

James & Cornelius Callaghan or O'Callaghan – Are they Brothers??

As part of my general family history research I was pleased to find my Great Great Grandfather was an Enrolled Pensioner Guard. He, with his wife, daughter & son arrived in the Swan River Colony on the "Merchantman 1" in Feb 1863. He is listed in the Passenger List as James Callaghan aka John O'Callaghan and all subsequent references to him and his descendants in the Colony are as O'Callaghans.

While I had discovered a significant amount of information about them in the Colony I had little success tracing their roots in Ireland. Everything pointed to Cork but little else was known. It was clear that I had to locate a copy of James Attestation Papers which would contain his place of birth etc..

Initially I lived in Dianella and used the WAGS and SLWA Resources. Upon moving to Madeley in 2005 I switched to the Warwick Family History Centre where I was fortunate to meet up with Gillian O'Mara, a volunteer at the Centre and an enthusiastic and knowledgeable EPG researcher. With her assistance I continued to look for the Attestation Papers. 18 Microfilm Reels, WO 97, 120, 118 & 11 AJPC Reels later, by the beginning of this year I still had not located the Papers, however, we had found a likely candidate in the Kilmainham Hospital Pensioners Admissions in James Callaghan born in St Nicholas Parish Cork, c1823.

Then there began an interesting series of coincidences.

Gillian had drawn to my attention that Attestation Papers were now available on-line via "findmypast.com" and that access was freely available at Warwick FHC. By a time consuming process of elimination of Callaghan/O'Callaghans records, I eventually

found my James, who neatly cross referenced with the Kilmainham record

In July 2010 Leslie Singleton, a descendant of EPG Cornelius Callaghan, followed up on a request in a 2009 Newsletter to provide EPG stories. She provided all the information she had collected on Cornelius. He was born in St Peters Parish Cork in 1820, only a short distance from St Nicholas. He arrived in the Colony in 1853 as an EPG aboard the "Robert Small" with his wife. Leslie's notes came to the notice of Gillian via Beth Smith and she recognised a possible connection with my James. At our next EPG meeting she showed me Leslie's results.

Shortly after this meeting I visited in Hospital my dying Aunt aged 90, the last of my Fathers O'Callaghan generation. Her 3 children, normally scattered throughout the State, were at her bedside and our conversation turned to family history. One of my cousins said Aunty had on several occasions said that our EPG had a brother here in the Colony. This was the first I had heard of him.

On returning home I sent Leslie an email, which she received just as she was leaving Busselton to visit her sister in Madeley. When she arrived at her sisters she mentioned my email, to which her sister replied "there's a Richard O'Callaghan living in this Village". I was only a stones throw away. She immediately rang me but we didn't physically catch-up as in a few days we were off overseas and she back to Busselton.

We now both have our Attestation Papers but are not yet much further in confirming a family connection. There's a cluster of Parishes in central Cork City. As well as St Nicholas & St Peter there are Holy Trinity, St Paul, St Anne Shandon & St Michael. The Griffith Valuation of 1853 show all of these Parishes to be full of Callaghans & O'Callaghans, so we still have the job ahead of us to prove the connection. Having two members of the same family to work with will hopefully assist in locating the rest of their family, Parents etc

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