

Notes on the Correspondence to Mary E. Welch, 1859-1881

By Marie E. Daly

Ann Mulheran

The author of many of the letters, Ann Mulheerin [sic], was baptized on 5 July 1840 in the parish of Kilronan, County Roscommon, and was the daughter of Patrick Mulheerin and Mary Flynn. The sponsors at her baptism were Peter Flynn and Ann Monaghan.¹ In her letters, Ann mentions a sister, Eliza. Elizabeth Mulheerin was baptized on 22 November 1841 in the parish of Kilronan, and was the daughter of Patrick Mulheerin and Mary Flynn. Sponsors at her baptism were Stephen McKenna and Bridget Mulheerin.²

Ann wrote most of the letters from 1860 through 1863 from the townland of Seltannaveeny, which is located on the northern border of Kilronan parish, near the Sligo border. The townland is situated within a region in Kilronan called Arigna. Mining has been a major industry in these mountains above Lough Allen since the 1600s, first as iron mines and later coal mines.³ Situated on the side of Corrie or Lynch's Mountain, the townland of [Seltannaveeny](#) had a long, narrow shape, with the population centered in the lower, southern half, and with mountain bog and about ten coal-pits in the upper, northern half. The Arigna River runs at the base of the mountain through the Arigna Valley.⁴

Mulherns have lived in the townland of Seltannaveeny for generations. In the 1825 [tithe applotment book](#), there were three Mulheern [sic] heads-of-household: Andrew, Bryan and Michael Mulheern.⁵ With the data gathered around 1850, [Griffith's Valuation](#) lists three Mulherans: Francis, Mary and Andrew. Since we know that Ann Mulhern's mother was named Mary, it is possible that the Mary listed in Griffith's Valuation is her mother. In the valuation, Mary Mulheran lives at #4a, and rents from Edward K. Tenison 7+ acres of land and a house valued at 5 shillings. This would have been a one-room house. She may have lived in a larger house earlier in her life, and may have turned over her larger house to one of her sons. The houses of Francis and Andrew Mulheran were valued at 15 shillings, which were probably three-room, thatch-roofed cottages. From the letters, we know that Ann's mother, Mary Mulheran, lived alone. From Griffith's Valuation, we also note that Thomas Flynn lived next door, and may have been her brother. The twelve families who lived in Seltannaveeny shared in common 141+ acres of mountain land.⁶

Their landlord was Edward King Tenison, who lived in Kilronan Castle, held over 17,000 acres of land in Roscommon, and was the High Sheriff of Leitrim. The rental rolls of Edward K. Tenison 1846 – 1859 [MSS.3156] and 57 valuation maps of his estates [MSS. 19,747] are available at the National Archives of Ireland.⁷

Thomas J. Walsh/Welch

Ann Mulheran addressed the letters to Thomas J. Walsh, Esq., 48 Oak Street, Boston, and the letters imply that Ann had worked as a domestic servant for the Walsh family [the family was usually recorded as Welch in records]. She likened "Aunt Chloe's preparation in the cabin" in the book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, to Mrs. Walsh's directions to Ann.

According to his marriage and death certificates, Thomas J. Welch was born in Pennington, NJ ca 1825, and was the son of John and Elizabeth Welch. The parents of Thomas may have been the John Welch and Eliza Hunt who were married in Hunterdon County, New Jersey on 11 June 1812.⁸ The Welch family came to Boston as early as 1829, and his father was a grocer on Washington Street, in business with John Wade, who lived next door in 1850.⁹ John Welch engaged in numerous real estate transactions, as did his sons, Wilson Welch and Thomas J. Welch.¹⁰ In the early 1850s before his marriage, Thomas boarded with his brother, Harrison S. Welch, at the same address at 737 Washington Street.¹¹ His brother had taken over the grocery business. Thomas J. Welch also engaged in many land transactions, and in 1860, his real estate was valued at \$28,000,¹² and in 1870 at \$10,000.¹³

