

Tracing our Kee and McKee Genealogy Using Pedigrees and DNA

-- William E. Howard III, Robert J. Kee and David McFarland --

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ABSTRACT:

For many years each of the authors had been independently exploring our Kee and McKee ancestry. In early 2010 we discovered that we had pieces of information that, taken together, showed a common ancestral line in Ulster. We worked together to produce a tentative family tree. With the goal of proving our line, we began to fill in missing pieces from original and secondary sources, published books, and family records. We found that one or more lines had migrated from Ulster to Canada. The results of three Y-DNA tests led credibility to our provisional pedigree and showed family relationships among the authors. The Y-DNA results of many males who have surnames that include, or sound like Kee, McKee, Gee, McGee, McGhee, McKay, McKaye, etc., were used to produce a phylogenetic tree that shows the genetic relationships among all these surnames. Analyses of the positions of the testees on the tree provide estimates of how long ago each testee shared a most recent common ancestor with other testees. We show that a large majority of this entire surname group carries the M222 SNP (an identifying Single-Nucleotide Polymorphism) whose progenitor lived about 1680 BC¹. We also conclude that virtually all the testees listed in the largest group within the testing agency's McKee 37-marker site share a close common ancestor with our pedigree line who probably lived in Scotland about 1670 years ago +/- 300 years SD), or about 275 AD, much farther back than genealogical records are available.

INTRODUCTION:

This is a story of how three amateur genealogists engaged in a joint quest to find our ancestral Kee and McKee lines. We begin the story with three individual accounts of what we knew about our own line and we then show how our collaboration took place and the types of exploration we did together, including the pursuit of DNA results². We then discuss the process by which we tied pedigrees to a phylogenetic tree with its associated time scale. From this process we finally show how all these pieces of the jigsaw puzzle began to yield sets of relationships that might not have been possible without the time, the effort, the camaraderie, and the communication that each of us put into our collaboration.

PART I – OUR PEDIGREE LINES:

BILL'S McKEE LINE – Magheracoltan to Strabane to America (William E. Howard)

A. Discovery

I was aware during my early boyhood, just before World War II, that my maternal grandmother was corresponding with relatives who lived in Northern Ireland. Her name was Cecil Frances McKee Bacon (1874-1959) and she was the daughter of the Rev. John

Matthew Ezekiel McKee (1832, Strabane–1916, Washington DC). She was a veteran bridge player and sometimes wrote snippets about the family on the back of bridge score pads and put them in her writing desk. When she died, her effects passed through the family and eventually came into my possession.

When my mother's sister Ann Hamilton Bacon died in 1995, I managed her estate, and I received a letter of condolence from someone living near me in Virginia whom I did not know. I found out that she was a descendant of the Upper Maymore Hamilton family in Co. Donegal to whom my grandmother had been writing in the late 1930s.

By this time I had become interested in my ancestral lines. My Howard line goes back to the mid-1600s in Maryland and my paternal grandmother's line traces from Washington DC to New York State, then back through two different lines that connect with William Bradford, John Alden and Priscilla Mullens, all of whom were passengers on the Mayflower in 1620. Now I was beginning to have information on part of my mother's maternal line, the Hamiltons. Family lore on both sides of the Atlantic told the story that JME McKee, returning to America after having been ordained to the priesthood by Bishop William Alexander of the Diocese of Londonderry and Raphoe in Co. Donegal, had been asked to escort Anna Hamilton (1848, Upper Maymore – 1932, Washington DC) aboard a ship that was taking her to Philadelphia to visit her brother James (1863 Upper Maymore—1936, Mt. Ephraim, NJ). They fell in love and were married on shipboard one day out of New York. McKee took her to Washington instead.

Incidentally, their daughter, Cecil Frances McKee (my grandmother) was named after the wife of Bishop Alexander, Cecil Frances Humphreys. They married in Strabane in 1850. Mrs. Alexander was a hymn writer of world wide-reputation and among her hymns are the famous "There is a Green Hill Far Away", "All Things Bright and Beautiful", and the Christmas carol "Once in Royal David's City".

I found that the current resident of the ancestral home in Maymore, Tom Hamilton, had a brother John Leslie Hamilton who was compiling an extensive genealogy of the Hamilton line, which he could trace back to James II of Scotland. This line was later proved when Tom's Y-DNA test matched the group called Hamilton B and both his pedigree and his DNA matched others in that group³.

Leslie and I began an email correspondence about the Hamiltons. He had begun to write a book on his Hamilton genealogy and he shared his manuscript with me. In 2000 there was a meeting of the International Astronomical Union in Manchester, England that I was planning to attend and Leslie invited me to visit him after my meeting. Unfortunately, Leslie died before the meeting, but his brother Tom invited my wife and me to visit them, instead. Leslie's widow and son published Leslie's book posthumously⁴.

By this time, I knew much more about my maternal and fraternal lines than I did about the McKee line, so during our week in Maymore we spent time in churches, graveyards and in a car exploring where my McKees lived in both Strabane and Magheracoltan -- both on the estate of Baronscourt -- all of which had been mentioned on the back of my grandmother Cecil's bridge scores.

B. McKee's Life

In 1998, before our trip to Maymore, I began a chronology of the life of Rev. JME McKee. There are extensive letters from him and concerning him that are in the archive of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland in Baltimore and his Civil War records and other census data are in the US National Archives.

His letters in the archive of the Diocese are especially illuminating about McKee as a person. For a short time he worked as a young reporter for the Tyrone Constitution⁵. He

came to America in 1857 with a driving ambition to become an Episcopal priest, but his education was not up to the standards required for ordination. He spent two years in Pennsylvania, and tried to undertake courses of study that would lead to the type of degree and the languages needed for ordination. He left both his preparatory studies in Philadelphia and at the Virginia Theological Seminary before completing his studies. His letters show great patriotism for he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Union Infantry, signing up in Clarion Co. where some McKee relatives apparently resided⁶. His unit saw US Civil War action in many famous battles, including the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. After the war he went to Georgetown, a part of Washington, where he began in 1866 to write plaintive letters to Bishop William R. Whittingham asking for admittance to Holy Orders, but to no avail. By 1868 he was a lay reader and is listed as a minister, returning from a trip to Ireland. A month later he is admitted to Holy Orders and he again pleaded for ordination. Whittington only ordained him as Deacon. By 1870 he was officiating in St. John's Parish, Washington, with special charge of the black congregation at St. Mary's Chapel.

On Easter Day, 1871, while he was the first minister of St. Mary's Church, an arm of St. John's Church on Lafayette Square (the "Church of the Presidents"), he told his black congregation that, according to the rules of the church, only the white leadership could participate in the management of the church. A petition to the Bishop by some of the men in the congregation led to his removal. He was a white minister heading a black congregation. He had obtained money from the Freedmans' Association that funded efforts to integrate freed slaves into the life of the city. Although he was conforming to the church policy of the times, his lack of diplomacy was probably responsible for his removal as minister. He then took on temporary duties at a little black church in Anacostia. He continued to petition the Bishop for ordination to no avail and his livelihood was maintained by various jobs at the Freedmen' Bureau, and as Hospital Chaplain near Howard University.

