

# Finding Michael McGrath from Moyaliff, Country Tipperary, Ireland

Compiled by  
**Michael F. McGraw**  
[mfmcgraw@austin.rr.com](mailto:mfmcgraw@austin.rr.com)

Revised January 15, 2008

## **In the Beginning**

The story really begins in Maple Ridge, NY. In the town of Martinsburg, in Lewis County, there is an elevated region known as the Tug Hill Plateau that runs to the northwest along the west side of the Black River Canal. It receives the brunt of the Lake Effect snows coming off Lake Ontario and records the highest snow falls in the state every year. Up on this plateau was the tiny hamlet of Maple Ridge. In 1999 I had come across a reference to a Michael McGrath who was buried in Lowville, NY, located just a few miles up the road from Maple Ridge. At the time I wasn't aware of Maple Ridge but I saved the information on Michael and started a Lewis Co. folder. This original Michael McGrath was eventually determined to have come from just outside the village of Golden in Co. Tipperary and lived in Maple Ridge for a while. However, he was not related to my family.

In July of 2000 I found some information posted on the Internet about a Thomas McGrath who was buried in the cemetery adjacent to St. Patrick's Church up on Maple Ridge. The inscription on his gravestone indicated that he was from Moyaliff, Co. Tipperary. That really increased my level of interest because that was the same civil parish where my gg-grandparents had lived. This Thomas McGrath had married into the Gleason family who was also from Moyaliff. Thomas' sister-in-law, Margaret Gleason Ryan, had moved to Maple Ridge with her family by 1860 and an older brother, Pat Gleason, had also been living there since before 1855. Margaret Gleason Ryan's daughter Bridget had married James McGrath and they were also living at Maple Ridge in the summer of 1860.

There were apparently five McGrath families living in Maple Ridge in the 1860s and I spent quite a bit of time trying to sort them out and determine if any of them were related to this Thomas McGrath from Moyaliff. Over time I was able to uncover more details about these families. However, the information needed to actually link them or to prove that they were not related just wasn't showing up. Therefore, I moved on to other projects and put the Lewis County work back on the shelf.

### **The Maple Ridge and Central New York Link Grows Stronger**

Around the end February of this year (2007) I received an e-mail from a Phelan researcher. There were Phelans from Upperchurch parish in Co. Tipperary that were linked to Onondaga Co., NY and to Grey County, Ontario, Canada. There were also Phalons in Maple Ridge. I had been interested in determining if the Maple Ridge Phalon families could be linked back to Upperchurch. The civil parishes of Upperchurch, Moyaliff and Templebeg form the Roman Catholic Parish of Upperchurch. I sent this researcher some Phelan information and asked if she had access to a Phelan Family History book that had been privately published and had been out of print for several years. I eventually heard back from her but in the meantime it reminded me that my Maple Ridge contact had mentioned that a cousin of hers had written a paper on the Ryan families of Maple Ridge. I sent an e-mail to her and asked about obtaining a copy of that document and got a reply from the author Tom Buckley, along with an attached copy of his paper.

My focus has been on tracing the family lines back to Ireland and I was paying close attention to the time lines that showed when people had arrived, where they went and the records they left behind. I had to very carefully separate what was fact from what was wishful thinking. In Tom Buckley's paper was a tiny piece of information that started things rolling again. Margaret Gleason Ryan, from Moyaliff, had a daughter named Bridget who married a James McGrath. In 1860 they were all living in Maple Ridge and I had originally thought all of Bridget's children had been born in Maple Ridge. In the 1865 NYS census Tom had found that their first child, Mary McGrath, had been born in Onondaga Co., NY. They had not gone to Maple Ridge first, they had gone to Central NY, like so many Upperchurch folks before them.

