



MARCH - 'COMES IN LIKE A LION AND GOES OUT LIKE A LAMB'

Hello All

The weather here today, which seemed to encompass all four seasons, reminded me of a collage I made for my grandmother's eightieth birthday. I included the weather reports for the day she was born. Something to consider when checking old newspapers for family notices. Did the midwife have to battle through storm and snow to deliver your great grandfather, was the sun shining on your granny's wedding day? It all adds to the story.

Speaking of your stories, have a look at the bottom of this page. Audrey who edits the North Irish Roots Journal is on the lookout for articles related to South Africa for the autumn edition. If you are carrying out some research in that area of the world, please get in touch.

The Society is also looking for your help in appointing a volunteer to seek out funding opportunities. This doesn't have to be a member living in the North of Ireland as mostly the applications are completed online. If you feel you have some time to spare and can help out, the full details are on page 2.

On the topic of things financial, I recently purchased a copy of Chris Paton's 'The Mount Stewart Murder: A Re-Examination of the UK's Oldest Unsolved Murder Case Kindle Edition' using Amazon Smile. NIFHS is my nominated charity, of course, and I was pleased to receive an email providing me with figures of donations the Society has received. The most recent quarterly donation was £147.54 and, altogether, the Society has received £873.54 since linking with the scheme in 2018. Quite a healthy amount. Thank you and well done to all our members who have nominated NIFHS as their chosen charity. You can see from these figures that it is worthwhile.

Enough from me, read on for information on upcoming events, a member's very positive experience of volunteering and some interesting articles.

If you have something to share, the contact email is - newsletter@nifhs.org.

Stay well,

Evelyn
B2513

NORTH IRISH ROOTS - AUTUMN 2021

Our Editor - Audrey McKeown - of the North Irish Roots has been in touch. The Autumn Journal will have a focus in some of its articles on "Tracing Your Ancestors in South Africa". She would welcome articles from the membership on personal family stories and genealogical sources. The closing date for these and other general articles as well as profile forms is 31 July, 2021.

Audrey will guide you in how to prepare the article as well as supplying you with the Journal template which makes writing up very straightforward.

Audrey's contact email is NRoots@nifhs.org



VOLUNTARY FUNDRAISING OFFICER

A volunteer is needed to seek out funding opportunities to support society initiatives such as genealogy projects, purchase of equipment and/or website upgrades. The role involves looking online for funding schemes, bringing potential funding opportunities to the attention of society officers and drafting application forms. This post can be carried out by anyone in the society and would be suitable for an associate member outside of Northern Ireland as it will be computer based. Communication with society officers can be maintained through email and Zoom.

If you would like to offer your services or find out some more about this very worthwhile volunteering opportunity please contact - newsletter@nifhs.org.

TWO REMINDERS



The talk schedule has been announced for the

FHF Really Useful Family History Show

Which takes place online on :-

Saturday 10th April 2021

Find out more at :-

www.fhf-reallyuseful.com

From Family Tree to Family History

with Mike McKeag

Tuesday 13 April 2021 : 2 pm - 3 pm

You have a family tree and would like to develop that into a readable family history.

But where do you begin? How do you organise your material?

How are you going to find enough stories about those people?

How are you going to find enough illustrations?

These and other questions will be addressed, and the course will be based on a real case study.

Course Notes are included in one of the payment options. Find out more and book at :-

www.nifhs.org/courses



MORE EVENTS TO ATTEND

Here are some links to events that you might find interesting. The links are all live at time of issue :-

Family Search Webinars - familysearch.org/locations/library_class_schedule

Public Record Office of NI - www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/talks-and-events-proni

Ireland xo - 'Ten Irish Museums to Visit Virtually' - irelandxo.com

ONE OUTCOME OF A VIRTUAL EVENT

Last November I was unable to attend the FHF Really Useful Family History Show on the day, but I did volunteer to answer some queries that had been submitted to NIFHS on the day. Long story short I ended up speaking to Sue Barrett by phone, Southern meets Northern Hemispheres. We had a good chat and Sue kindly forwarded to me a list of Australian and New Zealand resources which she has compiled and has kindly given me permission to share with you. As it quite a long list, I have only included the New Zealand resources in this edition. You'll have to wait until next month to get the Australian list.

