Irish Origins: Buckleys and Sullivans

The Irish have a well deserved reputation for enjoying a good time. I read somewhere that Dublin is now the most popular destination in the UK and Western Europe for 'hens parties'. And the number one tourist destination in Dublin is the old Guinness factory at St James' Gate. Nevertheless, it came as a surprise to me to be told that marriage and baptisms in rural Ireland in the nineteenth-century and earlier would not have taken place in the solemn setting of a church. This news came to me from Frank Thompson, a researcher based in New York who knows a lot about Irish history and customs. He has also spent many years compiling a data base of over fifty thousand people involved in marriages and baptisms in the nineteenth-century in Carrigaline and surrounding parishes in county Cork.

Margaret Callaghan

The person who links the Buckley and Sullivan family lines is Margaret Callaghan. My initial source of information about her was the internet site *irishgenealogy.ie*. Frank later made me aware that the data on that site are neither entirely accurate nor fully comprehensive, but more about that later.

Margaret's first husband was Patrick Buckley. After his death she married the widower Matthew Sullivan. Matthew's first wife had been Mary Jeffords. Here's a simplified genealogy. The names of spouses are not included except for Margaret.

Patrick Buckley	=	Margaret Callaghan	=	Matthew Sullivan
Catherine MacKay (nee Buckley)		Daniel Sullivan		
James (MacKay) McCoy[i]		Michael Thomas Sullivan		
Albert McCoy		Keith James Sullivan		
Mildred Hansen (nee McCoy)		Margaret Collis (nee Sullivan)		
Janet and Heather		Andrea		

Margaret Callaghan's baptism is recorded on 13 April 1808 at the Sacred Heart church at Minane Bridge in Tracton parish, county Cork. Her parents were John Callahan/Callaghan and Mary McDaniel. Margaret had three sisters – Mary (baptised in February 1804), Ellen (15 May 1806) and Joanna (30 December 1810). I haven't been able to find out anything more about their parents as earlier church records for this parish have not survived. We can be confident that this is the right Margaret Callaghan since our ancestor's death certificate shows that she was 74 years of age when she died on 14 April 1882, therefore born in 1808. This matches almost to the day.

Area - CORK & ROSS (RC) , Parish/Church/Congregation - TRACTON ABBEY

Baptism of MARGT CALLAHAN of N/R on 13 April 1808

Back to search results

Name	MARGT CALLAHAN
Date of Birth	N/R N/R N/R
Address	N/R
Father	JOHN CALLAHAN
Mother	MARY MCDANL

Further details in the record

Child Denomination	RC
Sponsor 1	WM DESMOND
Sponsor 2	JOAN MCDANL
Recorded Diocesan Area	CORK & ROSS
Recorded Parochial Area	KINALEA (TRACTON ABBEY)

Let me briefly explain a few things in the transcripts. The area "Cork & Ross" is an amalgamation of two earlier dioceses – Cork comprising Cork city and the rural area south and west of the city, and Ross the more sparsely populated area west from there to the Kerry border. N/R of course stands for "not recorded". Kinalea is a barony, a division introduced by the English but no longer used for administrative purposes. Tracton Abbey was a Cistercian monastery built in the thirteenth century which had disappeared by the sixteenth century. The monastery survives only in its name, shortened now to Tracton.

Although the name of the priest is not included in the transcription, it is shown in the original parish register. The writing is a little difficult to read but with the benefit of enlargement it can be seen to be T. O'Connor, written in the Gaelic form with an accent over the O (thus Ó Connor). This was Rev Thomas O'Connor, parish priest at the Sacred Heart at Minane Bridge from 1802 until his death on 20 May 1840. The church was built in 1775, and enlarged and "elevated" (I'm not sure what that means – perhaps decorations were added to a simple utilitarian building) around 1804.
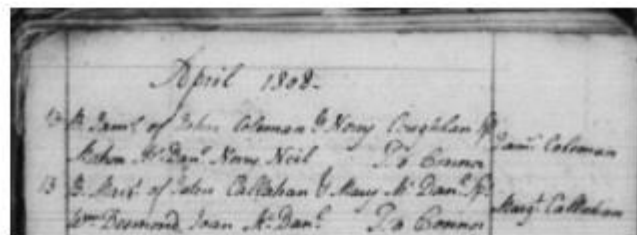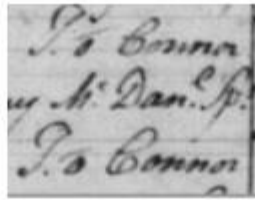
The Sacred Heart church at Minane Bridge continues in use to the present day.

