

# THE TRAIL OF JAMES MCGRATH

Revised: March 29, 2018

## THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF JAMES MCGRATH

There was a James McGrath (b. ~1829) living in the town of Pompey, NY, with Michael McGrath, Michael's son Thomas and Thomas's wife Catherine Gleason McGrath at the time at the 1855 census. James married Bridget Ryan, Catherine Gleason McGrath's niece, who had been living on an adjacent Pompey farm at the time of the 1855 census. In late 1858, James and Bridget McGrath, Thomas and Catherine McGrath, plus some others, migrated to Maple Ridge in the town of Martinsburgh in Lewis Co., NY.

James McGrath's ancestry has proved to be very elusive. After sorting out the McGrath connections in Central NY and Maple Ridge, James still stood alone. Since he was living with Michael and Thomas McGrath in Pompey it had been assumed that he was either family or a neighbor from Ireland. After several attempts, no family connections have been found and so it has been assumed that he was a neighbor from Ireland.

“Jane McGrath Ostrowidzki's grandmother (Katherine Bridget Maher who married Thomas William McGrath, the son of James McGrath and Bridget Ryan) said they (Jane's ancestors) weren't related to the other McGraths in Martinsburgh (the town in which Maple Ridge is located). This statement means that the other Thomas McGrath, John McGrath and Michael McGrath (from Golden, Co. Tipperary) aren't related to James and neither is the elder Thomas McGrath (of Moyalliff). So far her statement has turned out to be true.”

The label “Elder” was used to describe the older Thomas McGrath just to avoid confusing the two Thomas McGraths living in Maple Ridge. [http://mcgrathsearch.com/Lewis\\_County.html](http://mcgrathsearch.com/Lewis_County.html)

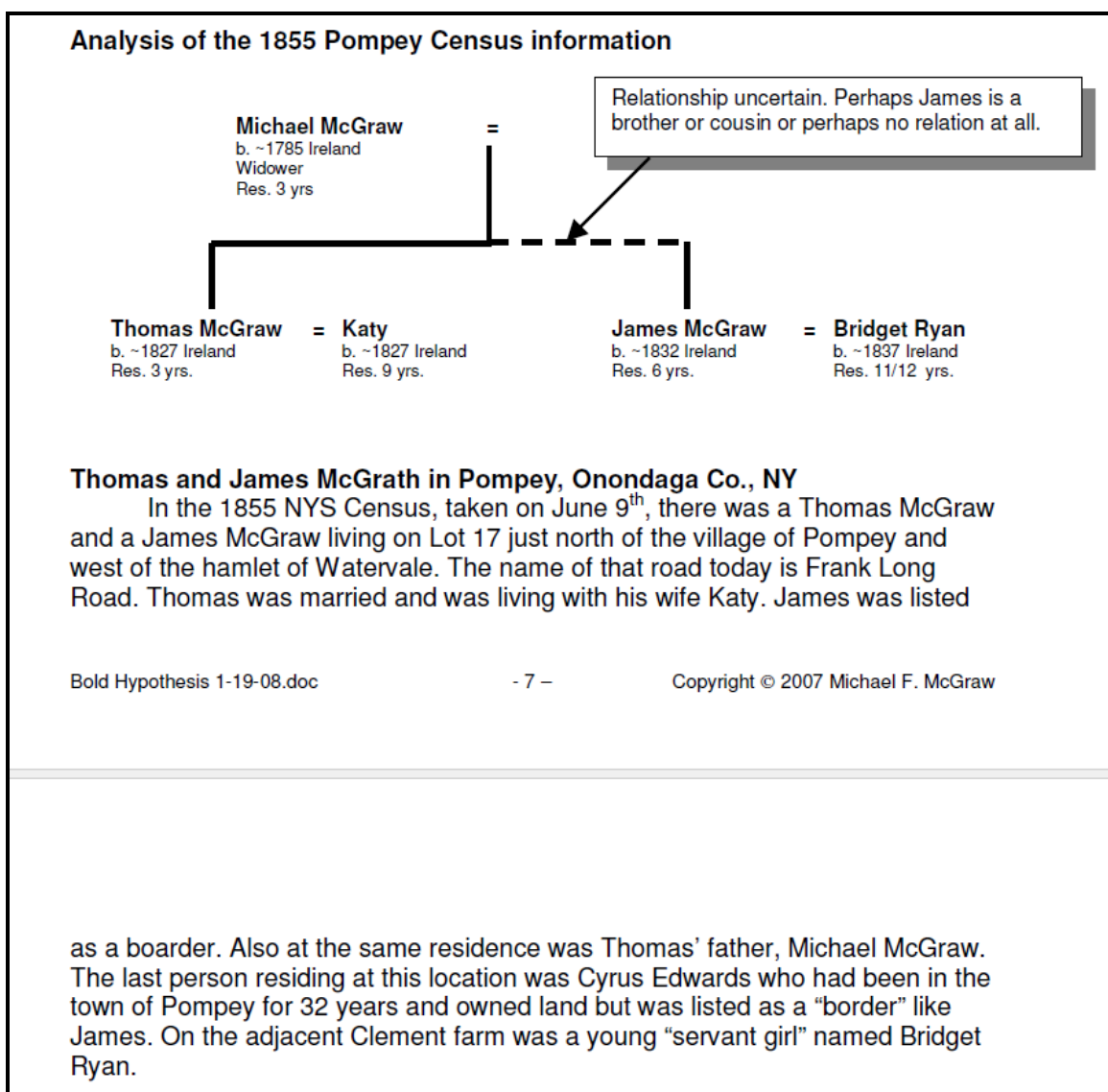
Around the end of the 1850s the Michael McGrath family seems to have split up and there was no evidence that they stayed in touch with one another. The existence of Margaret, who had married Richard Long (a former neighbor in Ireland), moved to Maple Ridge and then moved back to the same road where Michael, Thomas and James were living in 1855, was unknown to us. That road, by the way, is now named Long Road. Sometime between 1855 and 1860 Michael McGrath is believed to have passed away. After a careful examination of St. Patrick's Cemetery, at Maple Ridge and its records, it is believed that Michael was not buried there. Hence he died before the migration and was probably buried in old St. Mary's Cemetery on Renwick Ave. There is no record of him being buried there at the time of his death nor was he listed among the identifiable graves that were disinterred in 1958 and reburied in a mass grave in the new St. Mary's in DeWitt.