SOME FAMILY HISTORY LINKS - December 2020 compiled by Sue Barrett

(Most of the websites are free, but you might have to register for some free websites.)

NEW ZEALAND

A Memory Tree - Death Notices - www.amemorytree.co.nz

Anzac Day Resources - www.nzhistory.govt.nz/war/anzac-day-resources

Archives New Zealand - www.archway.archives.govt.nz

Auckland Museum - Online Cenotaph - www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph

Births, Deaths & Marriages Online - www.bdmhistoricalrecords.dia.govt.nz/search

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography - www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies

National Army Museum - www.armymuseum.co.nz/research/family-history

New Zealand Cemeteries - freepages.rootsweb.com/~shipstonz/genealogy/cemeteries.html

New Zealand History - www.nzhistory.govt.nz

Papers Past - paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

Roll of Honour - www.familyrelatives.com/search/search_nz_roll.php



MY VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

by Imelda McVeigh B0384

I've worked for Allstate NI (ANI) for over 20 years. They have a Force for Good program that gives each member of staff 15 hours a year to Volunteer either in Community, Environment or with People. I knew from being at our Society Library that there was plenty of Transcription work needing to be undertaken so selfishly suggested that I could initiate a Force for Good Project for ANI. The reason I said selfishly was because I was finding it difficult to participate in many of the outdoor activities due to health constraints, so it was a win/win for me both by contributing to the Society and meeting my volunteer targets. It was duly authorized by both NIFHS and ANI.

In August 2019 I made PDFs of the documents from 1st Ahoghill Presbyterian Church, supplied by NIFHS Projects and issued volunteers with 3 PDFs and Spreadsheet Template, (which I'm sure many of you are familiar with) to transcribe and log their volunteering hours. I was overwhelmed with volunteers, (and to date 90+ volunteers used their Force for Good hours for our Transcription Project). To ensure I had Transcription and Validation work for them to do I reached out to Sandra Ardis Project Coordinator for the Society and made copies of a further two churches in the area Trinity Presbyterian, Ahoghill and Toberkeigh Presbyterian.

Transcriptions started to come in various stages of completion and accuracy. People tried their very best (others not so much). Some people gave up and I returned their PDFs and I had to instruct new volunteers. It wasn't until the summer of 2020 that all transcriptions were completed for the three churches. Validation now had to begin.

The next group of Volunteers (some returners who got the bug) were provided again with 3 PDFs, but this time with the completed spreadsheet to review and edit as they read it. This second set of eyes was vital as it helped remove many question marks from the original transcriber.

In December 2020, I collated all the Transcriptions validated and received for 1st Ahoghill and reviewed each again making the necessary corrections re townland names etc...

So, on the 4th February 2021 I sent the completed 1st Ahoghill Transcription to NIFHS Projects and their final validation is due to complete by the end of March 2021. For those of you who may be interested in some stats see below:

- 4413 Baptism Records are available with 380+ surnames represented
- 16 sets of twins recorded from 1841 to 1909
- 90 Baptisms were marked as illegitimate or mother unmarried
- 9 Ministers were involved in the Baptisms (approx. 80% were baptized by Rev David Adams)

This new Resource within our society will be available to members in April 2021 for Look Ups. Apart from all my colleagues in Allstate who have participated and thanks via our company's recognition program I'd like to thank Sandra for her help, guidance, and support throughout the process. I'm hoping to have completed the Validation of Trinity, Ahoghill by the end of this month so watch this space for the availability of these Baptism records and those for Toberkeigh soon.



