

Patrick Kennedy of Dunganstown, co. Wexford, Great-Grandfather of the President

By Richard Andrew Pierce

Since John F. Kennedy was elected U.S. President in 1960, much has appeared in print on his Irish and American ancestors [1]. However, to this writer's knowledge no research has been conducted on the Irish antecedents of the immigrant Patrick Kennedy, who left Dunganstown, co. Wexford, in the famine years of the late 1840s. This article will briefly outline new material on the Irish Kennedys and the first generation of Kennedys and connected families in the U.S. The writer hopes to extend this research, in collaboration with an Irish researcher, to earlier generations of Kennedys in co. Wexford.

From census and vital records we may infer that Patrick Kennedy was born about 1823. That his birthplace was the townland of Dunganstown, parish of Whitechurch, co. Wexford, is a family tradition; apparently no official record, such as a baptism, naturalization or headstone inscription, corroborates it. The only clue to his parents' names is a notation in the Loretta Kennedy Connolly collection at the Kennedy Library that they were Patrick and Mary Johanna (----) Kennedy of Dunganstown.

Roman Catholic parish registers of White church, co. Wexford begin in 1824. A search of baptisms between 1824 and 1830 by the rector uncovered no Kennedy baptisms. Possibly the family worshipped at a nearby church; the registers of several surrounding parishes are now being searched. Some of these registers date from the late 1700s, so it is hoped that earlier generations may also be traced. The Tithe Applotment Book of 1824 for Dunganstown shows a Patrick Kennedy with 16 acres, 1 rod, 17 poles; Patrick Kennedy *Junior* with 2 acres, 3 rods, 39 poles; and Martin Kennedy with 8 acres, 0 rods, 20 poles.

Omitting Martin Kennedy, whose relationship cannot be ascertained (the name Martin was not continued in the American family), it would appear that Patrick Kennedy's father was one of the two Patrick Kennedys in Dunganstown in 1824. These latter may have been, but were not necessarily, father and son. Previous research [2] has determined that Patrick Kennedy had at least two older brothers, John and James, born about 1809 and 1815 respectively; so their father's approximate birth date is about 1785. Quite possibly this earlier Patrick (father of the immigrant, John and James) was Patrick Jr., aged almost 40 in 1824, while his own father, perhaps Patrick Sr., was in his 60s or 70s.

Griffith's Valuation of Ireland, completed for Dunganstown in 1853 but probably compiled over several previous years, shows Patrick and John Kennedy as householders. We assume that these were Patrick (born ca. 1785), father of the immigrant Patrick who was already in America, and John (born ca. 1809), his eldest son. Death records in Ireland began only in 1864, and no search in them has yet been undertaken for the senior Patrick Kennedy or his wife; nor have existing probate records been checked. But from Richard J. Hayes, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation* (1965), and from further correspondence with the National Library of Ireland, this writer uncovered another potentially valuable source: estate records of the Glascott family, who held Whitechurch parish and much surrounding land from at least 1756 onwards and were landlords of the Kennedys and other resident Catholic tenant families.

The Glascott records are currently held by the National Library in off-site storage and are not readily available for research. It is hoped that an Irish genealogist will soon have access to them. Included are leases and deeds (1715-1848); rental records (1820-27 and 1830-42); and accounts (1826-71). Ian Cantwell, an Irish researcher whose father, Brian Cantwell, has compiled several volumes of co. Wexford tombstone [103] inscriptions, sent the following inscriptions from Whitechurch yard (three headstones in one enclosed plot):

Erected by James Kenedy in memory of his father John Kenedy of Dun ganstown who depd this life 29 Octr 1803 agd 63 years also his wife Bridget Kennedy alias Shallow depd 17th July 1774 aged 30 years.

Erected by John Kennedy in memory of his mother Mary Kennedy alias Cunnip of Dunganstown who died 30th Dec 1898 aged 85 years also his father John Kennedy who died 24th March 1864 aged 55 years [the interments of John

(Jr.) and several brothers and sisters follow]

Erected by Patrick Kennedy [of Dunganstown in memory of his father James Kennedy who died 13th Feb 1881 aged 66 years also his mother Catherine Kennedy who died 10th Nov 1904 aged 85 years [the interments of Patrick, three of his children and a sister follow].

Almost certainly the above John Kennedy (ca. 1809-1864) and James Kennedy (ca. 1815-1881) were the older brothers of the immigrant Patrick¹ Kennedy. Unfortunately no headstones were found for their presumed parents, Patrick and Mary Johanna (____) Kennedy. The John Kennedy who was buried in 1803, aged 63, *might* have been the father of the older Patrick Kennedy in Dunganstown in 1824, father or grandfather of the younger Patrick Kennedy (b. ca. 1785, probably also in Dunganstown in 1824), grandfather or great-grandfather of the immigrant Patrick¹ Kennedy and great-great--great- or great-great-great-great-grandfather of the president.

