

## Threads – A new look at the tapestry of life.

Usually when the subject of Ireland is brought forward two main topics are discussed with great vigour. The first is the great loss of information in June 1922<sup>1</sup> with the fire in the public record office and how difficult it is to conduct genealogical research in Ireland. There is no doubt that the loss in these fires hampers the genealogical research effort in Ireland and lessens the quantity of evidence available to prove lineages. The second is the Diaspora<sup>2</sup> and the dispersion of the Irish people due to the great potato famine and the starvation that was taking place during the mid-nineteenth century. Many families have oral traditions of great deprivation and poverty during that time and tales of rights being denied, evictions and absent landowners.

But what if your Irish ancestors did not have these stories in their oral history, are there still some other untold Irish stories?

I was investigating a number of families in Ontario for clients and started to notice a pattern developing. English surnames emigrating from Ireland well before the potato famine; early marriages in Ontario amongst their descendants and a predominantly Protestant base. So who are these families and what did they have in common that would bring them to Canada so early? Did they even have anything in common, or was it just happenstance that I encountered clients with similar backgrounds to my own. The British certainly encouraged many young couples to migrate to the new world between 1800 and 1850 but these were British immigrants usually direct from England although immigration from Ireland was also encouraged.<sup>3</sup> The Napoleonic wars had recently ended and soldiers were being offered land for their effort in the long drawn out affair and at least one of my ancestors took advantage of this type of offer. This ancestor emigrated to Rhode Island where he petitioned the Canadian government for land and eventually made his way up through New Jersey and on to Orangeville, Ontario; England, USA and then to Canada, not the Ireland-directly-to-Canada route of the individuals I was investigating. Most of the Napoleonic soldiers were English.

So what could these English-Irish families reason be for leaving Ireland and their possible connection to each other? Were they a “group” with some common elements or just a general expulsion from Ireland? Were they from all over Ireland or a distinct area or region? Did they share a common element any where?

My passion is demographics, patterns in numbers and influences that affect a group of people as a whole. These individuals inhabited the eastern part of Ontario and then spread through York and Simcoe County when it was known as “The Home District.”

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Archives\\_of\\_Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Archives_of_Ireland) for a description of the event

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.irelandroots.com/roots4.htm> for a discussion and breakdown as to where the Irish settled

<sup>3</sup> British regiment soldiers who were veterans of the war were offered free land, some remained despite the harsh winters. Unlike the period prior to the war, immigration was now directed at Europe and more specifically to the United Kingdom and Ireland, not from the US, which was the largest source of immigration before the war. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper\\_Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Canada)

Surnames such as Kidd, Carr, Willoughby, Lindsay and many others intermarried into my early Irish Weir line, but had these families known each other in Ireland and just how far back did their friendships stretch?

With documentation of Irish families a threadbare existence at best, could some specific lines be established to a common originating point and would there be any evidence of knowledge of each other?

So with this challenge in mind I started to look for “threads” in the tapestry we call Irish genealogy. I was looking for individual lines that have been documented or established through the last five hundred +/- years of Irish history to see if there was a pattern that could be determined.

I tried to take examples from my own family surnames that were part of this Protestant Irish grouping, but the research may be from other sources, such as Ancestry.com.

Joseph Kidd married to Mary Susannah Weir<sup>4</sup> was the son of  
Henry Kidd married to Elizabeth Wright was the son of  
John Kidd married to Jane Morris was the son of  
Joseph Kidd married 1790 to Ann Poole was the son of  
Thomas Kidd married 1736 to Hannah Clancy was the son of  
George Kidd married 1712 to Eleanor was the son of  
Thomas Kidd who died in Dublin, Ireland 1704 and was the son of  
Richard Kidd who died in Dublin, Ireland 1670 and married 1637 to Ellen Kelly and was the son of Richard Kidd in England

William John Weir<sup>5</sup> married Edna Willoughby a daughter of  
Adam Willoughby married 1867 to Sarah McKillop was the son of  
Ralph Willoughby married Isabella Thompson is believed to be the son of  
Adam Willoughby married circa 1765 Clarinda is believed to be the son of  
Niches Willoughby and is believed to be the son of  
Nicholas Willoughby and Sarah Hatten of Dublin, Ireland was the son of  
Charles Willoughby married 1670 Frances Stopford was the son of  
Sir Francis Willoughby who died in Dublin, Ireland 1658 and married 1634 Elizabeth Barlow and was born in England

Edward Hodgins<sup>6</sup> married 1872 Elizabeth White was the son of  
John Hodgins married 1838 Margaret Taylor was the son of  
John Hodgins was the son of  
James Hodgins married 1777 Ellen was the son of  
Thomas Hodgins of Templemore married 1757 Ellen was the son of  
Robert Hodgeins of North Tipperary married 1724 Mary Glass was the son of  
James Hodgins married 1689 was te son of

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<sup>4</sup> My great-grandfather’s sister, much of the Kidd line was from Ancestry.com

<sup>5</sup> My great-grandfather, this line is taken from my personal research

<sup>6</sup> The grandfather of a family friend, the information was taken from a variety of sources

Officer James Hodgins married before 1653 died in Dublin, Ireland 1680 was the son of Captain Tom Hodgins of Northumberland, England

The first two examples are from my own direct line; Mary Susannah Weir is the sister of my great-grandfather William John Weir and I am not aware of any other Weir – Kidd blood or married relationships in the family.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> examples are even more remarkable, the grand-daughter of William John Weir has been a lifetime friend of the grand-daughter of Edward Hodgins, no known blood or married relationship exists between the two families.

So what is so remarkable about these lines that I have picked a few “threads” to discuss in this article?

Well, it is my belief that these families are the remnants of a long ago occupation that took place in Ireland. I believe these to be the remnants of Cromwell’s army that conquered Dublin in 1641 and stayed on through the Plantation years and finally exited Ireland following the Irish Rebellion of 1798. They were predominantly English Protestant families that were a very small minority during their time in Ireland.

Sir Francis Willoughby was known to be in command of Dublin Castle and occupied it along with his son, Captain Willoughby. Obviously Officer James Hodgins also served in some capacity at Dublin, Ireland and was very likely aware of the Willoughby family.

While I have not been able to determine a command for any of the Kidd’s, they too were located in Dublin, Ireland. Again and again, “threads” lead back to this same point in time and place. These then are the descendants who appear in Ontario and take up residence in this province circa 1800 thru 1825.

There are many other surnames that may be part of this group – for example Lambert, Monck, Hastings, Walton, Howard, Baillie, Morgan, Baynes, Standish, Gerard, Greer, Markham, Kellie, Lindsay/Lindsey, Furlong, Kidd, Willoughby, Hamilton, Beatty, Russell, Thompson, Robinson, Walker are all potential names.

If you have a story in your family about “being part of Cromwell’s forces” and can provide a “Thread” thru Ireland please contact me at [jamaldridge@rogers.com](mailto:jamaldridge@rogers.com).