

Cumann Geinealais na hÉireann

## Ireland's Genealogical Gazette

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GENEALOGY

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SOCIAL HISTORY

Heritage Matters

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## An Gorta Mór

*Annual Commemoration of the Great Famine*

The Irish government has finally agreed to have an annual commemoration of one of the most catastrophic events in Irish history—An Gorta Mór or the Great Famine. This was the culmination of five years of hard work by Dublin taximan, **Michael Blanch** and his wife Betty. Back in 2003 they held the first of their annual Famine Victims Commemoration marches through the streets of Dublin city. This year the government hosted a reception in the Custom House to mark the annual march to the famine sculptures on Custom House Quay. Mr. Blanch's idea of designating the last Sunday in May each year as "*National Famine Commemoration Day*" has long been supported by this Society as both an appropriate and very much overdue commemoration. The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, **Mr. Éamon Ó Cuív, TD**, announced the establishment of a special committee to consider the most appropriate form a national commemoration of An Gorta Mór should take. The members of this committee are Mr. Michael Blanch, Prof. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Dr. Éamon Phoenix, Dr. Margaret McCurtain, Mr. Tim Pat Coogan, Dr. Majda



Ben Saad, Mr. Hugh Swift, Mr. Justin Kilcullen and Mr. Brian Hanratty. The latter are representatives of the Irish aid agencies Trócaire and Gorta. The committee held its inaugural meeting on Tuesday 22 July 2008 at the National Library of Ireland. Whilst, the Minister said that he did not want to be prescriptive about the work of the committee, it is very important that any commemorative events be fully participatory where the citizens of Ireland take ownership of this annual event. Local authorities throughout the country should be asked to establish a focal point for the commemorations in their respective areas. Whether, this be a new or existing memorial or indeed, one

of the many famine burial grounds around the country, it's vitally important that events are held simultaneously throughout the nation. Contrary to some prevailing myths, the Great Famine touched both rural and urban Ireland especially, with famine related diseases spreading the horror far and wide. Mr. Blanch's excellent idea of having the last Sunday in May each year designated for the event is something that the Irish Diaspora could also observe. Our collective race memory of the devastation caused here by the Great Famine of the 1840s must surely spur us all to do something about the huge disaster looming on the Horn of Africa where nearly twelve million people are facing famine. We remember, all too well, the harrowing scenes from the Ethiopian famine of the 1980s— but now it's about to happen all over again. Maybe part of our own commemoration could be a national famine relief collection in every city, town and village in the land. But the suffering people on the Horn of Africa cannot await such grand gestures, they need our help now.



**Please** make a donation now to **GOAL** on-line at [www.goal.ie](http://www.goal.ie)

## 1926 Census Campaign

This Society's long-running campaign to have the 1926 census of Ireland opened to the public has now been supported by **Senator Lábhras Ó Murchú (Fianna Fáil)** who has agreed to sponsor the Society's Draft Bill. This Bill aims to amend Section 35 of the Statistics Act, 1993 to effectively remove the 1926 census from the scope of the Act. This will finally permit the National Archives of

Ireland to facilitate access to this important first census taken since independence. In kindly agreeing to sponsor the Society's Bill, Sen. Ó Murchú is spearheading the most significant development in the advancement of Irish studies, history and genealogy for many decades. The release of the 1926 census will provide researchers with the essential closing chapter of the most turbulent period in

modern Irish history. The Draft Bill, provisionally titled *Statistics (Heritage Amendment) Bill, 2008* is a very short and clear piece of draft legislation that should be capable of receiving the backing of all senators and Teachtaí Dála (MPs) irrespective of party affiliation or otherwise. The Society is extremely grateful to Senator Ó Murchú for his strong support for the 1926 Census Campaign.