Minane Bridge Church

Although Margaret's name and details appear in the Sacred Heart baptism register, and the officiating priest was Rev O'Connor, Frank Thompson writes that some of my assumptions are incorrect –

> You mention at some point a marriage taking place in the church (at that time always called a 'chapel', since 'church' referred only to the Protestant place of worship) at Minane Bridge. But it was a time-honored practice that Catholic weddings, as well as baptisms, were not to be celebrated in the chapel, but in private homes or other private structures, often the local pub. The chapel was reserved for mass, or for various other events. The (British-ruled) State, oddly enough, recognized Catholic baptisms and Catholic marriages, so long as they were 'private'. So logic held that they were to be held in private surroundings, not in a 'public' building such as a chapel. The Catholic mass was not recognized at all, so it made no difference, in a legal sense, where it was held. The priest generally travelled to the place of the baptism or marriage on horseback, and he was treated to 'dinner', which often involved a great deal of drinking and merriment, a good reason for the venue not to be held in the chapel. During the 19th century, bishops encouraged the use of the chapel for these ceremonies, but they met with great resistance. By the end of the century, they had won the battle. It took longer to stifle the merrymaking involved with wakes and funerals, however (Frank Thompson email, 25 May 2014).

3

O'Murchu's Bar, Minane Bridge, Tracton

So Margaret's baptism might have taken place in a local pub, perhaps one like O'Murchu's Bar at Minane Bridge shown above, located over the road from the Sacred Heart church. O'Murchu's recently ceased trading after operating for over 100 years but not long enough to have been in existence when Margaret was baptised. Nevertheless, something similar undoubtedly did. On our last trip to Ireland we noticed that churches and pubs were often close together. In a village in county Wicklow, we hit the trifecta – church, pub and a betting shop all in a row and in that order.

Patrick Buckley and Margaret Callaghan

Margaret Callaghan's husband-to-be, Patrick Buckley, had been baptised at Minane Bridge (chapel or pub) about 4 years earlier (5 August 1804)[ii]. His parents were Daniel Buckley and Mary Buckley. Buckley might have been Mary's married name. However, it's also possible that Daniel and Mary were related but as to how closely it's impossible to say.[iii]

I don't know the details of Patrick and Margaret's marriage since those records don't begin in Tracton until 1840. However, I think the marriage would have taken place at Minane Bridge since this is where they were both baptised as also were their children.

Their first child, Thomas, was born on 13 July 1832. His father Patrick was then just a few weeks short of 28 years of age and Margaret was 24.

Area - CORK & ROSS (RC) , Parish/Church/Congregation - TRACTON ABBEY

Baptism of THOMAS BUCKLY of N/R on 13 July 1832

Back to search results

Name	THOMAS BUCKLY
Date of Birth	N/R N/R N/R
Address	N/R
Father	PATRICK BUCKLY
Mother	MARGARET CALLAHAN

Further details in the record

Child Denomination	R.C.
Sponsor 1	THOS BUCKLY
Sponsor 2	CATH CALLAHAN
Recorded Diocesan Area	CORK & ROSS
Recorded Parochial Area	KINALEA (TRACTON ABBEY)

His sister Catherine was baptised two years later.[iv]

Area - CORK & ROSS (RC) , Parish/Church/Congregation - TRACTON ABBEY

Baptism of CATHARINE BUCKLY of N/R on 18 August 1834

Back to search results

Name	CATHARINE BUCKLY
Date of Birth	N/R N/R N/R
Address	N/R
Father	PATRICK BUCKLY
Mother	MARGARET CALLAHAN

Further details in the record

Child Denomination	R.C.
Sponsor 1	THOS SULLIVAN
Sponsor 2	CATH BUCKLY
Recorded Diocesan Area	CORK & ROSS
Recorded Parochial Area	KINALEA (TRACTON ABBEY)

Thanks to Frank's records, I've now discovered that there was a third child, Mary Buckley, baptised on 3 October 1836. Her name does not appear on

irishgenealogy.ie. She must have died in infancy since she did not accompany her two siblings and their mother Margaret to Australia in 1844.