So, by the early 1860s Edmund was in Cuyler, in Cortland County; Margaret McGrath Long was in Pompey, in Onondaga County (having returned from Maple Ridge); Lanty was in Clifton Springs, in Ontario County and Thomas and James were in Maple Ridge, town of Martinsburgh, in Lewis County. Edmund McGrath's wife, Mary Ryan had two sisters that settled in the Pompey area and we were aware of them and the family interacted with them. One of Catherine Ryan Sheahan's son's went in with Edmund and his two sons as a partner in their 225 acre farm

at the north end of Kettlebail Road at the northern edge of the town of Truxton. However, from Edmund's side of the family there was nothing but total silence. My grandfather, Edmund's grandson, thought the family came to the Truxton area in about 1875. We grew up thinking that Edmund had been an only child, despite the unlikely possibility of that happening in an Irish family in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The following excerpts are from "The McGraths, Ryans and Gleasons of Maple Ridge, Lewis County, New York"

<http://mcgrathsearch.com/files/Lewis%20County%20Update%201-21-08.pdf>



This would have been a perfect place to show that James was related to the other McGraths living in the same household but he was listed as a "boarder." I think it can be assumed that he might be a cousin or possibly a neighbor from back in Ireland.

One day while looking for some Phelan records in the St. James church records (Cazenovia, Madison Co., NY) I decided to review my Ryan records from St. James and there they were:

67. **McGRATH, James** married **Bridget RYAN** 21 October 1855. Priest: James P. Cahill. Witnesses: **Thomas Ryan** and **Catharine Ryan**

341. **McGRATH, Mary**, daughter of **James McGRATH** and **Bridget RYAN**, born 17 August, baptized 2 November 1856, at Pompey. Sponsors: **Thomas Ryan** and **Mary Ryan**. Priest: M. W. Rooney.

I had found solid evidence of the connection between Onondaga Co and Lewis Co at last.

Thomas Ryan was Bridget's brother. Catharine Ryan has not been identified as yet and Mary Ryan might be the wife of Edmund McGrath. There seems to be a tighter connection between James McGrath and Thomas Ryan than with Thomas McGrath.

### Final Analysis

That brings us to the statement of the Bold Hypothesis. Lanty, Edmond, Thomas and Margaret were all siblings and their father was Michael McGrath of Moyaliff.

Lanty	Edmond	Thomas	Margaret
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baptismal sponsors</li> <li>• Naming pattern</li> <li>• Family on same boat as Edmond's</li> <li>• Lanty was a Ryan nickname in the Moyaliff area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father was Michael per Death Certificate</li> <li>• Naming pattern</li> <li>• Family on same boat as Lanty's.</li> <li>• From Moyaliff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father was Michael McGrath in Pompey in 1855</li> <li>• Naming pattern</li> <li>• From Moyaliff</li> <li>• Maple Ridge Migration participant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Father was Michael per death Certificate</li> <li>• Naming pattern</li> <li>• Maple Ridge Migration participant.</li> </ul>

James and Bridget Ryan McGrath named their children Mary, Thomas, James, Margaret, John, Joseph and Bridget. These names are about as typically Irish as any names one might find. Bridget's parents were Thomas Ryan and Margaret Gleason. Although the birth order doesn't exactly follow the tradition these two names can be pulled off the list and the next two are Mary and James. These might be the names of James' parents or one or both might have had the same names as his wife Bridget's parents.

