

History of Mooncoin

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Eamon De Valera outside the Church gates in Mooncoin, in May 1922. The worried look on his face can be attributed to fact that he was trying to stop the country slipping into Civil War. The aim of his speech in Mooncoin was trying to get the people to support 'the pact' he had finalised with his old friend, now foe, Michael Collins. The idea of the pact was to form some kind of 'power sharing' between people who supported the Treaty and those that did not. The resulting election did not go this way, and civil war broke out a few weeks after De Valera had been in Mooncoin. Eamon De Valera had previously come to Mooncoin in March 1918 with Arthur Griffith for a meeting after the Waterford by-election. At that time De Valera was president of Sinn Fein and they were running candidates in all by elections with the aim of making headway as a political party following the wave of public support that followed the 1916 rebellion. They lost this by election to the son of the late MP John Redmond. The reason they would have met in Mooncoin and not Waterford was for their own safety and fear of arrest.

Early History (1100-1650s)

We begin with our earliest written history or records related to the area. However it is worth remembering that there is unwritten history in the landscape. For example, the 'fairyforts' in the parish e.g. near Tubrid, are early farming settlements, dating from cir 400AD. So these people would have built up a mound of earth, fortified it and built a dwelling house, of which usually only some of the mound remains in the landscape. They usually were on elevated ground so the inhabitants had a good view of the area. There is estimated to be around 45k 'fairyforts' in Ireland. However as there has been no excavations on these prehistoric farms, we need to start with the written history.

One of the earliest recorded pieces of information in relation to Mooncoin is in the 'Catalogue Of the Bishops of Ossary' (British Museum - London). It states that in 1220, the Bishop of Ossary (De Turville) 'acquired a wood near Clonmore'. We now believe that this wood is where Kilnaspic is currently, and subsequently where Kilnaspic got its name i.e. Kyle - na-spig - 'Bishops Wood'. The bishop of Ossary owned a lot of land in Clonmore also, and this is the reason we have these records. The church owned these lands for many centuries and in 1460, Bishop Hackett of Ossary built a mansion in Clonmore.

The current parish of Mooncoin is generally referred to as the 'Burgagery of Rathkieran' in these early Ossary records of cir 1200 (in many records Mooncoin parish is actually referred to as the 'Parish of Rathkieran' up until the 1800s), this was because the main church of the area was in Rathkieran. In fact there is a record of Donnail O Fogertach, Bishop of Ossary being buried there on the 8th May 1178 (this early church has long since disappeared and there seems to be a number of churches built on the site). The church ruins currently in Rathkieran today are of the Protestant church built in 1727 - however it is recorded as being nearly identical to the previous Catholic church (this church was mostly knocked in 1880). It is worth remembering that there is an overlap between the Protestant and Catholic churches of the parish, as after the Reformation of the 1540s, the Catholic churches that existed in the parish would have been reconsecrated as Protestant churches (Anglican/Church of Ireland), which was to become the official State church.

There is also evidence that pre 1118, Rathkieran was its own holy sea, that is, it was its own diocese and was absorbed into Ossary after this date. 200 yards north east of Rathkieran near Ashgrove, there is a Rath or hill called 'the Corrig'. This is where the monks attached to Rathkieran church were said to have had their residence.

Outside of the church history, we know the main landowners in the area from cir 1400 were the Butlers of Grannagh (Granny) Castle - (who were a branch of the Butler family based in Kilkenny Castle). In later years, the Earl of Bessborough based in Kildalton, Piltown, was the main landowner in the Barony of Iverk. Poleroan then became a sub manor of Granagh.

Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland

There is also detailed information surviving in relation to Mooncoin from the 1650's when Oliver Cromwell and his army conquered Ireland and subsequently made official records when locals were transplanted. In fact, Oliver Cromwell passed close to Mooncoin after taking control of Wexford Town and New Ross. He came over the Walsh mountains and on looking down on Mooncoin and the surrounding area is reputed to have said; "This is land worth fighting for".

Firstly some background to Cromwells 'conquest' of Ireland. There was a rebellion in Ireland, mainly in Ulster in 1641 where many Protestant planters were killed by the local Irish (cir 5000 killed). We now know that there was an equal number of Catholics killed around this time in retaliation. The 'tabloid' News-sheets in London went into overdrive in the years proceeding this, greatly exaggerating the number of Protestant settlers killed. One figure given was 150k killed, even though there was not that many Protestants in the whole of Ireland at the time! Cromwell saw his invasion in 1649 as revenge against the 'barbarous Irish wretches' for these acts committed in 1641. He also needed to regain control of the country as there was a Confederation (type of government) in Kilkenny City which was governing most of the country. The Confederation of Kilkenny was made up of a mixture of Catholic and Protestant members loyal to the King of England (Charles I). Cromwell sided with the Parliament at Westminster, and subsequently made England a type of Republic for the only time in its history. When Cromwell sailed for Ireland, it was his first time ever leaving England and he arrived (with severe seasickness) in Ringsend, Dublin in August 1649.

