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Dear Mr McMichael

Many thanks for your note, which arrived this morning. Sadly, the story is not very likely. The main Ewing family in the Dumbarton area in the late 17th and early 18th century was that of Ewing of Keppoch; the Ewings of Craigtoun were probably also relatives. Tullichewen in the early 18th century was a possession of the Colquhouns, a large family based on Luss on the western shore of Loch Lomond. I am enclosing some photocopies and though I will check a couple of further sources when next in Edinburgh, I think we can dismiss Tullichewen, where the 'imposing residence' called Tullichewen Castle was not built till the late 18th century and which does not seem to have been a barony. Indeed, all the statements I have so far seen claiming a west of Scotland connection seem to be based on assumption rather than evidence and this story is certainly inconsistent with all the others.

The statement by Nathaniel Ewing (of which you sent me a copy) is much more authoritative and is consistent with the facts which can be ascertained. He is quite clear that the family, 'were originally from Scotland, their seat ... being on the Forth, not far from Stirling Castle.' His information in one respect can be more or less confirmed for Nathaniel Ewing married Rachel Porter on 2nd March 1721 at Templemore, Londonderry, Ireland [IGI].

Indeed, the IGI confirms a large number of Ewings in that area, from the mid 17th century onward, when the records begin. The records are very incomplete and do not tell us where people came from and there is not enough information to construct a family tree. However, IGI does indicate that Findlay Ewing and Jane Porter had two sons, Thomas baptised Londonderry in 1695 and Robert, baptised Londonderry in 1718; again these relationships are consistent with earlier accounts.

The IGI mentions several Williams but it is quite impossible to say how they are related; none is recorded as married to an Eliza Milford. Milford is not a name which occurs in Scotland at that time and I am sure that she came from Ireland where the name is common. My enquiries in Ireland have not been very fruitful and I am afraid that detailed local research is the only hope of disentangling the situation there.

However, what is known is consistent with the family leaving Scotland sometime in the mid to late 17th century but if all we have to go on is the name William Ewing, then there

is an abundance of choices; the photocopied lists give an indication of the numbers of candidates and are far from naming all 17th century Scots Ewings. However, if Nathaniel Ewing's statement that the family came from the banks of the Forth, near Stirling Castle is correct, then it narrows the search considerably.

It is impossible to be certain, however, if he means that there really was a 'family seat' in the sense of an estate and house of some size or if he uses the term loosely. If he is serious about the 'seat' then there really is only one line, the Ewings of Powis and Cockspow, who fit the bill. So far I have not found a William amongst them but younger sons can sometimes leave no trace at all and there are still a few sources worth checking.

If, on the other hand, he merely means that they came from the general area, then there are several possible lines. In the early 17th century one William Ewing inherited land at the site of the house on the left of this picture – originally drawn in 1672. You can't get much closer to Stirling Castle than that!

There are several other Williams, in the town and the area and though it is not always possible to follow the lines exactly, outlines of branches in Stirling, Buckieburn and Denny can be made out and are related to each other.

I have not yet found any evidence of any of them moving to Ireland; but there are few circumstances where such a fact would be recorded. The difficulty remains that, to get a definite identification we need not just a name but some other diagnostic feature, such as a marriage partner.

I propose to proceed in the hope of finding a definite Stirling/Ireland link from this end or more likely, a William amongst the Powis/Cockspow Ewings. Unfortunately, the Register House is very busy at this time of year and last time I was in Edinburgh it was impossible to get in!

It is a shame that so much seems to have been written about the early family by people who know little of 17th century Scotland and those assumptions have later been accepted as fact. But if you do know of any other first hand statements like Nathaniel's, particularly about William, then do please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

/s/ J. Harrison