

Research in Ireland

David Neal Ewing

Earlier this year, Clan Ewing hired a researcher with the Ancestral Research Service of the Ulster Historical Foundation in Belfast to review the Irish research reports from 1995 that we have posted on the website, and to make suggestions about what further research might be helpful. He thought that we already had reports of most of the readily available resources, but suggested some additional research.¹ We hired him to do this, and this is his report (reference UHF4/06/32):

Estate Papers

Several items from collections of estate papers were identified as being potentially useful in the search for information on the Ewing family.

- *Survey of the Abercorn estate in County Donegal, 1718 – Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, D/623/DE/1/3/1* (The Abercorn estate in County Donegal included parts of the parishes of Taughboyne and Raymoghly.)
Nil Ewing [appears in this survey]
- *Muster roll of the Abercorn estate in County Donegal, 1745 – published in Directory of Irish Family History Research (1998)*
Nil Ewing [appears on this Muster roll]

We also looked at a survey of the Forward estate in County Donegal, the original of which is in the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, and here we did find two Ewings listed. The Forward estate in County Donegal included parts of the parishes of Raymoghly, All Saints, Burt, Taughboyne and Templemore.

<u>Townland</u>	<u>Tenant's name</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Reference</u>
Moness	William Ewing	22 7 0	80 - -	1727	NLI Ms 4247
Portlough	John Ewing	10 7 -	58 2 20	1727	NLI Ms 4247

Wills and testamentary papers

Virtually all original wills probated before 1900 in what is now Northern Ireland were destroyed in Dublin in 1922. From 1858 we have the will books kept by each district registry which contain transcripts of the original wills. These are available on microfilm in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Before 1858 the administration of testamentary papers was regulated by the Church of Ireland. Will indexes survive for each of the dioceses in Ulster, some of which have been published.

We examined the published index to wills for the dioceses of Derry and Raphoe and found a significant number of Ewing wills listed. The relevant pages were photocopied and are included with this report.² Templemore parish (including Burt and Inch) is in the diocese of Derry. Taughboyne and Raymoghly are in the diocese of Raphoe.

Although virtually all original wills pre-1900 were destroyed a significant number of will abstracts and duplicate copies do survive. There are some 13,000 of these in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. We examined the printed index to these surviving wills, but failed to note anything of relevance.

Freeholders

For most of the eighteenth century only Protestant men who possessed what was known as a 40 shilling freehold were permitted to vote in parliament elections. In 1793 the law was changed to allow Catholic freeholders the right to vote as well. In the nineteenth century the qualifications for voting were revised on a number of occasions. Lists of freeholders, particularly from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have survived for parts of Ulster and are particularly good for counties Armagh and Down.

A Register of freeholders for County Donegal covering the period 1767-1771 was examined (a photocopy of this register is available in our office).

<u>Name of freeholder</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>Freehold</u>	<u>Date of registration</u>
Alexander Ewing	Carnamugagh	same	14 April 1768
John Ewing	Drain	same	14 April 1768
Samuel Ewing	Cavan	same	16 April 1768
Samuel Ewing	Minnevoy	same	26 April 1770

The following document was also recently brought to light by one of our members and includes some interesting references:

- *A list of the gentlemen and freeholders that voted for James Lennox Esq Mayor of Derry, 11th May 1697 – Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, T/3161/1/4*

EWEING, Joshua, Merchant, City of L'Derry

EWEING, Samuel, Merchant, City of L'Derry

Presbyterian records

We examined a publication entitled, *Roots of Presbyterianism in Donegal*, which is basically a more recent edition of two fascinating books written by the Rev. Alexander Lecky in the early twentieth century. At the end of this volume there is a list of names of elders and commissioners from the different congregations in the north-west which formed part of the Laggan Presbytery in the late seventeenth century. We examined these names which are arranged by congregation, but perhaps surprisingly, the only Ewing we found was an Alexander Ewing who is listed under Ray (near Manorcunningham). No Ewings were listed for Burt and Londonderry.

Gravestone inscriptions

The following names of Ewings were extracted from inscriptions from Taughboyne Church of Ireland graveyard in the researcher's private possession. The present church stands on the site of a medieval parish church and in fact incorporates portions of the medieval church in its walling. The graveyard is used by all denominations.

- Alexander Ewing of Murlough, Newtowncunningham, died 4 July 1940; his wife, Elizabeth Baldrick Ewing, died 23 April 1959.
- Samuel Ewing of Carnamaddy, died 23 April 1821, aged 52, erected by his disconsolate widow.
- Joseph Ewing, died 8 July 1768 aged 72; his widow Ann, died 17 June 1809 aged 80; his sons John and Walter (no dates given); his daughter Ann, died 26 April 1845 aged 85; his son Joseph, died 29 March 1855 aged 91.

- Marianne Ewing, widow of Andrew Hamilton MD of Londonderry, died at Belfast 27 November 1873 aged 60.
- Mrs. Elizabeth Ewing died 3 October 1825 aged 26.

