

Migration from Valcartier to Wisconsin

by Patricia Balkcom, 2006
(Updated January, 2014)

The following information has been compiled from the Wisconsin censuses and from a letter written by Cornelius Neilson in 1860. Those families that I am most interested in appear in an attached Census Chart. Many individuals discussed here and the details of the censuses in which they were listed can be found in the main database using the Surname Index.

By the 1840 and 1850's, the second generation of the original Valcartier settlers found that farm land was becoming scarce. Unless their parents were willing to subdivide their land, the grown-up children found that they had to move into the surrounding mountains. As a result, some of them decided to move into Quebec City or into lands in the United States. These U. S. lands included the states of New Hampshire, Michigan and Wisconsin. I have traced several of those families that traveled to Wisconsin as several of them are in my ancestral line.

Those Who Came

Wisconsin was formed into a territory in 1836 but did not achieve statehood until 1848. It was the nation's leading grain producer at this time, and farmland was abundant and relatively inexpensive. Settlers from Valcartier were experienced farmers and would have found this area attractive as it bordered the shores of Lake Michigan. Also, as train travel expanded west, the trip to Wisconsin was made much easier. It appears that the first settlers to travel from Valcartier were Thomas **GOUGH** and his wife, Mary Anne **MCDONALD** who were settled there by 1843. Thomas and Mary are found in the 1850 Census in the town of Mequon. Thomas's brother, Michael **GOUGH** and his wife, Elizabeth **ELDER** follow around 1847 and settle about 10 miles to the north in Saukville. Both brothers have large families and tragically suffer the loss of several of their children. Thomas's lost three young sons all on July 26, 1852, possible to a contagious disease, such as diphtheria. It is interesting to wonder how the Goughs knew about Wisconsin as I suspect advertisement about land in Wisconsin was probably not widespread in Quebec. Mequon was founded by British settlers in 1836 and at that time was a dense wilderness with the only thoroughfares being those of the Indian trails. By the early 1840's though, a grist mill had been built and the town laid out. Thomas and Mary stayed here until the 1860s and then relocated to Maple Creek in Outagamie County. Michael and Elizabeth remained in the Saukville area all of their lives.

The Goughs must have written back to their friends and relatives in Valcartier with positive experiences, as the next group to arrive appears in 1854 and they also settle in Mequon, Ozaukee County. Included are three children of William Corrigan and Margaret Brown - John Charles **CORRIGAN** and his wife Ellen Mooney and their three children, Michael Corrigan (who marries Catherine Goff the year after arriving) and Jane Corrigan and her husband Michael **CASSIN** and their two children. Ellen Mooney's parents and several siblings, including her married brother, Richard, also come (parents are Lawrence **MOONEY** AND Bridget **BYRNES**). It is not clear if the Mooneys came with the Corrigans and Cassins or if they came a few later, however, we know that they are there by 1857. At this time, I have not found land records, so I do not know

how large the farms were. However, from census records, I do know that all five families were living adjacent to each other in Mequon in 1860.

Between 1855 and early 1860, several other families make the trip. Included in the group who settle in Saukville, Ozaukee County, are James **MCDONALD** and his children. His wife, Frances **IRELAND** does not appear in the 1860 census, however, she is listed as being baptised in Valcartier in 1859 - had she left Wisconsin and moved back, or had she died between 1859 and 1860? Living beside the McDonalds is William **DONOHUE** and his wife Sarah **FINLEY** and their six children. The Donohoes appear to have arrived by 1856 as they have had three additional children born in Wisconsin by 1860. A couple of farms away is William **FINLEY** and his wife Catherine **FOGARTY** and their 5 children. It appears that they also arrived in 1856. William Finlay and Sarah Finley Donohoe are brother and sister - they are the children of Charles Finley and Ann Carton. Ann died in 1848 and Charles remarried Ann Foy. By 1860, Charles has also died, and his second wife, Ann **FOY FINLEY**, also comes to Saukville with their three children. She settles next to Michael and Elizabeth Gough.