Finally, in desperation, he returned to Ireland where he was ordained by Bishop Alexander of Derry and Raphoe. He returned to Washington and wrote Bishop Whittingham saying, in essence, "Here I am; I am ordained; Use me!"

His ministry thereafter was one of successive posts – a Rector of St. James' Parish, the US Hospital Chaplain, and a recall to Anacostia. In the 1880s McKee became rector of St. John's Chapel and undertook as part of his duties, the supervision of St. Mary's, the parish from which he was dismissed earlier in his career. In the 1890s, he applied for a pension and he had extensive correspondence about whether his war disabilities, including deafness, would affect his occupation as a minister. His daughter, Cecil, was an organist with the All-Boy's Choir at St. Mary's. In 1904 McKee left the Washington Parish and was listed as a non-parochial clergyman. In 1905 as a result of deaths in the family, he returned to Co. Tyrone where he acted as superintendent of Sunday School in the absence of the invalid Rector, in Newtonstewart, Co. Tyrone. He preached at Christ Church, Strabane, and preached and assisted at Communion services at St. Thomas' Church, Belfast. For two years before his death in 1916, McKee was engaged in work with the National Cathedral Chapter in the early days of the construction of that Washington edifice.

C. Pedigree

There was enough information in my grandmother's effects to trace McKee's family to his father Joseph (1801-1880), a druggist in Strabane, to his mother Margaret Donnell (~1809-1875), to his sisters Maria/Marian (1828-1905), Elizabeth (1829-1906), Harriette

(1837-1903) and to his deceased brother William Blair (1839-1847) who burned to death at the age of 8. Family notes named McKee's Grandfather Matthew McKee (~1780-~1858) and grandmother, Elizabeth Blair⁷ (1783-1873) who lived in Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone. Elizabeth Blair's father may have been Alexander Blair of Calhame, and Matthew's father (first name unknown; ~1760~1834) was married in about 1778 to a woman whose surname was Orr (1764-?).

Having been curious to fill out this line more completely I posted questions about the line on Rootsweb and waited for replies.

ROBERT'S KEE LINE – Ulster (Robert J. Kee)

A. Background

I was born on New Year's Day, 1960, and grew up on a small farm in the townland of Castletown (East), about 1 mile east of Strabane. My grandparents, John James Fulton Kee (1892 - 1980) and Barbara Annie Hawthorne (1903-1979), lived with us on the farm which my Grandfather had inherited in 1926, upon the death of his father, Hamilton Kee (~1843 – 1926). The farm lies on the slopes of Knockavoe, where the O'Neills were routed by the O'Donnells in 1522. The adjoining townlands to the south are Calhame and Dergault, with Tullyard and Holly Hill to the north. The ancestral home of Woodrow Wilson is in Dergault.

My early education was at Strabane Grammar, where the main building, Milltown House, was the residence of Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), the hymn-writer. My parents believed that her composition, "There is a Green Hill Far Away", was inspired by the views of Knockavoe from Milltown House.

My Great Grandfather, Hamilton Kee and his wife Rebecca Anne Fulton (1865-1954), were both born in the vicinity of Strabane, and were noted as the parents of ten boys, nine of whom remained in Ireland and one, Samuel (1901–1894) emigrated to Ontario. Hamilton and Rebecca were often discussed by my relatives but I never heard any mention of their ancestors, apart from family folklore, which suggested that Hamilton's ancestors came from Scotland, and moved to Ireland with King William at the time of the Battle of the Boyne (1690). Hamilton and Rebecca resided on a 21-acre farm at Holly Hill, which adjoined the Sinclair estate. William Roulston⁸ writes that "*the Sinclairs were the leading gentry family in the area from the late seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth century*". It is believed that the Sinclairs moved from Caithness in northeast Scotland to Leckpatrick, Strabane around 1666. Prior to my recent research, I supposed that my ancestors had resided in Holly Hill for several generations, and had probably come over to Ireland from Scotland as tenants on the Sinclair estate. I also noted that the McKay clan was based in Strathnavar, NE Scotland, from about 1160. The Kee surname is one derivative of McKay.

A Canadian QC (Queen's Council), Douglas Thurston Kee of Chatham, Ontario, contacted my family in the 1950's while he was working on his ancestry. I have recently found the letter and questionnaire, which Thurston sent to my grandparents, via my dad's 1st cousin, William Hawthorne (d -1997) Madoc, Ontario. Unfortunately, the questionnaire was never completed. It was recalled by my father, John Hamilton Kee (1929–2003), that Thurston was particularly keen to establish a link between his Grandfather, Hamilton Kee, and a Matthew Kee of Ardstraw.

Thurston compiled a family tree that showed that my Castletown branch was descended from a William Kee (d 1783) of Gortileck in the parish of Donaghedy. He traced his own ancestors to a Mathew Kee/McKee (b ~1780) in Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, and seems to

have concluded that this Mathew was a son of William's. No evidence to support this claim was provided.

Thurston also drew attention to the fact that a 1631 muster roll for Eden-Killeny⁹, the estate around Donemana, included a Daniel McKey. This Daniel was a settler under Sir William Hamilton and possessed a sword and snaphance.

William Roulston¹⁰ writes: *This man – also known as Daniel (or even Donel) McKey – was seneschal of Manor Elieston in the 1630s. He lived at Tirkernaghan where he died c.1636.* Manor Elieston was owned by Sir William Hamilton, and subsequently by the Leslie family. A portion of the house built by John Leslie II remains to this day, and is shown in Roulston's History of Donaghedy¹⁰. This house is located approximately 2 miles to the southeast of Gortileck.