Over the last few years, I had found so many CNY families that had migrated from the Upperchurch area of Co. Tipperary that I started a web site to keep track of them. [http://mcgrathsearch.com/Arrival\\_List.htm](http://mcgrathsearch.com/Arrival_List.htm)

Tom Buckley had also found naturalization records in Onondaga County, NY for James McGrath and his wife Bridget's brother Thomas Ryan from the late 1850s. This indicated that they had been there for some time since the naturalization process took about 5-7 years. These folks were in Maple Ridge in time for the 1860 census. If these are the same person then they shouldn't show up in the Onondaga County census. I searched but I couldn't find them in the 1860 census for Onondaga County. I had also searched the 1850 census for Onondaga County and could find no evidence for James McGrath or Thomas Ryan even though both are believed to have come to the U.S. prior to 1850.

The 1860 census was pretty accurate, but the 1850 census was like a sieve. Several times I have found situations where people that I could prove were in a particular region of Onondaga County didn't show up in the 1850 census. The 1850 census took months to complete. If someone moved from Pompey, Onondaga Co. to Truxton, Cortland Co. during the middle of August they would have never seen a census taker. The Pompey census was started about 2 weeks after the Truxton census was completed. I ordered a copy of the 1855 Onondaga County census from the local Mormon Family History Center and searched all 8 wards of the city of Syracuse, page by page, and couldn't find James, Bridget or Thomas. Tom Buckley thought that the boys had been in the northern part of Syracuse, in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> wards, where most of the Irish were living, but they weren't there in the summer of 1855. So, things slowed down again.

### **Finding James McGrath and Bridget Ryan**

A few weeks later I was looking through some Phelan baptismal records from St. James Church in Cazenovia, Madison Co., NY. Cazenovia is located right next to the southeastern corner of Onondaga Co. In fact, St. James was the main church back in the 1850-1890 time period and had responsibility for Pompey and Truxton as mission churches. That really helped when looking for church records, in that area and for that time period, because they are almost all in one place. While I was searching these records I decided to check for Ryans and hit the jackpot (5/10/2007). I found the marriage record for James McGrath and Bridget Ryan (Oct. 21, 1855 at St. James Church, Cazenovia, NY) and the baptismal record for their daughter Mary (b. Aug. 17, 1856 in Pompey). The baptism was performed in Pompey so that was where the family was living at the time. Bridget's brother Thomas was a witness at their wedding and a sponsor at the baptism of their daughter. Another baptismal sponsor was Bridget's younger sister Mary. It would appear that much of the Ryan family was in the Pompey area by 1856 and they had not yet settled at Maple Ridge.

### **Finding Michael McGrath - GGG-grandfather**

In searching through my Pompey information I came across an old copy of a page from the 1855 Pompey census that had Michael and Thomas McGraw on it. I had looked at the old copy a dozen times before but this time the names just jumped out at me. Thomas' wife was Katy (the Thomas McGrath from Maple Ridge had married Catherine Gleason) and here was a James McGrath and on the very next farm was a young "servant" girl named Bridget Ryan. I checked the ages against the persons of the same names from Maple Ridge and they were all close enough by census standards. By 1860, when all these folks were showing up in the Maple Ridge census, they were nowhere to be found in Onondaga County. At that point I decided these were the same Maple Ridge people and through Thomas and the others (with the exception of James McGrath) they were connected back to Moyaliff in the

Upperchurch area. The census gave Michael as Thomas' father and hence another Moyaliff connection. There had been only one Michael McGrath from Moyaliff and that was my ggg-grandfather. We never thought Michael had come to America and always believed that he had died in Ireland, but it appears that we were mistaken.

### **Expanding the Circle**

After finding all these new Moyaliff connections in Pompey, I thought that perhaps this could be spread out a little further. Could there be still more relatives living in Pompey and Fabius that have not yet been identified? It was time to go back and reexamine the previous research I had done in that area.

My interest in the Richard Long family began with a research effort into the Carroll families in the town of Pompey in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several Carroll men had married McGraw / McGrath women. Among this group was a Richard Long who had married a Margaret McGrath. One of their sons had later married a Carroll whose mother was also a McGrath. There were several other McGrath women in this research effort and given the usual difficulty associated with tracing the female lines that appeared to be a fertile area in which to find more connections.