Cromwell is most infamous in Ireland for the genocide (or 'ethnic cleansing' as it would be termed nowadays), he committed in Drogheda, Co Louth where he massacred around 3000 men, women and children (this occurred on Sept 11, 1649, their own '9/11'). The dead were mostly Catholic. Even at the time it was considered shocking, as women, children and the elderly were usually spared in 17th century warfare, not this time however. He is also accused of not giving 'quarter'. This is when people surrender, they are meant to be spared and taken prisoner. He decided to kill most prisoners. He also killed any Catholic clergy and burnt the Cathedral in Drogheda to the ground even though there was

over 100 people inside seeking sanctuary. Cromwell felt however he was doing Gods work, and that God was on his side. If things worked out for him, which they often did (weather etc), it was God guiding him to victory.

The only town that gained any success was Clonmel. Here Cromwell lost around 2000 men. The man leading the Irish that day was Hugh Dubh O Neill of Ulster. Cromwell was furious, even more so when he eventually got inside Clonmel and found out Hugh Dubh had escaped out the back gate, along with his army of Ulster men! At that point in time, it was the biggest loss of men Cromwells army had ever suffered in either England, Scotland or Ireland.

Soon after Cromwells conquest of Ireland he started a policy of Transplantation. This involved moving the native people from their lands, to western counties (where the land was poorer), so foreign settlers could move in("to hell or to Connaught"). This was decided under the 'Act of Settlement'. This Act defined that, to pay the wage bill of Cromwells army who were in Ireland since 1649, it was decided to pay them with land from the conquered Irish, as opposed to actual money which was scarce. At one stage the leaders in Dublin and London were pushing to remove ALL Catholics to Connacht. However, it was then decided to move just land owning Catholics and give them a third or two thirds in value, of their conquered land, in Connaught. Poorer Catholics and labourers stayed put, so to work the land for their new landlords. Protestants already based in Connaught had the option of exchanging their land for better land in Leinster or Munster. All catholics priest were also told to leave the country. Here is an extract from the official documentation in London dated April 1653;

They (Catholic landowners) have until 1st of May 1654 to remove and transplant themselves into the province of Connacht and the county of Clare, or one of them there to inhabit and abide.

In January 1654, in Grocers Hall London, representatives of adventures and soldiers met to draw lots on which land they would take in Ireland. A kind of a lucky dip depending on rank etc.

When families were to be transplanted, the man of the family had firstly to go to Loughrea, Co Galway. Loughrea was the centre of administration for the transplantation. Here he had to register and stake provisional claim and throw up a shack while leaving the family to look after crops and animals. He then returned for his family and 'cattels'(mainly 'black cattle and horses'). However many families could not meet the 1st of May 1654 deadline and so applied for extensions. Some were granted, which allowed the women and children to stay behind in Kilkenny in the summer

of 1654 to harvest crops. However they had to give a lot of these crops to the new landowners as compensation.

Mooncoin did not escape this Transplantation plan. It is worth noting that 58% of the land in county Kilkenny was confiscated and given to the Cromwellian/Parliamentarian soldiers. Some evidence is still on the landscape today with the ruins of Corluddy castle and Grange castle which were abandoned in 1653, with their owners moving to Connaught. It is hard to imagine the trauma these people went through at this time. Many would have been old and had to make the hard journey to Galway on foot, or horse if lucky, never to see Mooncoin or their homes again. I dont think in Irish peoples worst nightmare did they think it would have come to this. Just a few years before, Kilkenny City had been prosperous and the capital of Ireland, with the local economy doing extremely well. Closer to home, just five years previously, the Walsh family that lived in Grange Castle had hosted the Papal Nuncio from Rome which was a huge privilege. The Papal Nuncio would have been one of the most powerful and influential people in Europe at the time. Now the family of seven were on their way to Connaught.

Here is an extract from certificates granted to the native Mooncoin people transplanted from the Mooncoin area(1653-1655) - Cromwellian soldiers would have taken over their land in Mooncoin. Note: the different families with the name of 'Grant' were all related in some way. So they were all 'tarred with the one brush'. 'Glengrant' got its name from this family. Also note: place spelling is how it was written at the time:

Name	Townsland	Number of People
Donnagh Brenane	Ardragh	9 persons in all
Walter Dalton	Rathcurby	20 persons in all
David Egnott (Synott)	Aghlish	7 persons in all
Edmond Grant	Polroane (Castle)	14 persons in all
David Grant	Corlodie (Castle)	21 persons in all
Edmond Grant	Dunguoly	15 persons in all
Ellen Grant	Ballynabouly	14 persons in all
Thomas Grant	Ballynabouly	6 persons in all(Forfeit Caste)
Thomas Purcell	Ballysallagh	16 persons in all
Helias Shea	Clonmore	5 persons in all
Oliver Wailsh	Grange (Castle)	7 persons in all
Rich Wailsh	Killcragganstown	6 persons in all
Thomas Wailsh	Ardry	25 persons in all

William Wailsh	Barribahine	8 persons in all
Pierce Dalton	Ballynecrony	12 persons in all
Philip Henbury	Fanningstown	6 persons in all
Philip Kelly	Jamestown	15 persons in all
Ellen Sweetman	Ballyferrickle	11 persons in all
Piers Wailsh	Ballyferrickle	3 persons in all
Robert Wailsh	Unnige	10 persons in all
Edward Wailsh	Listorline	7 persons in all
James Wailsh	Corbehy	11 persons in all
Edmond Wall	Bananagh	9 persons in all
Patrick Waldon	Killdarton	13 persons in all

All of the native Irish outside their own locality had to carry identity cards to facilitate the upheaval.

