

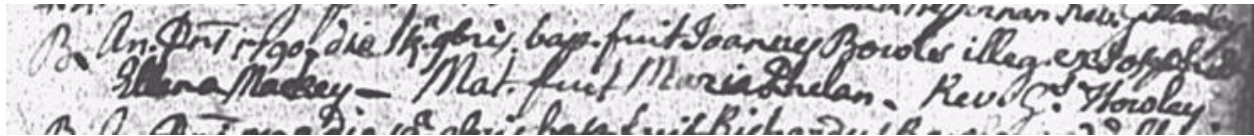
The Bowles of Valcartier's Roots in Ireland

by Tom LaPorte
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At least 10 years ago I was told that the Bowles of Valcartier had a family reference, perhaps in a family bible that their ancestor who came to Canada, John Bowles, had been born about 1790 to parents, Joseph Bowles and Ellen Mackey of Springhill, County Tipperary, Ireland. I have never been able to find any proof of that until this month when the Roman Catholic Church registers kept at the National Library of Ireland were finally made available and searchable on the findmypast.com website. Although there were no records in the database for Springhill I found that the closest Roman Catholic Church to Springhill was at Killenaule. In the Killenaule registers I found that the family tradition was correct.

John Bowles bp. Sept. 14, 1790 Killenaule, co. Tipperary; parents: Joseph Bowles and Ellena Mackey

Godmother: Maria Phelan

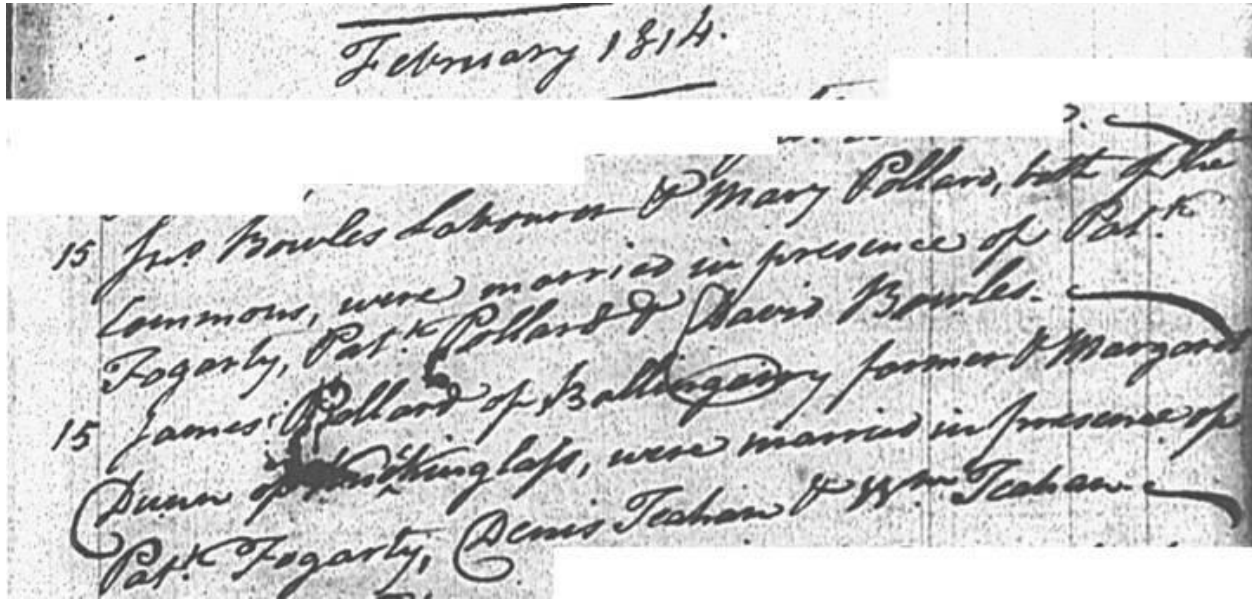


One researcher stated that John Bowles was b. between 1788 and 1791 and that he married a Mary Pollard at Gortnahoe Parish and their first child was born there about 1817.

Fortunately, the Gortnahoe Parish Registers are also in the newly available Irish Church Records database. I found John Bowles and Mary Pollard's marriage there in 1814.

Feb. 15, 1814 John Bowles, labourer/collier (ie. coal miner) m. Mary Pollard, both of The Commons Feb. 15, 1814 Gortnahoe Parish Witnesses: Patrick Fogarty, Patrick Pollard and David

Bowles



It's significant that David Bowles, who must have been a brother or cousin of John's, signed as a witness at this baptism in a Catholic Church.

The Bowles of Kilcooley had a division in their religious beliefs. The Bowles of The Commons were Catholic and the Bowles of Bawnlea, just a couple of miles up the Palatine Road, were Protestant. David was one of the Protestant members of the Bowles family but it seems that at this point their differences had not affected their family loyalties. Their exact relationship is not known but I believe they were cousins rather than brothers. John and a George Bowles, both of The Commons, were probably brothers, sons of Joseph Bowles of Springhill (b. ca. 1760-65). David of nearby Crohane and Charles Bowles of Bawnlea were probably the sons of George Bowles of Bawnlea (b. ca. 1758) who was the son of George Bowles Sr. of Crohane (b. ca. 1735). That would make Joseph Bowles of Springhill also a son of George Bowles Sr. of Crohane.

