

# Celtic Connections Conference 2020

## Saturday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

### Question & Answer Log: Chat with John Grenham: Irish

**QUESTION:** My 2x great-grandfather and family emigrated from near Moneygall, Kings County, between 1855 and 1858 and settled in Chicago by 1858. One source suggests emigrants from North Tipperary and Kings County frequently traveled to Dublin, then by ship to England and on to Canada and/or the USA. Does that route sound likely? Can you suggest any sources on emigration or shipping records? Also, can you give me any notion of the cost of such a move?

**ANSWER:** The main route for most migrants from Ireland to North America was via England and Scotland. From the north of Ireland, the province of Ulster, Glasgow was a good jumping off point; otherwise, Liverpool. And the reason was frequency of ships and cost. Before the 1840s there weren't that many direct boats going from Ireland to the US. There are exceptions, of course, such as Londonderry to Philadelphia. The most usual route was via Liverpool. An entire family migrating together suggests several things. 1) the cost of such a move. Steerage would have been the cheapest and the most difficult and would cost £3 to £4. Which is more than the average rent on a small farm in Ireland so it is a fair amount of money. Multiply that by a family and you're talking about a serious amount of money. So that tells you a bit about the family. The fact that they migrated as a family means that they had money, and this was planned. This was a not a desperate escape. They sat down and planned their budgets, mapped their routes and did it very carefully. And that, again, suggests literacy and a certain amount of education and planning. They are likelier to have left records rather than the desperate migrant workers who left. Sources on immigration: North Tipperary and Kings County, Moneygall – that particular area is famous for the mass migration for lots of family groups of Anglicans – members of the Church of Ireland – and particularly to Canada but also to areas close to Canada. *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* by Bruce Elliott shows how to trace records based on family groups and family history. He is an emeritus professor in Canada, he interviewed survivors and family members, reconstructed the family history, so that is where I would look first.

**QUESTION:** I am researching Hearn and Ryans who settled a fishing cove outside Halifax, Nova Scotia in the latter 1700s. Based on clues, the settlers of Prospect were immigrants from the Waterford/Wexford area who went to Newfoundland and canoed to Nova Scotia. Records in Newfoundland are sparse and almost impossible with the surname Ryan. Is there any type of record identifying those who left with the fishery to Newfoundland? I have read that often the fish managers were from Devon or Dorset and would stop at Waterford to pick up crew.

**ANSWER:** There was an amazing cod fishing industry in Newfoundland. There was no real tradition of this deep-sea fishing in Ireland never mind in Wexford. So yes they found their way there and the owners of these long distance trawlers would stop and pick up deck hands and laborers and bring them seasonally across the Atlantic starting in the 1760s. Over time people became more skilled and settled in Newfoundland once the fishing season was over. And it is not just Waterford it is Wexford too – the city of Waterford and the city of New Ross in Wexford were the main ports from which people would sail. In terms of records: no. But, there are no systematic records. These people came and went at will with no great interest in letting the authorities know in what was then the Kingdom of Ireland and later the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. John J. Mannion has done considerable study and he has published four or five books about the migration from the Wexford/Waterford area to Newfoundland. He's published case histories and sections of the New Historic Atlas of Ireland – he shows families in Newfoundland and identifies how they intermarried, how they came there, their connections to Ireland, etc. The best source to find a bibliography of John Mannion's writings is the catalog of the National Library of Ireland at [catalog.nationallibrary.ie](http://catalog.nationallibrary.ie). Search for "John Mannion" and all his works will pop up. All off the books are in print or available through inter-library loans. I think instead of genealogy you will need to venture into local history which is very common with this type of research.

**QUESTION:** I live in Canada and my 2x great-grandfather, James Black b. abt. 1802, left Dungannon area in 1847 with a large number of family and neighbors who settled in Innisfil Township, Ontario. Besides many Black family members, there were surnames Neely, Fagan, Latimer, Culbert and others. An article online at <http://www.dippam.ac.uk/ied/records/36704.transcript> has some information and wondered if you can provide the rest of the story about these folks who had booked passage on the *Nelson Village*? I have never been able to find my relatives on any passenger list.

**ANSWER:** The website you mention is for Irish Emigration Database (the "ied" in the URL) and is an extraordinary database of records from multiple sources that have some connection with Irish emigration. This group of families had migrated and paid for passage on a ship called the Nelson Village and were stiffed by the ship owners – and when they went to pay their passage they were told that the price had doubled. This sounds to me like something that may have become a topic of public interest and it is quite possible that there are newspaper articles about this. 1847 is a time when the notion of public opinion was starting to grow, journalism was flourishing and you're talking about newspapers related to Donegal and Belfast. The shipping agents and owners were based in Belfast and they went to Belfast to pay and found the price had rocketed. I would search "Nelson Villages" on the newspaper sites such as British Newspaper Archives and also Findmypast.ie particularly the *Belfast News Letter*. For local papers, the *Derry Journal* and other ones. Irishnewsarchive.com is good as well – both are subscription sites. Also Ancestry has a good set of the *Belfast News Letter*.