

An Early Emigrant Family from Seagoe Parish to America in 1682

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Sketch of Seagoe Church

We are indebted to the first Chairman of Craigavon Historical Society Rev B J Mooney for his research regarding the meaning of the Townland names in Seagoe Parish, and for his History of the District. ¹

Townland names are now less frequently used and their location is only vaguely known especially since the Post Office authorities, to aid postal deliveries, devised the Postal Code system.

The map shown [*Map is in printed Review only - Ed.*] will enable us to locate the townlands within Seagoe Parish and their juxtaposition; this map is also copied from Rev B J Mooney' History. ²

The Hearth Money Tax of 1664 was a form of taxation imposed by the Irish Government of the day on all house-holders. A charge of 2/- (old money) was levied on every hearth within each dwelling house. The number of hearths and the names of the house-holder responsible for payment were listed within each townland. The original list or roll as it was called was destroyed by fire when the Public Record Office, Dublin was burnt in 1922. Fortunately the list for County Armagh had been copied, and a complete list of house-holders in this parish at this date is available. ³

Perhaps ones first reaction in looking through the list is the comparative sparceness of the population at that time. For instance in the townland of Ballyvickcrannell (now Ballymacrandal) we find but two names recorded, namely Valentine Hollingsworth and William Smurfit. It is the first of these two families we are concerned with. As the name denotes they do not appear to have been of local origin, but are in all probability settlers, who had come into the district at the Plantation of Ulster.

The first member of the family to take up residence over here was Henry Hollingsworth, he was married to Katheran and they seem to have had but one son, Valentine (born 1632) who inherited his father's house and farm and whose name appears on the Hearth Money Roll of 1664. Valentine became a member of The Society of Friends (Quakers) who met in Lurgan, and his name occurs from time to time in their records. He appears to have been a man of character and substance, and was soon in positions of responsibility within the meeting.

His name occurs (with other local Friends) as a Trustee of Friends' Burial Ground, Moyraverty where he is described as "a Freeholder". ⁴ His first marriage was to Ann Ree of Tandragee in 1655, she died in 1671 and is buried in Moyraverty Burial Ground. He married secondly Ann Calvert, daughter of Thomas and Jane Calvert of Drumgor Parish of Seagoe. This wedding took place on 12th of the fourth month 1672 in the house of Marke Wright, Parish of Shankill and according to Quaker custom they signed the

Marriage Certificate which concludes with the words - "They tooke one another in marriage in the presence of God and His people according to the law of God and we are witnesses of the same whose names are herunder subscribed ye day and yeare aforesaid". Val. Holengworth Anne Holengworth.

(Witnesses signatures who were present at Wedding)

*Francis Robson,
William Williams,
Jo: Calvert,
Chris: Hillery,
Hugh Stamper,*

*George Hodgshon,
Jam: Harison,
Dorothy Hillery,
Roger Webb,
Will Pearson,*

*Nic: Harison,
Elis: Gnus,
Robert Hoop,
Marke Wright,
John Wright,
Alice Williams,*

*Michael Staise,
Timo: Kirk,
James Bradshaw,
An. Bradshaw,
Tho. Wederall,*

*Rob Chambers,
Tho: Calvert,
Debora Kirk,
Will Dixon,
Antho. Dixon,*

*Fergus Softly,
Alice Wright,
Dina Kirke,
Mary Walker. ⁵*

News of the new colony in America, which had been granted to William Penn, who was a man of influence and a leading Quaker, was being talked about by Irish Friends. The colony which Penn sought to establish was to be governed on democratic lines, with justice for all irrespective of race or creed. The land was to be sold at very low rates, and freedom of Worship was assured without fear of persecution.

Valentine must have carefully weighed up the prospects, finally deciding to take the big step and emigrate. He and his wife Lydia, together with their family, some of whom were only infants, also his son-in-law Thomas Connaway (married to his daughter Mary) and an indentured servant, all sailed on the good ship "Antelope" from Belfast in 1682.