In the Civil Survey of 1654 – 1656¹¹, it is stated that: *Hugh m^ckey and daniell m^ckey Scottish Protestants (sic) claymeth a fee farme of the within menconed Balliboe of Tirkernovan as heys to Daniell m^ckey decesased, who had a deede thereof from Sr William Hamilton then proprietor.*

In the 1660s, a dispute arose between James Hamilton (son of Sir William) and John Leslie II regarding the ownership of Manor Elieston. Some details of the court case exist and are given by Roulston¹⁰ as follows: *The first Daniel McKey made his will in 1635 and bequeathed Tirkenaghan to his son William. William was killed by insurgents in 1643 and Tyrkenaghan passed to his uncle Hugh. On 8 August 1655 Hugh McKey sold Tirkenaghan to John Leslie II.*

In the subsequent historical records associated with the townlands of Gortileck and Tirkenaghan, the family names of Kee, Keys and McKay regularly appear. The following is a selection:

1666: Mathew Kee is included in the Hearth Money Rolls for Donaghedy

1667: John Key was excommunicated from Donaghedy Presbyterian Church

1733: John and James Kee of Donaghedy leased lands in the adjoining county of Donegal¹² (note: the deed for this lease has not yet been found)

1777: Widow Kee and William Kee listed in the Survey & Valuation of Gortileck in the Manor of Cloghokal (Abercorn estate)

1783 (3 Aug.): James Hamilton¹³ writes to the Earl of Abercorn, "*Manor of Cloughokal, William Key, he is dead; his rent was £18. he left his land to his widow and two sons William and James, to each a third, William wants to sell his part to Robert son of Marey Kee. Marey lives on the mearing with Williams widow and pay £12.*

1783: Will of William Kee, Gortileck and will of Rose Kee, Gortileck¹⁴

1787, George, John and Robert Kee, John and Patrick McCay are listed in the Abercorn Rental Book for 1787¹⁵

In the Abercorn rental Book for 1833-1857, Robert and John Kee are listed as tenants in Gortileck, and my Great Great Grandfather, William Kee (1799-1888), is listed as a tenant in Castletown. The name of the previous tenant on William's farm has been struck out – he was James Donnell (1759-1844), brother of Ezekiel (~1763-1833). Ezekiel's daughter, Margaret Donnell (~1809-1875), married Joseph McKee (-1880) son of Matthew McKee, (~1780-bef 1858) and Elizabeth Blair (1783-1873). This Matthew McKee is the Great Great Great Grandfather of my co-authors, Bill Howard and David McFarland. Samuel Kee (1790-1892) is the Great Great Great Grandfather of David Jackson Kee. The rental books have shown that one of my co-authors (Bill) has a direct ancestor who farmed the land where I was raised. This was a wholly unexpected finding. The annual rental for the farm was £2 5s 1½d, paid in two equal installments in May and November. James Donnell died on 1st August 1844, and a rental payment was made in

November 1844, a sum of £90 1s 0d on 20th January 1849, i.e. 4 year's rental. This payment probably represents William Kee's payment for the leasehold. It is interesting to note that the 4 years between the death of James and the apparent transfer to William were the some of the worst years of the potato famine.

An additional connection to Elizabeth Blair is probable. Blairs were resident in Castletown in the early 1800s, and have been farming in the adjoining townlands of Calhame and Dergault from the late 1700's to the present day. Our home farm at Castletown is currently rented by members of the Blair family.

My paternal grandmother, Barbara Annie Hawthorne descended from a notable business family in Strabane. Her paternal Grandfather, Thomas Law, owned a brass and iron foundry, and is reputed to have manufactured all the hardware that was required to install gas-fuelled lighting in Strabane. A copy of his advertisement in a local paper states: *orders carefully attended to, and none but First-class and Sober Workmen sent out.* Unfortunately, to date, apart from my great grandmother, Isabella Law (1863 -1940), I have been unable to trace the fate of the other seven Law siblings. The Law business in Strabane collapsed while under the management of Isabella's husband, Thomas Hawthorne (1859-1930).

The Law family of Strabane seems to have many connections to Scotland; a significant proportion of the photos in a family album were by photographers in Glasgow. Also, internet searches show that a Law family in Glasgow operated a foundry. It is highly probable that many of Thomas Law's descendants returned to Scotland. Some of my relatives have claimed that Thomas Law was connected to Bonar Law (1858–1923), the first British Prime Minister of Scottish descent.

Around the year 2000, a close family friend, Norman Shaw, began researching his family tree. He kindly copied any information relating to my family, passed it on to me, and thereby stimulated a keen interest in my ancestry. I recalled that Thurston Kee of Ontario had researched the Kee line, and set about locating his documents. In an attempt to discover if a register of QC's existed, I called a lawyer, Prof. Kevin McGuiness, at the University of Bournemouth, as an internet search had revealed that Kevin had previously practiced law in Ontario. In an amazing stroke of luck, Kevin informed me that he personally knew a David Jackson Kee in Toronto, and gave me his contact details. I contacted David, and shortly afterwards received a copy of the book which Thurston compiled in 1970.

In November 2000, I noticed a message from Bill Howard on the Rootsweb/Genforum website. Bill was searching for information on Matthew Kee or McKee of Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, which is located seven miles directly south of my home farm at Castletown. I sent Bill a copy of Thurston's book, and put him in contact with Faye Logue, a noted genealogist based in Australia. Thurston's book suggested that Bill and I had a common ancestor, William Kee (d 1793) of Gortileck, Strabane but no firm supporting evidence was provided. Gortileck is approximately 4 miles to the northeast of Castletown and Holly Hill.

At this time, my father, John Hamilton was seriously ill, and I lost interest in my quest to discover my ancestors. Dad died in 2003, and it was not until Bill contacted me in 2009 that I resumed research.

B. Pedigree

My Grandfather, John James Fulton Kee (1893-1980) was born in the townland of Holly Hill, Strabane. He was one of the 10 sons of Hamilton Kee (~1843-1926) and Rebecca Ann Fulton (1865 -1954). Thurston quotes John Lyon Kee (d1955) of Buffalo, N.Y. as

follows: “*Verily the breed (Kee) shall not perish from the earth; he (Hamilton) did his part.*”

Thurston’s book¹⁷ indicated that Hamilton’s parents were William (~1799-1885) and Sarah (1807-1884). I managed to confirm these details from death certificates, and a decorative card that was circulated at the time of Sarah’s death. I also found an invoice dated 1892 from William Wilson, Solicitors, Strabane, in which the costs for ‘*endeavoring to effect a settlement*’ were detailed; William Kee had died intestate. This document listed William’s children as Matilda (b1836), William (1836-1906), Margaret (1837-1904), Hamilton (~1843-1926), David (b1843) and James (b1851).

According to Thurston, my Great Great Grandfather’s parents were Robert Kee (1752-1832) and Margaret Dunbar (1768-1856). Robert and Margaret are buried in Leckpatrick Old Burial Ground; the gravestone inscription indicates that he was from Gortyleck (sic), i.e. Gortileck in the parish of Donaghedy. This link to Gortileck was extremely important in my quest to develop a pedigree. Unfortunately to date, I have been unable to find a primary source that confirms the link. However, I am confident that Thurston’s assertion that my Great Grandfather William (~1799-1885) came from this area is correct.

Thurston’s main source for information on this branch seems to have been John Lyon Kee (d1955) of Buffalo, N.Y., a great nephew of William (~1799-1885). John Lyon Kee’s Grandfather was David Kee (d1855) of Larch-Hill, Donemana, Co. Tyrone. David Kee was a well-known poet, and his descendants in Donegal were considered to be cousins of my Grandfather.