Thomas J. Welch married Mary E. [Eliza] Ainsworth, daughter of Almond Ainsworth, on 25 June 1853 in Boston.¹⁴ Eliza Ainsworth had been born in Boston on 4 July 1829, and her father was Almond Ainsworth. According to her death record, her mother, Mary Stacy, had been born in Eliot, Maine.¹⁵ However, the Ainsworth genealogy states that she was the daughter of Almon Ainsworth and Roxanna Drake, and that her mother was born in Canton, Massachusetts. Her father had been a merchant in Boston, and at some time moved to Guelph, Ontario, where he died on 15 February

1884.¹⁶ Thomas J. Welch died of Organic Disease of Brain in the Insane Asylum, Somerville, Massachusetts on 29 December 1872. The asylum was most likely the McLean Psychiatric Hospital.¹⁷ Mary E. (Ainsworth) Welch died in Brookline, MA on 4 December 1913.¹⁸

Thomas J. and Mary Elizabeth (Ainsworth) Welch had the following children:

- i. Elizabeth E., born 24 November 1852, Boston, married Daniel Goodnow, a hardware dealer, son of Daniel Goodnow and Anna Bradlee, on 29 June 1871.¹⁹
- ii. Anna Cora, born 15 June 1856 at 48 Oak Street, Boston.²⁰ According to the Welch genealogy, Anna Cora Welch was in an asylum in 1899. In 1880, an Anna C. Welch, age 24, was listed among the patients at the McLean Asylum in Somerville.²¹
- iii. Abbie Louisa, born 2 January 1858, in Boston; ²² died in 1926 in Boston.²³ In 1916, there was a Suffolk County probate record for Abbie L. Welch for non compos mentis.²⁴ She never married.
- iv. Thomas Francis, born 18 August 1859, 48 Oak Street, Boston.²⁵

The letters were addressed to Thomas J. Walsh [sic], 48 Oak Street, Boston, MA. Oak Street was located between Washington Street and Harrison Avenue in the South Cove district of Boston.

In 1864, a letter mentions a financial setback for the Welch family due to a dispute between Thomas J. Welch and his business partner, Mr. Short. Thomas J. Welch had a summer home in the [Germantown](#) section of Quincy, on a point of land at the mouth of the Fore River, and the family was forced to live in their Quincy home for a few years. By 1870, they were back on Oak Street.²⁶ Since Thomas J. Welch died in 1872, his widow sold some of their real estate in 1873.²⁷ By 1880, Eliza Welch, widow, was living at 627 Tremont Street, at the corner of West Canton Street, in the South End of Boston, with her son Thomas Francis Welch and her daughter, Abby Louisa Welch.²⁸ By 1900, Eliza had moved to Brookline, MA, where she lived at 7_ University Road.²⁹

Harry Welch

In 1861, Ann Mulheran commented about the fact that Mr. Harry Welch, succeeded in getting a farm. This was probably Harrison S. Welch, the brother of Thomas J. Welch. Harrison S. Welch was born 20 November 1829³⁰ in Boston, and was the youngest son of John and Eliza Welch. He married in Boston on 9 November 1856 Elizabeth J. Foster, daughter of John H. and Elizabeth (Allen) Foster of 4 Hollis Street Boston. She had been born in Platte County, Missouri.³¹ In 1860, he was living in on a farm in Waltham, Massachusetts that was valued at \$15,000, and his personal estate was valued at \$1,000. He died in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 28 October 1864. The cause of death was typhoid fever.³²

Mary McKenna

The letters make a number of references to Ann Mulheran's cousin, Mary McKenna. She was most likely the servant who was recorded in the Welch household in the 1860 and 1870 census.³³ In fact, the collection includes a letter written by Mary E. McKenna to Lizzie Welch, daughter of Thomas and Mary Eliza Welch, on 5 February 1865. In the letter Mary McKenna addresses Lizzie as "My Dear Lizzie" and refers to Mary Eliza Welch as "Mother." The use of these terms sheds light on the close relationship between servant and employer. However, she was writing from the kitchen while the rest of the family was in the dining room having lunch. In her 1865 letter to Lizzie Welch, Mary McKenna wrote that she was going to have some photographs taken and sent to her (Mary's) grandmother. Mary also wrote that she had made mistakes in the letter, thus implying that she was writing the letter herself. Mary was not with the Welch family in the 1880 census.