Barony of Iverk

The Barony of Iverk took in the modern parishes of Mooncoin, Kilmacow, Piltown and Fiddown. Originally the main seat of power for Iverk was Granagh castle and later the Earl of Bessborough in Piltown (the Bessborough estate owned cir 25,000 acres in 1875). The current parish of Mooncoin was actually made up of 8 Civil parishes listed below. There is some slight differences between the Roman Catholic parish which is mostly used today (made up of Kilnaspic, Mooncoin and Carrigeen) and the civil parishes, in that, some don't overlap as you would expect. For example the townland of Cashel is in the current Roman Catholic parish of Mooncoin, but in the Civil parish its in Fiddown. Likewise, some parts of the current Kilmacow parish were under Rathkieran civil parish.

Each Civil Parish area had their own Church of Ireland (Protestant) church. Church of Ireland was the official state church up to the late 1800s and catholics were limited in how they practiced and so did not have as many churches. The ruins of these churchs and graveyards can still be seen for the most part; for example Polerone Church ruins near the river Suir was church of ireland, Graigavine Church (near cloncunny - church of ireland), a church in Rathkieran (Church of Ireland), Tubrid (church of Ireland), Aglish (church of ireland) and Kilaspy (not to be confused with Kilnaspic, this church was in silverspring). Surprisingly, considering there was previously cir 7 Church of Ireland churches in Mooncoin, there is now none in the parish with most closed by the early

1800s. However, it should be noted that if these churches existed before the Reformation they would have been Catholic. We know for example that Rathkieran was the main church in the area in the 1300s. There was a number of churches on this site, and it became anglican after the Reformation of 1540.

These Protestant churches in the parish found it very hard survive as the population of the Protestant community was very low. After the Reformation and the Penal laws of the 1690s, the idea was that the Catholic population would decline and the Protestant population would increase as people converted to avoid the harsh Penal laws. So after a few generations the Catholics would be in the decline. This worked fairly well in England and Wales but they failed to take into account the Irish peoples perseverance! This eventually resulted in Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland as the State Church in the 1870s. In records that survive from 1776, in Portnascully parish (which had a Protestant church), there was 433 Catholics and 4 Protestants including the Vicar.

Ironically the number of Catholic churches were less (considering the majority of the population were catholic - however this was due the Penal laws which as stated aimed to wipe out the Catholic faith of the country). There was three Catholics churches in use from the 1700s, as there continues today. The previous Catholic Mooncoin parish church was located in the old graveyard on Chapel street. Previous to that, the only Catholic church in the area was in Ballytarsney. This church also has the distinction of being the first Catholic church built in the area since the Reformation of the 1540s. It was built just after 1700. It was small and had a thatch roof and was burnt down on one occasion as by law, Catholics were not allowed places of worship. Also, as there was very few places for the Catholics to be buried, many were given permission to be buried in the Church of Ireland plots. For example, there is records of the 'papist' (catholic) parish priest being buried in Rathkeiran in the 1600s (Church of Ireland). In general in Mooncoin, there is not much evidence of conflict between the differing believers through the centuries. Many Catholics attended mass (and as stated were buried), in Protestant churches as they had no church of their own until the 1700s. So it would be considered a 'grey' area with many of the local vicars turning a 'blind eye' to the Catholics attending mass.

Civil Parishes in the current catholic parish of Mooncoin:
(parishes spelt as they were at the time)

- Rathkyran (Rathkieran)
- Clonmore

- Poleroan
- Aglishmartin(Aglish)
- Ardera
- Portnescully (Portnascully)
- Ballytarsna (Ballytarsney)
- Tubrid

Here are some Extracts from the Ossary records from 1837 which reference the church of Ireland civil churches in area:

(* note; 'Glebe house' is the local Rectors house)

MOONCOIN

"Moncoin", Mount-Coin, or [Mooncoin], a village and extra-parochial place, locally in the parish of Poleroan, barony of Iverk, county of Waterford, and province of Leinster, 6 miles (W.) from Waterford, on the road to Carrick-on-Suir; containing 102 houses and 495 inhabitants. In the R. C. divisions this place is the head of a union or district, comprising the parishes of Rathkyran, Aglishmartin, Portnescully, Poleroan, Clonmore, Ballytarsna, Tubrid, and part of Burnchurch, in which union are three chapels; that of Mountcoin is a neat edifice.