**James McGrath = Bridget Ryan**

m. Oct 21, 1855. St. James, Cazenovia, Madison Co., NY

Wit: Thomas Ryan and Catharine Ryan

Mary A – 1858

Sps: Thomas Ryan and Mary Ryan

Thomas W. – 1859

James E. – 1864

Margaret – 1868

John F. – 1870

Joseph W. – 1872

Bridget E. – 1874

If James was using the Irish naming convention then his father's name was Thomas, not Michael, as seen in the case of the four siblings above. This is an additional indicator that James was not one of Michael's children. However, perhaps James wasn't a big believer in that method of selecting his children's names.

James did participate in the Maple Ridge Migration and I believe that he did come from the Moyaliff area. Edmund was a baptismal sponsor for one of Lanty's children. Edmund's and Margaret's death certificates listed their father as Michael.

Question: Did James McGrath's death certificate contain the names of his parents?

**Finding James McGrath Back in Ireland**

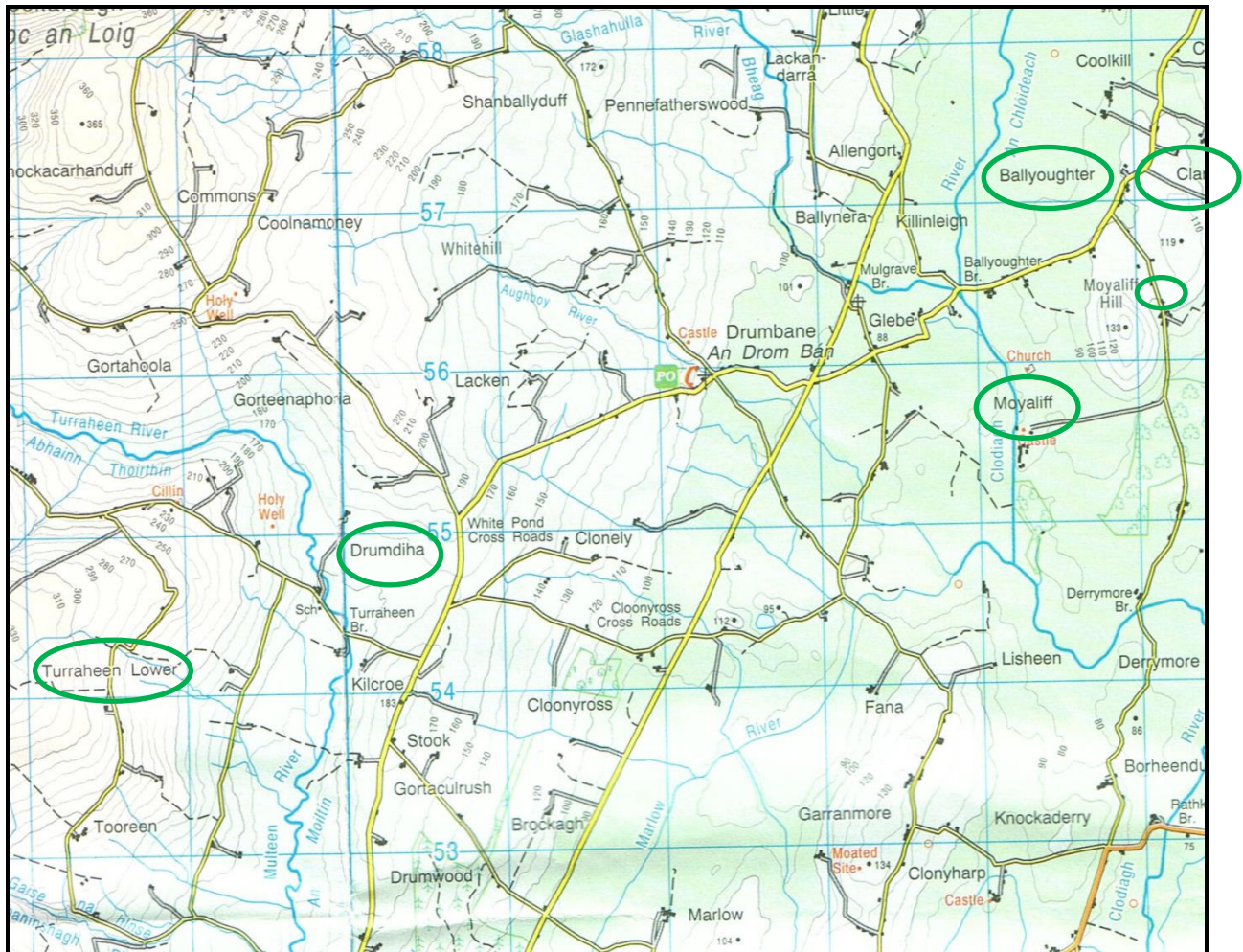
On July 8, 2015, the National Library of Ireland put their microfilm collection of the Parish Registers from the Catholic Dioceses on line. (This is the link: <http://registers.nli.ie/> ) Since then I have been transcribing the interesting records from Upperchurch (1829), Clonoulty (1809) and Holycross (1835) parishes into a spreadsheet. The year appearing in the parentheses after the parish name is the year when the records commenced. This gives us a handle on the James McGraths in those parishes whose birth years have been found in various records to be between 1829 and 1835. Several viable candidates have been found and are shown in the table on the next page.