A William Kee (d1783) of Upper Gortileck is mentioned in the Derry Index of Wills¹⁴, and in the 1777 Abercorn Estate valuation maps, a William Kee and a Widow Kee are shown as tenants on 133 and 26 acre farms, respectively. The Abercorn Letters of 1783 also mention William Kee¹⁶. Given the geographic proximity, and the dates of death, Thurston deduced that William (d1783) was the father of Robert Kee (1752-1832) but no evidence to support this was provided. In PRONI, I have recently found a letter to the Earl of Abercorn (the landlord), which calls this assumption into question. On 10th of August, 1783, James Hamilton¹³ writes:

In my last I informed your Lordship that a son of William Keys of Upper Gortileck had sold a third of the farm which his father had left him, to Robert son of Marey Key the rent £6 the purchase £63-10. Robert the purchaser lives in Lower Gortileck. This letter to the Earl suggests that Robert may have been William’s nephew. Further scrutiny of the Abercorn Letters, deeds, etc will hopefully provide definitive answers.

In this paper, I have assumed that the pedigree compiled by Thurston is correct.

DAVID’S McKEE LINE – Ulster -- (David McFarland)

A. Discovery

My interest started from my family being Northern Irish, although they had moved across to England before I was born. With the advent of the Internet I became more interested in researching my family roots, which started in 2008. My mother’s maiden name was McKee and I knew that her family home was the Gatehouse (now a beauty salon) on the Herdsman estate Carricklea (near Strabane, Co. Tyrone), where her father Mathew James McKee and mother Mary (Minnie) Fitzpatrick worked. My interest in the McKees originated from discussions with my mother who recalls as a child being taken to Old Urney Graveyard and shown where her grandparents Mathew and Susan McKee, along with aunties and uncles were buried in an unmarked grave (no headstone). We have since gone back with my mum and uncle, but they couldn’t recall whereabouts it was. My mum

remembers that her dad had said that the family originated from Magheracoltan and during my last visit to Ireland my uncle was able to take me to the old farm house in Magheracoltan. He had previously discovered from the local church records at Ardstraw that Mathew James McKee's father was William. My mother recalls that her grandmother's maiden name was McGonigle and that she came from around Ballybofey area in Co. Donegal. She remembers her dad talking about a relative (think 2nd cousin) George Kee being his best man and about other Kee relatives who owned a hotel in Stranorlar, Co. Donegal (still exists) and a shop in Ballybofey, Co. Donegal. My mum remembers as a child "Old Farmer Joe Magee", another relative, would come from Cappry, Co. Donegal in a pony and trap and call in to see her Mum and Dad for a cup of tea on his way to Strabane to do business. His son Attie (Armstrong) Magee was very friendly with her mum and dad. My mum remembers her parents meeting with a McKee relative in the 1970's who came from New Zealand to find her roots. She had made contact with them through the Ulster Folk museum.

The other information I had to go on at the time was that Bill Howard had sent his family tree to my uncle showing his McKee family was also from Magheracoltan (Baron's Court) near Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone. As they came from the same townland I suspected we were the same family, which was later confirmed. Bill's tree also showed the name William as a brother to his Joseph McKee, which I suspected was my Great Great Grandfather. Bill had tracked down my uncle in 2000 following enquiries at the local Post Office in Ardstraw. It was fortunately that McKee isn't and wasn't a common surname around this area; otherwise, we may never had made the connection between the families.

Another stroke of luck was that eight years later via the Internet I was able to make contact with Bill. This find was to be one of the most significant finds for me in my research as Bill was able to take the McKee family back a further two generations using his family notes, which otherwise might not have been possible with the limited records in Irish Genealogy. I guess these notes were put together as a result of his family's immigrating to the US and the stronger need to record family history back to this immigration. Bill had also connected with Robert Kee who was able to share Thurston's (Mc)Kee notes that had a section on the Magheracoltan (Mc)Kee family containing suggestions that two brothers had emigrated in 1834 from Ardstraw (Magheracoltan). This added another conclusion to the jigsaw puzzle that again would not otherwise have been possible.

The benefit for Bill in this relationship was that I was able to take his Irish connection forward to the present day and he had found in my cousin a male (Magheracoltan) McKee for DNA testing. The challenge for us both at the outset was being able to verify the family connection between Joseph McKee and William McKee with no primary records being available. The early census records (1820 etc. for Magheracoltan) and some church records (Church of Ireland, Ardstraw) had been destroyed in the Dublin 1922 court record fires.

B. Pedigree

My Pedigree started with my Grandfather Matthew James McKee (1899-1976) and from my mum's accounts that he had brothers Henry William (1891-1971), Joseph (1897-1946), Albert Edward (1901-1977), Thomas Alexander (1894-1952) and sisters Mary Ann (1893-1940) and Sarah Jane (1903-1980) and that his wife was Mary Fitzpatrick (1912-1977). His father was Matthew McKee (abt. 1851-1909) and his mother was Susan

McGonigle (1860-1932). This information was obtained from their marriage certificate and my mother's knowledge that Susan's maiden name was McGonigle and that she had come from Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. I was able to confirm his father as William McKee (of the Parish of Ardstraw - abt. 1818-1889) and mother Mary Jane Meldrum (abt. 1825 - 1904) from 1844 church marriage records obtained from Urney PRONI 81/1, a follow up to a reference in the Strabane Morning Post. I was also fortunate that William McKee had made a will (obtained from PRONI), which listed other sons William McKee (abt. 1860-1901), and Joseph McKee and sisters Mary (Marie) McKee (abt. 1850) and Sarah Jane Craig (1861-1939). My uncle informed me that Sarah Jane Craig was married to David Craig who was the landlord of the Pub in the village of Ardstraw (which still exists). The mystery amongst this all was Joseph McKee who after the will never appeared in any census records or death certificate in Ireland, so I suspect that this person emigrated to New Zealand based on my mum's account that a McKee from New Zealand (related) had visit her mum and dad in the 1970's. This will be another lead for the future to research. My pedigree was able to stretch further as a result of collaboration with Bill Howard and Robert Kee, and DNA verification testing of my cousin Eric McKee, Robert Kee and David Jackson Kee.

The next lead to track down from my mother's accounts was the family connections with the Kees and Magees of Co. Donegal. To start this research I was able to obtain from the marriage certificate that Susan McGonigle's father was Thomas McGonigle (townland Dooish in Co. Donegal abt.1815-1891). Fortunately, Thomas had made a will (obtained from PRONI) that listed other sons and daughters. I discovered through marriage and birth certificates translations (obtained online from the UHF website) that one of the sons, William McGonigle (1840-1922) had married Margaret Magee (1832) who had a brother Richard Magee (1834) who was the father to "Old Farmer Joe Magee" (1869) as mentioned in my mum's account. His son Armstrong (Attie) was born in 1910 was a relative and friend of my Grandmother Mary Fitzpatrick and Matthew James McKee. I also found that one of the daughters, Rebecca McGonigle (1850-1913), had married a Thomas Kee (1844-1925) and that he had sons George Kee (1890) and James Kee (1884), second cousin to my grandparents as mentioned in my mother's accounts.