[From A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland (1837)]

Church Records

Civil Parish: Polerone. RC Parish: Mooncoin (Carrigeen).

Earliest Records: births. Dec 1797; marriages. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Polerone	Mooncoin	not available

Polerone

"Polerone", or Poleroan, a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 6 miles (N. W.) from Waterford, on the road to Carrick-on-Suir, and on the north-eastern bank of the river Suir; containing 1245 inhabitants. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Ossory, united by act of council, in 1680, to the vicarages of Potnescully and Illud, together consituting the union of Poleroan, in the gift of the Corporation of Waterford, in who the rectory is impropriate. There is a glebe-house with a glebe of 4 1/4 acrtes. In the R. C. divisions the parish forms part of the union or district of Moncoin. About 60 children are educated in a private school.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Polerone. RC Parish: Mooncoin (Carrigeen).

Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Cross reference to Family History Library microfilm (double-check with the Library)
 Civil Roman Catholic Time FHLC
 parish parish period number
 Polerone Mooncoin not available

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Polerone	Mooncoin	not available

RATHKIERAN

"Rathkieran", or Rathkyran, a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, near the road from Waterford to Carrick-on-Suir, 4 1/2 miles (N.W.) from Waterford; containing 1408 inhabitants, of which number, 120 are in the village. The parish comprises 4197 statute acres, and the village contains 22 houses. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Ossory, and in the patronage of the Vicars Choral of the cathedral of Kilkenny; the rectory is appropriate to the dean and chapter. In the R. C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising this parish and those of Aglishmartin, Portnescully, Poleroan, Clonmore, Ballytarsna, Tubrid, and part of Burnchurch, in which union are three chapels. At Moncoin is a school under the superintendence of the nuns, in which are about 250 girls; and in a private school are about 200 boys; there is also a Sunday school.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Rathkieran. RC Parish: Mooncoin (Carrigeen).
 Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Rathkieran	Mooncoin Mullinavat pt	1843-1880

AGLISH

"Aglish", or Aglishmartin, a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 3 miles (W.) from Waterford, on the river Suir, and on the road from Waterford to Carrick-on-Suir; containing 401 inhabitants, of which number, 142 are in the village. It comprises 2414 statute acres, and is a rectory, in the diocese of Ossory, and in the patronage of the Crown: the tithes amount to £96.18.5 1/2. There is neither church nor glebe-house; the glebe consists of 2 1/2 acres. In the R. C. divisions it is part of the union or district of Mooncoin.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Aglish. RC Parish: Mooncoin.
 Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Aglish	Mooncoin	1856-1880

BALLYTARSNEY

"Ballytarsney", a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 6 1/2 miles (E. S. E.) from Carrick-on-Suir; the population is returned with the parish of Poleroan. The parish is situated on the road from Waterford to Limerick, and is about five British furlongs in length and breadth, comprising 1116 statute acres. It is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Ossory, and forms part of the union of Clonmore. In the R. C. divisions it forms part of the union or district of Moncoin. Here are the remains of a square fort, which appears to have been of considerable strength.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Ballytarsney. RC Parish: Mooncoin.

Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Ballytarsney	Mooncoin	not available

CLONMORE

"Clonmore", a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 2 1/2 miles (S. S. E.) from Piltown, on the mail coach road from Limerick To waterford. Containing 702 inhabitants. The principal seats are Silverspring and Cloncunny. The living is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Ossory, united to those of Ballytarsney, and in the patronage of the Bishop. The glebe-house was built in 1817: the glebe comprises 11 acres. The church was erected in 1818, In the R. C. divisions this parish is in the union or district of Moncoin.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Clonmore. RC Parish: Mooncoin

Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Clonmore	Mooncoin	1856-1880

PORTNASCULLY

"Portnascully", or Portnescully, a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 3 miles (N. W.) from Waterford, on the river Suir; containing 1084 inhabitants. It is a vicarage, in the diocese of Ossory, forming part of the union of Poleroan; the rectory is impropriate in the corporation of Waterford. In the R. C. divisions it is part of the union or district of Moncoin, and contains the chapel of Carrigeen. About 240 boys are educated in two private schools; there is also a Sunday school.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Portnascully. RC Parish: Mooncoin.

Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Portnascully	Mooncoin	not available

TUBBRID

"Tubbrid", or Tubrid, a parish, in the barony of Iverk, county of Kilkenny, and province of Leinster, 9 1/2 miles (S. by W.) from Knocktopher; containing 213 inhabitants and comprising 980 statute acres, as applotted under the tithe act. It is a rectory, in the diocese of Ossory, forming part of the union of Fiddown. In the R. C. divisions it is part of the union or district of Mooncoin. A day school, in which about 100 children are taught, is aided by contributions from the parish priest; and a Sunday school is held in the R.C. chapel.

Church Records

Civil Parish: Tubbrid. RC Parish: Mooncoin.

Earliest Records: b. Dec 1797; m. Jan 1772.