Several James McGraths Found in the Parish Registers for three adjoining RC parishes: Clonoulty, Ballycahill & Holycross and Upperchurch & Drombane. The highlighted James McGraths are discussed in the text.

Clonoulty RC Parish	
Clogher	Clonoulty
<b>James Magrath = Judith Davern</b> m. 30 Oct 1827, Cloonyross <b>James – 2 Dec 1828, Turraheen</b> Sps: John Davern & Betty McGrath <b>Patrick – 2 Apr 1830, Turraheen</b> Sps: Edmund Magrath & Cate Dwyer <b>James – 6 Nov 1832, Turraheen</b> Sps: Timothy Crough & Norry Harney Margaret – 6 Nov, 1832, Turraheen Sps: John Dwyer & Ellin Davern Judith - 16 Feb 1835, Turraheen Sps: Mathew Davern <b>James - 3 Dec 1836, Turraheen</b> Sps: Mathew Davern & Bridget McGrath Cate – 28 Sept 1838, Turraheen Sps: John Daverin & Bridgit Scanlan John – 11 Apr 1840, Turraheen Sps: Michl Davern & Margaret Ryan Mary – 28 Dec 1841, Turraheen Sps: Patrick Davern & Bridget Davern <b>Michael – 23 Mar 1844, Turraheen</b> Sps: Patrick McGrath & Margaret McGrath Matthew – 9 Feb 1847, Turraheen Sps: Patk Magrath & Margaret Magrath	<b>Thomas Magrath = Anne Maher</b> m. 19 Feb 1828, Lisbook <b>James – 28 Dec 1828, Lisbook</b> Sps: James Ryan & Mary Maher Cate – 9 Apr 1831, Ballycamusk Sps: John Meagher & Ally Meagher Michael - 1 May 1834 - Ballycamusk Sps. James Meagher & Catherine Hogan Mary – 22 Oct 1837 Sps: Patrick Farrel? & Judith Shelly Alice – 26 Apr 1841, Lisbook Sps: Mary Maher
<b>Patrick Magrath = Mary Ryan</b> <b>James – 7 Jul 1829, Turraheen</b> Sps: Michael Magrath & Mary Fogarty	
Upperchurch and Drombane RC Parish	
<b>Philip Magrath = Catherine Maher</b> Catherine – 2 May 1830 Sps: James Bourke & Johanna Long Mary – 27 Jun 1832 Sps: Matt Bourke & Sally Ryan <b>James – 7 Sep 1835</b> Sps: James Bourke & Mary Murphy	<b>James Magrath = Mary Ryan</b> <b>James – 15 Sep 1839</b> Sps: James Ryan & Winny Ryan Judy – 17 Sep 1846, Finihy Sps: Henry Ryan & Onny Grady
Ballycahill and Holycross RC Parish	
<b>William McGragh = Mary Tynan</b> <b>James – 13 Nov 1836</b> Sps: Michael Fanning & ? Fanning	



## THE CONVERGENCE OF MOYALLIFF, CLONOULTY AND HOLYCROSS CIVIL PARISHES



For a distance scale the blue squares are 1 kilometer on each side.

### LOCATIONS

East side of Moyalliff Hill – Michael McGrath farm

Ballyoughter, Clonoulty & Moyalliff – Locations of the Thomas Ryan and Margaret Gleeson family when their three youngest children were born. This was Thomas Ryan and Bridget Ryan's family.

Drumdiha – This is where Michael McGrath's son Edmund was living when his oldest two children were baptized: Margaret (1842), Michael (1843)

Turraheen Lower – This is where the James Magrath and Judith Davern family were living. This would give us a James Magrath who was baptized on Nov 6, 1832.

