

PROJECT REPORT TO: Christine Bebee Keener

Project Title:

John David McGuffin

Aim:

To try and find some background information on John David McGuffin.

Background:

It is believed that John David McGuffin was born in Ireland c. 1803/04. Unfortunately no specific location could be provided. He never gave a location in any of the records found to date on him. His parents names are unknown. The family was Protestant and there is a strong tradition of Baptist in the southern roots of the family.

Oral history suggests that four McGuffin brothers emigrated from Ireland to the US as young men. The names of the brothers were reported to be John David (Christine's ancestor), James, William and Joseph. One a preacher returned to Ireland. Family narratives say James settled in Pennsylvania, William settled in New York and Joseph settled in Franklin County, Virginia. John David most likely settled in Virginia at some time. He married Nancy Cook 29 Feb 1828 in Wythe County, Virginia.

They had the following children:

- Mary McGuffin b. abt 1830, Virginia, USA
- Catherine McGuffin b. abt 1832, Virginia, USA
- Jonathon David McGuffin b. abt 1833, Virginia, USA d. 4 April 1865
- Elizabeth McGuffin b. abt. 1835, Virginia, USA
- Nancy McGuffin b. abt. 1837, Virginia, USA
- Margaret McGuffin b. abt. 1840, Virginia, USA
- Charlott McGuffin b. abt. 1841, Virginia, USA

Results

According to de Bhulbh¹ the McGuffin surname is quite rare believed to originate from the Tyrone-Down area. The name in the Irish language is *Mag Dhuibhfhinn*. (dark Finn) or *Mag Dhuibhghinn*. (dark head). This research looked at the surname McGuffin and the variants Maguffin, McGoffin, McGuffan and McGoughan.

1. Church Records

Without a specific knowledge of location or parents we carried a high level all-Ireland search of Church records to try and locate any baptisms for either John David or his brothers². Given the background information provided the search concentrated on non-Catholic baptisms only. The

¹ Sloinnte na hÉireann-Irish Surnames Le/ By Seán de Bhulbh, Comharchumann Íde Naofa, 1997.

² www.rootsireland.ie - a subscription database that offer transcripts of many church records. A full breakdown of sources for each county can be found on the site.

following table details the results. No baptismal record was located for John or Joseph. Two were found for a William, while one was found for a William.

Table 1: Non-Catholic baptisms of McGuffin & variants in Ireland 1790-1815

Religion	Name	Church	County	Year	Parents Names
Church of Ireland	James Giffin	St. Anne's Shankhill	Antrim	1804	John & Peggy
Presbyterian	William Giffen	Armagh	Armagh	1801	James & Mary Maddin
Church of Ireland	James McGuffin	St. Anne's Shankhill	Antrim	1791	James & Ann

According to oral history, one of John David McGuffin's brothers returned to Ireland as a Preacher. The term preacher does not suggest (contrary to what has been said) a Protestant connection, but rather Methodist/Wesleyan, Presbyterian or another Evangelical church.

Methodist Church

The Methodist Church in Ireland are currently working on a database of ministerial records that will be put online. Unfortunately the only surnames currently available online are those beginning with the letter 'O'. A list of preachers and missionaries belonging to the Irish Conference up to 1832³ was reviewed online however no McGuffins were included on this list. It is recommended that Christine make contact with the Methodist Church via their genealogy / history website⁴.

Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church provides access to online publications that provides a full list of ministers. It is recommended that Christine makes contact with this church via their website or to become a member to access these lists⁵. The two relevant areas are:

- Irish Presbyterian Church 1613-1840
- Presbyterian Church of Ireland 1840-1910

2. Land Records

Griffiths Valuation

The Griffith's Valuation that was carried out throughout Ireland between 1848-1864 and records an average 70% of the heads of households, but it is very important to note that this drops to about 20% in the City of Dublin. It was printed in volumes arranged by poor law union, parish and townland, the work commencing in the Dublin area in 1848 and concluding in the north of Ireland in 1864. Whilst it does not provide specific genealogical information it does provide an overview of the location of McGuffins plus variants found in mid C19th Ireland through this valuation.

