthur, who was created Earl of Donegal in 1647.

Samuel Montgomery, a wholesale and retail wine merchant from Killaghtee, County Donegal, established his business 'Montgomery & Gamble' in Derry in 1750. The Montgomery family had settled in the parish of Killaghtee in west Donegal in c. 1628 and Samuel inherited the family estate. He married a woman from Inishowen by the name of Ann Porter and in 1768 leased 800 acres of land from Lord Donegal in Inishowen, in Ballynelly (Ballynally) townland. He proceeded to build New Park house, which had a demesne of 60 acres and included Bath Green. Making the area his home he then began developing the town of Moville and the first houses were built in the 1770s<sup>3</sup>.



New Park House, Donegal County Archives

- <sup>1</sup> Dickson, David. Derry's Backyard: The Barony of Inishowen, 1650 – 1800 in **Donegal History & Society**. Nolan, Ronayne, & Dunlevy (eds) Geography Publication, 1995, p. 415
- <sup>2</sup> Hunter, R.J. Plantation in Donegal in **Donegal History & Society**. Nolan, Ronayne, & Dunlevy (eds) Geography Publication, 1995, p. 289
- <sup>3</sup> Dates for all buildings and streets highlighted in this article are from Montgomery, Rt. Rev. Bishop Henry. **A History of Moville and its Neighbourhood**. C. Morris and C. Doherty, 1992



Temperance Hall, Moville. Donegal County Archives

Montgomery died in 1803 and his son, the Reverend Samuel Law Montgomery, inherited the property. The Reverend became the rector of the parish of Lower Moville in 1812.

By 1820 there were 50 people living in the town and the area began to develop rapidly over the next few decades. Between 1820 and 1830 the Market Square and principal streets of the town were completed. In 1833 River Row was built, while the houses of Main Street were built c. 1840.

In 1821 St. Columb's School house was built by the Reverend Montgomery and a Roman Catholic school opened in River Row in 1850.

In 1829 a stone fishing pier was built which was followed by the Carrickarory Pier erected in 1847 by the Derry Harbour Commissioners<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Swan, Harry Percival. **'Twixt Foyle and Swilly - Panorama of Ireland's wonderful Peninsula'**. Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1949, p.178.

St. Columb's Church opened in 1858 with the tower and spire added in 1865. St. Eugene's Hall (Temperance Hall) was erected in 1887 and the Victorian houses of Montgomery Terrace were completed shortly after.

Moville's importance as a trading centre grew in the 19th century and contributed greatly to the further development and increasing wealth of the town. By the early 1830s a grain store and grain market had been established, which traded with the city of Derry. Moville also became notorious for its whiskey trade. Goods coming into town were traded for illegally distilled Inishowen whiskey. Quay Street was used to keep watch for smugglers and became known as Whiskey Lane.

The monthly cattle markets, trade, and the blossoming of the town as a seaside resort for the visitors travelling out from Derry, brought wealth to the thriving town. Moville, however, received its most lucrative boost from its rich maritime industry. Large trading ships and transatlantic liners dropped anchor in the deep waters off Moville throughout the 19th century.

Two Derry businessmen, John Cooke and William McCorkell invested heavily in shipping in the area, importing goods from America. They soon realised that these ships could also carry passengers on their outbound journeys. Moville became a major port for embarkation that at its height, in the later years of the 1800s, rivalled Cobh. Passengers, eager to start a new life in America and Canada, were carried on the McCorkell Line ships to New York, Philadelphia, Quebec and New Brunswick.

By the 1870s sailing ships were replaced by large transatlantic passenger steamers, which anchored in the Foyle and were boarded by way of small local tenders leaving from Moville pier. The Anchor Line, operating out of Glasgow, started taking on passengers in Moville from 1860. The Allan Line, operating out of Liverpool, also called at Moville to pick up passengers bound for America. Generations of the Montgomery family continued to live at New Park house.

Samuel Montgomery's son and grandson invested in the further development of the town, building houses, roads, schools and St. Columb's Church. Sir Robert Montgomery, grandson of Samuel, became a Lieutenant Governor in India in the early 19th century. His son, Bishop Henry Montgomery (1847-1932), donated the area of shorefront known as Bath Green to Donegal County Council in trust for the people of Moville as a recreation area. The beautiful park is still a wonderful local amenity and includes the shore walk extending as far as Greencastle. Bishop Montgomery was also responsible for the first written history of the town, which he published in a series of articles in the Londonderry Sentinel. These articles outline the history of the Montgomery family's development of Moville but also include stories of life in Inishowen at that time.

Bishop Henry Montgomery was the father of Sir Bernard Law Montgomery (1887– 1976), Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, affectionately known as 'Monty'. Monty had an extremely distinguished career in both World War I and II. His role in the Battle of El Alamein, in North Africa in 1942, and his command of allied troops during the invasion of Normandy, brought him both fame and the respect of his peers. He was created a Knight of the Garter and the 1st Viscount of Alamein in 1946. Monty, who was born in London, first visited Moville as a child in 1897. He developed a deep affection for the town and its people, spending much of his summer holidays as a youth at the family home of New Park. Bishop Montgomery died at New Park in 1932 aged 85. His wife Maud lived at the house until her death in 1949.

Today Moville retains a small fishing harbour. It holds an annual regatta in August and remains a popular town for visitors. The town was designated a Heritage Town in 2000.



Market Square, Moville, Courtesy National Library of Ireland

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Swan, Harry Percival, **'Twixt Foyle and Swilly - Panorama of Ireland's wonderful Peninsula'**. Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1949

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Montgomery, Rt. Rev. Bishop Henry, **A History of Moville and its Neighbourhood** C. Morris and C. Doherty, 1992 (Printed by Foyle Press, Carndonagh). Originally published as a series of articles in the Londonderry Sentinel.

Nolan, William, Ronayne, Liam & Dunlevy, Mairead (eds.), **Donegal History & Society**. Geography Publication, 1995

## Derry and its port

**Bernadette Walsh**

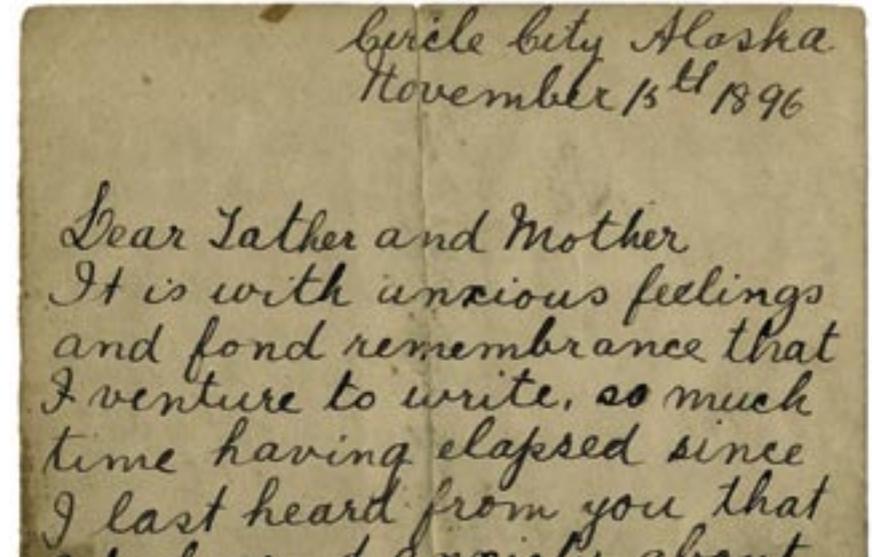
Since Colmille left for Iona, Scotland, in the sixth century, the river Foyle has been the point of departure for many thousands of emigrants.

Emigration from the island of Ireland is a relatively recent phenomenon. Eighteenth century emigration is associated with the Ulster-Scots, who were tempted by the opportunities in the American colonies. From 1710 to the early 1770's as many as 50,000, mainly affluent families, chose to settle in the colonies. Although the American War of Independence (1775-1783) temporarily prevented access for Irish emigrants, emigration became an established aspect of life.

Derry was a chief port for transatlantic trade during the eighteenth century. Trade with the West Indies and the thirteen colonies of North America grew to such an extent that in 1771, the American colonies imported more linen cloth and



Saint John, New Brunswick, 19th century, Provincial Archives of New



Emigrant letter from Alaska, 1896, Derry City Council

food provisions from Derry than they did from Britain. The volume and variety of Derry's trade with Britain also increased significantly, and by 1821 four million yards of linen were being shipped to Britain annually. The trade of provisions such as beef, butter, pork and ham, also rose steeply.

Throughout the nineteenth century Derry continued to thrive as an emigration port. Local merchants became ship owners, as opposed to agents for American and British companies. Emigration from the island of Ireland has often focused on the links with North America. Between 1815 and 1845 almost one million people left the island for North America.

The maritime provinces of Canada have also played a significant role in migration and shipping. The scale and impact of Irish migration to New Brunswick, Eastern Canada, was considerable. In the case of New Brunswick in particular, the history of migration from the port of Derry to Saint John has resulted in a large percentage of the New Brunswick population tracing 'Irish' ancestry today. Much



The Minnehaha, McCorkell Line, Derry City Council

of the migration took place from counties Londonderry, Donegal, Tyrone and Cork, and was of both Protestant and Catholic denominations. These four counties account for more than half of all Irish immigrants who can be identified in the New Brunswick 1851 census.

By the 1850s, the passenger trade was dominated by two firms, J & J Cooke and William McCorkell & Co. McCorkell ships travelled to New York and Philadelphia whilst Saint John, New Brunswick was one of the major ports of destination for the J & J Cooke ships. The links with Canada were further strengthened, as most Derry owned wooden sailing ships were built in the maritime provinces of Canada.

From the 1870s steam took over from sail on the transatlantic routes. Would be emigrants were carried down the Foyle in a paddle tender from Queen's Quay to

connect with the Anchor and Allan Line steamships that anchored eighteen miles downstream at Moville.

Whilst the port has played a significant role in the emigration trade for many years not all emigrants crossed the Atlantic. The Donegal practice of travelling to Scotland to help with harvest enabled many to escape the effects of the Famine.

The beginnings of shipbuilding in the city of Derry can be assigned to Captain William Coppin who bought the yard and slip dock on the Strand Road in 1839. Coppin was born in Kinsale, County Cork, in 1805. His parents sent him to Saint



John, New Brunswick to work with a relative who owned the shipbuilding firm John W. Smith. Coppin's first wooden ship was the 'Kathleen' built in 1829.

Coppin later became interested in a new form of propulsion, which allowed him to advertise a fast service from Derry to Liverpool. Coppin is probably most famous for 'The Great Northern', built in 1842. The ship was propelled through the water by a four-blade screw propeller. Archimedes created the principle of the screw, which was then adapted by F. P. Smith. 'The Great Northern' was the first ship in Ireland to use this mechanism.

Coppin invented many pieces of machinery during his lifetime, including dredging equipment, salvage vessels, and diving equipment.

## Emigration Sources in the Derry City Council Archive Collection

Derry City Council's Heritage and Museum Service is committed to collecting, preserving and making available archival material from the collection.

The Heritage and Museum Service collects records relevant to the city and its environs. These records reflect the development and heritage of the area.

The collection includes council minutes, photographs, drawings, works of art on paper, legal deeds, estate papers and business papers.

The archives collection contains a number of items that relate to emigration and the port of Derry. A selection of shipping notices, emigrant letters, photographs, tickets and ephemera, and evocative photographic images help to convey the desperate feelings felt by so many.

The archive collection is available for research through the Harbour Museum by appointment only.

## Out of the Foyle and the Lee, Early Irish immigration to New Brunswick

### Denis Noel and the staff of the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick

*In New Brunswick no people have played a more important role in the development of the province than the Irish.<sup>1</sup>*

The massive wave of Irish immigrants which flooded onto the shores of New Brunswick following the Battle of Waterloo marked the beginning of an exodus from Ireland that would culminate with the Great Famine. Irish settlers made up the mosaic of New Brunswick from its beginnings as a colony, but it was the immigrants of early nineteenth century Ireland who dramatically changed the complexion of the province.

The Napoleonic Wars ushered the age of sail into New Brunswick's harbours and timberlands. With the closure of the Baltic ports to British shipping, timber merchants looked to the province's "vast ocean of trees". The economic prosperity which followed in its wake attracted thousands of Irish immigrants to the province to find work in the rugged timber industry.