There would have been little eating, drinking and merriment at marriages and baptisms during the Famine years (about 1846 to 1851). Rev. Cornelius Corcoran who succeeded Thomas O'Conner as parish priest at Minane Bridge in 1840 was a tireless advocate for those affected by the Famine. An extract from one of his letters was published in a London newspaper:

> Over sixteen deaths occurred in my parishes[v] for the last ten days. I am morally certain that each and every one of them was occasioned and accelerated by want of food and fire. Buckley, of Ballyvorane, and Sullivan, of Oysterhaven, died suddenly. Buckley dropped dead on the [relief] works, on a journey of three miles before day. His wife will make an affidavit that he had not sufficient food the night before he died, and that she and the rest of the family lived thirty-six hours on wild weeds to spare a bit of [potato?] cake for him (*Illustrated London News*, 16 January 1847).

Relief work was funded by the British government and generally involved road construction and similar projects. To be paid -- and they weren't paid much -- the workers had to arrive on site at a very early hour.

The Sullivan from Oysterhaven mentioned by Corcoran is probably not a relation since our Sullivan ancestors came from Carrigaline, probably from the townland of Commeen[vi]. And of course Sullivan is a common name in county Cork.

However the Buckley he mentioned could well have been a close relative. Ballyvorane is near Farranbrien West, both in turn close to the church at Minane Bridge. The sponsor (i.e. godfather) of Thomas Buckley in 1832 was also named Thomas Buckley. He might have been the grandfather since the first born son was traditionally named after the father's father. There is only one Thomas ("Thos.") Buckley in the 1833 Tithes Survey of Tracton parish[vii] and he lived at West Farrenbrien (now Farranbrien West). The writing on the original survey document is very faint and difficult to read, however the essential information is shown in the index. Additional information in the original document shows that he had a total of about 9 acres in three separate allotments.

Home / Search the Tithe Applotment Books /

Search results: Displaying one result

Sort by: Relevance / Surname / Forename / Townland or City / Parish / County / Year /

| Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	Parish	County	Year
Buckley	Thos	West Farrenbrien	Tracton	Cork	1833

Given the conjunction of names, dates and locations, I think it's very likely that the farmer Thos Buckley was Patrick's father, and thus young Thomas Buckley's grandfather. The Buckley from Ballyvorane who died in the Famine could well have been part of that extended family.

Matthew Sullivan and Mary Jeffords

Although we don't have a baptism record for Matthew Sullivan, we know from an Australian record that he was born in Cork in 1797. Nor do we know the date of Matthew and Mary's marriage. All we can say is that it would have taken place at some time before 1826 – the year of birth of their first child Anne (or at least the first surviving child).

We are very fortunate to have the record of Anne Sullivan's baptism on 7 January 1826. Hers is the sixth name on the first page of the earliest surviving register for Carrigaline parish.
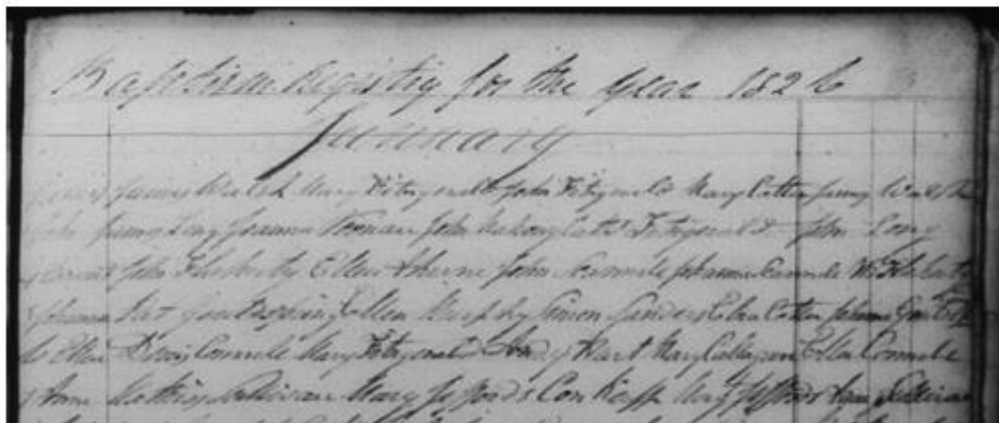
Area - CORK & ROSS (RC) , Parish/Church/

Baptism of ANNE SULLIVAN of N/R on 7 January 1826

Back to search results

Name	ANNE SULLIVAN
Date of Birth	N/R N/R N/R
Address	N/R
Father	MATHIAS SULLIVAN
Mother	MARY JEFFORDS

Further details in the record

Sponsor 1	CON KEEFFE
Sponsor 2	MARGT JEFFORDS
Recorded Parochial Area	CARRIGALINE & TEMPLEBRIGID

Catholic Church records at that time often used the Latin version of Christian names, hence Matthew's name as Mathias. "Carrigaline & Templebridget" are neighbouring parishes. The same priest (Rev Jeremiah John Ryan) was responsible for both, and the records were kept in a common register, so they effectively constituted a single parish.