## TOO MANY JAMES MCGRATHS

James was a popular name among the McGraths so there are more than enough candidates. There are far more McGraths in the Clonoulty RC parish, which included the civil parishes of Clogher (north) and Clonoulty (south), than in any of the other surrounding parishes. Based on the Irish naming convention the Thomas Magrath and Anne Maher family of Lisbook, Clonoulty is a possible candidate but Lisbook is in the far southern part of the parish. Based on proximity the James Magrath and Judith Davern family of Turraheen is the most likely. The name James was used twice in this family which means that the younger James had died [then a third James showed up for the same family - discussed below]. Another James Magrath of Turraheen was baptized on Jul 7, 1829. He was the son of Patrick Magrath and Mary Ryan with sponsors: Michael Magrath and Mary Fogarty.

As seen in the map above Turraheen is very close to Drumdiha where my gg-grandfather Edmund McGrath had lived in the early 1840s. Both of these locations are within walking distance (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish sense of the word) of Moyaliff Hill where Michael McGraths' farm was located on its eastern side. Scattered in the same area were the townlands of Ballyoughter, Clareen and Moyaliff (which to complicate matters is the name of a townland and a civil parish) where Bridget Ryan's family lived at various times. The people from these areas would have known each other as they all traveled to the same market town of Thurles.

The original pick for a James McGrath candidate was James Magrath, baptized Nov 6, 1832, Turraheen, Clogher parish, parents: James Magrath and Judith Davern. But then another James McGrath showed up in the records for that same family. This newest James was baptized Dec. 3, 1836 which implies that the 1832 James had died young. This new James was too young to be the James McGrath being sought. The most likely James McGrath candidates are now: James Magrath, baptized Dec 28, 1828, Lisbook, with parents Thomas Magrath and Anne Maher; James Magrath baptized on Jul 7, 1829 of Turraheen with parents Patrick Magrath and Mary Ryan.

The Lisbook James Magrath selection gives up the geographic proximity of the Turraheen McGraths. However, it is in agreement with a partial application of the Irish naming tradition by James McGrath and Bridget Ryan in naming their first son Thomas. The proximity of Lisbook to the Moyaliff area is not a real issue because that was where James Magrath's parents were living when he was baptized. By 1850 James could have been working on a farm in the Moyaliff area and that was how he came to know the Michael Magrath and other families. The Turraheen James Magrath retains the geographic proximity to the McGrath, Ryan and Gleeson families and he had a "Michael Magrath" as one of his baptism sponsors but he loses the use of the naming tradition in the naming of his children. Since these two James McGraths are only about six months apart in age it appears that this search has ended in a tie.

# EXAMPLES OF THE PARISH REGISTERS FOR CLONOLTY RC PARISH

19<sup>th</sup> Thomas McGrath and Anne Maher  
were married by Rev. C. Enolony in  
presence of James Ryan and Bridget  
Ingleahy and Rev. M. Laffan  
Lisbouicke

Thomas McGrath married Anne Maher on 19 Feb 1828. Their residence was Lisbouicke, now Lisbook.

28. James Mcgrath of Thomas & Anne Maher  
James Ryan and Mary Maher  
Lisbouicke

James McGrath, baptized on 28 Dec 1828. Residence was Lisbook.