Margaret McGrath married Richard Long in 1852 at St. Mary's Church in Syracuse, NY. Later (at least by 1874) they were living just west of the old Cyrus Edward's farm on a road that is now named Frank Long Road, possibly named after Margaret's youngest son. Years ago I had received a copy of a page of the 1855 census that showed Cyrus Edwards had several recent Irish immigrants living with him on his farm. There was Michael, the father, Thomas, his son, and Thomas' wife Katy and a possibly related James McGrath. I had also received a copy of Margaret's death certificate that stated that her father's name was Michael. This came from the same Long researcher that had sent me a copy of the 1855 census. As tempting as it was to link the two back in 2001, there just wasn't enough evidence to support it. Today, I think there is enough evidence to claim that this Michael was Margaret's father.

In 1855, living just west of Cyrus Edwards, was Samuel Hinsdell who owned structures both north and south of the road known today as Frank Long Road. By 1874 Richard Long and Margaret McGrath, were shown on a map of Pompey at the former Hinsdell properties. If Cyrus had still been there, they would have been neighbors. This location proximity to where Michael McGrath had been living in 1855 might just be a coincidence.

One of the baptismal sponsors of Margaret Long's son Michael, at St. James Church in Cazenovia, on August 1, 1858, was Bridget Ryan. I am guessing she was the

same Bridget Ryan who was married to James McGrath. Margaret and Bridget might have known each other from back in Ireland if the hypothesis about this Michael McGrath being her father is correct. In a 2001 e-mail researcher Nancy Long had mentioned rumors that part of her husband's family (Long-McGrath) had come from Upperchurch. Based on this new information I am now pretty much convinced that the Michael McGraw from Moyaliff, who was at the Edwards farm in 1855, is a likely candidate for Margaret's father. Since there was only one Michael McGrath in Moyaliff in the 1840's this is probably the same one.

### **The Maple Ridge Migration**

Richard and Margaret Long were gone from Pompey by 1860. By that time Michael, Thomas and the rest of the crew were also gone from Pompey and had settled in at Maple Ridge. On Saturday July 7<sup>th</sup> (2007) luck struck once again. Nancy Long was searching for Richard and Margaret in the census records and was trying various misspellings of the surname when she was able to locate them under the name LANEY in of all places - Maple Ridge. The fact that Richard and Margaret Long had followed the others to Maple Ridge further strengthens the identification of Michael McGrath as her father. It appears that they arrived in Maple Ridge prior to the August 1860 census and were back in Pompey by the July 22, 1864 birth date of their daughter Mary.

This is still a working hypothesis but it just keeps working better all the time. I keep finding more links and supporting evidence and none of it has been contradictory. There may never be one piece of rock solid evidence that nails down this hypothesis but the evidence from the interlinking clusters of people is very convincing.

The numbers have grown to the point where this flux of people leaving Central New York heading to Maple Ridge needs a name. The "Maple Ridge Migration of 1858-1860" should do for now.

### **Finally, A Place for Lanty**

Could there be more of them, still out there, that just haven't been identified yet? Among the Central New York records there is a group of individuals that are very frustrating. These represent persons who showed up once or twice in the records and then disappeared. Usually this limited appearance profile meant that the persons had moved on. But where did they go? The census would place them in time at a particular location. However, it was the church records, with the sponsors and witnesses, which would document the critical connections to the other families.

In the 1855 Fabius census there was a Lanty McGraw living in the village of Fabius. His name had come up before, in my sister Shirley's research into our family

history, back in the early 1980s. She had found Lanty in the 1855 census but then he disappeared from the Central New York records and the name hadn't come up again. It was an unusual name and I always remembered it.

I was on a roll so I decided to assume that Lanty was also one of Michael's children and then set out to either prove or disprove that hypothesis. Initially I thought I might be stretching my luck on this one, but then I remembered a baptismal record for one of Lanty's children from St. James Church in Cazenovia. One of the sponsors was an Edmund McGrath, who I had always felt was probably my gg-grandfather. This would make Lanty and Edmond brothers. A second piece of evidence was found in the 1855 census. Lanty and Catherine Wade McGraw had named their first son Michael. The Irish naming tradition calls for the first son to be named after the paternal grandfather and the second son to be named after the maternal grandfather. This was also the case for Edmund and Thomas McGrath while in Margaret McGrath Long's case, being the mother, her second son was named Michael. The third piece of evidence was found in the ship's manifest for the *British Queen*. Catherine Wade McGrath and three of her children came to America on the same ship as Mary Ryan McGrath, my gg-grandmother, and her sons Michael and John. They landed together at New York City on November 7, 1850.