The next puzzle in this story was how my Great Grandfather Matthew James McKee from Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone had met Susan McGonigle from Dooish, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. We knew from the land records of Ardstraw Co. Tyrone (Duke of Abercorn), that no Kee/McKee lived in the Magheracoltan, Ardstraw area prior to the 1800s so it is most likely that they had come from the neighboring parish of Gortileck, Co. Tyrone or that they had come from Co. Donegal. It was fortunate that Robert Kee (whose family pedigree is from Castletown, Strabane, Co. Tyrone) had agreed to a DNA test and we were able to compare this with my cousin Eric McKee's DNA to confirm that it was more probable that the McKee line from Magheracoltan had come from Co. Donegal, although without further DNA testing with Kees from Co. Donegal this cannot be proved. It remains a speculation at the time this paper was written.

PART II -- COLLABORATION, EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

Part I presented the genealogical search from the point of view of each of the authors who will now be referred to as Bill, Robert and David. In this section we will try to show what happened once the authors began to work together.

A. Laying the Groundwork

During Bill's 2000 visit to Strabane, he had met David's Uncle Fred who still lives there. His inquiries were remembered later and passed on to David when we began to work together. Bill had also posted inquiries on Rootsweb, asking for information on his McKee line. Robert had been working on his family tree and had posted information on his family.

B. Making Contact

Robert's tree came to Bill's attention through the internet. Bill noticed name and place similarities between Robert's tree and his family records. David read Bill's posting and found we were probably related because of having first names and place names in common. Bill found out that both Robert and David were on Skype and in March 2010 we began exchanging information using both Skype and email. We agreed to share information among us, with all emails going to all parties. Our Skype sessions continued to be one-on-one amongst the three authors and the number of our emails exceeded 1000.

C. Sharing the Work of Others

Robert drew our attention to Thurston Kee in Toronto who had compiled a book in which Magheracoltan was the townland where a possible early ancestor, Matthew Kee lived¹⁷. David Jackson Kee, a lawyer in Toronto who is related to Thurston, sent the book to Robert. Bill wrote to him to establish contact; Bill, David and Robert began sharing maps of townlands, wills, marriage records, ahnentafels, as well as "The History of the McKee" by Raymond W. McKee¹⁸ and Faye Logue's book on Strabane¹⁹.

D. Insight and Uncertainties Arise

We found that our families appeared to descend from Matthew McKee in the townland of Magheracoltan, Ardstraw Parish, but David could trace his line only back to William. However, Robert's line appeared to trace to nearby Gortileck. We found from the information we shared that the Irish Birth, Death and Marriage Index contained a small number of McKees registered in Strabane. So, for this area it was very likely that most of the McKees listed in Strabane originated from the same family. David made a trip to Belfast and obtained information on Bill's McKees. He sent us lists of early English and Scottish planters.

We realized that our composite pedigree had disagreements on names and for dates earlier than about 1800. Uncertainties began to arise about when part of the line emigrated from Co. Tyrone to Canada. While the naming convention of children indicated we were on the right track²⁰, there was much difficulty sorting out the parents and children of given names. Matthew appeared several times in the records and Samuel appeared in at least two generations, one of which went to Canada.

Because early records of the Ardstraw Parish had burned, we found that Bill's family records provided crucial leads to the McKee line in Magheracoltan dating back prior to the fire. David later noted that Bill's family notes had been vital. In time the information was backed up by evidence such as wills, the Strabane Post, church records, all of which showed the notes to have been accurate. No census or other records exist at PRONI for Ardstraw Church of Ireland. The only place left to look is to see if anything exists in local church records.

One of the early Matthews was married to someone who was referred to in Bill's family records as "Handsome Betty Blair." She later was identified as Elizabeth Blair (1783-1873) who was married to Matthew McKee, the Grandfather of the Rev. JME McKee. The family records also showed that Matthew McKee's mother was someone with the

last name of Orr, and the first name of her husband was not recorded. Research involving the internet records of Co. Tyrone and in the PRONI began to fill in the details but the early confusion still persisted. To resolve some of these uncertainties, we realized that DNA testing might give us clues to how these pedigree lines might be reconciled. Meanwhile, Robert began to investigate Kees in Donegal and Donaghedy, and Kees in Meenagrave. He began to make series of contacts with testees having DNA results close to his. We all discussed the priorities that we should place on our effort. There were two main competitors -- (1) concentrating on the line thought to descend from William Kee & wife Rose of Gortileck or (2) widening the search into the 1600s and into Co. Donegal, which we knew to be the most difficult choice because data are scarce before about 1800. The connection we made with Robert and David Jackson Kee was based on Thurston's notes regarding Matthew Kee. However, Thurston's notes are full of assumptions and inaccuracies regarding the family line that Bill and David share, the Magheracoltan branch. David's line is based on prime material (viz., wills, vital statistics from certificates) and family knowledge going back to William McKee (b. 1818), showing that David's Great Grandfather was Matthew McKee a farmer from Carricklee, and his brother was William, a farmer from Magheracoltan. The link between David's branch and Bill's branch was made because both came from Magheracoltan (a small townland), and David's Great Grandfather was listed in a will from Bill's family (Marie McKee) plus the fact that Bill's Great Great Grandfather Joseph McKee (1808-1880) had a brother William. David notes that his family has a male line (his mother's brother) who still lives in Ardstraw and his son Eric might be convinced to take the DNA test. David summarizes the problem with the early (Mc)Kees²¹ -- once you seek to go beyond the prime records of births in 1864, marriages in 1845, wills in 1850, censuses in 1901 and Ardstraw church records before 1845, it becomes guess work based on land records. So once we go back beyond Bill's family notes, the information provided by Thurston's notes is very much based on assumptions. Even the link of the Canadian branches Samuel/Joseph Kee as coming from Ardstraw Parish, Magheracoltan appears to be an assumption.

Looking at the prime material for Canada (via Ancestry.com) we find that it states only that Samuel and Joseph came from Ireland, not from Magheracoltan/Ardstraw. Thurston's notes assume that they came from Magheracoltan, and they may be incorrect. There have not been many families with the (Mc)Kee name in Co. Tyrone. This observation adds weight to a connection on the Magheracoltan branch between Bill and David. There is only one McKee family living in this area in the 1901 census. They were the wife and daughter of William (Mc)Kee, the only name listed for Magheracoltan & Backtown Carricklee Urney in the 1858 Griffith Valuation (married to Mary Jane Meldrum 1844 Carricklee -Strabane Post). William was the father of Matthew McKee (Urney -Backtown Carricklee).