# Ulster-Scots Writing—An Anthology

## Frank Ferguson, Editor

Today "Ulster-Scots" is a term that still generates varying degrees of controversy in Northern Ireland. Some see it simply as a dubious modern ethnopolitical campaign by wayward elements within unionism, others embrace it enthusiastically as an expression of a culture and heritage stretching back nearly four hundred years. Surprisingly some of the most sceptical voices on the issue emanate from within the unionist community itself. Whilst, the term, depending on context, may require further definition, clarification or refinement, the essence of what it means to be culturally "Ulster-Scots" is best expressed in its prose, poetry and folklore. An immensely important new publication from Four Courts Press ([www.fourcourtspress.ie](http://www.fourcourtspress.ie)) "*Ulster-Scots—An Anthology*" edited by **Frank Ferguson**, (ISBN 978-1-84682-074-8. 544pp hb Price €45.00) explores the rich literary heritage of the Ulster people of Scots descent, the Ulster-Scots. Far from having some frayed umbilical cord stretching back romantically to Robbie Burns and eighteenth century Scotland, this anthology rightfully establishes Ulster-Scots writing as an independent genre in its own right. Though, it is essentially very rooted in its place and time, possibly even more overtly so than its native Irish or "indigenous" counterpart, it nevertheless expresses itself confidently as a vibrant "Scottishness" in an Irish setting. Indeed, the poet Samuel Thomson (1766-1816)

from Carngranny, near Templepatrick in Co. Antrim, said of this wonderful duality—*I love my native land, no doubt, Attach'd to her thro' thick and thin; Yet tho' I'm Irish all without, I'm every item Scotch within.* This is certainly the crux of the issue of "rootedness" and "identity" for those of Scottish ancestry in Northern Ireland and it was theme that perplexed, amused and ultimately challenged most of the writers explored in this anthology. So you may ask, where does all this fit with genealogy and why should those with ancestral connections to any of the nine counties of Ulster (six in N.I.) obtain a copy of this book. Naturally, for those whose interest in genealogy is confined to gathering names and dates without any regard for the wider contextual understanding of the time and place of their ancestors, this book shouldn't interest them. But true family historians want much more and that includes an understanding, appreciation and knowledge of the cultural environment in which our ancestors lived. In this respect, Frank Ferguson's anthology is an enormously important contribution to fields beyond just literature, including family history, local history and social history. For the over ninety writers included in the anthology, Ferguson provides a very useful brief biography for each starting with John Livingston (1603-72) right down through the ages to Gary Mitchell who was born in Rathcoole in north Belfast in 1965. All facets of daily life from the cradle to the

grave feature in these writings. The beautiful poem "*The Irish Cottier's Death and Burial*" by James Orr (1770-1816) from Ballycarry, Co. Antrim, is hauntingly reminiscent of much in the Burns tradition as it's touchingly egalitarian in its respect for the common man. Far from just dealing with post-plantation themes, these Ulster-Scots writers explored the ancient traditions and folklore of the native Irish. Samuel Ferguson (1810-1886) from Belfast in his poem "*The Healing of Conall Carnach*" was inspired by the Fenian or Ossianic tales of Gaelic Ulster. Interestingly, this drawing upon Gaelic lore and themes by Ulster-Scots writers could either have been a conscious understanding and acknowledgement of a shared inheritance between the Scots and the Irish or simply evidence of a more complex exploration of identity and belonging. The thorny issue of the orthography currently employed by enthusiasts for the Ulster-Scots "language" to capture its authentic accent, need not overly concern readers as a full glossary is provided. Though, most of the writings are readily understandable in any case. In recommending this anthology to those with Ulster ancestry, I understand that not all will immediately appreciate the significance of this anthology and yet, would anyone with such ancestral links to Ulster forego the unique opportunity to experience and to explore the essential cultural expression and spirit of the Ulster-Scots? I doubt it. **MM**