The timber industry remained the main attraction for Irish immigrants until 1830, when the nature of immigration changed. Prior to this period, immigrants tended to arrive as individuals seeking employment. After 1830, they arrived as families in search of the great Irish dream of owning their own land. It is these men and women who arrived throughout the 1830s, establishing settlements in the province's sweeping wilderness, that many of New Brunswickers can claim ancestry.

<sup>1</sup> Spray, William, 'The Irish in Miramichi', in **New Ireland Remembered**, (1989).

Part of Sunderland  
*A List of the crew and of such persons as have contracted to take their passage on board the Brig Ambassador of saint John N. B. Thomas Vaughan Master Benthon for Regulus 176 Tons and bound for saint John N. B.*

No	Names of crew	age	Residence	occupation
1	Robert Callender	30	St John N. B.	Mate
2	Benjamin Vaughan	23	do	Carpenter
3	David McClellan	24	do	Seaman
4	Mathew Organ	30	do	do
5	John McEwen	23	do	do
6	Thomas Murray	25	Iceland	do
7	Charles Schurly	30	do	do
8	John Murray	25	do	Shipwright
9	Thomas Jones	16	do	Shipwright

No	Names of Passengers	age	Residence	Occupation	Sex
1	Thomas McFetrick	13	County Lemy	Servant	1
2	William McFetrick	10	St. Lemy	Child	2
1	John McFetrick	45	do	Farmer	3
2	Martha do	45	do	Wife	4
3	Catharine McLaughlin	23	do	Spinster	5
4	Martha McLaughlin	20	do	do	6
5	Montagh Patton	40	St Tyrone	Servant	7
6	Margaret Patton	35	do	Wife	8
	Michael do	14	do	Child	9
7	Ann Donnyfar	45	St Lemy	Spinster	10
8	Ann Donnyfar	13	do	do	11
9	Robert Ramsey	25	St Donnyfar	Farmer	12
10	Jane Ramsey	20	do	Wife	13
11	William Ramsey	2	do	Child	14

Brig Ambassador 1834  
 Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, RS23

1847 represented a temporary aberration in the long-established history of Irish emigration to British North America.<sup>2</sup>

The 1830s was the most important decade of Irish immigration to New Brunswick, yet the era that has received the most attention has been that of An Gorta Mór, the Great Famine. With the failure of the potato crop in 1845, thousands upon thousands of desperate and diseased men, women and children from every corner of Ireland sought escape from the misery by boarding ships bound for North America. For many of the Famine immigrants New Brunswick was simply a stopping off point on their way south to the burgeoning "Irish American" cities of the Boston States; others - in desperate need of medical attention and funds - received help in towns like Saint John until they were well enough to begin the journey south again.

Although some Famine refugees made their home in New Brunswick, Irish settlement patterns had already been well established in the region before the 1840s. Demographics clearly show that the two most significant areas in Ireland from which New Brunswick immigrants came were West Ulster in the north and County Cork in the south.

...The New Brunswick Irish, although at least a few have come from each and every county in Ireland, have come mainly from either Cork or Western Ulster. Cork, Donegal, 'Derry, and Tyrone account for more than half of all Irish immigrants who can be identified in the New Brunswick census of 1851.<sup>3</sup>

Emigration was really driven in these regions of Ireland from 1815 to 1830 through technological changes in the linen industry that put weavers out of work. The Ulstermen in general tended to adapt more easily to New Brunswick society than the Cork immigrants. During the period from 1830 to the Great Famine Irish

<sup>2</sup> Houston, Cecil J. and Smyth, William J., **Irish Immigration and Canadian Settlement**, (1990)

<sup>3</sup> Toner, Peter, **The Green Fields of Canada...Irish Immigration and New Brunswick Settlement, 1815-1850**, (1991)

emigration to New Brunswick tended to be fairly well planned, with many family groups establishing themselves on farms in Canada. This contrasted with the Irish emigrant experience during the Great Famine. Much of the immigration to New Brunswick during the Famine still derived from Western Ulster and Cork, but greater numbers overall came from Ireland as a whole.

The tendency among Irish immigrants when they arrived in New Brunswick was to settle near countrymen who had come from their own region in Ireland. For example, a large number of Cork immigrants settled in the city of Saint John.

*A visitor from Belfast would be very confused by the Charlotte County telephone directory because it contains so many names which could be taken from the telephone directory in Belfast. Similarly, a visitor from Western Ulster driving along any rural road in southwestern New Brunswick would read hundreds of names off the roadside mailboxes which would be familiar from back home.*<sup>4</sup>

The sign of the Irish can be seen not only in surnames, but also in the names that were given to the communities and places where they settled. Many place names in New Brunswick were obviously created to celebrate the origin of settlers: Hibernia Settlement, Irish River, Irish Settlement (settled in 1819 by Irish immigrants who had fought with Wellington at Waterloo), and Vinegar Hill (likely named by Irish settlers in remembrance of the rebels' challenge of 1798 in Wexford).

Irish place names were transferred along with immigrants, sometimes with modifications, to their new homeland. New Brunswick has a Donegal, Cork, Ballyshannon, New Bandon, Londonderry, Kerry, North Clones, Waterford Parish, Killarny Lake, and Carlow, all named for places in Ireland and most established in the early part of the nineteenth century. Community names were also frequently derived from influential early settlers including Allison Settlement, named for William Allison from Northern Ireland; Patterson, after a settler family from

County Donegal; and Phillipstown for David Phillips, an early settler and teacher from Derry.

Regardless of the decade of their arrival, the fact remains that the thousands of Irish who came to the far-off woodlands of Canada during the period 1815 - 1855 have left an indelible mark, not only on New Brunswick, but the entire country.

*Londonderry*

*A list of the Passengers and Crew names on Board the Packet Boat of Londonderry 245 Tons John Hughes Master bound from Londonderry to St John N.B.*

<i>N<sup>o</sup></i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
1	John Hughes	Derry	Master
2	Walter Melchell	do	Mate
3	Richard Murphy	do	Seaman
4	John Ferguson	do	do
5	Andrew Cronin	do	do
6	Walter M <sup>o</sup> Donnell	do	do
7	Robert M <sup>o</sup> Nye	do	do
8	George Miffitt	do	do
9	Walter Crosswell	do	do
10	James M <sup>o</sup> Donoghue	Bellevue	do
11	Charles Gallagher	Derry	Apprentice
12	Robt Gallagher	Derry	do

<i>N<sup>o</sup></i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
1	Joseph M <sup>o</sup> Donnell	Bellevue	Palmer

Leslie Gault 1834. Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, RS23

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*



Merville, courtesy of National Library of Ireland

## Emigration From Merville

### Seán Beattie

In the early years of the nineteenth century, there was considerable economic prosperity in Ireland, thanks to investment in industry, a growth in business, an increase in exports and improved prices for farmers. The economic boom generated greater wealth and new trends emerged in the tourist industry, which benefited seaside towns such as Merville, where the new commercial classes built holiday villas and visited regularly as part of the holiday season. To facilitate the demands of a population with more spending power, steamboats provided transport on Lough Foyle between Merville, Derry, Portrush and seaside towns in Scotland in the 1830s. Local landlords such as the Montgomerys developed a wharf and established markets while their neighbours, such as the Carmichaels and the Thorpes, promoted agriculture and in some cases, fisheries. Others, however, discovered business opportunities in the development of the Foyle and invested heavily in the shipping industry. Among such investors were

two Derry men, John Cooke and William McCorkell, whose entrepreneurial genius in the maritime industries gave them a dominant position in the transatlantic trade for most of the nineteenth century. Initially, they invested in ships that carried grain, flax-seed and timber from America. On the return journey, these ships travelled empty until William McCorkell discovered that they could provide transport to America and Canada for passengers seeking a new life beyond our shores. Thus began the trade and passenger services under the flag of Cooke and McCorkell.

Meanwhile, with the population expanding rapidly, few anticipated the growth in emigration that lay ahead as Famine stalked the land from 1845. By May 1847, the Londonderry Journal estimated, with Famine conditions at their worst, that over 16,000 people were expected to sail from the city during that year. It was a harrowing time, as entire families closed the doors of their homesteads and escaped from hunger and disease.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Merville had a small stone pier, a wharf and a substantial stone pier at Carrickarory, all of which served the needs of fishermen landing their catches, farmers selling grain, butter, fowl and potatoes, merchants importing coal and timber and tourists from Portrush and Derry who were holidaying in the town or day-tripping. Such was the inflow of people that plans were afoot to establish a rail link between Merville and Derry. However, the discussions came to nothing and finally the terminus of the rail network was not Merville but the neighbouring market town of Carndonagh.

But to the surprise of the townspeople and with a modest population in 1861 of 897 persons, Merville achieved unexpected fame in the second half of the nineteenth century when, together with Cobh in County Cork, it became a major port of embarkation for emigrants going to Canada and America. The new status of the town was clear for all to see as, starting in the 1860s, the majestic ships of the Anchor line, with their predominantly black funnels, anchored in Lough Foyle on a weekly basis en route to America.

Business in the town received a massive boost and in 1867, a traveller described Moville as ‘decked with shipping of every class, from the American liner to the smallest fishing boat’. Indeed for many such ships, the journey into Lough Foyle was their maiden voyage on the Glasgow-Moville-New York route, a great attraction for passengers embarking at Moville who came from all over the north-west to start their journey to a new world. Among such ships were the Anglia, the Dorrian, and the Furnessia. Passengers on the latter travelled in some style with access to smoking rooms, a music and drawing room with walls covered with dark walnut panels and with brown upholstered seats and carpeted floors. It was a far cry from the cabins of the freight ships used in pre-Famine times. Eighty per cent of emigrants went to America, with tickets in many cases pre-paid by relatives who emigrated earlier in the century in a process known as ‘chain-emigration’. Bookings could also be made at the Anchor Line offices in Moville, situated beside the stone pier, in Derry, and in local towns scattered throughout the county. It was a convenient service for the thousands who made the journey, whether unemployed weavers, agricultural labourers or young girls seeking employment as domestic servants in the homes of the wealthy in New York, Boston or Philadelphia.



Lough Foyle, Moville, courtesy of National Library of Ireland



Transatlantic paddle steamer tender, Derry, Biggar/MacDonald Collection

A boat called the “tender” ferried passengers from Derry, a tearful journey lightened by the strains of a blind fiddler playing traditional Irish airs and snatches of Moore’s melodies. Passengers could also board the tender at Moville. Many of them carried oat cakes to eat on the journey or gifts of poitin, often referred to as “the creathur”, but on long voyages, it was frequently consumed before arrival, particularly if bad weather forced delays. The night before departure, a traditional farewell dance was held, sometimes referred to as the “American wake” or a “bottling”, which lasted into the small hours. As the liner steamed out past Inishowen Head into the Atlantic, relatives stood on headlands and waved good-bye or lit fires on knolls to attract the attention of passengers as they silently strained to catch last glimpses of their beloved homesteads and farms they were leaving behind:

*As we view the Castle turrets,  
See Shrove’s sandy shore  
Take a peep at Port-a-doris  
Look across at fair Bengore.*

(Moville and Greencastle by Dominic O’Kelly)

The sorrow and romance of leave-taking are embedded in the folk music of the period and many of the songs have survived:

*There's a dear old spot where I have oft times strayed when I was but a boy,  
To watch the big ships sailing down, it filled my heart with joy.  
To watch the big ships sailing down, as they sailed away each day  
With thousands of brave Irish hearts going to Amerikay.*

(Moville Along the Foyle)

*From Derry quay we sailed sway all on the eighth of May  
Being forwarded by a pleasant gale, we soon reached Moville Bay.  
Fresh water there some twenty tons our brave Captain took in store  
Lest we would want going to St. Johns far from Greencastle shore.*

*All safe on board the anchor weighed as her head it swung towards the sea  
While the sun shone o'er Benevenagh Rock most glorious to see,  
Greencastle's lovely church and fort, it is them I still adore  
On many a pleasant day I spent on far Greencastle shore.*

(Greencastle Shore)

*Our good ship she's lying below Londonderry  
To bear us all away o'er the wide swelling sea  
May the heavens be her pilot and grant her fresh breezes  
Oh till we reach the green fields of America*

(The Green Fields of America)

But the journey was not without elements of danger and adventure. On the night of 19 October 1870, the Cambria, en route from New York struck rocks at the Garrive Isles off Innistrahull with tragic loss of life, a tragedy also marked in song:

*For the loss of our good ship Cambria that has sunk to rise no more  
With one hundred and seventy-nine on board bound for the Shamrock Shore,  
Oh but Armagh, Tyrone and Derry and the County Donegal  
Cavan, Antrim lament its loss both one and all.*

(The Cambria)

In the years prior to World War One, guide books such as Black's Guide to Ireland, which recommended McConnell's Hotel in Moville, (now the Foyle Hotel) and admired the "clean and pleasant" streets, noted that the main business of the town was generated by "the American mail steamers on the northern route [calling] for the latest telegrams". Like its counterpart, Cobh at the other end of the country, Moville and its hinterland experienced a boom, with both towns thriving on their reputation as major ports of call for transatlantic liners in the early 1900s. In 1905, Moville made world headlines and entered the record books of maritime history when the Belfast-built ship, the Victorian, belonging to the Allen line, became the first turbine-engined vessel to cross the Atlantic, which it managed to do in eight days, thus opening up a new epoch in marine engineering.