Another Pollard was married that same day in what appears to have been a double wedding as shown in the Gortnahoe register above:

James Pollard of Ballingarry, farmer m. Margaret Dunn of Knockinglass (?); Witnesses: Patrick Fogarty, Denis Teahan (?) and William Teahan (?)

Mary Pollard, was likely also from Ballingarry, Tipperary where we find a monument for the Pollard family which lists a Pollard couple from The Commons:



Monument for the Pollard family at Ballingarry Village , Church of The Assumption.

While living at The Commons, John Bowles and Mary Pollard baptized four sons:

James Bowls bp. Mar. 19, 1816 Gortnahoe

Witnesses: D... Bowls and Mary Mathew (?)

19 - James of John Bowls of the Commons & Mary Mathew
witnesses: D... Bowls & Mary Mathew

Thomas Bowles bp. Sept. 10, 1817 Gortnahoe (parents are 'of Williamstown' which is about 1 mile north of The Commons)

Witnesses: Richard Dugan (?) and Margaret B....

10 - Thomas of John Bowles of Williamstown & Mary Mathew
witnesses: Richard Dugan & Margaret B....

William Bowels bp. May 20, 1819 Gortnahoe

Witnesses: Joseph ? (possibly Boles)

William of John Bowels of the Commons & Mary Mathew
witnesses: Joseph ? (possibly Boles)

John Bowles bp. June 10, 1821 Gortnahoe

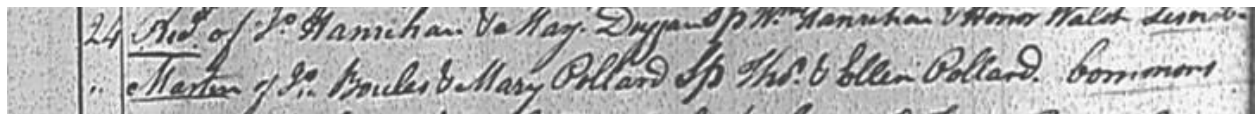
Witnesses: P... B.... and Mary ?

10 - John of John Bowles of the Commons & Mary Mathew
witnesses: P... B.... & Mary ?

The predominately Catholic Irish were becoming increasingly active in their resistant to English Protestant rule in the early 1800's due to an increased enforcement of the Anti-Catholic laws. The Bowles of The Commons lived in a predominately Catholic community right next door to the exclusively Protestant community of Bawnlea where their Bowles relatives lived. Bawnlea was a predominately Palatine settlement with a few Protestant Irish tenants which had been created by Sir William Barker, Baronet on his Kilcooley estate. In 1822, with Kilcooley in a virtual state of rebellion, John Bowles and Mary Pollard baptized another son in the Pollard's village of Ballingarry.

Martin Boules bp. Nov. 24, 1822 Ballingarry

Witnesses: Thomas and Ellen Pollard



That's the last record I can find for them in Ireland. Another son Charles was born in Ireland but I cannot find any record for him.

In 1825, when the English Parliament was considering a Catholic Relief Bill which would ease the anti-Catholic laws in Ireland, Sir William Barker was one of the major local opponents of any such measure. That bill was defeated but remained a contentious issue in England as in Ireland. In 1827 the English landlords attempted to demonstrate their opposition by circulating an Anti-Catholic petition. On April 4, 1827 the Tipperary Free Press (of Clonmel) printed "It is a pleasing circumstance, that out of the numerous body of Landed Proprietors, only two dozen could be found, whose hearts are so corroded with bigotry, as to deny a participation of rights to their fellow-subjects" and also hinted "The Slieverdagh (ie. Kilcooley) Petitioners shall also receive a just measure of attention, when the hurry of the Assizes are over; we have received their names, and shall only now say, that such a list of ragamuffins (with very few exceptions) was scarcely ever presented to the public." The list of the signer's from the Slieverdagh Hills was published on May 12 and included about 325 names including almost the entire list of landholders in Bawnlea including Charles Bowles and from nearby Crohane: John Bowles, sen.; Chas. Bowles; Wm. Bowles and David Bowles. Given the power and authority of their landlords it's doubtful that they had any choice in the matter but they signed and undoubtedly were

subjected to the 'measure of attention' by their Catholic neighbours as promised by the newspaper.

Within the next year John Bowles and his family would emigrate to Canada and settle at Valcartier and Charles and David Bowles and their families would leave Kilcooley and settle in Peel County, Ontario. It's believed that there was no further contact in Canada between the two Bowles branches. When the suggestion of their common ancestry came up skepticism on both sides led to DNA testing which resulted in a 24 of 25 marker match (with only one quickly mutating marker being different by 1 unit which can occur even between subsequent generations) proving their common ancestry.