Anne (also known as Nancy) was the first of the family to emigrate to Australia. She arrived in Melbourne on the *Royal Consort* in February 1844, seven months before the rest of the family on the *Abberton*. There are some inconsistencies in her details on the passenger list but the consensus among family researchers seems to be that this is our Anne from Carrigaline parish.[viii]
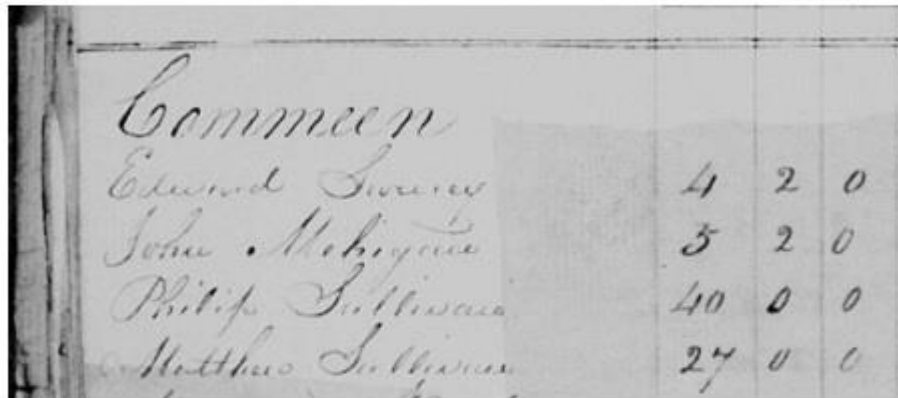
Matthew and Mary had seven children, only four of whom – Anne, Ellen, Mary and Margaret -- survived beyond infancy or early childhood. The dates shown below are actually for baptism, not birth. Family Tree Maker is not set up to show baptism dates in the summary table. At that time children were baptised within a few days of birth so the two dates would be very close.

Go	Children: 7	Sex	Birth
◄	Anne Sullivan	F	07 Jan 1826 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Ireland
◄	Ellen Sullivan	F	20 Feb 1828 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Ireland
◄	Mary Sullivan	F	14 Apr 1830 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Ireland
◄	Margaret Sullivan	F	05 Jul 1832 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
◁	Philip Sullivan	M	25 Aug 1833 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
◁	Eliza Sullivan	F	27 Jul 1835 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
◁	Fanny Sullivan	F	27 Jul 1835 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork, Ireland

Since Matthew and Mary's first son was named Philip, we could guess that Matthew's father was named Philip. However, Philip does not appear as a sponsor in this instance, nor for any of Matthew's other children.

Nevertheless, this is still a possibility. In the 1831 Tithes Survey there were two Philip Sullivans in Carrigaline parish. One was in the townland of Ballyduhig North with a large farm of 82 acres; the other in the townland of Commeen with 40 acres. The farm of the Philip Sullivan in Commeen is next to that of a Matthew Sullivan – and *this is the only Matthew Sullivan shown in the parish of Carrigaline* in the Tithes Survey. With 40 and 27 acres respectively, Philip and Matthew were among the larger tenant farmers in that townland.

There is another possibility – that our ancestor Matthew Sullivan was a landless labourer. Farm work was seasonal and usually provided for little more than basic survival. However, the circumstances of the family's departure for Australia suggest the family had some financial resources, limited though they might have been.

I think we can be more confident about Matthew's identity on the Tithes list, but less so about Philip's. Perhaps he was Matthew's uncle, or even more distantly related. There is no way to know with certainty.

Matthew Sullivan and Margaret Callaghan

Patrick Buckley and Mary Jeffords died in either 1836 or 1837 – this being the interval between the births of Margaret's last child with Patrick (Mary Buckley in October 1836) and her first child with Matthew (Catherine Sullivan in February 1838). So the marriage probably took place in 1837. Catherine Sullivan and her younger brother Michael died in infancy as they were not part of the family group that emigrated. We can't know the dates since burial registers were not kept for either parish. Bridget and Joanna were both in the family group that sailed on the *Abberton*. Sadly, Joanna died on the voyage. The remaining three children – Daniel[ix], Sarah and Honora -- were born in Australia.