But the golden days of Moville as a transatlantic port of call gradually came to an end in the inter-war years, with World War 2 striking the death knell of a glorious, unforgettable and colourful era in the rich and stimulating maritime heritage of the town and surrounding countryside. The steamboats, sailing ships and liners with their passengers have departed but the memories live on:

*From Moville Bay we sailed away just at the evening close  
And I waved my hand to the dear old land and my lovely Irish Rose.*

(*My Lovely Irish Rose*, composed by Fred Kearney, Carndonagh from *The Flower of Dunaff Hill*, compiled by Jimmy McBride, Bunrana)



Passengers at Anchor Line offices, Derry, Biggar/MacDonald collection

## New Brunswick and the Port of Derry The Forgotten Link

### Mickey McGuinness

The ports of Saint John, New Brunswick and Derry were to develop intimate relationships in the early nineteenth century. This early burgeoning of trade is reflected in the table, figure i, page 82 of the book, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement*, which represents transactions between the two ports in 1818.<sup>1</sup> The predominance of Derry and complementary nature of timber and emigrant cargoes, important to shipping firms, is obvious. The local firms, J & J Cooke and William McCorkell & Co. were to eventually dominate this lucrative trade. Emigrants were attracted by land grants and employment, especially in those trades associated with timber. In turn Derry shippers benefited from intimate

<sup>1</sup> Smyth, William J., and Houston, Cecil J., *Irish Emigration And Canadian Settlement*, p. 82 (Toronto 1990)

contacts with Saint John. At least sixteen Derry owned sailing ships were built in the province including the celebrated Minnehaha, which was built in Saint John. Personalities emerged whose histories, when fully explored, could serve to bring colour to the intimacy of the New Brunswick link. Among these are Derry shipbuilder William Coppin who learned his trade in Saint John and then brought his genius to Derry to become an outstanding figure in Derry's maritime history.

Coppin was at the height of his powers when David Lynch, a boy of nine in 1845, along with his father, boarded ship along the quayside close by Coppin's flourishing shipyard, en route to New Brunswick. He would become eventually one of its best known shipbuilders. Lynch's Alexander Yeats was reputed to be one of the finest ships built in the province.<sup>2</sup> An intriguing possibility is that in naming another ship Rock Terrace he acknowledged a connection with the small nineteenth century village, situated only a short distance from the site of Coppin's shipyard, known as "The Rock" and now the site of a row of houses which bears the name "Rock Terrace." We can only wonder how much Coppin's enterprise influenced Lynch's career choice or if indeed recommendations were made on the Lynch family's behalf to contacts in New Brunswick.

The same questions may be asked with respect to the possibility of similar influences on John Meahan, born 1806 in Omagh, County Tyrone. Meahan emigrated to New Brunswick in 1833 and also became a successful shipbuilder. Evidently proud of his origins he named three of his ships Omagh, Tyrone and Derry.<sup>3</sup> His continuing interest in his homeland was manifested in his donation, made in September 1860, towards the building fund for the new Christian Brothers school in the town of Omagh.

<sup>2</sup> Clark Wright, Esther, *Saint John Ships and Their Shipbuilders* (1976)

<sup>3</sup> Notes from Louise Manny, "Shipbuilding in Bathurst": PANB

An example of transatlantic owner-builder familiarity and the benefits of same have been demonstrated by a study of correspondence between ship owner John Cooke in Derry and his agent Thompson in Saint John.<sup>4</sup> The focus of the study is the negotiations around the commissioning, in 1838, of a new barque for the Cooke fleet, to be called the Londonderry. Cooke is shown to be a shrewd businessman with an intimate knowledge of costs and conditions on either side of the Atlantic and sound financial judgement to match. Relative costs of materials and services were explored on either side of the Atlantic and the cheapest options chosen. Such correspondence, akin in volume, detail and relative immediacy to modern fax communication, contributed to a very successful business transaction. When final payments were made it emerges that approximately three quarters of the cost of the ship were to be met by the sale in New Brunswick of a cargo of bacon and calfskins sent out from Derry on another ship. The remainder was to be recouped by the sale of the timber cargo to be carried back by the new ship, the Londonderry.

Opportunities for exchanges between Derry and New Brunswick, based on exploring historic and cultural parallels, as first attempted by the Different Drums Project of 1990, can bring mutual benefits. Since then recognition of our shared history and the goodwill generated by the work of historians and Irish cultural organisations in New Brunswick is beginning to be recognised. As a result further exchanges have been made between Derry, Inishowen and New Brunswick with the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick playing a crucially prominent part. IRDL in Inishowen, Derry City Council and The Academy of Irish Cultural Heritages in University of Ulster are firmly committed to such exchanges. It is surely time, although perhaps this time there may be different emphases, to reconstitute the forgotten link between The Port of Derry and New Brunswick.

Ships Calling at Saint John, 1818

Ship (in order of arrival)	Arrived from	Returned to
<i>Prompt</i>	Derry with 251 passengers	Greenock with timber
<i>Thomas Henry</i>	Derry with 335 passengers	Derry with timber
<i>Integrity</i>	Workington with 60 passengers	Limerick with timber
<i>George</i>	Belfast with 90 passengers	Greenock with timber
<i>Lord Whitworth</i>	Derry with 235 passengers	Liverpool with timber
<i>Sarah</i>	Derry with 156 passengers	Periscot for timber for Europe
<i>Droper</i>	Derry with 114 passengers	Cork and Liverpool with timber
<i>Alexander</i>	Derry with 150 passengers	Millford with timber
<i>Neptune</i>	Belfast with passengers	Waterford with timber
<i>General Brock</i>	Norway via Iceland with 186 Irish passenger	[not known]
<i>Ganges</i>	Belfast with 45 passengers	Aberdeen with timber
<i>Martin</i>	Belfast (cargo unknown)	Cork with timber
<i>Jeffie</i>	Drumfries with 70 passengers	Dumfries with timber
<i>Bartley</i>	Derry with 130 passengers	Derry with timber
<i>Young Halliday</i>	Dublin with 67 passengers	Liverpool with timber
<i>Nile</i>	Dumfries with passengers	Dumfries with timber
<i>Halifax Packet</i>	Derry with 215 passengers	Liverpool with timber



Londonderry 1800, H. Brocas, Derry City Council

<sup>4</sup> New Brunswick Shipbuilding and Irish Shipping: **The Commissioning of the Londonderry, 1838** : Acadiensis.

## Along the North-West Passage

### Paddy Fitzgerald

Undoubtedly more people today than a generation ago recognise that emigration across the Atlantic from Ulster ports like Derry did not begin with the Great Famine (1845-50). However, there remains a marked tendency to associate the emigration of the preceding century and a half with the American colonies or what, after 1783, became the United States of America. As a corrective to this grand popular narrative we need to remember that during the decades when genuinely mass emigration can be said to have got underway (1815-45) more Irish emigrants (450,000) went to British North America (Canada) than the USA (400,000). From the North-western counties of Donegal, Derry and Tyrone, in particular, the pre-Famine emigrants forged particularly strong ties with the port of Saint John and the province of New Brunswick.



Women emigrants on board a tender ship, 1930s, Biggar/MacDonald collection

In the eighteenth century emigrants leaving Derry for the New World had packed into the holds of merchant vessels which had often brought bulk cargoes like flaxseed from the American colonies. In a real sense these migrants were thought of by merchants and shippers as a human cargo helping to make both legs of the transatlantic journey profitable. At the beginning of the nineteenth century as the Napoleonic Wars raged, the demand for timber, not least to build warships, grew but could not be met from the traditional source, the Baltic states, due to a blockade imposed by Napoleon's navy. The vast forests of maritime Canada filled the void and the trade in timber, and return trade in migrants, continued to flourish after peace was established in 1815. The government in London continued to do all that it could to encourage a commercial relationship which brought profit to Imperial rather than continental interests and delivered the human potential of migrants to British North America rather than the United States.

Derry had established its reputation as the major emigrant port for the New World in the North West from the early eighteenth century. From the 1740s, as the rural economy began to prosper and the population expanded, the city strengthened its position as a major urban hub in a largely rural, agricultural region. In the course of the generation prior to mid-century Derry doubled its population from roughly ten to twenty thousand, despite the ravages of Famine (1845-50). However, significantly more of those migrating in from the expanding west Ulster hinterland were destined to 'pass through' on their way to overseas destinations. The contraction of cottage based linen production during this period left many impoverished weavers and their families with few options but to migrate. The cheapest option was across the Irish Sea and some left Derry for Scotland or England, as a regular steamship service was available from the late 1820s. In terms of trans-oceanic emigration however, Derry had managed to withstand the strong competition of Liverpool, already established as the most significant transatlantic port for Irish emigrants. From the quays of Derry the route to New Brunswick exercised great appeal over the alternative to Philadelphia



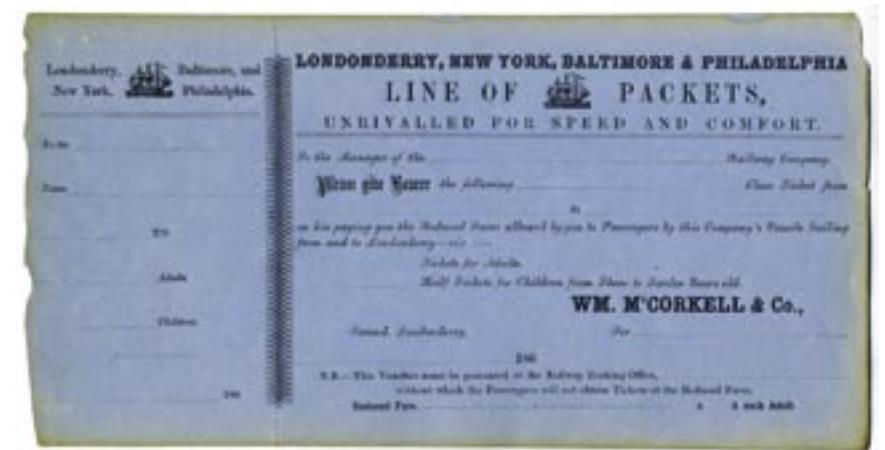
Child on board tender, 1930s, Biggar/MacDonald collection

because the passage was shorter but much more importantly because it was consistently cheaper.

One emigrant letter, transcribed on the Irish Emigration Database at the Centre for Migration Studies, provides a window on the experience of one young emigrant from County Derry who made his way across the ocean to New Brunswick in the spring of 1834 (CMS IED 9510005). Leaving his family home in the townland of Cumber, near the village of Clady, in the foothills of the Sperrin mountains, James Ward would likely have walked the 10 miles or so along the main Dublin to Derry road. In mid-August 1834, about three months after his arrival James took up his pen in Saint John to write home to his father. Although he had found work as second steward on the Woodswick steamboat he confessed to his father that 'this country puts an Irishman to his wits' and he refused to advise others at home either to follow him or to hold off emigrating. In the letter we see already the network of connection, the results of chain migration which

made New Brunswick more familiar for the new arrival like James Ward. With a sister settled in Fredericton, Ward also noted his acquaintance with William Carlin and his son George, the former sending his best regards back to John Kennedy and family in Derry.