Civil Parish	Roman Catholic Parish	Time
Tubbrid	Mooncoin	not available

Historical

Townlands (1851)

Geography

Parish	Townland	Acres	Diocese
Tubbrid	Barnacole	120	Ossory
Tubbrid	Barrabehey	539	Ossory
Tubbrid	Tubbrid	344	Ossory

1821 Census and Geneology

As many people with an interest in genealogy would know, the earliest complete census returns in Ireland is the 1901 Census. This census is freely available on the Irish National Archives website (the Tithe Applotment books which list the heads of most households in Mooncoin cir 1830 are available freely there also -Tithes were a tax on all people for the upkeep of the state Protestant Church at the time - it was later considered an unfair tax considering over 85% of the population were Catholic!).

Mooncoin parish, however, has been staggeringly luckily in relation to information recovered from earlier censuses. Firstly, the background to

the completion of censuses in Ireland; censuses were taken every 10 years from 1821 (1821 being the first official census by the British government who ruled Ireland at the time). Many people then ask; so what happened to all the census records from 1821-1891? The 1861 and 1871 censuses were purposely destroyed by the government shortly after all the data had been analysed. The 1881 and 1891 censuses were 'pulped' by the British government during World War 1 because of a paper shortage at the time. The vast majority of the remaining census extracts were destroyed during the Irish Civil War in June 1922 when the Four Courts in Dublin was burned. The Irish records office was located in the same complex and over 1000 years of history was burned also at the time.

As stated, Mooncoin parish has been very fortunate (in comparison to many areas of Ireland), in relation to the what survived from the earlier censuses;

1841/1851: The only transcripts in relation to the whole of County Kilkenny to survive from the 1841/51 censuses are the townlands of Aglish and Portnahully (viewable in the national genealogy centre, Kildare St, Dublin 2).

1831: The only transcripts in relation to the whole of County Kilkenny to survive from the 1831 census are the townlands Aglish, Clonmore, Kilmacow, Pol(e)rone, Rathkieran and Tybroughney (viewable in the National Library, Kildare St, Dublin 2).

1821: For the 1821 census, there survives a full complete transcript of the census for the Parish of Mooncoin. Again, Mooncoin is very fortunate, as a man by the name of Edmond Walsh Kelly (whos family came from Glengrant and Licketstown (Carrigeen)) , who had an interest in genealogy, transcribed the original 1821 census for the local area before it was destroyed in 1922 (he is also responsible for the other census transcripts mentioned above). The Census transcripts were later copied by his niece Kathleen Kelly (Tramore) in 1976, who made them available for publication. These transcripts are all stored in the National Library of Ireland and are known as the 'Walsh-Kelly notebooks' (GO MS 684). This census was first published in the book 'Mooncoin - 1650-1977'. As the 1821 census was the first of its kind, the information would have been less detailed than it is today. The transcripts of the 1821 census are available to view below. Just click on the specific townland to open the return. Note: the person listed is son or daughter of the head of the household unless otherwise stated.

Mooncoin Parish Census 1821

<u>Aglish-Curraghmartin</u>	<u>Dournane</u>	<u>Polerone</u>
<u>Ardera</u>	<u>Dungooley</u>	<u>Portnahully</u>
<u>Ballincur</u>	<u>Glengrant</u>	<u>Portnascully</u>
<u>Ballinlough</u>	<u>Grange</u>	<u>Rathcurby</u>
<u>Ballybrassil</u>	<u>Kilcraggan</u>	<u>Rathkieran</u>
<u>Ballymountain-Farranmcedmund</u>	<u>Kilnaspic</u>	<u>Silverspring - Afaddy</u>
<u>Ballytarsney</u>	<u>Licketstown - Moonveen</u>	<u>Skelpstown</u>
<u>Barabehy</u>	<u>Luffany - Ballygorey</u>	<u>Tubrid</u>
<u>Cashel</u>	<u>Middlequarter</u>	
<u>Clogga</u>	<u>Mooncoin Village</u>	
<u>Cloncunny</u>	<u>Mountneill - Ballyslough</u>	
<u>Curluddy-Clashrow-Cussany</u>	<u>Nicholastown</u>	

Family Roots / Mooncoin Geneology

Many people have emigrated from Mooncoin parish over the years. The most popular subject on this websites Message board is geneology or tracing family roots. Here is some advice when trying to locate ancestors;

-Gather as much *solid* information as possible, this is vital e.g. roughly the dates when you ancestors left Mooncoin. Likewise, the townland the person is from is very important. Its not enough to know that your ancestor came from Kilkenny(!) or even Mooncoin. The specific townland is very important (e.g. Dournane). This is especially vital if your ancestor had a very common name like Walsh, Delahunty or Mackey, which are very popular in the area. Also, the tradition in Ireland was to the name the first son after the paternal grandfather and the first daughter after the paternal mother. The second son/daughter was then named from the maternal side. So if a grandfather had a large family, many of his grandchildren could have the same name as himself! This is why dates are very important. It is also, for example, why there as been so many Michael, Patrick, John and Richard Walsh's from Mooncoin over the years! It helps also, when we dont know exactly the name of further back generations, we can make a guess when researching by comparing the names of the oldest grandchildren. Also, be careful of spelling changes in names over the years. Many people that emigrated to America could not read or write, so officials on the American side often spelt the name phonetically. This was compounded probably by the accents of the Irish! For example, Henebery, which is still a popular name in the area, has had many variations through the years; Henneberry, Henebery, Henebry and also an American version Hanabery (which was probably corrupted as defined above). The same can be said for the local townlands, they have changed spelling considerably (mostly

abbreviated) over the years e.g. Polerone was Polleroan. Kilnaspic was Killinaspic (so try a number of combinations when searching).