Wilson of Dyan Hill and "James Wilson of Dyan"

Dr. J. Scott Wilson
Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada
Member A1528

Oral histories and family stories, passed from generation to generation, are a rich source of material for historians and genealogists. Simple documents of the time, such as family letters, journals, diaries and handwritten family histories help immensely as a starting point. Finding the truths and documenting the facts are all part of the joy and frustration of both historical and genealogical research. This particular journey of Wilson research began with a four-page family history on "The **Wilson**s of Dyan Hill, Caledon, Co. Tyrone", written in 1875 by the Rev. James Wilson BA, LLD. Rev. Wilson was, for over 50 years, the minister of First Rathfriland Presbyterian Church, and one of what we refer to as "the six brothers of Dyan Hill". A copy of the 1875 document came to me in 1998, and so began the search. This family history begins: "*It is believed that originally there were four brothers - Wilson - said to have come from Scotland who settled (1) one on Dyan Hill, Caledon, Co Tyrone, Ireland (2) one in Enagh - near Caledon - now occupied by Uncle Moses and Aunt Jane **Robinson** (3) one in Wilson's Townland in Co Armagh (4) one not known where.*"

During interviews with relatives in Ireland, I began to hear family stories of James Wilson of Dyan, and the events of the 1790s that resulted in the formation of the Orange Order. It had been suggested that this James Wilson may even have been one of my direct ancestors.

In our genealogical research so far, we have found one James Wilson in the correct time frame - James Wilson (of Dyan Hill), husband of Agnes "Nanny" Young, and whom we refer to as the patriarch. We have had to estimate birth, marriage and death dates based on records from his children and grandchildren but roughly he would have been an older man, at least in his 60s or 70s at the time of the founding of the Orange Order. The 1875 Wilson family manuscript states this James Wilson "lived to be nearly 100 years of age."



The original Dyan Hill farmhouse. It was destroyed by fire in 1937. (Tyrone Courier, March 1937). A stone on the building bore the date 1662. (Tyrone Courier, March 1938). The farm was in the Wilson family for over 250 years.

So, is there any evidence that James Wilson the patriarch of my family could be the James Wilson of Dyan of Orange Order fame? And what do we know about James Wilson founder of the Orange Order? We have by no means completed an exhaustive study of Orange Order history materials, however initial research in the written record has turned up some items of biographical material on the man.

In the 1898 publication "The History of The Orange Order", William Banks writes on page 17: "*On June 24, 1794, James Wilson, a Godly well-to-do farmer of Dian, a village of County Down [sic], attended his Masonic lodge.*" and later on the same page... "*Some enemies of the Orange Order have tried to make out that Wilson, "Bauldra" Wilson, as he was called by his neighbours and friends as a token of homely friendly regard...."*



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Robert M. Sibbett wrote in 1914 in "Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire", page 216: *"Comfortable in his worldly circumstances, he was known to his neighbours as Buddra Wilson, and, in a communication from one of his early comrades, the evidence of his respectability, as an agriculturist, is stated to be that 'he turned out a good horse and was a good horseman' — orthodox credentials in rural districts at the time. Wilson was also a member of the Society of Freemasons, which fully qualified him for establishing a new Order of a secret character."*

In Kevin Haddick-Flynn's book "Orangeism: A Historical Profile" 2019, page 103 he writes *"There lived in the Blackwater Valley, near the village of Dyan in County Tyrone, a substantial farmer named James Wilson. He was a large, florid and bearded fellow, nicknamed 'Buddra' (or 'Bauldra'). His grandfather had fought on the Walls of Derry and another of his name had been with William at the Boyne. As a boy he had sat at feet of old men and listened to stories of the Orange victories and developed a pride in the Orange tradition. He was a Freemason and attended a meeting of his lodge in Benburb on St. John's Day, 14th June 1794."*

The Birmingham Orange Order website also includes this about James Wilson: *"In the Dyan he was a man of some substance: a Freemason, a hard-working and knowledgeable farmer, and it was said that 'he turned out a good horse and was a fine horseman'"*.

To help in understanding the man and his activities, what can we glean regarding the age of James "Buddra" Wilson during the 1790s, the decade that birthed the Orange Boys and the Orange Order?