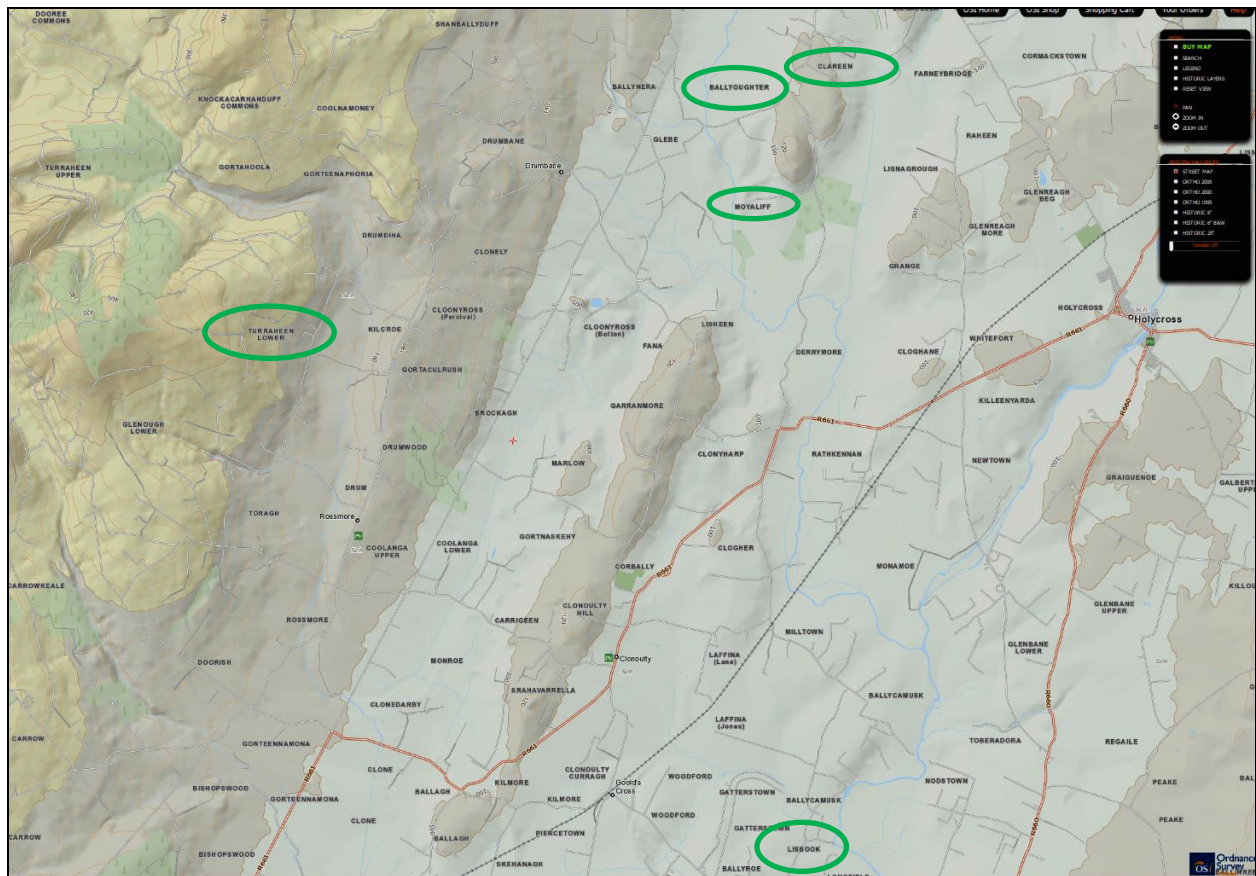
9 Cate Magrath of Thomas and Anne Maher  
John Maher and Mary Maher  
Ballymore

Cate Magrath was baptized on 9 Apr 1831. The residence is possibly Ballymore.

Alice of Thos McGrath & Anne Maher  
Sp. Mary Maher  
Lisbouicke

Alice Magrath was baptized on 26 Apr 1841. The residence was Lisbook.





OSI Map showing the relative locations of Turraheen Lower, Ballyoughter, Clareen, Lisbook and Moyaliff. For a scale, the Moyaliff to Turraheen Lower distance is about 6 km.

## THE DETAILS OF JAMES MCGRATH'S DESCENDANTS

### JAMES MCGRATH AND BRIDGET RYAN

(s/o Thomas Magrath and Anne Maher OR Patrick Magrath and Mary Ryan) ?

(d/o Thomas Ryan and Margaret Gleeson)

#### James McGrath

1829 – Jan. 20, 1892  
m. Oct 21, 1855, Cazenovia, Madison Co., NY  
d. Martinsburg, NY  
bur. Maple Ridge Cemetery

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#### Bridget Ryan

1831 – Dec. 21, 1909  
d. Martinsburg  
bur. Maple Ridge, NY

James and Bridget McGrath had seven children. Only 3 were still alive in 1900 according to the census that year.

#### Mary A. McGrath (1 child)

b. Aug. 17, 1856, Pompey, Onondaga Co., NY  
d. 1887  
bur. Maple Ridge Cemetery

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#### Henry Dow

b. ~1855

#### Thomas William McGrath

b. Jan. 31, 1859, Martinsburg, NY  
d. Aug. 18, 1929, Lowville, NY  
bur. Lowville Rural Cem., Lowville, Lewis Co., NY  
(nine children)

=

#### Katherine Bridget Maher

b. Feb. 26, 1866  
Williamstown, Oswego Co., NY  
m. 1885 St. Mary's Church, Copenhagen, NY  
d. May 13, 1956, Lowville, NY  
bur. Lowville Rural Cem., Lowville, Lewis Co., NY

#### James E. McGrath

b. Jan. 23, 1864  
d. April 18, 1929  
bur. St Mary's Cem, Clayton, Jefferson Co., NY

=

#### Lena Rogers (1st)

1869 - Nov. 11, 1894  
(2 children)

=

#### Catherine Walsh (2nd)

#### Margaret E. McGrath

b. 1866 (unmarried)  
d. Mar. 12, 1896  
bur. Maple Ridge Cem.

#### John F. McGrath

b. 1870 (unmarried)  
d. June 6, 1900  
bur. Maple Ridge Cem.