In November 1860, Cornelius **NEILSON**, and several of his family arrive. We are lucky to have a transcription of a **letter** that he wrote to his father, William, shortly after their arrival in Wisconsin. It helps not only by providing a list of those arriving but also gives us details as to the cost of land and some details of settling in the area. Cornelius' grandfather, John Neilson, is generally considered one of the original founders of Valcartier. The letter also makes me wonder about the timing of the arrival as Cornelius talks about plowing 55 acres in late November - seems like the ground would be getting hard by then, although he states they have had good weather since they got there. Cornelius settles on a farm in Granville which is just south of Mequon but in Milwaukee County. Unfortunately, the letter contains only first names, so we have to make some deductions as to who he is talking about. "Agnes **CASSIN** has not found a place yet and is living with Mark Cassin's wife". I believe he is referring to Agnes, daughter of Denis Cassin of Valcartier. I think "Mark" is a transcription error and that it should say Mick or Mike, referring to the only Cassin that we are aware of in Wisconsin - Michael Cassin and Agnes would have been first cousins. Cornelius also talks about his wife, Maggie, (Margaret **IRELAND**), and mentions their two children - Walter, who would have been 3 yrs. old and a baby. This baby is not found in subsequent censuses, so I believe that it died in their first years there. The others mentioned to say "hello" to back in Valcartier are probably: Cornelius' siblings - Margaret Neilson who married John **REYNOLDS**, Sam Neilson and his wife Elizabeth Brown, Agnes Neilson and husband John Billing, Elizabeth Neilson, Isabel Neilson who married Charles **WOLFF**. I believe that Sarah is probably his sister-in-law, Sarah Ireland.

Ellen Corrigan, another child of William and Margaret Brown Corrigan, made the trip with her husband, James **CORRIGAN**, in 1862. James was the son of Lawrence Corrigan and Isabel Bonnali. No proof of the relationship between William and Lawrence, both from Ireland, has been found, however, it is possible that they were brothers. This would make Ellen and James first cousins - marrying relatives was not unusual during this time period. Also Ellen's brother James Corrigan, his wife, Ann **NAVIN**, and their four daughters, came about 1867. At the same time, or by the next year, another brother, Edward, a sister, Margaret, and their mother, Margaret **BROWN CORRIGAN** also arrive. Edward marries a Wisconsin girl, Mary O'Brien, shortly thereafter. By 1868, seven of Margaret Brown Corrigan's eleven children have moved to the area. By 1870, we find that Hopper **IRELAND**, his wife Margaret **WATTS**, and daughter, Louise, join their other daughter, Margaret and her husband, Cornelius in Granville. They buy a farm close by.

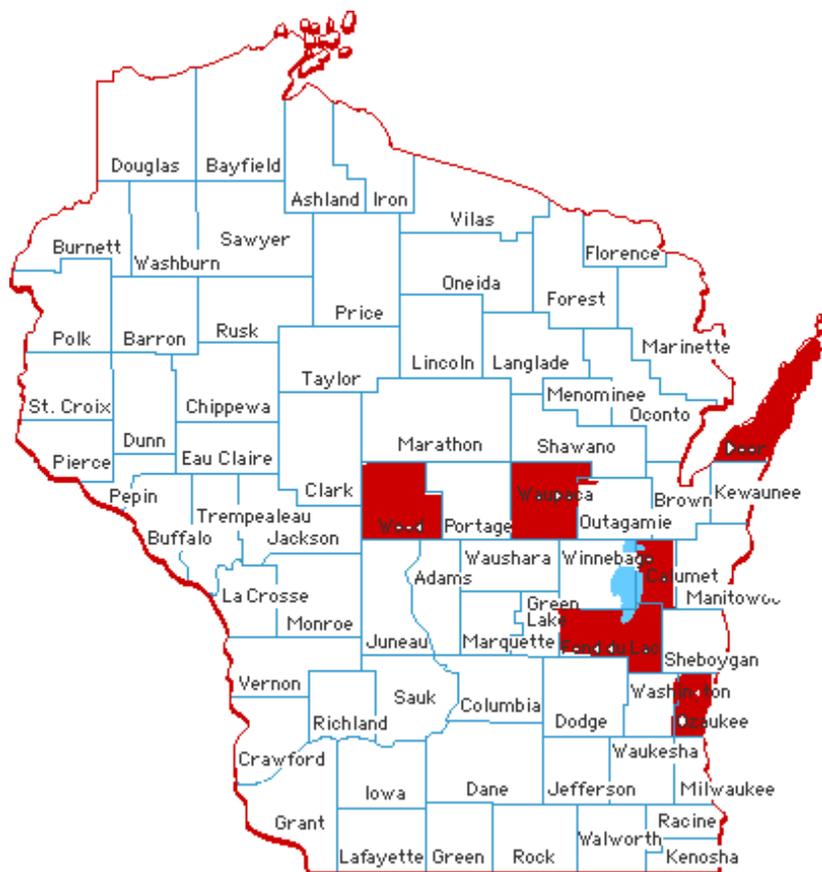
The last folks that I have found that come from Valcartier are William Corrigan, son of Margaret Brown, and his wife Jane **MARTIN**. Interestingly, they arrive in 1885, close to 60 yrs. old and settle in Wood County, in the interior of Wisconsin, where I have not found any others from Valcartier. It appears that they leave behind in Valcartier their eight grown children, however, it is possible that some of these are in Wisconsin and I have missed them in the censuses. In the late 1800's, Edward 'Jack' **KEILY** and Hugh **BOYD** arrived. This information is provided by his grandson, Patrick Keily: "Jack Keily was a wilderness guide at Boyd's Mason Lake Resort in Fifield, Wisconsin. He traveled from Quebec to join with Hugh Boyd, also of Valcartier, QC. He Married Freida Linsmeyer (adopted by Louis Linzmeier-Actual father was one Fred Biller, mother Louise Hoelzer) in 1908. Grandpa Jack was a rough, tough fighting wood butcher (sleigh maker) and plumber. Hard drinking and obstinate, he was actually liked by many people and feared by most. He lived in Butternut, Wisconsin until the early 1950s when he was put in a nursing home in Park Falls, Wisconsin. He ran away many times, always heading in the direction of Quebec (quoted once in 1961 as saying he was going to catch a ride on a rig back to Valcartier). When they took away his shoes to discourage running away, he ran away bare-footed. Stories told by my family say that he was a friend of Stephen Crane whom he guided on wilderness trips. He is buried in Fifield, Wisconsin, next to wife Freida, son George and daughter, Kathleen. In 2001, I traveled to Valcartier, QC to visit the site of the Keily farm. Upon returning, I brought a bag of soil from Grandpa's birthplace and placed it on his grave, thus bringing to him what he seemed to long for in his final years.