American research has uncovered several other families, probably from Dunganstown, with whom the Kennedys were associated in Boston. Patrick¹ Kennedy's children were born in East Boston in the 1850s. Among the surnames of their baptismal sponsors Barron, Aspell and Maloy are quite common in southwest Wexford, the Kennedys' homeland. A Patrick Barron (born ca. 1777, died Boston 20 Sept. 1852) and wife Mary (Aspell) Barron (born ca. 1781, died Boston 30 Dec. 1856) are first found in the 1850 Census of Ward 12, Boston. They had at least four children James, born 1809, died after 1860, probably Boston; Thomas, born 1813, died Boston 10 Nov. 1891; Patrick, born 1820, died Boston 6 July 1891; and Johanna, born ca. 1827, died Boston 23 June 1916. The naturalizations of James, Thomas and Patrick Jr. all give co. Wexford as their place of origin. James, Patrick Jr. and Johanna were all living with their parents in the 1850 census. Living with them was Nicholas Aspell, aged 40, also a sponsor to one of Patrick¹ Kennedy's children, and adjoining the Barron household was that of a Francis Kennedy, aged 25, with a wife and two small daughters. According to city directories and vital and census data the brothers James, Thomas and Patrick Barron, Jr., the probable cousins Nicholas and Richard Aspell, and both Francis and Patrick Kennedy were all employed as coopers.

The Patrick Barron, Jr. noted above migrated to East Boston at about the same time as the Kennedys, was one of two witnesses at Patrick Kennedy's 1849 wedding, and sponsored one of the Kennedy children. A close Barron-Kennedy connection is likely, especially since the maiden name of Patrick Joseph² Kennedy's mother is mistakenly given as "Barron" on his 1928 death record (it was actually Murphy). Possibly Mary Johanna (____)Kennedy, mother of the immigrant Patrick¹, was a sister of Patrick Barron, Sr. Boston vital records establish that the latter's wife Mary was an Aspell, and Richard and Nicholas Aspell (the latter b. ca. 1810), who were in Boston by the 1850s, were probably her nephews. Both Nicholas and Richard changed their surnames to Archibald (of which Aspell is a derivative) sometime in the 1860s. According to Boston vital records, Nicholas's parents were John and Bridget (Hanlon) Archibald, and Richard's were James and Mary (____) Archibald. Their kinship to the Kennedys, while probable, has not been proved. No Barrons nor Aspells appear in the 1824 Tithe Applotment Book of Dunganstown, although several lived in Whitechurch and nearby parishes.

A Patrick Maloy was sponsor to one of the Kennedy children in 1852, and several other Maloys were sponsors to children of Patrick Barron, Jr. in the 1850s. Although incomplete, research thus far indicates that this Maloy family consisted of at least four brothers -- George, Valentine, Patrick and William, born between 1810 and 1825 -- sons of John and Ann (Grace) Maloy. At least three of the brothers, residing in Dorchester in the 1840s, moved to East Boston in the 1850s. George Maloy's naturalization record states that he was from "Suttons" parish, co. Wexford, of which Whitechurch was part (see Samuel Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, vol. 2 [1837, reprint 1984], p. 181). The Tithe Applotment Book for Dunganstown shows James, John, William and Widow# Muloy, along with Michael and #Widow# Grace, as householders; the 1853 Griffith's Valuation shows Patrick, John, Michael and Thomas Molloy as householders there. No kinship of these Maloys/Mulloys to the Kennedys has yet been found.

The writer is continuing research on the Kennedys and their connections, and would welcome any further information. He may be contacted at P.O. Box 6101, Boston, MA 02114.

Footnotes

[1] The best monograph to date is certainly Edward L. Galvin's "The Kennedys of Massachusetts," in the *Register*

139(1985):211-24, reprinted in *The Irish in New England* (NEHGS, 1985), pp. 25-38. See also *TAG* 53 (1977):145-46, 55(1979):50, 57(1981):89, 61 (1985-86): 173; Harvey Rachlin, *The Kennedys: A Chronological History, 1823-Present* (1986); Doris [104] Kearns Goodwin, *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* (1987); and G.B. Roberts, *Ancestors of American Presidents*, preliminary edition revised, 1989), pp. 72-73, 127.

[2] *Look* magazine of 14 March 1961, Pp. 17-25. A photograph of the Kennedy-Cunnip tombstone appears on p. 19.

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Editorial note: This article will become, we hope, the first in a series exploring 19th-century Irish origins and using both materials at the Society and data obtained from Ireland. Especially welcome will be studies of members' forebears whose place origins were first revealed in volume I of *The Search for Missing Friends*.--RS/JHO