### **Loose Ends**

There are a bunch of folks from Moyaliff that might have settled nearby Michael and Thomas McGrath in Pompey. Some of these would have been Bridget's younger siblings and her mother Margaret Gleason Ryan, who was the sister of Thomas' wife Catherine. Bridget's brother Thomas and sister Mary were witnesses and sponsors for Bridget's marriage to James McGrath and the baptism of their daughter Mary. Bridget's mother, Margaret, would have been living with the younger siblings Patrick, James and Edmund. I have searched the 1855 NYS census for Pompey and Fabius. So far they haven't been found in Pompey or Fabius, which would have been the two most likely places for them to settle if they had immigrated in 1855, or anytime prior to the Maple Ridge Migration.

Despite Patrick's claim, in the 1900 census, that he came to the U.S. in 1855, I have not been able to find him, or his mother or his younger siblings, in any of the ships' records that I have searched. I am slowly coming to the conclusion that they probably arrived in the U.S. after James, Bridget and Thomas Ryan moved to Maple Ridge and most likely went straight from the boat to Maple Ridge. This would put their arrival in the U.S. in 1859 or early 1860, prior to the census that year.

Since their mother Margaret was a Gleason, that now opens the question of possible connections to the other Gleasons in Pompey, Fabius, Truxton and Cuyler. The investigation into these other connections have just begun.

### **Summary**

As of today, there are still areas that need attention. The date of Michael McGrath's death and his place of burial are unknown. Whether he actually went on the Maple Ridge Migration or remained in Central NY is not known. Thomas McGrath died on March 4, 1883 and is buried in the Maple Ridge Cemetery. His first wife, Catherine Gleason McGrath is also buried there with her sister Margaret Gleason Ryan. There is no evidence that Thomas' father, Michael, Thomas' second wife Mary Kennedy McGrath or any of their children are buried in the Maple Ridge cemetery.

Thomas' second wife Mary and her son Walter appeared in the Lewis County Directory for 1895-6 but then they disappeared from the records. No descendants of Thomas McGrath have been found to date. Descendants of Margaret, Lanty and Edmund McGrath have been found.

This had all started as a search for a link between Maple Ridge and Central New York. It was an unrelated Michael McGrath, buried in Lowville, NY, that began a search that finally found Michael McGrath, my ggg-grandfather. In addition, three more of his children were discovered in the southern portion of Onondaga County, NY. During the course of performing this research some additional folks have been identified that also came from the Upperchurch area and settled in Central NY. The towns of Pompey and Fabius truly seemed to have been magnets for people from the Upperchurch area of Co. Tipperary.