In regard to the Migration to Wisconsin portion, I may have a little information that may explain part of the migration. It concerns the Wisconsin Central Railroad. I read the history of this railroad about 30 years ago and some things stuck with me. The railroad was built following the American Civil War and was a military railroad. It was constructed from Menasha (between Green Bay and Oshkosh) in southeastern Wisconsin, to Ashland, on the south shore of Lake Superior. Its purpose was to provide transportation of troops to the Canadian border as Canada was considered a hostile nation at the time because of England's support of the South during the war. I am not sure of the amount, but I believe it was \$35 million dollars was provided by the government for a private party to construct this railroad. Also included in the deal was that the railroad was given every other section of land for 20 miles either side of the right of way. This was very important to the founders of the railroad as it was a way to establish commerce for the line. They offered the land to settlers for free providing they would clear the land and establish agriculture. The hardwood trees were burned to make charcoal and was exported on the railroad to Milwaukee and Chicago. After the land was cleared, the hay and grain were sold to these cities also. The railroad flourished and was just recently sold, ironically, to the Canadian National RR. This might have been part of the reason for the migration. My grandfather came and settled along this railroad but not to farm. Hugh Boyd came because he realized with a railroad, city people now had a way to travel to the wilderness, so he formed Boyd's Mason Lake Resort, a place still in existence and still bearing his name."

Not All Stayed Put

Many of the settlers stayed in Ozaukee County or in the case of the Neilsons, in Granville. However, Michael Corrigan and Michael Cassin moved to Lebanon Township in Waupaca County by 1870 (not the Lebanon that is about 40 miles west but the township that is about 100 miles northwest). This was more rural and mainly settled by Irish farmers and it's possible that Mequon became 'crowded' due to its proximity to Milwaukee and that land was less expensive as one moved to the interior. Also, as children of the original settlers grew up, several gave up farming and moved to the big city of Milwaukee. The

map's shaded areas show where the Valcartier people eventually lived. Several descendants of these settlers still live in Wisconsin. Some also moved to Nebraska at the turn of the century. Inspection of the [CENSUS CHART](#) below will show who went where and during what time period. Remember also, that more details of each census entry can be found in the main database by searching under individual names.



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Migration Dates are my 'best guesses' based on census information and birthdates of children.

Children of William Corrigan and Margaret Brown Corrigan appear in green.

Spouses are in black and indented, maiden names given when known. Children beyond the 2nd generation are not in the chart, but are in the database.

Blue areas indicate that they could not be found in that census.

Updated 27 January 2014

NAME	Migration Date	1860	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
John Charles Corrigan (1823 -)	1854 - Mequon	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee				
Ellen Mooney (c1831 -)	1854 - Mequon	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee				
Children of John Charles Corrigan:								
Margaret Corrigan (1850 -)	1854 - Mequon	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee					
Lawrence A. Corrigan (1851- by 1920)	1854 - Mequon	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	has died	
Margaret ? (1852 - after 1920)	married 1876			Saukville, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	
William Corrigan (1853 -)	1854 - Mequon	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City		Milwaukee City
Mary Clare (1860 -)	married c1880			Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City		Milwaukee City
Bridget Corrigan (1855 -)	born WI	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Cedarburg, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City		Sherwood, Milwaukee
John Mullaney (1851 -)	married 1874			Cedarburg, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City		Sherwood, Milwaukee
John E. Corrigan (1857 -)	born WI	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee		Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City		Whitefish Bay, Milwaukee
Margaret S. Bannon (1859 -)	married 1881				Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City		
James Bartholomew Corrigan (1858-)	born WI	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee					
Anna Maria Murray								
Elizabeth Jane Corrigan (1861 -)	born WI		Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee		Milwaukee City		
Thomas F. Corrigan (1865 -)	born WI		Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee				