-One of the best, and freely available sources of information is the 1901 and 1911 censuses of Ireland (from the national archives of Ireland website). Also, on this Mooncoin website, the census of 1821 for the parish is published (above), which we are very fortunate to have surviving.

-Civil records; the vast majority of Births, Deaths and Marriages were recorded in Ireland from 1864 for Catholics and 1844 for peoples of the Church of Ireland faith. These are available from the BDM's offices but specific dates are required as they do not do family research except for the genealogy office in Abbey Street in Dublin. However, the indexes of all birth, dates and marriage up to 1958 have been made freely available on the 'Familysearch.org' website. Using these indexes to get reference numbers, it is then possible to order certificates.

-Catholic Church records; these are very important as they predate the civil records. In Mooncoins case, genealogists are very lucky once again, as most marriages and births from 1779 onwards are recorded (Mooncoin was ahead of its time as many parishes did not do this for many years after). The downside with this is their not 'freely' available. Indexes of these records can be seen on the 'Roots Web' website for a fee. Likewise, microfilms (photocopies) of the Mooncoin parish record books from 1779-1895 are available by calling into the National Library, Kildare st, in Dublin (free of charge). Failing that, the indexes and original manuscripts are property of Mooncoin parish and are still located in the parish. **N.B.**; Church records are not public records and are fully owned by the church. So access to this information is solely at the local parish priests discretion. No parish priest in Ireland is obliged to make these accessible but many, thankfully, do. Also, they do not run a family research business (!) so its better to have your homework done before examining these records.

-Other sources include Griffiths Valuation (cir 1850) which is freely available online. This was a land survey but recorded the head of each landowning household in the parish. Likewise, many genealogy websites have records (for a fee) of ship passengers who emigrated from Ireland. These would include the address where the person was travelling from and going to.

The Rev. Carrigan's history of Mooncoin

A volume of books called "The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossary" (1905) by the Rev William Carrigan (d 1924), has become the de facto reference when completing any type of research or study about Kilkenny. The books (in four volumes) were the result of five years work by a local priest William Carrigan who was born in Ballyfolyle Co Kilkenny and have a thorough breakdown of the history of Kilkenny villages.

The books are no longer in print but are available in local library's. Also, priests ordained in the diocese of Ossary received the books as a present on their ordination.

Click the link belows to read extracts from "The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossary" that are specific to Mooncoin;

Mooncoin Extracts from Carrigans Book (volume 4)

Carrigan Pg 1	Carrigan Pg 13
Carrigan Pg 2	Carrigan Pg 14
Carrigan Pg 3	Carrigan Pg 15
Carrigan Pg 4	Carrigan Pg 16
Carrigan Pg 5	Carrigan Pg 17
Carrigan Pg 6	Carrigan Pg 18
Carrigan Pg 7	Carrigan Pg 19
Carrigan Pg 8	Carrigan Pg 20
Carrigan Pg 9	Carrigan Pg 21
Carrigan Pg 10	Carrigan Pg 22
Carrigan Pg 11	Carrigan Pg 23
Carrigan Pg 12	Carrigan Pg 24

Sinnotts Cross Ambush

An ambush occurred at Sinnotts Cross, Tubrid (at the Piltown end of Clogga) during the war of independence(1919-1921). At this time Ireland was under the control of the British Empire and many of the people of Ireland rebelled against their control to try and gain Independence. The Irish Republican Army used guerilla warfare to try and oust the British from Ireland. This meant that IRA units attacked the enemy and then scattered to avoid capture (this policy was used mainly because the

British would have superior man and fire power). The Irish soldiers did not wear any uniform and the British forces were never sure which people in any area were IRA members. So they frequently took their annoyance out on innocent people.

To deal with the problem the British government advertised for recruits in Britain. The first of these came to Ireland in March 1920 and some were stationed in the Barracks in Fiddown near Mooncoin. They were nicknamed the Black and Tans because of their khaki uniforms and dark green caps and belts.

Michael Collins (nationalist icon from Cork), along with Richard Mulcahy, were the main driving forces behind the Irish Independence movement after 1918. Collins was the IRA Director of Intelligence and was actively involved in providing funds and arms to the IRA units that needed them. In early 1921 Michael Collins ordered the smaller IRA battalions around the country that were not active so far during the war to attack, as he felt there was a need for a final push. In light of this order by Collins and others in high command, an ambush occurred near Sinnotts cross, Mooncoin, Co Kilkenny on 18th of June 1921.