The only member of the family who did not leave at this time was the eldest son Henry, now a capable young man of twenty four. He remained behind to wind up the estate and to dispose of the assets. It was only a temporary delay however, as he followed the others the next year. He travelled out with a

large group of Quakers from Dublin who left on "The Lion" of Liverpool all bent on emigrating. ⁶

There is a distinct touch of romance connected to Henry. Apparently he left his heart behind him when he left these shores as he had formed a deep attachment for a lovely Quakeress maiden also connected to Lurgan Meeting. Her name was Lydia Atkinson, daughter of Stephen and Isabel Atkinson of Ballencorr, Parish of Seagoe. Some accounts say Henry only remained about two years in America before returning to make Lydia his wife. It was a long hazardous journey by sailing ship but he must have felt it was worth all the risks involved. The wedding took place in the house of John Robson in Tamnaficarbets Seagoe Parish, on 22/8/1688. They both returned to America soon afterwards. ⁷

The Hollingsworth family seemed to prosper in the New World. Valentine was a man of extraordinary ability and influence, as very soon after his arrival he was called to hold office and participate in public affairs. He was a member of the First Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania and was signer of Penn's Great Charter. His son Henry was a surveyor, he assisted in laying out the City of Philadelphia. ⁸

Valentine was granted an estate of almost one thousand acres of land in a favourable location. He continued his interest in the Society of Friends, and provided a suitable site for a Meeting House and Burial Ground.

It is not the purpose or intention of this short article to trace in detail the progress and fortunes of the many descendants of this important family, suffice it to say that their numbers are legion. They are found in almost every State of the Union. They are found in all denominations, and in all professions and trades. They have played and continue to play a leading place in the life of their country. As we look back to their origins we remember the founding fathers who came from the Lurgan area.

Now for an up to date sequel to the story.

In June 1986 a Miss Elizabeth Hollingsworth arrived in Lurgan, on a visit of two weeks. She rightly claimed to be directly descended from Valentine, who left Lurgan in 1682. She came from Pennsylvania and was fulfilling a life-long desire to see for herself where her fore-fathers had come from. To walk the roads they walked to view the fields in which they had laboured, to breathe the air they breathed to view the mountains and hills they had glimpsed and to worship in the same simple manner in which they worshipped, when living here. This was her wish.

Her wish and desire was amply fulfilled, not only in viewing places of local interest, but also visiting places of tourist attraction throughout Ulster and indeed Ireland.

Before returning home Lurgan Friends arranged a social evening in her honour when mention was made of those who had left the district so long ago to pioneer a new life in a New World.

It would seem to be an oversight if no mention were made of another Lurgan man who is even better known than the family about whom we have been writing. We refer of course to James Logan, born in Lurgan in 1674 of Quaker parents. It seemed at first as though Logan was going to follow his father's footsteps and become a school teacher, but later he engaged in business.

Logan had now gone to live in Bristol, and it was here where William Penn spotted him and realised the potential qualities he had. Penn persuaded him to be his private secretary and accompany him to the new Colony of Pennsylvania to which he was about to go. Before embarking Penn made Logan Clerk of the Council, Secretary of the Province, Commissioner of Property and Receiver General for Pennsylvania: Penn's trust and confidence in Logan was never misplaced as he proved worthy in every way of the important positions he held. Logan has ever been esteemed and recognised as a worthy citizen and one who brought honour and renown to the town in which he was born. ⁹

References

1. The Parish of Seagoe. The Place-names explained by Rev B J Mooney, BD, 1954.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. Pages 51-53.

4. Original Grant Lynastown Burial Ground Moyraverty. Dated 15th 1st Month 1673.
5. Immigration of the Irish Quakers into Pennsylvania by A C Myers 1902. Pages 312-313.
6. The Hollingsworth Register Vol 5 No 3 September 1969 by Henry A Hollingsworth, California USA.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Review Craigavon Historical Society Vol 1 No 2 - article by Mr T J Malcomson - James Logan secretary to W Penn.

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