If some of the faces and voices the young immigrant saw and heard as he worked on the steamboat may have reminded him of home one feature of the environment, the climate, was starkly different from home. So even prior to experiencing for himself a first full winter, he reported to his father and all those at home to be prepared for 'a long tedious winter'. The adjustment to life in New Brunswick was not easy and Ward vowed that he would return to see his father within two years. Others no doubt followed a similar path or may in time have moved on within Canada or south to the United States. However, the Irish imprint remained deep upon the province of New Brunswick and as was typical of Irish emigration that imprint had a very strong and particular regional character. In New Brunswick the peoples of South Munster and North West Ulster came into contact to a much greater extent than would have been usual in pre-Famine Ireland itself.



An example of a ticket from the McCorkell Line, Derry City Council



Emigrants on board a tender ship, Biggar/MacDonald collection

## Saint John, New Brunswick: The cradle of Derry trade with North America

**Brian Mitchell**

There is a tendency to see the Great Famine, when over a million people left Ireland for North America between 1846 and 1851, as the cause of the Irish Diaspora. In reality heavy emigration from Ireland began well before the Famine and continued well after it.

The end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 was a significant landmark in the story of Irish emigration and Canadian immigration. With the depressed conditions following the end of war in 1815 many small farmers and rural tradesmen in

Ireland saw emigration as the only solution to their declining economic prospects. In the absence of alternative sources of employment, and in a time of rising population, it was clear that subdivision of the family farm among children inevitably led to deteriorating standards of living. Emigration was in these circumstances the only opportunity on offer in Ireland.

From 1815 to 1845 it is estimated that 1 million Irishmen and women crossed the Atlantic for North America. In this period Canada, not the USA, was the initial destination of these emigrants. It is estimated that 80% of passengers who sailed to North America from Irish ports landed in Canada, though perhaps half that total may have gone on to the United States.

In contrast to the United States the greatest numbers of Irish came to Canada in the pre-Famine period. By 1871 the Irish-born and their descendants made up 24.3% of Canada's population. In the same year the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick, with 35% of their population of Irish origin, were the two most Irish jurisdictions outside of Ireland.

In this pre-Famine period of migration to both the United States and Canada, Protestant Irish migrants continued to significantly outnumber Catholic Irish immigrants. As a consequence, in 1871, 60% of the Irish in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were Protestant. The Irish in Canada were, furthermore, rural settlers. By contrast, in the USA, the Irish immigrant's principal role was to service industrial expansion.

The links between Inishowen and Derry, and between Derry and Saint John, New Brunswick, were forged through emigration. From its earliest days Irish migration has been a family affair. The Irish either moved with kin or moved to join kin. When the Marchioness of Clydesdale sailed out of Derry for Saint John, at the height of the Famine in 1847, she was carrying 168 emigrants from Inishowen, including 87 people from Carndonagh, 23 from Clonmany, 15 from Malin and 11 from Culdaff. Although the decision to emigrate was influenced by economic and



Young family on board a paddle steamer destined for Moville, Biggar/MacDonald collection

social conditions at home, the locations of family members who had gone before was the major determinant of emigrant destination.

Based on the 1851 census for New Brunswick, Professor Peter Toner has produced settlement distribution maps for Irish immigrants according to source region in Ireland. It clearly demonstrates that Irish immigrants settled near others from the same areas in Ireland. The Irish from eastern Ulster settled in large numbers in Charlotte County while those from Counties Derry, Donegal, Fermanagh and Tyrone (who made up 43% of Irish immigrants to New Brunswick in the period 1815-1850) settled in the entire lower valley of the Saint John River. Immigrants from the south-eastern corner of Ireland settled in the Miramichi while those from Cork (who provided 19% of Irish immigrants in the period) predominated in the town of Saint John itself.

Derry's importance as an emigration port increased throughout the 19th century. It was a profitable trade. Merchants in Derry soon became ship-owners as opposed to agents for American and British companies. An outward cargo of emigrants, a homeward cargo of timber or grain, together with two voyages per year, one in spring and one in the autumn, ensured a sizeable profit. By 1833 seven merchants in the city owned fifteen vessels, all engaged in the North American trade.

Derry served as the emigration port for counties Derry, Donegal and Tyrone. New York and Philadelphia in the United States and Saint John, New Brunswick and Quebec in Canada were the destinations of emigrants departing from Derry in the first half of the 19th century. Of 38 emigrant ships advertised to sail from Derry in 1836, 12 were destined for Saint John (detailed at Table 1), 12 for Philadelphia, 7 for Quebec and 6 for New York.

**Table 1**  
**Emigrant Ships Advertised in the Londonderry Journal to Sail from Derry to Saint John, New Brunswick in 1836**

Name of Ship	Londonderry Agent	First Appearance of Advertisement
The Leslie Gault	Daniel Baird	15 March
Felicity	Joseph Young	15 March
Highlander	Richard Forrest	22 March
Aimwell	Norman MacLeod	29 March
Charity	Norman MacLeod	12 April
Intrepid	Richard Forrest	19 April
Edward Reid	Barber & Dixon	19 April
Perseus	Norman MacLeod	10 May
Formosa	Norman MacLeod	24 May
Mary and Ann	Richard Forrest	7 June
Spruce	Norman MacLeod	21 June
Charity	Norman MacLeod	23 August

The seasonal nature of the emigration trade in this period is evidenced by the fact that no emigrant ships were advertised to sail from Derry in the Londonderry Journal from 30 August to 27 December 1836. Emigrant ships generally did not set sail from Derry to North America in the months from September to March.

By the 1830s the merchant community of Derry had established close links with their counterparts in Saint John. Sholto Cooke described Saint John, New Brunswick as ‘the cradle of Derry trade with North America and destination of great numbers of emigrants for Canada or in transit to the United States. During the passenger season, one or more Derry ships usually lay at anchor in Saint John, either landing their passengers or loading deals for home. Saint John shipbuilders also had a good reputation in Derry and some of the finest and fastest ships owned in Derry were built in Saint John’.

The strong mercantile links between the province of New Brunswick and Derry are evident in the registers of the Custom House, Derry. These registers record that 53 ships, over 100 tons in size, were bought by Derry merchants between 1834 and 1850, and that sixteen of these ships were built in New Brunswick (detailed at Table 2).

**Table 2**  
**Ships over 100 tons Registered in Derry from 1834-1850 and Built in New Brunswick, Canada**

Ship	Tonnage	Where Built	When Built	Derry Owner	Year of Reg.
William	138	Hopewell, New Brunswick	1831	John Robertson	1834
Aimwell	155	Hillsborough, New Brunswick	1834	Norman Macleod & John Hyndman	1835
Donegal	135	St Martins, New Brunswick	1829	Peter Robertson	1835
Charlotte Douglass	574	Portland, New Brunswick	1835	John Munn	1836

Ship	Tonnage	Where Built	When Built	Derry Owner	Year of Reg.
Caroline	552	Oromocto, New Brunswick	1834	William McCorkell	1836
Erin	720	Saint John, New Brunswick	1835	Samuel Alexander Joseph Alexander & James Corscaden	1836
Londonderry	299	Saint John, New Brunswick	1839	John Cooke	1839
Provincialist	880	New Brunswick	1839	William McCorkell	1840
Malta	138	Saint John, New Brunswick	1839	John Munn & David Baird	1840
Mary Stewart	216	New Brunswick	1840	Daniel Baird	1841
Lady Colebrook	385	New Brunswick	1841	Charles Armstrong	1841
Croole	455	New Brunswick	1841	James Corscaden	1842
Rebecca	251	Portland, New Brunswick	1837	Archibald McCorkell	1844
Betsey	109	New Brunswick	1838	John Munn	1845
Clydesdale	514	Portland, New Brunswick	1838	Smith Osborne	1846
Royal Saxon	442	Saint John, New Brunswick	1838	Robert McIntyre	1846

The Custom House registers demonstrate that the merchant community of Derry established close trading, financial, and in some cases, family links with their counterparts in New Brunswick, Canada and Liverpool, England. The ship William, for example, registered in Derry on 22 December 1834, was built at Hopewell, New Brunswick in 1831. Peter Robertson, a merchant of Saint John, New Brunswick, had sold the ship, on 26 September 1834, to Derry merchant, John Robertson, for £900. John Robertson, on 29 December 1834, then mortgaged the William for £700 to Archibald Robertson, a ship-carver of Liverpool.

To finish with the fine words of Sholto Cooke: ‘A trade which was at its height less than a hundred years ago is now a matter of history.’

## The Fid - Merville Emigration Monument

Declan Sheehan



The Fid - Merville Emigration Monument

The best vantage points for seeing Merville's historic Old Stone Pier are an approach from on the River Foyle itself, and looking down towards the pier from a height on the village's shore green. The Old Pier is an emblem of Merville's rich maritime heritage: the Anchor Line ticket Office for the emigration boats was located just off the pier; and the pier itself is one of the last complete 1880's – 1890's Congested Districts Piers extant in Donegal.

This scene of Merville's historic Old Stone Pier, linking the River Foyle with the land of Inishowen, now features the striking addition of a new sculpture by artist Locky Morris,

The Fid- Merville Emigration Monument. This commission from Donegal County Council Public Art Office follows on from the artist's commission for Pole Star, his large sculpture which has become an iconic feature for Letterkenny.

The Fid -at Merville Old Stone Pier has its inspirations within the village's powerful connections to the sea and seafaring. The artist's conversations with local people uncovered tales of the beacon fires, which were once lit on the hills of Inishowen to mark the passage down the River Foyle of emigration ships. And in

Greencastle Maritime Museum the artist encountered an example of a 'fid', the small handheld tool turned from a piece of wood, used by fishermen for splicing ropes and nets and by sailmakers for opening holes in the sails without tearing the material. The final sculpture both recollects those beacon flames and that form of a 'fid'. It unites this elegant and flowing form with an assured sense of scale and location – standing over 25 feet high and over three feet wide at base, sited at the end of the pier, facing directly onto a beautiful and dramatic seascape.



The Old Pier then, marks the village's maritime heritage, for individual seafarers, emigrants and immigrants, their families, and the wider communities. In many ways, The Fid itself will act as a beacon towards this location: concentrating our vision and our thoughts upon those links between sea and land, which have made Merville.



For more information, see the website of Donegal County Council Public Art Office, [www.publicartdonegal.ie](http://www.publicartdonegal.ie)

Merville Quaypoint

## Emigration from Donegal Sources in Central Library, Letterkenny

**Berni Campbell**

### The Local Studies Collection in the Central Library, Letterkenny

Central Library's Local Studies Collection totals over 3,500 books and audio-visual items relating to the county - history, archaeology, genealogy, literature, culture and geography. The collection includes microfilms of local newspapers and a wide range of historical journals. The complete sets of the *Donegal Annual* and the *Clogher Record* are available for reference. Files are maintained of newspaper cuttings on selected topics, and there is a small selection of reproduction photographs from the Lawrence collection. There is a special collection of older printed books published in the 17th - 19th centuries, and maps dating from the mid-1800s and earlier.

The Central Library's genealogy collection is of special interest to family history researchers. It includes passenger lists, valuations, 1901 and 1911 census records, some parish registers, and a selection of graveyard indexes. The complete transcripts from over 360 primary school pupils in Donegal who took part in the 1937 Schools' Folklore Collection are available at the library on microfilm.

### Emigration sources in Central Library

#### A History of the Donegal Relief Fund, Sydney NSW, and the Celtic Relief Fund, Melbourne, 1858-1864.

Compiled by Lindel Buckley and Bill Spillane, New Zealand 2004.

#### Topics include:

- Names of the Cloughaneely evicted families who went to Australia 1858-1864, and whose passage was paid by the Celtic Relief Fund there.
- "London Times" 1861 extract on the Derryveagh Evictions.

### Aspects of Irish Assisted Emigration to New South Wales, 1848-1870.

By Richard E Reid.

#### Topics include:

- Emigration from Gweedore To Australia, 1858.
- The Donegal Relief Committee founded by Archdeacon McEnroe.
- Distress and emigration in 1850s Parish of Tullaghobegley.
- The role of local priests Fathers McFadden and Doherty.