There were three McKenna heads-of-households in the parish of Kilronan in Griffiths Valuation: Terence McKenna in the townland of Seltannaveeny, and Owen and Stephen McKenna in the townland of Giddaun.³⁴ The townland of Giddaun was located near Seltannaveeny, and Stephen McKenna was the godfather of Ann Mulheran's sister, Eliza, as noted above.

William F. Tansey

In her letter of 30 August 1861, Ann Mulheran wrote to Mrs. Welch inquiring about William F. Tansey and his whereabouts. William F. Tansey was married to Margaret M. Bulger in Fall River, Massachusetts on 30 April 1864 by a Catholic priest, Rev. Edward Murphy. William F. Tansey was listed as a soldier, and was the son of William and

Margaret (Fuller) Tansey, and she was the daughter of Owen and Bridget (Cronan) Bulger.³⁵

William F. Tansey joined the 5th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery on 16 December 1861 at Fall River, Massachusetts, and was mustered in as a Sergeant in Company C. He was promoted to Full First Sergeant on 1 February 1863; and he was discharged for promotion on 16 April 1864 at Little Washington, North Carolina. He was then appointed Full First Lieutenant, Company K, in the 14th Rhode Island Colored Heavy Artillery on 16 March 1864. He was mustered out on 2 October 1865.³⁶ The 14th Rhode Island Colored Heavy Artillery was designated the 11th Heavy Artillery on 21 May 1864, and was assigned to garrison duty in New Orleans. His 1864 discharge paper recorded that he had been born in Roscommon, Ireland, and was 5 feet 6 ¾ inches in height, and had a dark complexion and blue eyes. His occupation was listed as a painter.³⁷

Thomas Cull

In her letter of 19 March 1861, Ann Mulheran made the following reference: “Mr. Thomas Cull and family are well, and are thankful to you for your kind inquiries. He often complains of me for not going and make a home of his place.” In Griffiths Valuation of Ireland, a Thomas Coll lived in the townland of Tullynahaw, parish of Kilronan, County Roscommon, and as did Owen Coll and James Coll.³⁸ The townland of Tullnahaw is located adjacent to the townland of Seltannaveeny, where Ann Mulheran lived.

Nothing is known about Ann Mulheran after her last letter of _____, in which she stated that she had purchased a ticket to Australia. If Ann had immigrated to Australia, why would she not write to let Mrs. Welch know she had arrived safely? Once she achieved her goal of obtaining enough money to emigrate, did Ann see no further use to correspond with Mrs. Welch?

¹ Baptism record, Roscommon Heritage & Genealogy Company, <http://roscommon.brsgenealogy.com/>.

² Baptism record, Roscommon Heritage & Genealogy Company, <http://roscommon.brsgenealogy.com/>.

³ Kilronan Parish Website, <http://www.kilronanparish.ie/>

⁴ *Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1823-1844*. Dublin: Ordnance Survey, 1823-1844.

⁵ *The Tithe Applotment Books*. Dublin: European Micropublishing Services, 1990.

⁶ Richard Griffith, *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland*. Dublin: Irish Microforms Ltd., c1978.

⁷ Connacht Landed Estates Project, National University of Ireland, Galway, <http://www.landedestates.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/>

⁸ Deats, Hiram Edmund, *Marriage Records of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, 1795 – 1875*. Lambertville, NJ: Hunterdon House, 1986.

⁹ 1850 Federal Census, Boston, MA, Roll M432-338, p. 217.

¹⁰ *Grantor and Grantee Indexes, Suffolk County, MA deeds, 1639-1885*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1969.

¹¹ 1851 Boston City Directory.