#### Joseph M. McGrath

1872-1918 (unmarried)  
bur. Maple Ridge Cem.

#### Bridget Elizabeth McGrath

Aug. 6, 1874 – Nov. 11, 1878 (died young)  
bur. Maple Ridge Cem.

## THOMAS WILLIAM MCGRATH AND KATHERINE MAHER

This information came from the obituaries of Mayme McGrath (May 1, 1919) and of her father Thomas William McGrath (Aug. 18, 1929). Thomas William McGrath was the 2<sup>nd</sup> child of James McGrath and Bridget Ryan. Cities listed under the names are their respective cities of residence given in the obits. Additional information was obtained from the census records for the years 1900, 1910 and 1920.

### Thomas William McGrath

b. Jan. 31, 1859, Martinsburg, NY  
d. Aug. 18, 1929  
bur. Lowville Rural Cem.,  
Lowville, Lewis Co., NY

### = Katherine Bridget Maher

b. Feb. 26, 1866  
Williamstown, Oswego Co., NY  
m. 1885 St. Mary's Church, Copenhagen, NY  
d. May 13, 1956, Lowville, NY  
bur. Lowville Rural Cem., Lowville, Lewis Co., NY

### Elizabeth McGrath

### = Earl Charles Schramp

b. Jan. 1887, NY  
Lowville (1919)  
Mar. Jan. 12, 1920  
Rodman (1929)

### Mayme McGrath (unmarried)

b. Sept. 10, 1889, New Boston, NY  
d. May 1, 1919

### Gertrude McGrath

### = William N. Breen

b. Sept. 1892, NY  
Mar. before 1919  
Syracuse, NY (1919, 1929)

### James Michael McGrath

b. Sept. 1895, NY  
In the service in 1919  
Cleveland, Ohio (1929)

### Beatrice McGrath

### = Charles Donnelly

b. Oct. 1897, NY  
Syracuse, NY (1919)  
New York (1929)

### Kathleen McGrath

b. Apr. 1900, NY  
Lowville, NY (1919)  
Albany, NY (1929)

### William McGrath

### (Jane Ostrowidzki's father)

b. 1903, NY  
Lowville, NY (1919, 1929)

### Vivian McGrath

b. 1906, NY  
Lowville, NY (1919, 1929)

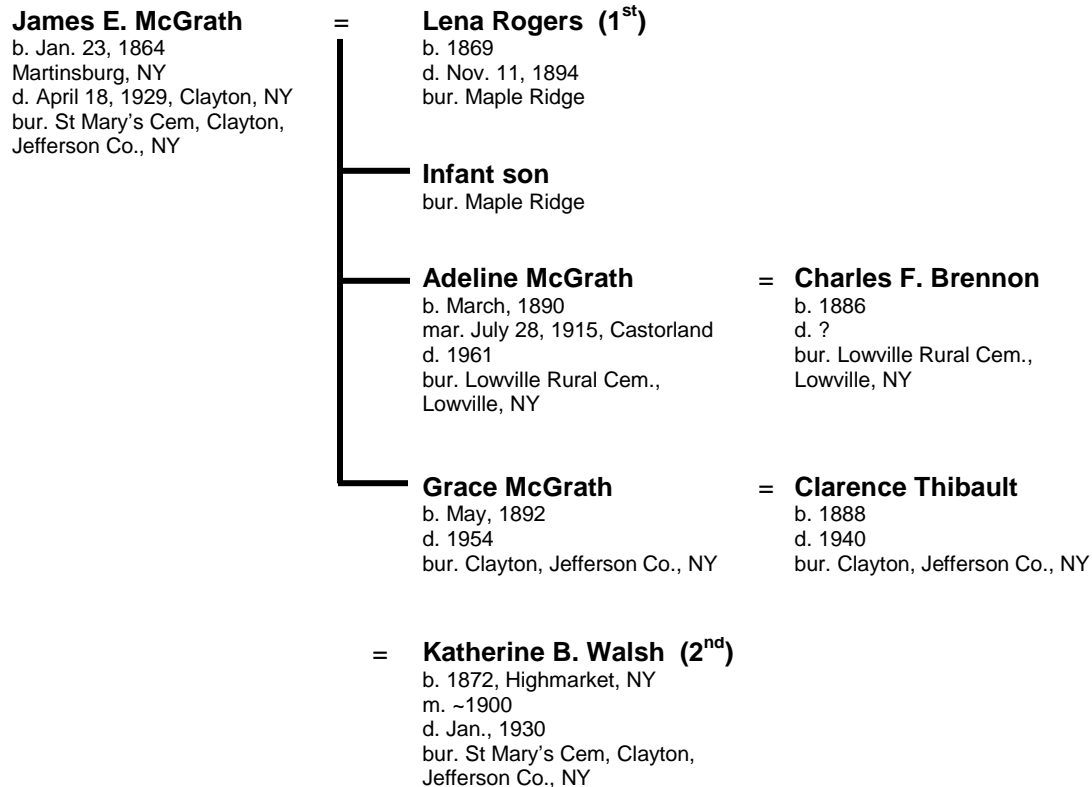
### Eileen McGrath

b. 1909, NY  
Lowville, NY (1919, 1929)