### Australia – the early years. From C19 reports in the "Derry Journal"

Nineteenth century Donegal emigration from Derry Port to Australia.

#### Topics include:

- Free passage schemes to Australia.
- Emigrants' letters from Australia.

### Arranmore Links

Aidan and Barney Gallagher, 2004.

#### Topics include:

- Emigration from Arranmore to Beaver Island, Michigan.
- Nineteenth century conditions on Arranmore leading to emigration.
- Glenties Workhouse and the Great Famine.
- The Sweeney family, Arranmore.
- The Ward (Mac a' Ward) family, Arranmore.

### Report of the Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems, 1948-1954

Lucey & Meehan. Government Commissioner, Dublin.

**Topics include:**

- Tracking population changes in the counties of Ireland.
- Emigration policy of the USA in the 1940s.
- Controls on emigration and employment in Britain, including seasonal migratory workers.

**Spalpeens & Tattie Hokers**

Anne O'Dowd. Irish Academic Press, Blackrock, Dublin 1991

**Topics include:**

- History and folklore of the Irish migratory farm workers in Britain.

**Who Belongs to Glasgow?**

Mary Edward. Glasgow City Libraries, 1993.

**Topics include:**

- Seasonal migration from Donegal to Glasgow.

**Tunnel tigers**

Patrick Campbell. New Jersey 2000

**Topics include:**

- Emigration from Donegal to the tunnel-building schemes in Scotland.
- Religious prejudice in Scotland towards migratory workers.

**Irish Passenger Lists 1847-187-.**

Brian Mitchell. Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., Baltimore, 1988.

- Lists of passengers from the North-West who sailed from Derry Port to America on J & J Cooke and McCorkell ships.

**Port of Derry ships list from J & J Cooke's Line (1847-1849)**

Dessie Baker. The Derry Youth & Community Workshop. Closson Press 1985

**Topics include:**

- Names of the emigrant ships; names and ages of the passengers, and where they came from.

**It's us They're Talking About! – Issue 4 – Emigration from Ireland to America and Britain since the Famine**

Mary Harkin. The McGlinchey Summer School, Inishowen, Co Donegal.

**Topics include:**

- Cause and effects of emigration from Donegal in the nineteenth & twentieth centuries.
- Emigration from Inishowen - emigrants' recollections.
- Donegal farm labourers in Scotland.
- The "navvies" in Britain.
- Donegal emigrants and Celtic Football Club.
- Inishowen emigrants and the American Civil War.
- Inishowen emigration to America
- Poems about emigration.

**Donegal Presbyterians**

Richard K McMaster. The Donegal Society, Pennsylvania, USA, 1995

**Topics include:**

- Donegal Presbyterian emigrants in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century.
- A Scots-Irish congregation in Pennsylvania.

**Dear William-Letters from Home 1796-1826**

Letters to William McKnight of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, from family in County Donegal, Ireland, with a history of the McNaught family of Grange, Burt Parish. Gary T Hawbaker, Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA, 2008

**Topics include:**

- Emigrant letters of John Patton, Ramelton, to William McKnight, USA
- Emigrant letters from Pennsylvania to Ramelton 1796-1826
- Property map of Porter-owned lands in Burt, 1727
- Ballymoney (Burt) Farm map C19
- Carrowen Farm (Burt) map C19
- Grange Farm (Burt) map c1835

**USEFUL WEBSITES FOR RESEARCHING DONEGAL ANCESTORS**

The following website addresses are dedicated to family research world-wide, and have very useful “links”:

<http://www.rootsweb.com> (A huge global genealogy site)

<http://indigo.ie/~donances> (Donegal Ancestry, Ramelton, Co Donegal). A professional genealogical company based in Ramelton, Co. Donegal)

[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) (United States National Archives site)

[www.dun-na-ngall.com](http://www.dun-na-ngall.com) (A good source for Donegal-related genealogy)

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (the Mormon Church (Latter-Day Saints) Family History site)

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal> (a part of the “Rootsweb” site - devoted to Donegal genealogy. New Zealander Lindel Buckley (Gallagher) is continuously adding new information)

[www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk) (Public Records Office, Northern Ireland)

[www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie) (National Archives, Dublin)

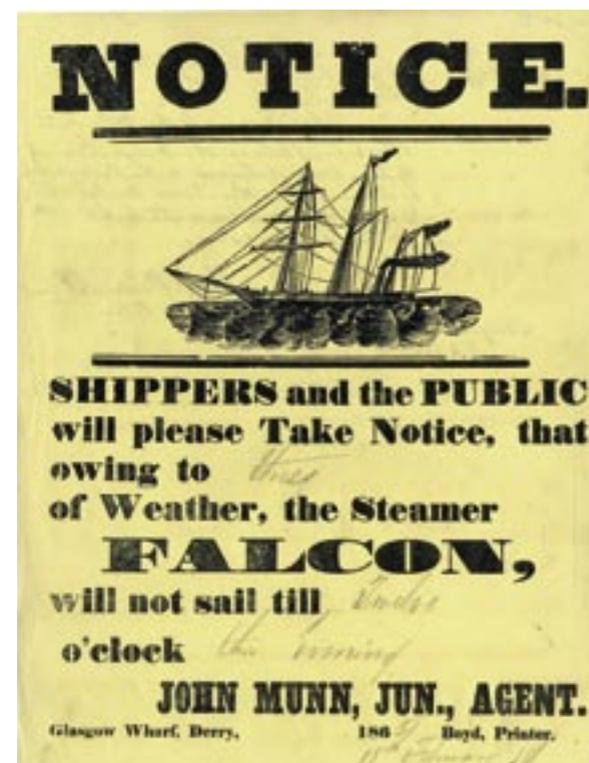
<http://www.nli.ie> (National Library of Ireland’s site – has a guide to beginning family research)

[www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) (American passenger records 1892-1924)

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal> (A website devoted to the genealogy of County Donegal; constantly being added to).

[www.gallagherclan.org](http://www.gallagherclan.org) Website of the Gallagher clan of Donegal

[www.lifesteps.ie](http://www.lifesteps.ie) (A public Libraries website, from a list of topics, click on ‘Family History’.)



An example of a shipping notice, Derry City Council

## Databases and websites- Passenger lists and Emigration Online

**Niamh Brennan**

Sourcing information about ancestors who emigrated over the past couple of hundred years is not easy. Many people left the country and went abroad, to England, Scotland, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and to other countries. But not everyone left a trace of his or her journey. Researching the lives of emigrated forebears can also be extremely expensive. The majority of national and local Archives do not have the resources to put original records online. Nonetheless in recent years where there are resources huge efforts have been made to develop genealogical and archival websites so as to make large numbers of records accessible online and often free of charge.

Many of these websites have digitised national and regional Archives' shipping records. Passenger lists all relate to those disembarking at the emigrants' new destination. This article takes a look at some of these websites and how they relate to emigration from Donegal and the north west of Ireland.

<http://archives.gnb.ca/Archives>

The New Brunswick Provincial Archives holds 23,318 records relating to what is described as 'Irish famine migration to New Brunswick, 1845–1852'. This searchable and free database gives details of immigrants to New Brunswick, including name, age and condition; for example: 'destitute', vessel sailed on, religion, and county. The database usefully gives a reference code for the original archival material. An example of one entry is for a Michael Doherty from Carndonagh, who sailed from the port of Derry in 1848 on the Lord Maidstone at the height of the famine, and arrived as an immigrant in Canada at St. John's Point.



However, there are difficulties in pinpointing one's ancestors. In Donegal - as in many parts of Ireland - many people in a district or even townland, even if not related, might share a surname, and generations of families often repeatedly used first names. Thus it might be hard to point out just which Michael Doherty is referred to in the above sample, as individual townlands' names are not usually given in the database. More research is inevitably needed. Some greater details are given where obviously required. This is demonstrated in the record of another Michael Doherty, from Mayo, who arrived in New Brunswick in 1847 with a fever, and was sent to the 'asylum'. (In this case it might be possible for a descendant to go on to access the records of the asylum referred to here, in archival institutions in Canada, in order to glean more information on the ultimate fate of an ancestor or possible ancestor.)

The New Brunswick Archive also contains a database with 10,000 records relating to emigrants to the port of New Brunswick from 1816–1838. Among the many records we discover a Mary O'Donnell, from Ballyshannon, who sailed on the Zephyr to the Port of Saint John in 1833, and it includes details of the Archive's own reference code. The original passenger list entries are digitised and can be downloaded from the website.

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases>

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) holds the Canadian immigration records for the years 1865 to 1935. The passenger lists are described in the website as ‘the sole surviving official records of the arrival of the majority of people accepted as immigrants in Canada.’ The passenger list includes the names of immigrants arriving at an official port of entry on a particular ship on a given date. Generally speaking, each manifest gives: the name of the ship, its port and date of departure, its port and date of arrival in Canada, and the name, age, gender, profession or occupation, nationality and destination of each passenger aboard. This website allows searches by ship. This service is free.

<http://www.ellisland.org>

**Ellis island**

The excellent Ellis Island website tells us that it is believed ‘nearly half of all Americans today can trace their family history to at least one person who passed through the Port of New York at Ellis Island’. Known in its time as ‘The Gateway to America’, Ellis Island, off New York harbour, is probably the most famous place in the world associated with immigration to America from the late nineteenth to the middle of the twentieth century. The very first person to go through immigration was a fifteen year old Irish girl, Annie Moore, in January 1892. Legal and health checks took place in the Registry room on this small island before each immigrant was allowed access to the United States.

Ellis Island, which was restored as an immigration museum in the 1980’s, includes a wall devoted to the inscriptions of names of over half a million immigrants including many thousands from all over Ireland.

The website contains an album of black and white photographs of immigrants being processed on disembarkation and also tells a variety of stories from descendants of people who emigrated from across the globe including Ireland. Most importantly for people intent on doing their family history, the website

includes a database of the names of all passengers disembarking at New York from 1892 – 1924, which is fully searchable and is free of charge. Researchers must register to access some parts of the website, but there is no charge to do so.



<http://www.ancestorsonboard.com>

Ancestors on Board is a recently launched website, compiled by the British National Archives, in association with website www.findmypast.com. It has or is in the process of digitising 24 million emigration records – 164,000 passenger lists for ships leaving Britain and Ireland from 1890–1960. Countries of immigration include not only the Americas, Australia and New Zealand but also India, South Africa, the Caribbean and West Africa. This new innovation is an incredible resource for people studying emigrant family history. It is not a free website but it is possible to search by name and get results without being charged. For example a quick search for a Thomas Doherty who left the port of Londonderry and went to New York brings up 60 results which give age, year of birth of each person registered under that name and year of departure. To view the image or transcript one must however pay.

### <https://www.worldvitalrecords.com>

This website, called World Vital Records, charges for use of its databases. Among the databases, which can be accessed at a cost, is a list of passengers from Ireland who arrived at American ports between the years 1811 and 1817. This is considerably earlier than most databases. Most of the information was transcribed by Donald M. Schlegel from a New York Newspaper, The Shamrock or Hibernian Chronicle which was in existence for those seven years. Apparently information on passengers, including family groups, is quite extensive. The website contains several other databases relating to Irish emigration including Irish Passenger Lists (also to be found in Irish Origins, [www.irishorigins.com](http://www.irishorigins.com)) for sailings in 1890 from British and Irish ports with US and Canadian destinations.

### [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com)

Irish passenger lists, mainly of immigrants to New York and Philadelphia, are also available from The Irish Times ancestry resource pages at <http://www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/browse>. The database gives ship, year, origin and destination, and Moville is included in several records. A number of records accessed give the names of individuals travelling on ships but no other details- age, townland etc. However, some of the online passenger lists seem more specific. For example, the record for the Ship Emmanuel which sailed from Londonderry in 1836 includes name, gender, age, occupation (farmer, clerk, clothier, weaver, labourer, spinster etc), and even lists the number of pieces of luggage accompanying each passenger as they disembark. At least half of the passengers on that ship were from Donegal, the remainder from Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone. A much later passenger list from a ship originating at Moville and Glasgow, the SS Ethiopia, lists all the passengers picked up en route to the USA, but only gives their country of origin, not their county. The Irish Times website also gives a list of published passengers' lists, which can be accessed in libraries.