## G & B Records Now in NY Public Library

News last year that the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society was to close and to sell off its four-story premises at 122, East 58th Street in Midtown, Manhattan, came as a monumental shock. Considered as one of the foremost private genealogical libraries in the world, the G & B, as it was generally known, firstly rid itself of its ordinary members and then sold the building for US\$24 million. Reportedly the G & B was suffering badly from a dwindling endowment due in part, it was claimed, to the increase in DIY programs for "amateur genealogists" and the upsurge in the use of internet access to various genealogical resources. This left the Board of the G & B with the task of

deciding what to do with its very sizeable collection of 75,000 volumes, 30,000 manuscripts and 22,000 reels of microfilm. Established back in 1869, the G & B moved into its building on East 58th Street in 1929 and its collections continued to expand with items from the mid-seventeenth century onward. Its resources were much in use by historians, writers and, of course, genealogists. The fear that this valuable collection would be broken up and sold was palpable amongst genealogists and others around the world. In the meantime, the G & B Board purchased a condominium in Midtown for its remaining staff and stated that it would now focus on grant-giving, tours, lectures and

other means of encouraging genealogical and biographical research. Whilst, this philanthropic future for the G & B is welcomed, the news that its Board decided to donate the entire collection to the New York Public Libraries was greeted with enormous relief by genealogists. The collection will not be broken up but maintained as a genealogical and biographical resource available to the public. Whether it be increasing costs or declining memberships, the G & B scenario has been played out elsewhere with varying outcomes. In Ireland we've lessons to learn from this trend, however, in the absence of any coordinated national policy on genealogical records, how safe are these records?

## A True Ranger

*The Life and Many Wars of Major Robert Rogers*

Many of us remember seeing the movie "*Northwest Passage*" made in 1940 starring Spencer Tracy as Major Robert Rogers. This movie classic was based on the 1937 novel of the same name by Kenneth Roberts and, no doubt, in keeping with our "Ulster-Scots" theme above, the following may be of interest. "*A True Ranger: The Life and Many Wars of Major Robert Rogers*" by **Gary Stephen Zaboly** published by Royal Blockhouse, New York (2204) ISBN 0-9761701-0-8 tells of the exploits of one of the many sons and daughters

of Ulster-Scottish stock who emigrated to Great Britain's north American colonies during the eighteenth century. "*Tell aw the poor Folk of your Place, that God has open'd a Door for their Deliverance*" wrote Parson James Murray in 1738 to his fellow Ulster Presbyterians begging them to join him in his "American Canaan". A call that James and Mary Rogers and thousands of their fellow Ulster-Scots found irresistible in the mid-eighteenth century. This story about the life and times of their eldest son Robert is much entwined with that of his

community and coreligionists in the American colonies. Zaboly's treatment of his subject material, including his provision of copious references and an extensive bibliography makes this book a must for students of the Scots-Irish in America and their contribution to the expansion of the colonies and eventually to the birth of a new nation in 1776. Our member, **David Paling**, has copies of this beautifully illustrated and well researched book for sale at just €50.00 per copy (plus p+p). Interested? Contact David by e-mail on [david.paling@hotmail.com](mailto:david.paling@hotmail.com)

# James Scannell Reports...

## WWI SOLDIERS HONOURED

During the weekend of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July the almost 50,000 Irish soldiers who died in the First World War were remembered at a wreath laying ceremony at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin. Ex-service men and their families from Northern Ireland and the Republic were amongst over three hundred people who assembled for an ecumenical service to remember all Irish soldiers killed in this conflict. As this year is the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War, the Ven. Christopher Long, Archdeacon of Ferns, delivered his homily on this theme. The Head Chaplain of the Irish Defence Forces, Mgr. Eoin Thynne, led the Prayers of Remembrance for peacemakers and peacekeepers, for civilians whose lives are disfigured by war or terror and for members of armed forces who are in present danger. The first wreath was laid by Cllr. Eibhlin Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin, followed by the representatives of branches of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster and Leinster Regiment

Associations, the Irish U.N. Veterans Association, the Grand Lodge, Trinity College Dublin and the Royal Dublin Society.

## DAIRINE VANSTON

**Ms. Rosemary Walton**, 11 Old Quay Terrace, Strand Road, Dublin 13, Ireland. E-mail:- r\_s\_walton@hotmail.com is researching the life and work of Irish artist Dairine (Doreen) Vanston and would be interested in hearing from anyone who knew her. Born in Dublin in 1903 and lived for some years in France and Costa Rica, Vanston returned to Dublin in 1941 where she lived and worked until her death. As there is very little of her work in public galleries, Ms. Walton would very much appreciate being able to view any paintings, woodcuts or lithographs that may be in private collections.