To provoke the Black and Tans to come to Clogga the local IRA men broke into and stole objects from the local landlord who lived near the mill. The Landlord reported this and this caused the Black and Tans to come to Clogga. Also, the previous year (1920), Piltown Courthouse was burnt down. Pat 'the fox' Walsh (Richtéan Walshs later Swithin Walshs) of Clogga was the leader that day.

At a turn on the road, very near Sinnotts Cross, the local IRA members waited and then ambushed the Black and Tans killing one of them. The Black and Tans did not know who committed the attack and vowed to "burn every house in Clogga to the ground". But thanks to the local miller, working in Clogga Mill, this did not happen. The miller at the time was from England and told the Black and Tans that it was an outside unit of the IRA. Being an English citizen, the Black and Tans trusted him and so did not harm anyone in Clogga.

It is important to highlight the fact that all men that took part that day were from the Mooncoin area. They came from all different walks of life, big and small farmers, labourers, shop keepers etc. They put their own lives and their families lives at risk to fight for cause in which they truly believed in. There was no financial or other rewards, but the sacrifices could have been huge. It would have been a lot easier not have taken part but they obviously believed strongly enough to do so. The Independence movement would have had huge support from the general

public, considering over 90% of the Irish people (outside Ulster) voted for republican candidates in the 1918 general election.



Ambush Turn. Site of the purposed Sinnotts Cross Monument (2004)and work to date (2008)



Sinnotts Cross

Pat 'the fox' and James Walsh who took part in the Ambush



The sculptor of the monument, Ruari Carroll, adjudicates on the final placement of his piece of art on the plinth (Feb 2009).



Sinnotts Cross Monument 2009

At the end of 2003 it was decided to erect a monument at the site of the ambush for all men and women who fought for the freedom of Ireland. A committee was formed and plans are now at an advanced stage. For more information [email us](#). Donations are greatly appreciated. For the full story of the ambush [Click here](#). Then Click on the Ambush button.

Here is an account from Martin Murphy of Grange who was involved in the ambush:

"The Clogga ambush occurred shortly after the failed attack on the Mullinavat Police Barracks. We gathered near Sinnotts Cross about 3pm. We got a signal the Tans were coming. We rushed into our positions. The Tans came along the road cycling. We fired at the Tans mostly with shotguns. One of them fell dead. We captured his rifle. Another Tan was wounded but he managed to get away. Ted Moore was one of those in charge. We all got away. This ambush happened in June 1921."

In recognition of the local heroes and of those who provided vital support to them, it was decided to build a monument at Sinnotts Cross Mooncoin (the site of the ambush), to commemorate all who played a part in the struggle for independence during the years 1919– 1921. The project has received the support of all shades of political opinion, as well as the Mooncoin Tidy Towns Committee, sporting clubs and societies, along with the overwhelming support of the locals. Construction started in April 2007 on the foundations and basic structure of the monument site. We have now moved into Phase 3 of the fundraising for the monument and would be *hugely grateful for any donations*, no matter how big or small, to complete this ambitious project. Also if you wish to become involved in the project, or assist in some way, please contact 00353 (0)87 269 3095.

[Thesis on Sinnotts Cross Ambush and War of Independence in South Kilkenny](#)

The Rose of Mooncoin

Mooncoin has been made famous by a love song called the "Rose of Mooncoin". It was written by Watt Murphy in the 1800's. It has now been adopted as the Kilkenny anthem (thanks to Paddy Grace, Dicksboro - former county chairman) and it is sung to represent the Kilkenny hurling team.

Watts father Henry Murphy, came to Mooncoin and set up a school in Carrigeen in the early 1800's where he was principle. Watt subsequently set up a school in Chapel Street in Mooncoin in the 1830s. The school was located roughly where the 'Mews' houses on Chapel street are currently.

The "Tithe Act" was still in use at this time where the people had to struggle to meet payments. Watt Murphy wrote a poem disgracing the landlords. He was severely reprimanded by the authorities who stopped his income as school principle. This gained him the nick-name "the Rebel poet". He also wrote a famous prose about the Battle of Carrickshock.

Watt's house was situated in Polerone. The local rector had just become his new neighbour where the Rectors house (Glebe) was located beside Polerone Church. Watt became infatuated with the Rector's daughter called Elizabeth, also called Molly. They were both intellectual and would walk the banks of the Suir along Polerone reciting and writing poetry. The Rector was not pleased to hear that both Elizabeth and Watt were in love, especially give the age difference (Watt was in his 50s and Molly was just 20). He also didn't approve of Watts rebel tendencies. So he sent his daughter to England in 1848 and the rest of his family moved to Kilmacow. Watt was heartbroken as a result of Elizabeth leaving Mooncoin. So as he walked the banks of the Suir, now on his own, he composed the famous *Rose of Mooncoin* in her memory. He died just 10 years afterwards and is buried in Rathkieran cemetery.