### [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

The National Archives and Records Administration of the USA. Though strictly speaking NARA has not put online most of its passenger lists, it provides a gateway to a number of databases including one which identifies 604,596 persons who arrived in the Port of New York, during the famine years, from 1846-1851. Approximately seventy per cent of people recorded as immigrants to the port of New York on this database came from Ireland. The database is free to search and information gleaned includes names and ages of passengers and the places they embarked at, such as Donegal, Belfast and Londonderry.

### [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)

The National Archives of Ireland's website contains a database of convicts transported to Australia between 1791 and 1853. While not strictly emigrants of course -or at least not willing emigrants- the people who were deported from the country left family behind, and the database is a useful resource for anyone commencing a search for Australian ancestors (and also of course for Australian people searching Irish ancestry.) Details include name, county, trial date, crime (e.g., 'larceny'), sentence, and the reference code for the original archive.

### [www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has recently launched a new database of its catalogues, the ecatni project. Some of the catalogues now online are not merely descriptions of collections but transcripts of archives, including journals and letters. Searches under headings of 'emigration and Donegal' and 'emigrants and Donegal' produced extremely interesting results. An informative online exhibition: 19th Century Emigration to North America includes digitised images of original archives and transcripts from emigration collections. The exhibition provides information and scanned archives relating to the aristocrat, Vere Foster, who assisted thousands of Irish people to emigrate through a variety of schemes throughout the 19th century. The detail provided in

the online catalogue entries varies considerably. A letter from James Dempsey on board an emigrant ship at Moville in October 1838, bound for Sydney, is transcribed on the website. Dempsey describes in great detail the conditions on board ship (T1935/1). A passenger book from Londonderry to Philadelphia (D2892/1) is transcribed, giving the names of families on board the Superior from 18 Feb to 17 March 1847.

Other catalogue entries transcribe only extracts from letters. The Johnston family emigration papers (D1047) contain such extracts, including a reference to a letter from emigrant Mrs Jane Fleming to Mr McVitty in Bundoran in 1853, which includes the line: *'the people in this country all works for their living.'*

The description of this collection includes another extract from an emigrant's letter, Francis Johnston, Ohio, to his uncle in Ireland, 1858. Francis comments ruefully that *'times is very hard in the United States, the like was never heard of before; the reason is the overpluss of grain'*.

Letters transcribed from the Vere Foster collection (D3618) include a letter from Reverend Charles Glynn, PP, Dungloe to Foster in 1884. The priest's letter apparently originally included an enclosure with a list of female applicants for emigration. Reverend Glynn states that the Glenties union is too poor to assist families emigrating under a new government scheme and urges Foster to give assistance. Another letter to Foster from Reverend P. Daly, Carrigart, 1881, acknowledges Foster's work for emigrants but states that while struggling families would benefit from emigrating many are 'so attached to the old spot' they will not leave.

Not all catalogue entries are described in detail however. For example, there is a brief description of the papers of Robert Moore from Carndonagh, an emigrants' agent, which include letters to him from his family and friends living in the USA (T2799). The collection spans the years from 1850 to 1936. To find out more about what these papers contain researchers must go to PRONI to examine the original archives.

### [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au)

The Australian National Archives is in the process of digitising its immigration and naturalization records in order to make them accessible online. This project is called Making Australia Home. At present (2009) it is possible to carry out a free name search for an ancestor on the Archives' website but information available on the record itself is scanty. However copies of records can be purchased.

### <http://www.archives.govt.nz>

Archives New Zealand's website provides information on a PDF downloadable pamphlet on what emigration sources are available on site but none appear to be accessible online.

### <http://www.list.jaunay.com/ausnzpassengers>

This website describes itself as a gateway site to free online passenger and convict lists for Australasia - sites such as <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com>

A glance through a few of these databases gives one an idea of how many Irish people travelled to Australia and New Zealand, often from ports such as Greenock and Glasgow. The Oamaru travelled to Bluff, New Zealand, from Glasgow in 1878 and its passenger list included many people from Cork to Donegal, from Derry to Limerick. The database gives names, ages, what county they hail from and their occupation (e.g., 'farm labourer', 'domestic servant.')

### <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal>

Donegal Genealogy Resources is part of the above website. These pages were set up by Lindel Buckley and include a selection of 18th, 19th and early 20th century transcribed sources. The website was designed to assist family historians in conducting research into their Donegal ancestry. The site includes transcripts of passenger lists – people emigrating from Ireland including Donegal, to America, New Zealand and Australia, from the 1840's onwards. The lists give names of ship, country and port of origin, date of arrival, name, gender and occupation of emigrant, port of arrival, and mode of travel, for example: 'steerage'.

### <http://www.cyndislist.com/ships.htm#Lists>

Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet is another useful gateway site to other websites containing shipping lists and also includes a list of useful books and pamphlets relating to the subject of emigration/immigration generally.

### <http://www.olivetreenealogy.com/ships>

Olive Tree Genealogy is a popular and meticulously researched website which contains databases of passengers on 2,550 emigration ships, to ports in America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK. While it is not free generally, some of the databases can be searched free of charge.

### Centre for Migration Studies

The Centre for Migration Studies is not a general online resource, but an article covering databases relating to emigration cannot fail to mention this magnificent resource on the outskirts of Omagh. Its mission is 'to serve the community as a leading international institution for the study of human migration, focusing on the peoples of Ireland world-wide'.

Although not online, the Centre along with the Irish Centre for Migration Studies (ICMS) at University College Cork, has plans to develop an Emigration Resources Information Network (ERIN) – the Irish Migration Gateway. The aim will be to 'provide a web-based resources directory offering a comprehensive information gateway to scholars and all others interested in Irish emigration and migration issues'.

A brief study of the database at the Centre brings up 141 transcribed items with the word Merville included. A cursory search through some of the transcribed material produces some fascinating documentation, including journals, diaries and letters, relating to the subject of emigration, mainly to the USA and Canada.

One transcribed letter which describes the experience of transatlantic travel is from Gwynne [B], Merville, to William [ ]. On 12 March 1847 Gwynne states that 'they have to stop [at Merville] till wind dies down. ...looking forward to a pleasant run across to the New World'.

A letter from J A Smyth, Essex, Ontario, to John James Smyth, Castledamph, in August 1904, writes that '[a relative] Mary will be coming by steam from Merville to Belle Isle via Quebec and that 'there is nothing so beneficial as seeing a little of the world'. Obviously a family that could afford to travel across the Atlantic more than once in a lifetime, Mary herself commented a year or so later in a letter to J. A., above, on the fact that three siblings have left home for Canada, some having travelled and come home more than once. The effect such emigration has on the older generations is reflected in her comment:

'No wonder mother says that she never had any peace with us as when one comes home another is leaving.'

The positive side of emigration is highlighted too however as J. A. is obviously doing well for himself:

'We are very glad that you are still climbing higher and higher. (11 April 1905).'

Journals include An Account of a Sea Voyage from Derry-America, 1818, the journal of a man from Cappagh, Strabane, Hugh Campbell. The importance of both Derry and Merville as ports as early as 1820 is reflected in the 11 June entry:

'We anchored this morning at Merville and Captain Elkins came on board. (p 19). Went to Culmore bay from Derry on 17th June. Obligated to await in Culmore, Merville for two days till the mayor 'would go through the customary forms of examining the passengers and crew..... sailed down to Merville on the evening of the 19th. Stayed in Merville a few days while Captain procured necessary papers in Derry.'

On 20 and 29 June he speaks movingly and poetically of the sorrow of leaving loved ones behind forever:

‘Moville bay, for the last time I took an affectionate farewell of my dear brother Andrew who came down to see me’ (20th June.); ‘I believe there is no period that emigrants feel more sorrow than when commencing a wide sea voyage, they compare their many privations and dangers with the security and ease they left behind. It makes them conscious of being cast loose from the secure anchorage of settled life and sent adrift upon a doubtful world. (29 June, p. 24).’

The divided politics of Ireland, as strongly felt by emigrants as by those left at home is emphasised too on the voyage:

‘Battle of the Boyne commemorated by a certain part of our passengers to the no small annoyance of another part. (10 July p. 25).’

The ongoing physical discomfort due to bad weather and incipient dangers from disease is evident by another entry in July:

‘During the night every moveable in the ship was put in motion by the great heaving, the kegs full of water for immediate use and the buckets full of all kinds of filth were hurled in the greatest confusion through the steerage to the great offence of our smelling organs. (p. 24).’

And the utter relief and joy felt by those who survived intact the long voyage is elucidated in a few simple words on 6 September:

‘Thrilling cry of ‘land’ from Mast head.’

Not all of the items on the database relate to emigration. George Hay wrote a diary in 1870 while on board ship home from his sojourn abroad. He gives details of his adventures on the voyage, including the wild weather. On 11 October, he writes:

‘Just met a steamer, sent out in search of us. Fortunately we do not need her assistance. Reached Moville at 1.30 and are transferred to small steamer and arrive at Derry about 4.’

From there he travelled by train to Belturbet (County Cavan), the whole trip having taken him three weeks altogether.

### Conclusion

In general it is evident that it is possible to use the worldwide web to commence the search into the lives of ancestors who were caught up in various waves of emigration over two centuries. However, it is only the beginning of the search and often findings are uncertain and unsatisfactory. As we can see from a survey of a small number of websites above, discoveries will more than likely lead to a need to follow up on more sources. Even if one is able to discover online that a great grandparent definitely disembarked in New Brunswick from a certain ship at a certain date, the next question is usually what happened to him or her next and how do I find out? The answer is that in reality many sources providing the necessary information most probably are only available at Archives, libraries and museums across the globe. But the web is a good place to begin.

## Emigration Sources and Stories in Donegal County Archives

### Niamh Brennan

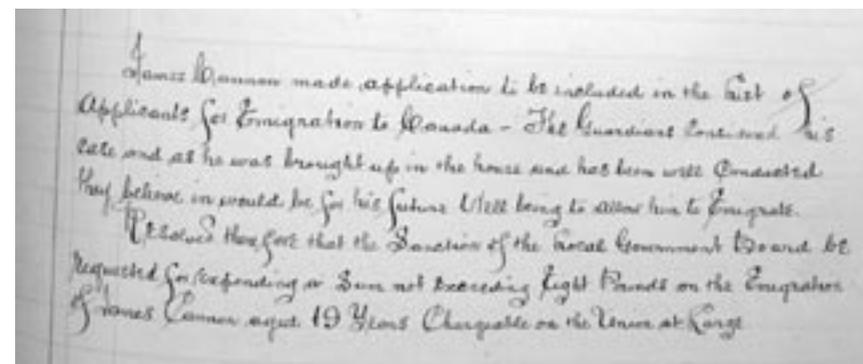
Donegal County Council's Archives Service is the county archive for Donegal. The County Archives' remit includes a commitment to collect, preserve and make accessible to the public archives relating to the history, culture and heritage of the county, whether of a private or public origin. To that end, the Service continually seeks to acquire archives which it believes contribute to the social, political and cultural history of the county. Archival material relating to family history in the County Archives includes valuation registers, electoral registers, school roll books and registers. Unfortunately archives relating to the history of emigration are scarce. However there are some extant written and oral archives relating to the subject.

### Assisted emigration from the workhouses

Under the Poor Law Act (Ireland) 1838, Ireland was divided into poor law unions. Before the Famine, eight workhouses were built in County Donegal. Boards of Guardians were assigned to manage each workhouse. Over periods of time, Guardians facilitated the emigration of a number of inmates of the workhouses to the New World. For example, the Letterkenny workhouse board minutes of March 1882 describe how the master of the workhouse accompanied John Diver, Jane Kennedy, senior, Jane Kennedy, junior and Jane Mac Clay to Derry where they embarked on the SS Moravian to Quebec in May of that year, and reported that Bridget Treckleton was assisted to emigrate while James<sup>1</sup> Cannon applied to the board to emigrate. The minutes from May to July 1883 report that Mary Diver, who was on the emigrant list to go to Canada changed her mind and

<sup>1</sup> Donegal County Archives, BG/109/17, **Minutes of meetings of Letterkenny Board of Guardians**, 24 September 1880 – 31 March 1882.

applied instead to emigrate to the USA. This application had to be sanctioned by the Emigration Committee.<sup>2</sup> Another example are the minutes of meetings of Ballyshannon workhouse in 1848 which include a resolution passed by the board to sanction the assisted emigration to Australia of a list of orphan girls.<sup>3</sup> The Poor Law Commissioners' reports, issued for each year in relation to the management of Irish workhouses, give statistics on emigration also. More information on the assisted emigration schemes of the boards of guardians can be accessed by visiting the County Archives.