## The Maple Ridge Migration of 1858-1860

Name	Relationship	Facts
Thomas McGrath	Son of Michael McGrath. Husband of Catherine Gleason McGrath.	Naturalized in Maple Ridge Feb 1859. Remarried by 1860 to Mary Kennedy. Died Mar. 4, 1883, Maple Ridge, at age 67.
Catherine Gleason	Wife of Thomas McGrath, aunt of Bridget, Thomas, Mary, Ellen, Patrick, James and Edmund Ryan. Sister of Margaret Gleason Ryan.	Died in Maple Ridge April 18, 1859.
James McGrath	Only known relation to the others is via his marriage to Bridget Ryan.	Mar. Oct. 21, 1855, Cazenovia, NY Naturalized in Syr, NY Oct. 1858.
Bridget Ryan McGrath	Daughter of Margaret Gleason Ryan and niece of Catherine Gleason McGrath	Mar. Oct. 21, 1855, Cazenovia, NY
Mary McGrath	Dau. of James & Bridget McGrath	Born Aug. 17, 1856, Pompey, NY
Richard Long	Husband of Margaret McGrath Long	Sp at baptism of brother Daniel's child in Pompey on Apr. 11, 1858. In Maple Ridge Aug. 1860. Returned to Pompey by July 1864.
Margaret McGrath Long	Dau. of Michael McGrath	Sp at baptism of brother-in-law Daniel Long's child in Pompey on Apr. 11, 1858. In Maple Ridge Aug. 1860. Returned to Pompey by July 1864.
John Long	Son of Richard & Margaret	Born 1856-7, Pompey, NY
Michael McGrath	Son of Richard & Margaret	Born June 17, 1858, probably Pompey. In Maple Ridge Aug. 1860. Returned to Pompey by July 1864.
Michael McGrath	Father of Thomas and Margaret McGrath	Missing. Not found in Maple Ridge, Pompey or Fabius in 1860. Year of death and place of burial unknown.
Thomas Ryan	Brother of Bridget Ryan	Witness at marriage of James and Bridget Oct. 21, 1855 Sp. at baptism of James and Bridget's child Mary, Nov. 2, 1856 Naturalized Oct. 1858
Mary Ryan	Sister of Bridget Ryan, never married	Sp. at baptism of James and Bridget's child Mary, Nov. 2, 1856. At Maple Ridge she lived with sister Bridget and Bridget's husband James McGrath. She later went



		west with brothers Thomas and Patrick Ryan.
James Tarpy (1818-1903) From Maple Ridge Cem.		Mar. Ellen Gleeson Jan. 22, 1860, Pompey Hill. Found in Maple Ridge Aug. 1870, age 49, with wife Ellen and family. Buried Maple Ridge Cem.
Ellen Gleason Tarpy (1821-1909) From Maple Ridge Cem.	Possible Gleason relation	Found in Pompey June 1855, age 27, in Pompey 3 yrs. Mar. James "Torpay" Jan. 22, 1860, Pompey Hill. Found in Maple Ridge Aug. 1870, age 43, with husband James Tarpy and family. Buried Maple Ridge Cem.
The following individuals have not been found in the Central New York records but were relatives from Moyaliff, Co. Tipperary who settled in Maple Ridge by August 1860.		
Margaret Gleason Ryan	Mother of Bridget, Thomas, Mary, Ellen, Patrick, James and Edmund. Sister of Catherine Gleason McGrath	Found in Maple Ridge, Aug. 1860.
Patrick Ryan	Siblings of Thomas, Bridget, Mary and Ellen Ryan	Found in Maple Ridge Aug. 1860.
James Ryan		Found in Maple Ridge Aug. 1860.
Edmund Ryan		Found in Maple Ridge Aug. 1860.
Ellen Ryan	Sister of Bridget Ryan	Reference to an Ellen Ryan found in 1855 Fabius census. Resident of town of Fabius for 1 month prior to the census. ID not certain. She did not turn up in Maple Ridge. Tom Buckley also uncertain as to her immigration status and her ultimate fate.