Conclusion

We have been able to examine all of the documents set out in the initial assessment.³ One set of records that have not been searched so far are the corporation books for Londonderry which survive from 1673 and are available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Searching through these would be a lengthy process, but might provide some additional information on your Ewing ancestors. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

¹ Dr. William Roulston, Research Officer, Ulster Historical Foundation, Balmoral Buildings, 12 College Square East, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 6DD. Tele: 028 90332288

² [This consists of three photocopied pages, pages 41 and 42 are captioned at the top “*Derry Wills, 1612-1858*” and page 167 is captioned at the top “*Raphoe Wills, 1684-1858.*” Names are listed in alphabetical order; I have transcribed only the names on those pages from Erwin through Ewing and have left out the others.]

page 41	<i>Derry Wills, 1612-1858</i>	date of probate
	Erwin, Edward, Lisglasse, liberties of Londonderry	*1706
	“ Joseph, Derribeg, p. Drumachose	1736
	“ See also Irvin, Irvine, Irwin, and Irwine [not transcribed]	
	Espie, Thomas, Belmacallie Beg (Ballymacally Beg), p. Aghadowey	1636
	Evans, Edmund, Castlefin	1732
	“ Finlay, Raphad, co. Londonderry	1792
	“ John, Legacurry, p. Cumber	1810
	“ Thomas, Bellaghy, p. Ballyscullion	1842
	Evory, George (apothecary), Londonderry City	*1774
	Ewin, John, Donagheady (<i>nuncupative</i>)	1762
	Ewing, Alexander, Molenan, liberties of Londonderry	1736
	“ Alexander, Monness, p. Templemore	1776
	“ Anthony, Carnochan (Carnaghan), p. Inch	*1773
	“ <i>als.</i> Nilly, Catherine (widow), Burt, p. Templemore	1686
	“ <i>als.</i> McNit, Elinor, Ballynakilly, Inch Island	1698
	“ Gabriel, Calhame, p. Donoughmore	1850
	“ James, Templemoil, p. Faughanvale	1791
	“ James, (innkeeper), Londonderry City	1799
	“ Jane, Moness	1770 or 1778
	“ John, Londonderry	1728
	“ John, Magheryboy, co. Donegal	1765
	“ John, Buchalen (Bohullion), p. Templemore, co. Donegal	1770
	“ Margaret (widow), Londonderry City (<i>nuncupative</i>)	1730
	“ Margaret (widow), Molenan, liberties of Londonderry	1843
	“ Nathaniel (merchant), Londonderry City (<i>nuncupative</i>)	1684
	“ Robert, Polpatrick, p. Donaghmore	1765
	“ Robert, Carnaghan, p. Inch	1795
	“ Robert, Carnahan, p. Inch	*1807
page 42	<i>Derry Wills, 1612-1858</i>	date of probate
	Ewing, Samuel (merchant), Londonderry City	1731
	“ Samuel, Londonderry City	*1749
	“ Samuel (farmer), Munness (Moness), p. Templemore, co. Donegal	1766

“ Samuel, Pollpatrick	1768
“ Samuel, Sessioghmore, p. Donaghmore, co. Donegal	1769
“ Samuel, Carnamady, p. Burt	1823
“ Thomas, Crehenan, p. Movice	1785
“ William, Mollenan, liberties of Londonderry	1776
“ William, Darganagh, p. Termoneeny	1783
page 167 <i>Raphoe Wills, 1684-1858</i>	date of probate
Erwin, James, Castlenon	1777
“ See also Erewin and Irvine [not transcribed]	
Evans, Edward Mevagh	1783
“ William, Mevagh	1734
Ewine, James, Convoy	*1722
Ewing, John, Oldtown	*1714
“ John, Whitehouse	1734
“ John, Letterkenny	1746
“ John, Drean	1807
“ Thomas, Windehall	1755

[I have no idea what the asterisks before some of the dates signify. DNE]

³ This is a copy of Mr. Roulston’s email outlining his “initial assessment.”
17 February 2006

Dear Mr. Ewing,

Your file has been passed to me for my attention. I have had a chance to look at the Clan Ewing website and find it very interesting. The research that has been carried out is very thorough and most avenues have been closed. I would also like to congratulate you on your excellent find in the Burt session minutes. I was aware of their existence and included a reference to them in my recent book, *Researching Scots-Irish Ancestors*, but without knowing the extensive nature of the material they contained. I have family connections with this part of Donegal and find the area to have a fascinating history.

As for further research, there are still a few things that could be examined. These include:

A valuation of the Forward estate in east County Donegal, including lands in the parish of Burt, of 1727. The original is in the National Library of Ireland, but I have transcribed it and could look for Ewings and other names in it.

Gravestone inscriptions in Taughboyne graveyard near St Johnston, probably the largest graveyard in east Donegal with a large number of 17th- and 18th-century inscriptions. In the summer of 1995 I transcribed the inscriptions and could look up my notebooks.

A survey of the Abercorn estate in the St Johnston area of east Donegal from 1718 in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Also a muster roll of the estate from 1745

Register of freeholders for County Donegal, 1761-75 in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and also a copy in our library here

Minutes of the Laggan presbytery, 1672-95 which covered Presbyterian congregations in the north-west of Ireland. Names of those who appeared as elders from the different congregations have been transcribed.

Indexes to wills and administration bonds for the dioceses of Derry and Raphoe, available at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

The above could be searched within the limits of a minimum budget search (£90). If you would like us to proceed on these lines, you can visit our website www.ancestryireland.com and go to Research Services. Here you will be able to register for a search. Please mark the form to indicate that it should be passed to me for my attention and I will complete it and send you the results of my enquiries as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely, William Roulston