³ Alphabetical Arrangement of the Wesleyan Methodist Preacher and Missionaries belonging to the Irish Conference MDCCCXXXIII, William Hill - accessed via www.books.google.com

⁴ www.methodisthistoryireland.com

⁵ www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com

Table 2: Occurrence of McGuffin surname in Griffiths Valuation mid C19th Ireland

Surname	Number	County
McGuffin	8	Down
McGuffin	6	Tyrone
Maguffin	2	Tyrone
McGoffin	3	Down
McGoffan	2	Belfast
McGuffan	1	Tyrone
McGoughan	1	Antrim
McGoughan	1	Derry

Tithe Applotment Books

Tithe Applotment records are a vital source for genealogical research for the pre-Famine period, given the loss of the 1821-51 Census records. They were compiled between 1823 and 1837 in order to determine the amount which occupiers of agricultural holdings over one acre should pay in tithes to the Church of Ireland (the main Protestant church and the church established by the State until its dis-establishment in 1871). This census substitute captures about 40% of the heads of households in rural Ireland only.

Only one entry was found for the surname (incl. variants). A Hugh McGuffin was located in the townland of Longfield, Muckno, Co. Monaghan in 1827. This date is obviously closer to the birth dates of John David and his brothers but there is no way to suggest any connection at this stage.

3. Other on-line databases

3.1 Headstones

Using a number of various online databases⁶ we concentrated the search on the known family names of John, David, William, James and Joseph. Of the two found, both were too late in terms of date and once again there is no way to suggest any connection but it does show of the existence of such names.

- William McGuffin, 34 Gamble Street, City Cemetery, Belfast, d. 4 Dec 1938 aged 75 years
- William James McGuffin, 113 Cliftonpark Ave, Dundonald, Belfast, d. 4 Dec 1937 aged 77 years

3.2 Wills

The Indexes to Irish Wills 1536-1858, 5 vols (1909-1920)⁷ identified only two McGuffin wills as follows:

James McGuffin (weaver), Newry, 1829

William McGuffin, North Street, Newry, 1857

⁶ www.headstonesfromhistory.com; www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community/burialrecords.aspx; www.interment.net/Ireland

⁷ W.P.W. Phillimore & Gertrude Thrift, The Indexes to Irish Wills 1536-1858, 5 vols (1909-1920 - www.findmypast.ie

Probate records are court records relating to the distribution of a deceased person's estate. Most pre-1858 probate records were destroyed when the Public Record Office in Dublin burned in 1922. Fortunately, prior to the fire, the original wills and administrations had been indexed. Most of the indexes survived the disaster. Unfortunately neither wills found having searched the various indexes have survived.

3.3 Name Search, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)⁸

Given the suggestion that the McGuffin surname was located in Ulster a search was also carried out on the PRONI website. In particular it concentrated on the "name search" facility. The following is list of interesting records:

- WILL John McGuffin, Mooretown, Co. Tyrone, d. 17 Sept 1772
- WILL Adam McGuffin, Derryhage, Co. Tyrone, d. 6 Feb 1759

No additional information exists apart from this listing.

- CORONERS INQUEST William James McGuffin, Shankhill Road, Belfast, d. 17 Feb 1892

Additional information does exist on this person and can be accessed at PRONI, Ref.

ANT/6/1/1/4/30

4. Conclusion

The project's aim was to try and establish the birth record for John David McGuffin who was born c. 1803/04. The research yielded no results for him specifically although some records were found for persons that held his brothers names. As to whether any are correct remains inconclusive.

A clue could be with the family lore that suggested one of John's brothers returned to Ireland as a Preacher. This term suggests a link to the Methodist, Presbyterian or other Evangelical faith. It is recommended that this is followed up with the respective churches in Ireland.

Further research was carried out using a variety of other on-line sources. Whilst none at this stage make a specific connection to the family in question, it does confirm the location of the McGuffin family in the Ulster area and there are possible leads that could be followed through in the future.

Ancestor Network

21 August 2015

Attachments

- Baptismal Record - James Giffen, 1804
- Baptismal Record - William Giffen, 1801
- Baptismal Record - James McGuffin, 1791
- Tithe Applotment Book - Hugh McGuffin, Monaghan, 1827
- Phillimore & Thrift Index to Wills - James McGuffin, 1829 & William McGuffin, 1857

⁸ www.proni.gov.uk