## New Found Upperchurch Folks that Settled in Central New York

Name	Co. Tipperary Origin	Arrival Date	Source
Thomas Long	Thurles	1852 <sup>(a)</sup>	Richard F. Long
James Long	Thurles	1852 <sup>(a)</sup>	Richard F. Long
Michael McGrath	Moyaliff	1852 <sup>(b)</sup>	M. McGraw
Thomas McGrath	Moyaliff	1852 <sup>(b)</sup>	M. McGraw
Catherine Gleason McGrath	Moyaliff	1852 <sup>(b)</sup>	M. McGraw
Bridget Ryan	Moyaliff	1854 <sup>(b)</sup>	M. McGraw
Thomas Ryan	Moyaliff	1847 <sup>(c)</sup>	M. McGraw
Mary Ryan	Moyaliff	Uncertain	M. McGraw
Richard Long	Raheen, Holycross	1848 <sup>(d)</sup>	Nancy Long
Margaret McGrath Long	Moyaliff	Bef 1852 <sup>(i)</sup>	M. McGraw
Lanty McGrath	Moyaliff	Bef 1850 <sup>(e)</sup>	M. McGraw
Catherine Wade McGrath Arrived with her children on the same ship as Edmond McGrath's wife Mary Ryan. <i>The British Queen</i> , Nov. 7, 1850 at NYC.	Moyaliff	1850 <sup>(f)</sup>	M. McGraw
Mary McGrath Traveled with Catherine Wade McGrath, listed as "spinster" and not one of Catherine's children	Moyaliff?	1850 <sup>(f)</sup>	M. McGraw
Stephen Ryan	Upperchurch	Bef. 1853 <sup>(g)</sup>	Richard F. Long
Margaret Dunn	Upperchurch	Bef. 1853 <sup>(g)</sup>	Richard F. Long
Daniel Long In 1860 town of Clay census. Also lived in Geddes and Pompey.	Raheen, Holycross	1848 <sup>(d)</sup>	M. McGraw
Mary Gleeson Long Mar. Daniel in U.S. Son Michael's baptism in Pompey on Apr. 11, 1858.	Probably Moyaliff area.	1850 <sup>(h)</sup>	M. McGraw

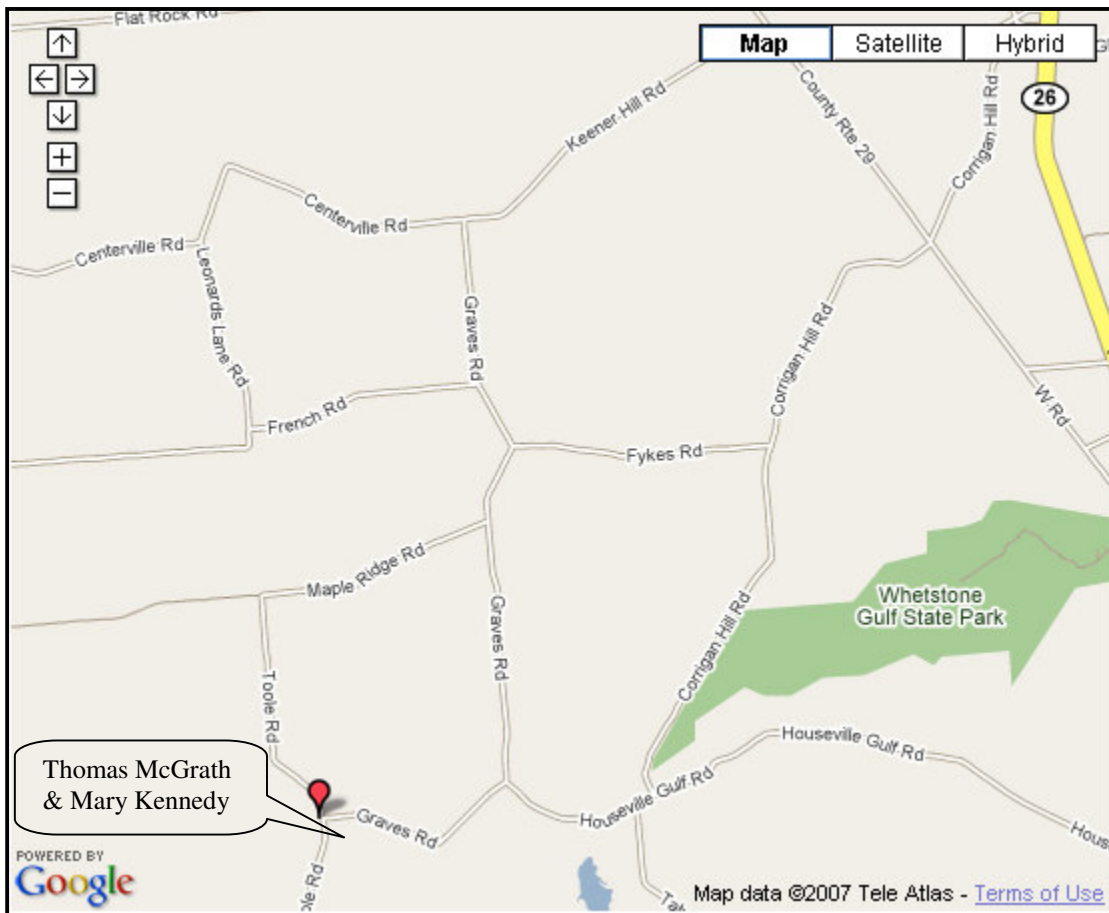
**Notes:** (a) Family tradition - Richard F. Long; (b) 1855 NYS Census - Pompey; Catherine was shown as a 9 year resident which I believe to be a mistake (c) Family tradition - Tom Buckley; (d) Came to U.S. in 1848, to CNY between 1850 and 1852 - Family tradition - Nancy Long; (e) 1855 NYS Census; (f) Ship manifest - British Queen - Nov. 7, 1850 at NYC; (g) 1855 NYS Census - Fabius, Residence time: 2yrs.; (h) 1900 census; (i) Married July 31, 1852, St. Mary's Church, Syracuse, NY