Beatrice graduated from the Lowville Academy on Monday June 25, 1917. She was the president of her class and gave a commencement address.  
Lowville Journal & Republican  
June 28, 1917

Miss Mayme McGrath was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. McGrath (Katherine Bridget Maher). She was born in New Boston, NY on Sept. 10, 1889 and died on May 1, 1919. Her survivors, in addition to her parents, were her brothers James McGrath who was in the service and William McGrath of Lowville; sisters Mrs. William Breen (Gertrude) and Miss Beatrice McGrath, both of Syracuse, and sisters Elizabeth, Katherine (Kathleen), Vivian and Arlene (Eileen) all of Lowville, NY. Source: The Lowville Journal and Republican, May 8, 1919.

## James McGrath and Lena Rogers

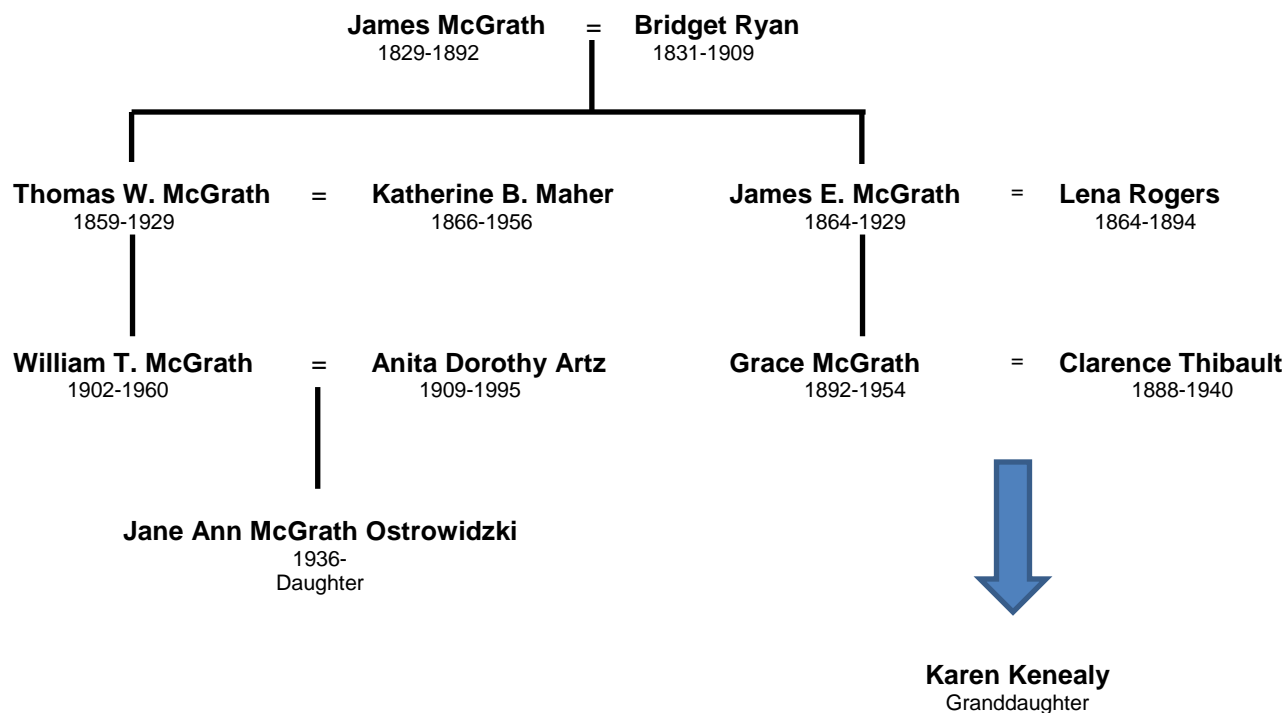


Catherine Walsh's parents were John Walsh and Ann A. Gilroy. Granddaughters Adeline and Grace were staying with their grandmother, Bridget Ryan McGrath, at the time of the 1900 census (June 21, 1900). 1900 NY, Lewis Co., Martinsburg, T623-1070-200A

The children of Clarence and Grace McGrath Thibault were: Joseph (died young), James, George, John, Catherine, Mary, Jane, Margaret (Peg) - from granddaughter Karen Kenealy

# Descendants of James McGrath

March 27, 2018



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