## ANDREW McMASTER

The Archive Production Unit in RTÉ (Irish National TV & Radio) is assembling a documentary on the life and work of the actor and

impresario Andrew McMaster and is interested in hearing from anyone who has film or video images of McMaster, particularly in an acting role, as there is very little footage of him in the RTÉ archives. Any other photographic material would be welcome. Contact Niall Mathews or Katherine Cahill at the Archive Production Unit, RTÉ, Donnybrook, Dublin 4, Ireland OR please contact Niall at +353.1.208259 or E-mail:- mathewn@rte.ie or Katherine at +353.1.2082701 or E-mail:- cahillk@rte.ie

*James Scannell*

## SEEKING JOSEPH READ

**Ron MacIntyre**, DSCO 5-4-10, AIR TDSC Client Svcs. 2nd Fl, 400, Cumberland St., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0K2. Wrote:- I am looking for information on Joseph Read a graduate of Dublin University specializing in classics. He came to Canada at about age 35 and taught High School and tutored families near the city of Cornwall, Ontario. Born 2 May 1835, died 10 Jan. 1909, unmarried. I would like to know if relatives exist that may have a photograph and if records exist on his education. Please e-mail me on MacIntyre.RC@forces.gc.ca Thanks. (B. O' C)

## Précis of the July Lecture

On Tuesday July 8<sup>th</sup> **Cecile Chemin**, former Archivist, Wicklow County Council and now working with the Irish Military Archives gave a lecture on local authority archives as a resource for the genealogist. Cecile outlined the various types of records held by the Irish local authorities, including voters lists, minute books, surveys, reports etc. In some cases the records of the local bodies that predated the establishment of the present local government structure are also available. Unfortunately access is not universal and some local authorities haven't even catalogued their collections. Most local authorities do not employ an archivist and those that do, do so on a temporary basis only. This was

regretted as these records are of immense importance to the study of local history. Cecile was greatly impressed by our commitment to the "principle of public ownership and right of access" to our archival heritage. A lively discussion followed this very interesting lecture.

## GSI LECTURE PROGRAMME

The Society's lecture programme is as follows:- **Tuesday Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>** Bernadette Galloghly, Senior Librarian, Dublin City Public Libraries, Pearse St. on the new genealogy resources at Dublin City Libraries; databases of Dublin Parish Registers, City Councillors and Memorial Plaque;

**Tuesday Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>** John Hamrock, MGSI, a county's resources for family history research: the Roscommon experience; **Tuesday Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>** Rory McKenna, Martello Towers in Ireland; **Tuesday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>** the Society will host a speaker from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. topic:- the Archives of the Society of Freemasons as a genealogical resource. **Tuesday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>** Ciara Kerrigan, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Ireland, Estate Records of the National Library. All meetings are held at the **Dún Laoghaire College for Further Education**, Cumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire at 20.00hrs. Any comments to: Gazette@familyhistory.ie

## Membership of the Genealogical Society

Membership fee renewals fall due in January each year. The Board of the Society at its November 2007 meeting conducted the normal annual review of the **Membership Fee** structure and under **Res: 07/11/573** the Board adopted the following equalised Membership Package for 2008:- **Ireland & Overseas:** Offering ordinary membership of the Society, Membership Card, voting rights, use of the Society's Archive, monthly newsletter by mail, Annual Journal by mail, and the right to purchase the Society's publications at Special

Members' prices of up to 50% off selected publications. This also includes an optional second Membership Card for a household member, including voting rights, for an all inclusive cost of just €40.00 per annum. The modest increase in the Membership Fee, which hadn't changed since 2004, was unavoidable as costs continued to rise sharply. The production of a biannual Journal became prohibitive when printing and postage costs eroded any savings that were to accrue in the change from a quarterly journal. Unlike many other similar organi-

sations faced with the same problem, the Board decided to keep publishing the Society's journal but as an annual publication only. The Membership Fee is now in line with similar organisations in Ireland. However, in many respects our Membership Package, offers considerably better value for money. You can renew your membership online at [www.familyhistory.ie/shop](http://www.familyhistory.ie/shop) or, if you prefer, simply download the form and forward it with your remittance to the Society's Director of Finance, **Mr. Denis Ryan, MGSI**, 6, St. Thomas Mead, Mount Merrion, County Dublin, Ireland.