E. Y-DNA Testing Needed

Robert was the first person to get his Y-DNA tested (Kit No. 177108), followed by David Jackson Kee (187442) in Toronto. We realized that if their DNA matched, it would show how closely they are related. Later, Eric McKee, a Co. Tyrone male in David McFarland's McKee line who lives near Magheracoltan had his Y-DNA tested (194487). The Y-DNA results for Robert's father's first cousin, Hamilton Kee of Camowen, Omagh, Co. Tyrone were available (183879), as well as those of a William Kee of Donegal (183618). These positions can be found in Figure 1.

We also began working on the line to Canada, producing a tentative list of male (Mc)Kee

descendants in the event their DNA was needed.

We made first contact with Trevor McKee in Toronto and Linda McKee in Arkansas who are McKee DNA surname administrators, and we sent them our pedigree line so that they can compare Robert's and David Jackson Kee's result with those of other McKees. They also provided us with Kee-sounding DNA haplotypes that we used to produce a large phylogenetic tree (not given here).

F. Our Collaboration Continues

We began to recognize that David Jackson Kee and Robert's lines probably did not intersect with a most recent common ancestor (MRCA) living as close in time as we had supposed from the pedigree. This means that the Ulster and Canadian pedigrees are probably correct as far as they go back in time, but that the Y-DNA trail indicates an earlier association, perhaps to Scotland²². A suggestion was made to use the results of tests reported on web sites (e.g., Sorenson, ancestry.com and/or y-search) because matches found there would have family trees that could be compared with our results²³.

Robert continued to look for connections that tie to Scotland. William Roulston wrote, "If the muster roll [In Eden-Killeney, the estate around Dunnamanagh] was accurate it indicates a substantial increase in the number of British settlers living on the Eden-Killeney estate by the early 1630s. Presumably Sir George and latterly Sir William had been more enterprising in their efforts to bring Scots to the estate.

Robert noted that Tirkernaghan is located less than 5 miles from Gortileck, in the parish of Donaghedy where his ancestor, William Kee (died 1783) resided. There's a strong possibility that Robert is descended from Daniel McKay, although he notes that there are five McKays shown in the Griffith's Valuation of 1858.

Eight months after our collaboration began we summarized where we were, using the following facts and evidence we uncovered in our research:

1. Bill's own family records mention that his Matthew McKee and Betty Blair family lived near Baron's Court had children Joseph (Bill's Great Great Grandfather), Mary, Eliza and William (Likely to be David's Great Great Grandfather based on records and the same townland).
2. A later family record of Bill's indicated that the townland was Magheracoltan near Newtonstewart, Co. Tyrone and Lydia had been added as an additional child to the older family record.
3. Mathew McKee (Backtown) David's Great Grandfather is a witness in Marie McKee's (daughter of Joseph McKee) 1905 Intestacy (Will) along with her sister Elizabeth.
4. William McKee's will in 1889 from the same townland Magheracoltan mentions wife Mary Jane, sons William, Mathew, Joseph and daughters Mary and Sarah Craig.
5. William McKee's will in 1901 from Magheracoltan mentions his brother Mathew McKee (Backtown).
6. Mary Jane McKee's will in 1901 from Magheracoltan mentions daughters Mary and Sarah Jane Craig, late son William and son Matthew.
7. William McKee from Ardstraw married Mary Jane Meldrim Carricklee in 1844 in Urney Church in the presence of Joseph McKee and Henry Meldrim (brothers to the bride and groom) according to microfilm church records held at PRONI.
8. Strabane Post records show that Henry Meldrim died 1836 at Carricklee of advanced age. He was the father of Mary Jane who married William McKee.

9. Strabane Post records show that a Miss McKee, daughter of Mr. Mathew M'Kee of Magheracoltan married William Knot in 1833. He was the only Mathew M'Kee mentioned in a Lordships Tenants of twelve Townlands of Ardstraw in 1832.
10. Eliza, daughter of Mr. Mathew M'Kee of Magheracoltan, married Thos Donnell in 1836.
11. William Kee is the only Kee/McKee listed in 1858 Griffith Valuation for Magheracoltan and Backtown.
12. There is only one grave plot in the records for Ardstraw that exists for Kee/McKee, and this is Mathew Kee.
13. Mathew Kee of Magheracoltan in 1834 sold land to the Duke of Abercorn (Land records). Presumably after this date Matthew McKee m. Betty Blair moved with his family to Strabane from Magheracoltan. But his son William remained in Magheracoltan and his son Joseph became a druggist in Strabane.
14. Beyond Bill's family notes going back to Mathew McKee and Betty Blair, we have no conclusive evidence of a valid family pedigree before that time since earlier associations are all based on assumptions based on Thurston's notes. Thurston based his assumptions on only the will indexes at the time. The association with William and Rose is based only on the reference to index wills at the time for Gortileck. Actual details of the will and the family of William or Rose no longer exist; they were burnt in court fires in Dublin in 1922.
15. Bill's records go back further to the father of Matthew m. Betty. We know neither the first name of this father nor his wife, but the wife's maiden name was Orr.

After one year all the Y-DNA results were available and we began to compare our work on the pedigrees with the DNA results, with particular emphasis on where our testees fit on the tree relative to others of similar surname and sub-haplogroup designation.

PART III -- Y-DNA TESTING – THE PHYLOGENETIC TREE

Early in our collaboration we recognized the power of Y-DNA testing. While the results cannot prove a line, DNA results can lend credence to a pedigree or they can destroy it. After receiving the test results for Robert, David Jackson Kee and Eric McKee, we gathered similar test results on others having the Kee and McKee surname, and all its equivalent names like Gee, McGee, and McGhee. We then presented their time and Y-DNA relationships on a dated phylogenetic tree²⁴. We also investigated these surnames along with many others that can be traced to Ireland or Scotland. Here we present only those surnames that have the closest relationships on the tree.

Figure 1 shows the resulting phylogenetic tree. The vertical axis on the right contains the Kit Number identification and the surname that corresponds to it. The horizontal axis contains the RCC time scale where an RCC of 10 is about 433 years²⁵. Closely related testees have values of RCC near zero. The junction points on the tree are where mutations occurred along the various lines to the present group of testees. Thus, the testees are linked in relationships that generally show an evolutionary tie among and pair of testees. Going from left to right, from larger to smaller values of RCC, we see the MRCA of all the testees on the tree. The mutation at RCC ~ 67 (2900 years ago) divides the testees into two parts, the McGee group at the top of the tree and the rest of the testees on the tree.

All testees on this tree belong to a subclade called an M222 SNP, and they all descend from a progenitor located off the tree to the far left. As the first to carry a mutation that defined the M222 SNP, which happened about 1680 BC¹, he is the common ancestor of a

large fraction of the current population of Ireland and Scotland who now carry a large variety of surnames.

The four McGees at the bottom of the tree show one identical pair (N35730 and 68141) and a MRCA at RCC ~ 7 (300 years ago). The six McGee/McGhees at the top of the tree are also closely related, but their MRCA with all the rest is located at RCC ~ 67 (2900 years ago).