Robert M. Sibbett wrote in 1914 in "Orangeism in Ireland and Throughout the Empire", page 217: *"We must, however, return to Wilson. He is said to have been a clandestine, or unwarranted Mason, which is denied by his family. But free and accepted, or clandestine, he attended a meeting of Masonic Lodges in Benburb, County Tyrone, on the 24th of June, 1794... A young man himself at the time, Wilson had as associates Isaac Jeffs, and two brothers, John and Abraham Dilly..."*

A man having children in the 1750s-1760s (as James the patriarch was doing) could hardly be the "young man" mentioned above. James Wilson of Orange Order fame would be more likely a young middle-aged man in the 1790s, as he was described by several authors, and not a man of grandfatherly/patriarch age.

And finally, what of James "Buddra" Wilson's family? The only reference so far unearthed by us is, again from R.M. Sibbett's book, page 266: *"Still, that date, 1794, is an epoch in Orangeism. In that year the Orange Boys Society was formed by James Wilson, and the account of it given here corresponds with the version supplied by his eldest son, who died at a ripe old age in Belfast over thirty years ago. A devout man, Mr. Abraham Wilson was intelligent and respectable, and his loss was felt very keenly."*

We have yet to verify an Abraham Wilson in our Wilson line, but an Abraham Wilson of Belfast died in 1878 at age 78 - a man of the right age to have been a son of James "Buddra" Wilson, and a man who was a church custodian and respected merchant.

By building a biographical framework of James Wilson of Dyan based on Orange Order history we hoped to see if and where he might fit in to the Wilson lineages we are researching. At this point it seems our James Wilson, the patriarch, is not the young compatriot of James Sloan and Dan Winter of Orange Order fame. However, because James "Buddra" Wilson was described by every Orange Order source as being from the Dyan, then he's almost certainly from the same ancestors as James Wilson the patriarch (my ancestor) and his family.



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Also, our research has been unable to verify so far that Abraham Wilson of Belfast is a son of James "Buddra" Wilson. This brings us to the topic of genetic genealogy, a very useful tool to complement traditional genealogical methods of research. Were a direct male descendant of this Abraham Wilson to have a Y-DNA test done the results would go a long way to establishing a connection between James "Buddra" Wilson and the Wilsons of Dyan Hill. As a direct patrilineal descendant of the Wilsons of Dyan Hill I have recently had both Y-DNA and autosomal DNA tests done and the results are archived with Family Tree DNA and Ancestry online.

For us, there remains work to be done in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) reviewing valuation records, Tithe Applotment books, Caledon Estate leases, church records, Masonic Lodge membership lists from Dyan, Moy, Caledon, Loughgall and Benburb from the 1790s, and other records. We are hoping to verify the details of the older generations and unearth more family groups and descendant lines.

In the meantime, we are seeking any information from your readers that would add to the knowledge of the Wilsons of Dyan Hill and their possible connection to James "Buddra" Wilson of Dyan. We are happy to share any genealogical information we have and can be reached at the email or mailing address below.

Wilson of Dyan Hill research group:

Scott Wilson, Canada
Ann Allen, Northern Ireland
Jim Rutherford, Northern Ireland
Annie Crenshaw, United States

Contact:

J. Scott Wilson
206 Hawkins Street
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada Y1A 1X4
scott@kusawa.net

AND FINALLY

The following Irish Newspapers that have recently been added to the British Newspaper Archive :-

Belfast Weekly Telegraph - 1873-1893, 1895 - 1922 - 21,862 pages

The Fermanagh Times - 1881-1886, 1888, 1891-1900 - 3,646 pages

Evening Irish Times - 1880 - 1895 - 37,460 pages

Ulster Football and Cycling News - 1888-1896 - 7,520 pages

General Advertiser for Dublin, and All Ireland - 1837-1841, 1846-1852, 1856-1866, 1874, 1885, 1897-1923

Find them here - www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

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