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**[www.familyhistory.ie/shop](http://www.familyhistory.ie/shop)****DIARY DATES**

Tuesday Aug. 12th &amp; Sep. 9th 2008

**Evening Open Meeting**Dún Laoghaire College of Further  
EducationCumberland Street, Dún Laoghaire  
20.00hrs—22.00hrs

Wednesday Aug. 27th &amp; Sep. 24th 2008

**Morning Open Meeting**Weir's, Lower George's Street, Dún  
Laoghaire

10.30hrs—12.30hrs

Contribution €3.00 p.p.

(Coffee/Tea included at Morning  
Meetings)**QUERIES**

**Ronald Wilson**, PO Box 333, Burwood, Victoria 3125, AUS. E-mail: [ronw2009@gmail.com](mailto:ronw2009@gmail.com)  
Wrote: Seeking a passenger list or emigration record for Roger & Mary **McMenamin** & ten children from Termonamongan, Co Tyrone to Montreal/Quebec Canada. They left in Jan 1840. The trip took 13 weeks arriving at the mouth of the St Lawrence River where they lay frozen for 3 weeks before they could land in Montreal, Canada. In 1841 after a year in Canada they started for New York. I am looking for the ages of the children that may be on the passenger list?

**Rosemary Jefferson**, Stenson Fields Farmhouse, Stenson Rd., Derby DE23 1LG. UK. E-mail: [rosemary.jefferson@o2.co.uk](mailto:rosemary.jefferson@o2.co.uk) Wrote:- Seeking info. on my great great grandfather Richard **Cain** (or **Cane**). His birth (in magazine article) as 5 Aug 1819, place: Dublin. His parents: William Cain & Mary. Possibly Richard baptised at St Catherine's in the Coombe and William Cain, or Cane was a weaver and all the family in UK (1841 census, Leicester). Other children of William & Mary were: Mary Ann, born c. 1826 and William born c. 1828 in Ireland. I don't expect extensive research but if any member is visiting the National library and could spare time to look at the Baptism registers of St Catherine's for a Richard **Cain/Cane**/et variants around August 1819, I would be most grateful. I can offer a reciprocal 'look up' in Derbyshire, Leicester, Nottingham or Lichfield, Staffordshire.

**Coleen Coleman**, 550, Jefferson St., Lander, Wyoming, USA, 82520-2126 E-mail:- [WYOMINGGAL1@webtv.net](mailto:WYOMINGGAL1@webtv.net) Wrote:- Seeking info. on Robert Ewing, born: 1740 Ireland. Married 1<sup>st</sup> (unknown) married 2<sup>nd</sup> 26 Sept 1785 Mrs. Jane **Bonneau**. Children: Esther, Samuel, John 1st, & Robert 2<sup>nd</sup> Also, Robert **Ewing**, born: 1766 Ireland. Married 1<sup>st</sup> 04 July 1791 Carrie Selina and married 2<sup>nd</sup> 12 Dec 1811 Isabella Smith. D: 14 July 1843 Adams Co OH USA. Children: Nancy, John Calhoun, Jackson 1st, Samuel, Robert, Sarah, Mary Ann, James, Jackson 2<sup>nd</sup>. Where from in Ireland? When did they emigrate? Also, James Denend Born circa 1810-1811 Ireland. Parents: possibly Humprey and Jerusha (unknown) **Denend** Married: unknown (possibly Catherine/Katherine) Children: Jerusha (?), William, James, & John. Spouse born 1822 KY, children born IN. Does anyone know this family? When did James and his family emigrate to the US? Any help out there? Thanks

**Deborah (Debby) Lynne Floyd**, PA-C, 22131 39th Place South, Kent, Washington, 98032 USA E-mail:- [debbyfloyd@msn.com](mailto:debbyfloyd@msn.com) Wrote: Searching for information on Matthew **Floyd** 1700-1735, I've lost the trail between this person and the following one that seems confirmed, David **Floyd** born 1700, Ireland, died 1735. Also, possibly David **Floyd**, born: 1734, Lincoln, KY USA Died: 16 Dec 1788, Lincoln, KY, USA married to Sally Elizabeth **Davis**, born: 1739, Lincoln, KY, USA Died: 1784, Lincoln, KY, USA. Any stories or facts associated with them appreciated. Any **Floyds** living in Ireland connected to these people?