Go	Children: 7	Sex	Birth
◁	Catherine Sullivan	F	25 Feb 1838 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
◁	Michael Sullivan	M	06 Sep 1839 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
◀	Bridget Sullivan	F	28 May 1841 in Ireland
◁	Joanna Sullivan	F	06 Sep 1843 in Carrigaline, Co. Cork
⇦	Daniel Sullivan	M	28 Jul 1845 in Collingwood, Melbourne, Victoria
◁	Sarah Sullivan	F	25 Jul 1847 in Melbourne, Victoria
◀	Honora Sullivan	F	10 Sep 1849 in Melbourne, Victoria

The timing of the family's departure was fortuitous since so many people, perhaps a million, perished in the Great Famine. Our ancestors could well have been among the victims had they not left for Australia in June 1844.

Sale Cemetery, Gippsland, Victoria.

Philip Crowe: 7 June 2014

[i] I don't know why the name morphed from MacKay into McCoy. Perhaps it was their Scottish accents when they gave their name to the minister.

[ii] Frank Thompson is not convinced that Daniel and Mary Buckley were the parents of the Patrick Buckley who married Margaret Callaghan. Frank points out that by 1807, Daniel and Mary had moved to Raffeen parish where their other three children were born. However, he does not have an alternative suggestion as to who Patrick's parents might have been. And the fact that all the other baptisms of that Buckley family were in Minane Bridge convinces me that Patrick too was baptised at Minane Bridge.

[iii] It was not uncommon in those small communities for distant relations to marry. Even first cousins were sometimes allowed to do so by the Catholic Church if permission was given by the parish priest. What the criteria were for granting permission I don't know. Similarly in the Church of England/Church of Ireland first cousins could marry and I don't think any special permission was required for them. Charles Darwin married his first cousin Emma Wedgwood (of the famous pottery family). On my Nana Sullivan's side, James Falls married Jane Falls, both from County Tyrone in the north of Ireland. They were probably related but how closely I don't know.

[iv] This is not the same information that Mildred sent me. She had a "Cathe Buckly" baptised in Carrigaline parish on 8 November 1833, daughter of William Buckley and Joanna Sullivan, but I think that's the wrong Catherine Buckley. It would be easy to be misled by this entry. The passenger list of the ship on which Catherine came to Australia in 1844 shows that she was then 10 years of age making her year of birth to be 1834, just one year different from the year in which "Cathe Buckly" was baptised. And since it was known that the Sullivans came from Carrigaline the location made sense. However, the mother's name should be Margaret Callaghan rather than Joanna Sullivan.

[v] He refers to parishes, plural. I think that is because he was building a nearby church, St. Patrick's at Nohoval, the completion of which was delayed until 1859 because of the Famine.

[vi] The townland is the smallest division of land in rural Ireland and was the basis for administration by both church and state. Despite its name, townlands do not usually contain a town. The boundaries are mostly based on Gaelic land patterns to which the English gave the name townlands – derived from the Old English term "tun" meaning an enclosure. They are not of any fixed area and can vary in size from less than one acre to several thousand acres. People in rural Ireland today still use the name of their townland for purposes of identification and include the name in their postal address. The Irish government plans to replace townland names with post codes in 2015. It will be interesting to see whether there is opposition from people not wanting to lose their traditional association with a townland.

[vii] Source: irishgenealogy.ie tithes

[viii] The list of bounty passengers shows Nancy Sullivan as being a Protestant from Co Antrim. There is a house at 20 Rome Street, Toowoomba, bearing the name *Cairndhu* (sounds like "can do"), a district in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. Records show that the family of Michael Thomas Sullivan lived in Rome Street from at least 1910 to 1913, but they do not show the house number. Family members of my mother's generation were aware of the name of that house and used to joke about it (Would you get me a cup of tea, please. Can do!). However, as to whether they lived in that particular house and were responsible for giving that name to the property I have yet to find out. If they did give it the name, maybe they were aware that Anne worked at *Cairndhu* before leaving for Australia. Or this might be just a false trail.

[ix] Daniel is shown as "O'Sullivan" in both his baptism and marriage entries in the Victorian BDM registers. I asked if this could be corrected but was told that, since that is how it was originally recorded, it must remain unchanged to preserve the authenticity of the records. As an alternative, I asked if a supplementary entry could be added to redirect people who are searching for Daniel Sullivan. The BDM's History Team are presently considering my suggestion.