## Descendants of Michael McGrath of Moyaliff, Co. Tipperary

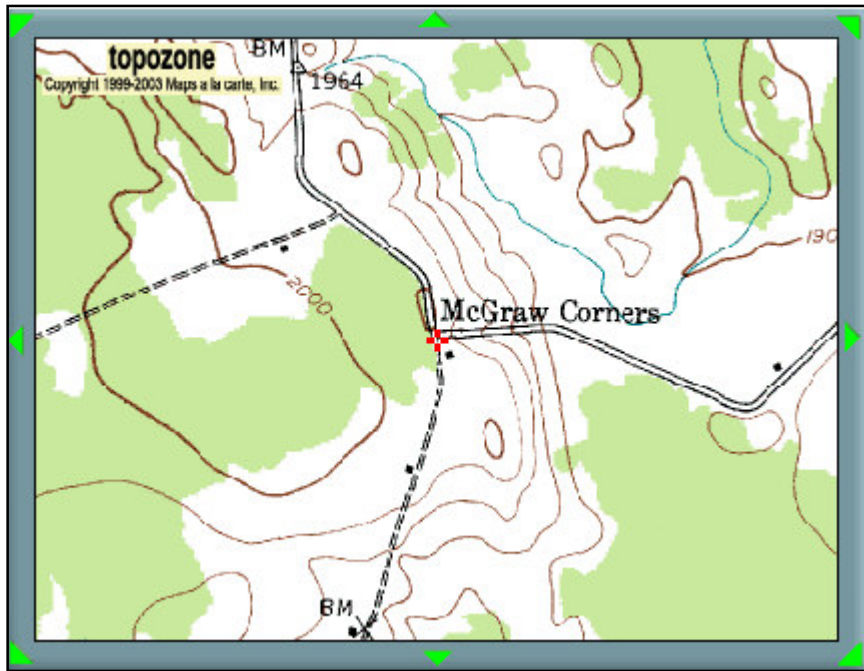
Name	Contact	E-Mail
Edmund McGrath	Michael McGraw	<a href="mailto:mfmcgraw@austin.rr.com">mfmcgraw@austin.rr.com</a>
Lanty McGrath	Judith H. Halseth	<a href="mailto:judith.halseth@wmich.edu">judith.halseth@wmich.edu</a>
Thomas McGrath	Unknown	
Margaret McGrath Long	Nancy Long	<a href="mailto:nancylong@comcast.net">nancylong@comcast.net</a>

**McGraw Corners** is located in Page, Lewis County, NY

Degrees Minutes Seconds:      Decimal Degrees:  
 Latitude: 43°41'9" N              Latitude: 43.685830  
 Longitude: 75°31'55" W      Longitude: -75.531940



The map depicts most of the area where the hamlet of Maple Ridge was located and the location known as McGraw Corners.



This is a topographical representation of the area around McGraw Corners where Thomas McGrath, from Moyaliff, Co. Tipperary, lived from ~1859 until his death in 1883. Thomas' farm was located southeast of this corner, where the small square block is located. His second wife, Mary Kennedy McGrath and their youngest son, Walter, were still in Maple Ridge in 1895.