Extract from Letterkenny Board of Guardian Minute book, March 1882, Donegal County Archives

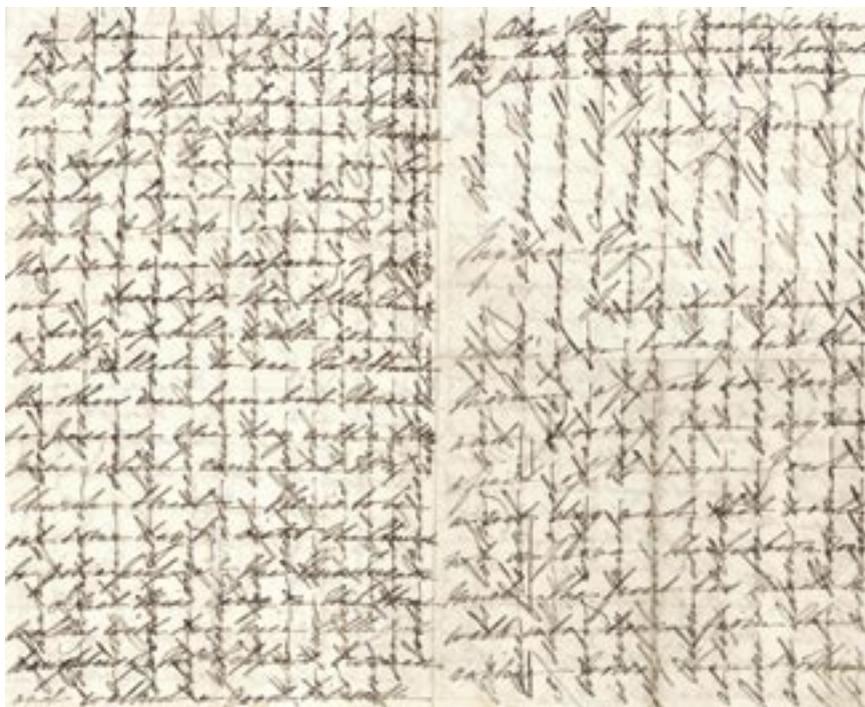
### Letters from the gold mines

Other archives in the County Archives relating to nineteenth century emigration from Donegal include a series of letters from a James Keown who emigrated to the mining area of Michigan Bluff, among the Sierra Nevada mountains in California, in the 1880's.<sup>4</sup> Keown appears to have been originally from Belfast and his letters nearly all date from 1882 - 1883. They are mainly addressed to his son who appears to have been living in London at that time. Subjects discussed vary greatly as one would expect. Serious health problems experienced by his

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., BG/109/1/19, **Minutes of meetings of Letterkenny Board of Guardians**, 2 March 1883 – 1 February 1884.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., BG/38/1/4, **Minutes of meetings of Ballyshannon Board of Guardians**, 15 January – 4 November 1848.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., P/90, **Letters from James Keown**, Michigan Bluff, California, 1882.



Letter home from James Keown, emigrant to California, 1880's, Donegal County Archives.

son cause his father great anxiety, particularly given the long periods of time that elapsed between receiving news of his condition:

*We have been daily expecting to hear from you, what [the doctor] thought of your chill. And not doing so have of course imagined the worst.*<sup>5</sup>

The letters, which it should be noted, are difficult to decipher, and require time and patience in reading, detail Keown's involvement in mining for gold and the many difficulties he faces. There are many references also to family and friends and to his interest in state and local politics.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., P/90, **Letter of 30 May** 1882

## Reminiscing on emigration

Of course emigration was not confined to the years during and after the famine. Emigration in the 160 years since has been a common occurrence in Ireland. The County Archives holds a few different series of oral recordings, interviews with older people in various parts of the county. The themes vary, and include migration and emigration.

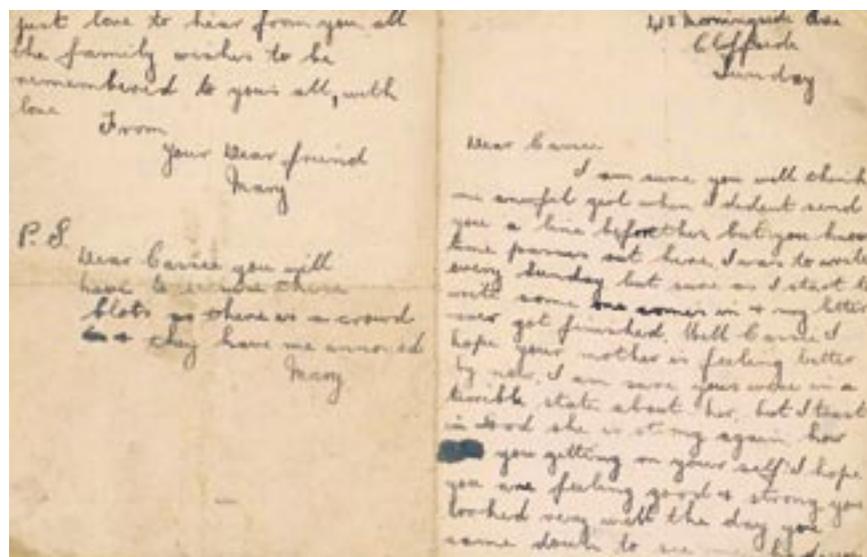
**The Islands Oral History project** is one example.<sup>6</sup> The aim of the project was to collect the oral history of Donegal's depopulated islands. The islanders who were interviewed by producer Mary Phelan spoke on many topics including their experiences of emigration.

Another series of interviews were taken by Anne McMenamain and excerpts were reproduced in her book, **When we were Young**.<sup>7</sup> Many of the interviewees recall their experiences of emigration, and interestingly of their return home, often after many years abroad.

Among the interviewees was Hannah Alcorn who emigrated to America at the age of seventeen along with her sister, Martha. Hannah met her husband, Alex in America and they farmed in Iowa till they returned to Ireland in 1936. In the interview she recalls their work on the farm and their social life among the Irish emigrant community in the USA. Another interviewee, Mr John Houston, recalls the 'convoys' when the young people went to America, how they would 'dance the night away' before they left, how 'very few of them came back.' Mr Tony McGinley, a War of Independence veteran, emigrated as a young man to California, and recalls that he felt encouraged to come home when [Eamon] de Valera 'sent out word' to emigrants - the 'soldiers of destiny' like himself, to return, telling them they would receive land if they did. When he did return home

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., P/98. **Oral history interview from the Donegal Islands**. The project was commissioned by Donegal's Library Service; interviews were carried out in 2003 by producer Mary Phelan.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., P/65, **Oral History interviews donated by Ms Anne McMenamain**, who conducted the interviews for her book, *When we were Young*.



Letter from emigrant from Ballybofey to New York, undated, Donegal County Archives.

Tony applied for land in Letterkenny, but was offered land in Meath instead. As he did not want to make his home there, he did not take up the offer. Interviewee Margaret Howley emigrated in 1929. She lived in Philadelphia, where she worked for a silk dyeing company, and in New York following her marriage. After 25 years in America she also returned home to Donegal.

## Recent donations of emigration archives

### The War at home

Donegal County Archives recently had an interesting response to its media appeal for emigrants' letters. Letters home often reflected the political and economic situation in the adopted and home countries as well as detailing life at a more local and intimate level. A letter donated to the County Archives in February 2009 is a perfect example of both.<sup>8</sup> The letter was sent by Mary [Gallagher], originally

<sup>8</sup> This letter was donated by Mr Jim Hannigan, Ballybofey, to Donegal County Archives, in February 2009.

from Ballybofey, to an aunt of Mr Jim Hannigan, who donated the letter. Her name was Cassie. She states:

We get the Irish World every week and I enjoy reading the Republican news. Our boys had a great time in Dublin on armistice day... the old union jack got some abuse but it didn't get half enough.

The date of this letter is unknown but it was probably written during the War of Independence, and the strong political sentiment expressed is typical of the feelings of many Irish people in those turbulent times, even those who were no longer living in their home country.

In this letter Mary expressed the homesickness typically suffered by emigrants, stating that:

I felt awful when I came first but since my mother came it is home out here...we are all settled here and we like our adopted country very well, it is a great change from Ballybofey.

The situation with regard to employment features heavily in the letter as with all emigrants' correspondence. Mary writes that:

Mick works in New York and I work in Union city; he goes to work at seven and I go at half eight and we both get home around six in the evening...I like the work fine.

Another letter<sup>9</sup> written in 1931 by Mary O'Donnell from California to her mother in Inishfree, expresses regret that she will probably never see home again, a regret very often expressed in emigrants' letters. Typically too of emigrants' letters

<sup>9</sup> A transcript of this letter was donated to Donegal County Archives by Mrs Maureen O'Sullivan, Roshine, Burtonport, in March 2009.

she focuses on the financial help she can send home, to her mother, and the aspiration to do well and earn a lot of money while she is away. Mary had began her career as an emigrant working as a nanny for the writer Patrick MacGill in London but when the MacGills moved to California she moved with them. Ruefully she remarks in her letter to her mother that she appears to be destined to be a ‘wanderer’.

**The Taits of Evanston**

Digital images of documentation and photographs regarding the Tait family were recently donated to the County Archives by their descendant, Pearl Hutchinson. The four Tait brothers emigrated from the Stranorlar area to the USA in the 1880’s, settling in Evanston, north of Chicago in Illinois. All four brothers were carpenters and builders and moved to Evanston as there was plenty of work



Emigrants, Robert and Sarah Tait (courtesy of Ms. Pearl Hutchinson).



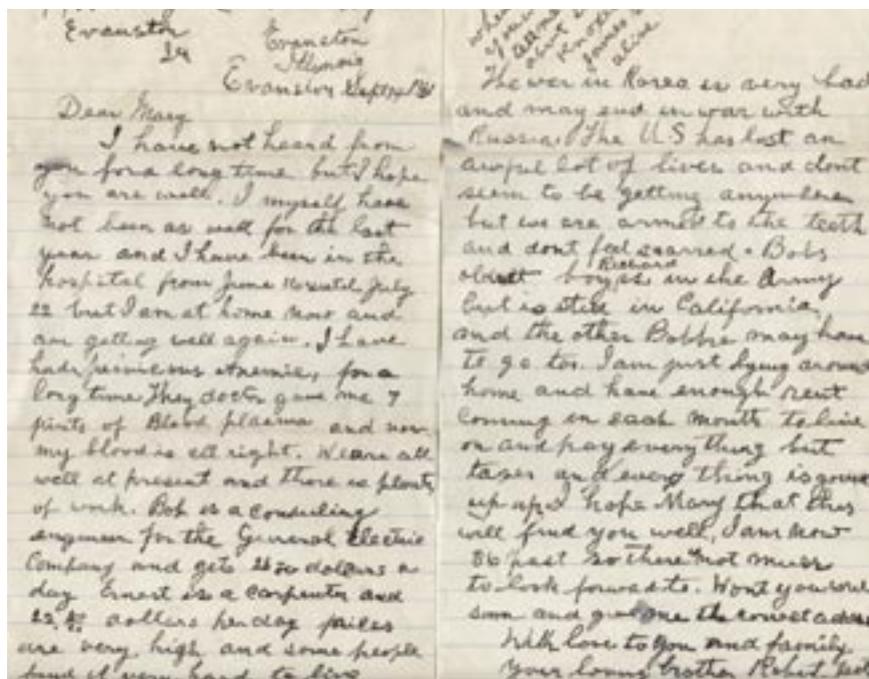
Page from The Merville Emigrant newsletter, 1967, Donegal County Archives.

there in the building trade. Robert Tait lived a long and fascinating life in America. The Evanston Review wrote a feature on Robert for his ninetyeth year in 1955, almost two-thirds of a century after he had emigrated. He was described by the newspaper as a renowned carpenter, ‘one of three Tait brothers who built scores of homes and business buildings in the 90’s and at the start of the century.’<sup>10</sup>

The newspaper also described his work as a teetotal policeman who was given responsibility for chasing ‘beer wagons’ during the years of Prohibition.