Surnames arose between about 900-1400 AD (RCC ~ 10-23) when it became necessary to separate individuals with similar first names as populations grew. Figure 1 shows that most of the similar sounding surnames connect with each other within that range.

PART IV – CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE POSITIONS ON THE TREE

David and Eric are very close together on the tree (TMRCA about 1550 AD +/- 180 years (one sigma) — the tie could have been in Scotland or early Ulster. This shows the connection with the McKees of Magheracoltan, although David's ancestors may have gone to Canada before our McKee line was living in Ulster. William Kee and Robert Kee are also close together (TMRCA about 1400 AD +/- 180 years (one sigma), probably in Scotland). This suggests a strong need to compare William's genealogy and Robert's. The tie at RCC ~ 25 points to a common ancestor of the four around 850 AD +/- 180 years (one sigma) -- almost definitely in Scotland before the descendants came to Ulster.

At this point in our collaboration, Bill has the answer regarding his Great Grandfather, John Matthew Ezekiel McKee. He probably had a haplotype very close to David Jackson Kee and Eric McKee -- probably Eric's. All three have DNA and/or pedigree ties to Magheracoltan and then back to Scotland. Success after a year of work!

PART V – A COMPARISON OF THE (Mc)KEE SURNAME ADMINISTRATORS' GROUPING AND THEIR POSITIONS ON THE PHYLOGENETIC TREE

Through the kindness of the McKee surname administrators who sent us all the posted haplotypes of the same-soundex surnames like Kee, McKee, Gee, McGee, etc., we derived a large tree containing all those surnames. We recognized that our two (Mc)Kee lines were both contained in a small section of that large tree, so we narrowed our tree presentation in Figure 1 to only those testees. We also recognized that this smaller group of (Mc)Kees all carried the M222 SNP.

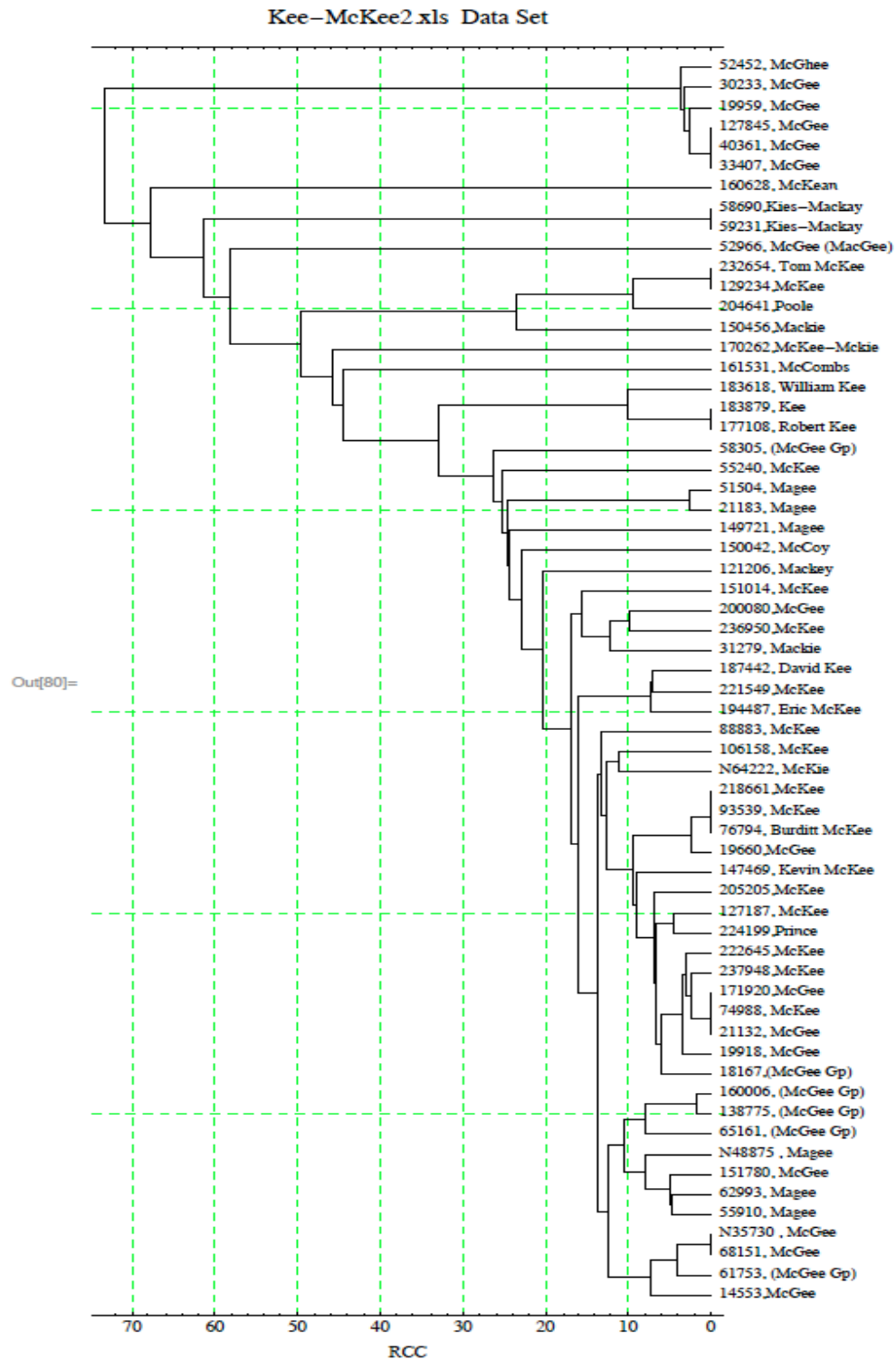
Once a Y-DNA test result is available, it is posted on a FTDNA web site²⁶. When we compared the testees in Figure 1 with the groups presented on that web site, we found a very close relationship between the members of their largest grouping and the testees in Figure 1. No other groups on their web site appeared on our tree, although we identified those other groups in our large tree. They share a common progenitor with testees in Figure 1 farther back in time than when surnames were adopted.

We conclude that members of that large group in the FTDNA posting correspond to members on our tree in Figure 1. We strongly suggest that if each of the ancestors in that large testee group in the FTDNA web site could trace their ancestors as we have done for ours, our pedigrees, and theirs would show that there is about a 50 percent probability that we would share an identical ancestor within the past 900 years.

Another observation from Figure 1 is that Craig McKie (Canadian) N64222 has a common ancestor with Eric McKee (Ulster) 194487 at RCC ~16 equating to between 1000 AD and 1500 AD. This is interesting as McKie has no known connection with Ulster, but has ancestral connections with the Stewartry of Kircudbright (ancient district

of Galloway) dating back to 1700's .We also know that his grandfather's middle name was Galloway and that in the 1950s his aunt visited a living relative in the area. We can conclude that this supports the historical case (see Part IX) that the McKees of Magheracoltan most likely came from the ancient district of Galloway (lowland Scotland).