**NOTA BENE:-** Queries are only published at the discretion of the editor and where a mailing address and e-mail address are provided.

# Access to Genealogical Records On-Line

In accordance with the "Principle of Public Ownership and Right of Access" to our genealogical heritage, the Society continues to campaign for free public access to genealogical records. The Fine Gael Spokesperson for Arts, Sport & Tourism, **Ms. Olivia Mitchell, TD**, put down a Parliamentary Question "to ask the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism the steps he is taking to ensure that the genealogical online research service is made available free of charge to members of the public; and if he will make a statement on the matter". The written reply of May 13th 2008 from the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, **Mr. Martin Cullen, T.D.** is as follows:-

In November 2007, the National Archives of Ireland launched the on-line version of the 1901 & 1911 National Census. Access to this service is available free of charge and has proven to be very popular already with up to 17 million hits on the web site in its first month of operation. In relation to the availability of the pre-1900 Church Birth, Marriage and Death records, in 2006 an Advisory Group was established by this Department to examine the computerisation of these records and their eventual availability through an on-line web site. Officials from this Department have been working towards the implementation of the report's recommendations. A key recommendation in this report was that priority should be given to computerisation of the Dublin City records. In 2007, Dublin City Public Libraries, with funding and support provided by this Department, completed the computerisa-

tion of almost all transcribed (i.e. on index cards) church records (totalling approximately 730,000 records) relevant to the Dublin City area. Consideration is being given at present to how the un-transcribed Dublin City Records (estimated to be in the order of 800,000 records) can be computerised most effectively and in the most financially advantageous way. Discussions have also taken place between this Department and a number of local genealogical centres with a view to securing a copy of their computerised records in the context of future Departmental funding. A copy of all the computerised Dublin City records, together with those of other centres to which this Department provides funding, will be lodged with the National Archives of Ireland. This Department intends to develop an online research service to provide free of charge access to this genealogical data and initial discussions with the National Archives have taken place to achieve this. The Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF), a private umbrella organisation for the majority of local genealogy centres throughout the island of Ireland, launched its own on-line genealogical research service recently, full access to which is subject to a charge. The IFHF does not receive any direct subvention from my Department. However, my Department have informed the IFHF that potential future funding to complete the computerisation of the outstanding Church Birth, Marriage and Death records from pre-1900 will be subject to compliance with the Advisory Group report including the placing of a copy of the computerised records in a single web site repository and that a guarantee must be given that free public access will be given to the data on this website. (Ref No: 18518/08) *The Genealogical Society's campaign for greater accessibility continues!!!*

## AN DAONCHARTLANN

The Society's Archive based at the restored Martello Tower at Seapoint, County Dublin. "An Daonchartlann" as it is called, is soon to be transferred to a temporary location in Dún Laoghaire town centre. The relocation is required in order that the Martello Tower can be fully surveyed to ascertain what works would be necessary to make the building atmospherically suitable for the Archive. Over the past three years the Society's endeavours to remedy the atmospheric fluctuations in the Tower have been only marginally successful and a long-term solution looks increasingly costly. Therefore, the Board of the Society is making contingency plans for the possibility that the building will be deemed unsuitable or that the costs to remedy the situation are too great. These plans include the possibility of linking up with a third level college and locating the archive within the college's library. The temporary location in Dún Laoghaire will enable the archive to be fully catalogued and made accessible to our members. The cataloguing will require volunteers and the Archivist, Séamus O'Reilly, MGSI, will be making an announcement on this project in due course. In the meantime, the Board wishes to thank members for their patience and support on this matter.