James Cassin (1876-c1918)	born WI			Lebanon, Waupaca		Milwaukee City	has died	
Kathryn Griffin (1879-1859)	married 1903					Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City
William Cassin (1862 -)	born WI		Lebanon, Waupaca			Royalton, Waupaca	Royalton, Waupaca	
Mary Bellen	married 1885					has died		
Cornelius Neilson (1835 -)	1860 - Granville		Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee		
Margaret Ireland (1838 -)	1860 - Granville		Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee		
James Corrigan (1822- 97)	1862			Calumet County	has died			
Ellen Corrigan (1824 -)	1862			Calumet County				
Hopper Ireland (1802 -)	by 1870		Granville, Milwaukee					
Margaret Watt (1809 -)	by 1870		Granville, Milwaukee					
James Corrigan (1837 -)	1867		Saukville, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee			
Ann Navin (1840 - c1881)	1867		Saukville, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee	has died			
Margaret Hulihan	married 1882				Mequon, Ozaukee			
Margaret Brown Corrigan (1804 -)	by 1868		Mequon, Ozaukee					
Edward Corrigan (1839 -)	by 1868		Mequon, Ozaukee					
Mary O'Brien (1845 -)	married 1868		Mequon, Ozaukee					
Margaret Corrigan (1847 -)	by 1868		Mequon, Ozaukee					
Children of James Corrigan:								
John Corrigan (1870 -)	born WI			Mequon, Ozaukee	Cedarsburg, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	
Mary Butler (1871 -)	married 1901					Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City	
Kathy Corrigan (1872 -)	born WI				Cedarsburg, Ozaukee			
Theresa Corrigan (1883 -)	born WI				Cedarsburg, Ozaukee			

Katherine Cassin (wife of ? Cassin)	1868				Little Wolf, Waupaca			
William Corrigan (1827 -)	1885				Pittsville, Wood Co.			
Jane Martin (1827 -)	1885				Pittsville, Wood Co.			
Edward H. Corrigan (1868 -)*	born WI			Saukville, Ozaukee	Milwaukee City	Milwaukee City		
Anna M. (1878 -)	married 1906					Milwaukee City		
William Cornelius Neilson (1869 -)**	born WI		Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee			Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee
Harriet D. Davis (1878 -)	married 1897						Granville, Milwaukee	Granville, Milwaukee
John Reynolds (1830 -)	1860		Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee				
Margaret Neilson (1841-1913)	1860		Mequon, Ozaukee	Mequon, Ozaukee			had died	
Catherine Corrigan (1876 -)***						Liberty Grove, Door Co.		Sturgeon, Door Co.
Henry Joseph Pleck						Liberty Grove, Door Co.		Sturgeon, Door Co.
*Son of Lawrence A. Corrigan								
**Son of Cornelius Neilson								
***Don't know if this is one of our Corrigan								

Others: (may not be in main database, can provide specific census details if you email me).
Remember that migration dates are approximate.

NAME	Migration Date	1850	1860	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
Thomas Gough (c1803 - 1892)	c1843 - Mequon	Mequon, Washington Co.	Mequon, Ozaukee	Maple Creek, Outagamie Co.	Maple Creek, Outagamie Co.				
Mary Anne McDonald (c1817 - 1860s)	c1843 - Mequon	Mequon, Washington Co.	Mequon, Ozaukee	Maple Creek, Outagamie Co.	has died				

Michael Gough (1807-1898)	c1846 - Saukville	Saukville, Washington Co.	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee					
Elizabeth Elder (c1816-1897)	c1848 - Saukville	Saukville, Washington Co.	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukeville, Ozaukee		has died			
William Donohoe (1823-)	1856 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee						
Sarah Finlay (1826 -)	1856 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee						
William Finlay (1827-)	1856 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee			
Catherine Fogarty (1830-)	1856 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee			
Ann Foy Finlay (1824-)	1856 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee						
James McDonald (1818-95)	1859 - Saukville		Saukville, Ozaukee	Saukville, Ozaukee		has died			
Edward Keily (1877-1962)	late 1800s						Fifield, Price Co.		
Hugh Boyd (1866 -)	late 1800s								