¹² 1860 Federal Census, Ward 10, Boston, MA, Roll M653-523, Page: 435.

¹³ 1870 Federal Census, Ward 8, Boston, MA, Roll M593-645, p. 74.

¹⁴ Massachusetts Vital Records, Boston, Marriages, 1853, vol. 71, p. 128.

¹⁵ Massachusetts Vital Records, Brookline, Deaths, 1913, vol. 25, p. 108.

¹⁶ Francis J. Parker, *Genealogy of the Ainsworth Families in America*. Boston: F. J. Parker, 1894. *Registrations of Deaths, 1869-1934*. MS 935. Archives of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

- ¹⁷ Massachusetts Vital Records, Somerville, Deaths, 1872, vol. 248, p. 256. There may have been a hereditary neurological disease in this family, since one daughter, Anna Cora, was also a patient at McLean Aylum in 1880, and another daughter, Abbie Louise, was declared non compos mentis in 1916.
- ¹⁸ Massachusetts Vital Records, Brookline, Deaths, 1913, vol. 25, p. 108.
- ¹⁹ Records of the Hollis Street Church in Boston, <http://www.newenglandancestors.org/> database. Ogden Codman, *Hollis Street Church, Boston: records of admissions, baptisms, marriages, and deaths, 1732 – 1887* ; transcribed by Robert J. Dunkle and Ann Smith Lainhart. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1998.
- ²⁰ Massachusetts Vital Records, Boston, Births, 1856, vol. 98, p. 122.
- ²¹ 1880 Federal Census, Somerville, MA, Roll T9-546, p. 205.
- ²² Records of the Hollis Street Church in Boston, <http://www.newenglandancestors.org/> database. Ogden Codman, *Hollis Street Church, Boston: records of admissions, baptisms, marriages, and deaths, 1732 – 1887* ; transcribed by Robert J. Dunkle and Ann Smith Lainhart. Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1998.
- ²³ *Massachusetts Vital Records, Index to Deaths in Massachusetts, 1926 – 1930* , vol. 87. Boston, MA: Registry of Vital Records and Statistics.
- ²⁴ Massachusetts. Probate Court (Suffolk County), *Index to the probate records of the County of Suffolk, Massachusetts : from the year 1910 to and including the year 1922*. Boston, Mass. : Printing Department, 1927.
- ²⁵ Massachusetts Vital Records, Boston, Births, 1859, vol. 125, p. 96.
- ²⁶ 1870 Federal Census, Ward 8, Boston, MA, Roll M593-645, p. 74.
- ²⁷ *Grantor and Grantee Indexes, Suffolk County, MA deeds, 1639-1885* . Salt Lake City, Utah: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1969.
- ²⁸ 1880 Federal Census, Boston, Suffolk, MA, Roll T9-558, p. 11.
- ²⁹ 1900 Federal Census, Brookline, MA, Roll T623-669, p. 8B, ED 1020.
- ³⁰ Date of birth calculated from his age on his death record, Massachusetts Vital Records, Cambridge, Deaths, 1864, vol. 175, p. 65.
- ³¹ Massachusetts Vital records, Boston, MA, Marriages, 1856, vol. 101, p. 146.
- ³² Massachusetts Vital Records, Cambridge, Deaths, 1864, vol. 175, p. 65.
- ³³ 1860 Federal Census, Ward 10, Boston, MA, Roll M653-523, Page: 435; 1870 Federal Census, Ward 8, Boston, MA, Roll M593-645, p. 74.
- ³⁴ Richard Griffith, *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland* . Dublin: Irish Microforms Ltd., c1978.
- ³⁵ Massachusetts Vital Records, Fall River, Marriages, 1864, vol. 171, p. 88.
- ³⁶ The Adjutant General, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War* , Vol. VI, p. 638. Norwood, MA: The Norwood Press, 1933.
- ³⁷ U.S. Colored Troops database, <http://www.ancestry.com/>.
- ³⁸ Richard Griffith, *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland* . Dublin: Irish Microforms Ltd., c1978.