Patrolman Tait got the assignment of capturing beer-runners because he was the one lifelong non-drinker on the force....he was entrusted with the only key of the police locker where confiscated liquor was kept. When he left the force after seven years he turned in the key of a cupboard that was filled with whisky bottles.

<sup>10</sup> Digital copies of the letter from Robert Tait to his sister Mary, 14 Sept 1951, and a copy of the Evanston Review, 1955, along with photographs of family members were donated by Ms. Pearl Hutchinson to Donegal County Archives in January 2009.



Letter from Robert Tait, Evanston, Illinois, 1951 (courtesy of Ms. Pearl Hutchinson).

A letter from Robert to his sister Mary at home in Donegal in 1951 speaks positively of the availability of work in the area and states that his sons are well settled and employed. He comments that his son Bob is a consulting engineer for the General Electric Company and receives 25 dollars a day while Ernest is a carpenter and gets 22 dollars a day. However, on a more negative note he adds that prices are high and people 'find it hard to live'. He also refers to the effect the ongoing war in Korea is having on family and on the morale of the nation:

The war in Korea 'is very bad....and the US has lost an awful lot of lives and don't seem to be getting anywhere but we are armed to the teeth and don't feel scared. Bob's oldest boy Richard is in the Army but is still in California and Bobbie may have to go too.

### The Steele Nicholson Collection

The Steele Nicholsons were a wealthy land owning family from Inishowen. They had property both in Donegal and Belfast.<sup>11</sup> The collection includes a diary written by James Steele Nicholson from Australia, and another diary written from a female member of the family (name unknown) on board a passenger ship to New Zealand. Included is a letter written by John Steele Nicholson on board the ship Emma as he emigrated to Australia in 1854. John obviously had few regrets about leaving, expressing a wish that he had 'started ten years ago'. Though given the subject of this nostalgic poem written home it is likely that he also was already feeling a touch homesick:

Fare thee well though I leave thee  
A mother's prayers will still be thine,  
And to hear of thy heart's gladness will be balm and joy to mine.

Also extant in this collection are letters from Isabella Steele Nicholson, written to her son James at a period of his life spent in Canada, and letters from emigrant relatives who made their permanent home in Peterborough, Canada.

### Letters to a foreign land

Donegal County Archives, in seeking emigrants' correspondence, did not really consider the possibility of receiving letters sent from home to relatives who had emigrated. Yet their relevance in the history of emigration is obvious. They help us complete the entire cycle of the lives of emigrants and their families- the ones left behind. Andrea McKeown Batt wrote an account of an emotional journey she made from the adopted home in Ohio of her great-great-great grandmother, Elizabeth Dudgeon, to Inishfree in County Donegal where the Dudgeon family lived till their emigration in 1821.<sup>12</sup> The family, forced to leave their sick four year

<sup>11</sup> A substantial collection of papers relating to this family was gifted by Tony Ragg in conjunction with Down Museum to Donegal County Archives in 2008. To date, the collection has been part listed (April 2009).

<sup>12</sup> A copy of the booklet, **Return to Inishfree: The Trail of the Dudgeon Family Letters' by Andrea McKeown Bhatt and Jeanne Haffa McKown**, was donated to Donegal County Archives in 2009. It includes extracts from letters and transcripts of letters sent from the Dudgeon family in Inishfree to John and Elizabeth Dudgeon in Ohio, from 1821 to 1829.

old son, William, behind in the care of relatives, landed in Newfoundland, and spent further weeks travelling across the continent until they settled in harsh conditions near relatives in Ohio. The letters that have survived are not from them but to them, from brothers, sisters, brothers-in-law and an uncle, still living in Inishfree.

The letters tell many stories of early nineteenth century island life in Donegal. These letters, from a home they would never again see, must have brought home to life again for the Dudgeon family, with their tales of neighbours' marriages and deaths, of local politics, of farming and the vagaries of the harsh land, and especially of family and friends. Elizabeth, thousands of miles away in America, had to bear the terrible news carried in her brother's letter, that not only had her son died but also her brother, drowned in a fishing accident. But the letters were often optimistic too, containing an eagerness to know what emigrant life was like and a desire among some to join the emigrant trail. More than anything else the letters express anxiety, about the health and welfare of brothers, mothers, sisters and friends. The Trail of the Dudgeon Family Letters refers to what is arguably the saddest letter written to Elizabeth from her sister Jane in 1828:

You must think I have quite forgot there is such a being on earth as you. Do not, I pray, my dear sister be of this opinion, for neither distance of place or length of time can ever make me forget a sister of whom we all often think- no, you shall never be effaced from our memories.

The Dudgeon family eventually moved to West Virginia but never did see any of their Inishfree family again.

Another series of letters written from Donegal to emigrants is contained in a book written by Gary T. Hawbaker and donated to the County Archives.<sup>13</sup> Most of the letters are from John Patton, a farmer and brewer from Ramelton to his

<sup>13</sup> Dear William, Letters from Home, 1796 – 1826, edited by Gary T. Hawbaker, 2008.

brother-in-law, William McKnight of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Some of the letters preserved are from William and his siblings, who were still living at home in Burt. William had emigrated to America, via the port of Derry, on the ship the St James, in 1791. Surviving letters were written from just before the 1798 Rising through to 1826, and reflect the political crises of the times as well as addressing domestic and personal matters of importance. As time passed it seemed that William wrote home less and less. His failure to communicate regularly obviously hurt and frustrated his extended family back at home who relied on the precious letters to know he was well and happy. For example, his sister, Ann, wrote from Burt in 1802:

William I wrote you a letter last fall and got no answer and your father none which makes me to think you have forgot there are such people.<sup>14</sup>



**The Moville Emigrant**

Another recent gift to the County Archives is a series of newsletters entitled The Moville Emigrant, which like the Dudgeon letters, reveal the importance for emigrants of the news from home- this time over 140 years after those letters were written.

This parish newsletter, copies of which are held in the County Archives dating from 1967 – 1971, was edited by J. O’Callaghan, PP, specifically for

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

emigrants, to keep them up to date with local events. The newsletter no doubt helped to offset the loneliness and homesickness endured by emigrants. The newsletters contain details of various activities and events going on in different townlands within the parish, including holidays taken, employment opportunities, illnesses, extensions to homes, fishermen's work, cars purchased, electric light coming to various townlands in the parish, people working abroad, sweepstake wins, local men studying for the priesthood, marriages, births and deaths.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the matters referred to in the newsletter may appear quite trivial but the newsletter must have been a boon to the homesick emigrants from this part of Donegal (especially those unfortunate enough not to receive many letters) who otherwise might have missed out on the accounts of the minutiae of town and village life that would have normally formed a daily part of their lives at home. The very existence of such a newsletter evidences the extent of the effect of emigration on small communities such as Moville's even in the 1960's.

### Conclusion

In every sphere imaginable, letters and stories from and to emigrants are fascinating. Not only do they reflect the period of history in which they are written, but at times it seems they reflect human history itself, the ever changing cycles of emigration and immigration, of leaving home and going back home, of the vagaries of the economy, politics and war, and their effect on ordinary lives. And they remind us of the unchanging nature of family life and friendships which survive great distances and absences; and of the fear and longing, hope and grief, homesickness and frustration, excitement and love experienced through over two centuries of emigration.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., P/160, **Moville Emigrant Newsletter, 1967 – 1971**. The newsletters were donated by Mr Sean Beattie in 2008.

## Derry Emigration Sources in PRONI

### Brian Mitchell

These sources relate to the collections of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast.

### Passenger Lists

[T.671/1-2](#) Extracts from Ordnance Survey notes, County Londonderry 1833-35.

[D.2892/1/1-3](#) or [T.2713/2/B](#) or [MIC.13/Reel 1-3](#)

Passenger lists of J&J Cooke, Londonderry; February 1847-67.

[MIC.203](#) Passenger account books of W. Dalzell & Sons, The Quay, Coleraine, County Londonderry, 1868-1934.

[MIC.333/1-4](#) Passenger lists of ships arriving in the United States, 1800-91.

### Business Records of Shipping Companies and Agents

[D.2892/2/2](#) or [T.2713/1/A/1](#) or [MIC.13/Reel 2](#) Copy letter book of W. McCorkell & Co., Londonderry, details timber cargoes, emigrant trade, 1826-34.

[T.2511/3](#) Account book for W. McCorkell & Co., Londonderry, details cargoes, passenger lists, 1855-59.

[D.2892/2/1](#) or [T.2713/2/A/1](#) and or [MIC.112](#) Copy letter book of J. Cooke relating to Canadian timber, emigrant trade, 1837-47.

[T.1883/63-64](#) Letters from J & J Cooke, Londonderry, to Rev. Robert Gage, Rathlin, concerning difficulties in accommodating passengers on the emigrant ship, 'St John', bound for Quebec, 1847.

[T.2713/2/C/1](#) Photographs of J & J Cooke, Londonderry, c.1840s.

[T.1455](#) Ticket issued by J & J Cooke's, Londonderry, for passage to New Brunswick, aboard 'S.V. Elizabeth', c.1860.

[T.3168](#) Papers relating to A.C. Buchanan, Chief Emigration Agent, Quebec, including letters, passenger lists, reports, 1847.

[D.3117](#) Documents of the Ulster Steamship Company & G. Heyn & Sons Ltd., includes details of cargoes, passengers, 1870-1969.

[D.2892/4/1-14](#) Photographs of advertising posters & sailing ships (undated).

[T.2403/2-18](#) Balance sheets and trading accounts of W. Dalzell & Sons, The Quay, Coleraine, County Londonderry, 1908-24.

[D.2948/2/2](#) Postcard produced by Henderson Bros Ltd, Londonderry, sent to advertise ships of the Anchor Line, 1915.

[D.3148](#) Coloured poster, advertising the ships of the Cunard Line.

## Shipping News

[T.3218](#) 'Londonderry Shipping List & General Price Current', by J. Evans, 1833-34.

## Family Papers

[D.2892/6](#) Unsorted papers of the Cooke family including material gathered by TSF Cooke during research for 'The Maiden City and the Western Ocean'

[T.2609/8,11](#) Letters from Mrs J Scott on board the 'Orpheus' to Mrs A Scott, County Londonderry, detailing the voyage to New York and the preparations for the arrival of the 71st & 83rd Regiments, 1835-38.

[D.1665/1/1](#) Letter from Captain W. Mitchell, Quebec, to his wife, describing the voyage and details of deaths and births on board, 1842.

[T.1639/5](#) Letter from Charlotte Bacon, Quebec, to her parents, Newtownlimavady, County Londonderry, giving news of her progress in Canada, 26 July 1843.

[D.1854/9/6,7](#) Two diaries and five photographs of Hugh Annesley, 5th Earl of Annesley, includes details of a voyage on the 'Hibernian' from Londonderry to New Brunswick, November 1861-January 1864.

[D.2681/E/4-6,14](#) Four letters from John White to his mother, written as he left Londonderry for Canada on board the 'Nestorian', c.1867.

[D.2778/1/1A-B](#) Typescript of a journal by Thomas Workman, describing a voyage on the 'S.S. Nestorian' from Londonderry to Canada and his travels, 1869-70.

[D.1858/6A,B](#) Two letters from Mrs M Spinks and her son, Ontario, to Miss A. M. Forster, Londonderry, commenting on the high unemployment in Toronto, 1931.

## Official Reports

[T.656 pp. 59, 64 and 74-80](#) Correspondence and reports between the British and Irish administrations concerning emigration from the North of Ireland to the British colonies, 1727-1729.

T.656 p.449 Report by Mr Edward Oswald suggesting collaboration with the Canada or British Land Co., to remove tenants from the Merchant Taylors' Irish estate to Canada, 8 November 1838.

## Notices in Canadian Newspapers

D.3000/104/1-13 Typed transcripts of notices in Canadian newspapers, mostly the 'New Brunswick Courier', 'Toronto Irish Canadian', 'Saint John Morning News', 1828-69 (compiled in 1984-5).

## Church Records

MIC.1P/149A/1 Minute book of 2nd Dunboe Presbyterian Church, County Londonderry, containing details of those who left for Canada, 1835-68.

CR5/13E/1 List of members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Fountain Street, Londonderry, includes the names and dates of families who emigrated, 1842-92.

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