The Rose of Mooncoin

How sweet 'tis to roam by the sunny Suir stream
And hear the dove's coo' neath the morning's
sunbeam
Where the thrush and the robin their sweet notes
combine
On the banks of the Suir that flows down by
Mooncoin.

Chorus

Flow on, lovely river, flow gently along
By your waters, so sweet sounds the lark's merry
song
On your green bank's I'll wander where first I did join
With you, lovely Molly, the Rose of Mooncoin.

Oh Molly, dear Molly, has the time come at last
When from you, dear Molly, from you I must part
But I'll think of you, Molly, while the Summer sun
shines
On the banks of the Suir that flows down by
Mooncoin.

She has sailed far away o'er the dark rolling foam
Far away from the hills of her dear Irish home
Where the fishermen play with their boats, net and
line
On the banks of the Suir that flows down by
Mooncoin.

Then here's to the Suir with its valley so fair
Where oft times we rambled in the morning's pure air
Where the lilies do bloom and the roses entwine
On the banks of the Suir that flows down by Mooncoin

Schools

There has been different schools in Mooncoin over the years. When the landlords first took control of the lands they set up schools where a select few were given the privilege of attending. The landlord paid for these schools.

In the 18th century only the better off could afford to send their children to school. As the Catholics gained more rights (after a lot of the penal laws were removed and subsequently Catholic Emancipation in 1829), the Catholic church set up schools around the parish. Watt Murphys school

on Chapel Street came under the patronage of the church along with schools in Kilnaspic (just down from present church) and in Carrigeen village. In 1830 the parish priest invited the Presentation sisters in Kilkenny City to set up a school for girls in the village of mooncoin (his philosophy was 'educate a boy and you educate the individual, educate the girl and you educate a family'). The convent was then located on main street mooncoin, in the house that's roughly opposite the car park of centra supermarket currently (main st mooncoin was actually called Convent Street at the time). The syllabus in all schools was concentrated around the main R's. Religion made up a big part of the daily study. Also, the families that could afford to pay, paid for their children's education but families that couldn't afford to send their children to school, were paid for by the Parish priest. So from around 1830, nearly all children up to the age of 10 got a chance to at least read and write, whether their families could pay or not. In this regard, Mooncoin was lucky as many parts of Kilkenny and Ireland did not have this opportunity for many years later. This is highlighted in the 1901 census as the majority of people in Mooncoin could read and write which is not reflected in Ireland as a whole.

In the late 1800's many schools opened around the parish. There was a separate boys school built in Mooncoin which replaced the school on Chapel st and another school which was open around the same time on the new road. In addition there was the Presentation nuns run school. In Carrigeen, there was a separate boys and girls school. Clogga national school and Clonmore national school were open at the same time in 1888 (and closed on the same day in 1969). Clogga school replaced the old Kilnaspic school which had closed down some years before. Many of these schools no longer exist today.

A technical school was opened in Mooncoin in the 1930's where the present day Furniture store is located. It then became a Vocational school. A new building was opened in 1993 and was renamed Cóláiste Cóis Súire in 2001.

Seamus Doran:

It should also be noted that Mooncoin is the birth place of the national organisation *Fóroige* (first meeting held in mooncoin technical school in 1952) and had the first branch of *Macra na Feirme*. These organisations which are spread throughout Ireland now were inspired by a teacher named Seamus Doran who taught in the technical school from the 1940s and was principal up until the 1990s (died in 2007). He was honoured in the school by president Mary McAleese to celebrate 50 years of *Fóroige* in 2002.

Mass Bush

In late 1600s the penal laws were introduced by the British government who controlled Ireland at the time (after Protestant King William of Orange's victory over Catholic King James II of England). They prohibited the practice of the Catholic religion which most of the Irish people had as their faith at the time. The main purpose was to wipe out the Catholic faith within a generation or two. This policy actually worked well in England, at present just 10% of the population is Catholic.

The people now had to practice their Catholic faith in secrecy. The Mass bush is where the people met to celebrate Mass with a priest. With the Penal Laws, Catholics were also prohibited from buying land, bringing their children up as Catholics, and from entering the forces or the law. Catholics could no longer run for elected office or own property (such as horses) valued at more than 5 pounds. In the early years of the 18th century the ruling Protestants in Ireland passed these laws designed to strip the "backwards" Catholic population of remaining land, positions of influence and civil rights. This inflicted massive oppression and poverty on the Catholics for generations which was fought against from the 1850s onwards up until Independence in 1921.

The main Mass Bush in the parish of Mooncoin is located at the top of Tubrid beside Knockanure (there were a few mass bushes at different times). There is a good view around the valley, this was to ensure that the people could keep a look out. It is possible to see four counties (Kilkenny, Waterford, Tipperary & Wexford) from that position. The mass bush can still be seen there today. There was also a mass bush at the crossroads in Ardera and a 'priests trench' on the road between Dournane and Polerone where the priest could say mass.



Mass Bush