Figure 1: A Dated Phylogenetic Tree of Kee, McKee and Equivalent-Sounding Surnames That Tend to Cluster in Surname Groups.



PART VI -- LINKING TO OUR PEDIGREE

As we developed a 'working pedigree' from our family records and other sources we recognized that crucial Irish records were no longer available. Census returns between 1861–91 were completely destroyed by government order, many during the First World War as scrap paper. There was a fire in 1922 at the Dublin Public Record Office during fighting in the Irish Civil War that destroyed the 19th-century census returns, the Church of Ireland parish registers (including Ardstraw) and the testamentary collections. Other records not maintained there have survived, however, including civil records of births, marriages, and deaths, non Church of Ireland parish records, property records, and later censuses. Even for much of the material that was lost, there are abstracts, indexes, transcripts, and fragments of the originals. These sources, together with family records that each of us had, were used to derive a "straw man" pedigree, but we realized that entries on that pedigree before the end of the 18th century were uncertain. DNA testing offered a modern way to see if the authors' pedigrees were connected.

Robert's result is shown on the tree at Kit No. 177108. His 37-marker Y-DNA result is identical to his father's cousin, Hamilton Kee (183879). Robert and Hamilton Kee share a MRCA with William Kee (183618) at RCC ~ 10, 450 years ago. However, this family cluster is farther removed from the testees below them on the tree. Their MRCA with the rest of the testees is at RCC ~ 27 (1670 years ago +/- 300 years), or about 275 AD, much farther back than genealogical records are available.

David Jackson Kee, the lawyer in Toronto, is within a much broader family cluster and he is closely connected with Eric McKee who is known by pedigree to be within David McFarland's mother's line of McKees. Their MRCA junction point is at RCC ~ 7-8 and they are more closely connected on the tree than they are with their surrounding testees. So, our first conclusion is that Robert's position on the tree shows why no connection has been found between his line and that of Eric McKee and David Jackson Kee. Our second conclusion is that our pedigree is correct when it shows the branch that emigrated from Co. Tyrone to Canada. Since Bill's Great Grandfather can be traced to Magheracoltan, like the other Kees and McKees in our pedigree, he must share a haplotype that is close to David Jackson Kee or Eric McKee, and it probably identical to one of the two. Unfortunately, Bill's McKee line in America has died out.

PART VII-- THE SCOTTISH ONOMASTIC CHILD NAMING PATTERN

Prior to the 20th century the Scotch-Irish living in Ulster traditionally followed a naming convention when assigning given names to their successive children²⁰. Most, but not all families followed this convention.

The (Mc) Kee family apparently used this naming pattern because our family pedigrees show remarkable consistency with the convention from the first son down through successive generations. The result of this exercise suggested that the two branches of David Jackson Kee and Eric McKee must have had a common ancestor further back than first thought against the DNA test results i.e. (Mc) Kee & Orr.

David Jackson Kee's first known pedigree entries were the brothers Samuel and Joseph Kee who both had first sons called John (further suggesting a family naming pattern). Eric McKee's first known ancestor was Mathew (Mc) Kee whose first son was called

Joseph. This would suggest that the brothers' father was called John Kee and Mathew (Mc) Kee's father was called Joseph.

We were therefore able to logically conclude from the DNA results and the known pedigree that John and Joseph were most likely brothers and that the Kee who was married to Orr was probably Joseph, the older brother, since the farm land in Magheracoltan was passed down this side of the family, as per family tradition.

PART VIII – OUR FINAL PEDIGREES

In the light of these results, it is worth looking at the excerpts appended below from William Roulston and Thurston's book.

It is clear that there were two McKey men (Hugh and Daniell) in Co. Tyrone in the 1630s. The first mention of Kees in Donegal is given as 1733, and Thurston supposed that these Kees were the great grandchildren of Daniell. The current William Kee of Donegal is almost certainly descended from the Kees mentioned in 1733. If the common ancestor for the two branches of David Jackson Kee and Eric McKee, and William and Robert Kee was around 850 AD, then the split between the branches almost certainly occurred in Scotland. Thurston's supposition seems to be erroneous. The Donegal branch, or more probably branches, must have come directly from Scotland.

Eric McKee's DNA results support the genealogy records we have for David Jackson Kee. They probably share a most recent common ancestor more than seven generations ago and they both came as the Magheracoltan branch in the 1700s. It also discounts the theory that Robert's relationship was a generation before this as that relationship must have been much further back (Scotland). Based on the evidence, naming patterns and the genealogy records, our Magheracoltan tree starts at Joseph Kee and Orr who were born around 1730-60. The exact relationship between Eric McKee and David Jackson Kee cannot be fully understood but this would be reasonable against the DNA results, naming patterns and genealogy evidence. David McFarland's own family connection with Donegal is via Matthew McKee (Magheracoltan) who married Susan McGonigle who came from Dooish (Stranorlar). Her sister Rebecca married a Thomas Kee in 1875. This is why David McFarland's mother mentioned the family's Donegal connection. We suspect that Robert's family was one branch of Gortileck, and the Magheracoltans were another branch of Gortileck, both having come from Scotland in the 1600s. The early (Mc)Kees in Gortileck may have branched out into Co. Donegal as early as 1733 when a lease was held by John and James Kee of Killinacurry in the parish of Donaghedy. We have not yet found this lease. They may have branched into Magheracoltan in the late 1700s. Thurston's book contains no mention of (Mc)Kees in Co. Donegal prior to those dates.

We now find that names (father/son relationships) and the period do link together against the records. Adding to our certainty is that only one Kee is mentioned in each record for Ardstraw down the ages, so our best guess is corroborated by the fact that only one grave (owner- Matthew) exists for Kee in the Ardstraw old graveyard²⁷.

The following pedigrees resulted from this work.

(1) William Kee
d abt 1783 Gortileck
& Rose Kee
d abt 1787 Gortileck

Key Family Branch

Gortileck-Kee



Magheracoltan-(Mc)Kee



(2) Robert Kee
b 1752, Gortileck
d 1832
& Margaret Dunbar
b 1768, Plumbridge
d 1856

Brothers (1a) Joseph (Mc) Kee
& Orr abt 1760
(1b) John Kee &? abt 1760

(2a) Matthew McKee
b. abt 1780, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
d. bef 1858, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
& Elizabeth Blair
b. 1783
d. 1873

(3a) Joseph McKee
b. 1801
d. abt 20 Jun 1880, Of Strabane, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland
& Margaret Donnell
b. abt 1809
d. 9 Feb 1875, Main Street, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Ireland



Bill Howard USA
Branch

(3a) Mary McKee
b. 1803, Ireland
d. 1871, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland
& Samuel Bates

b. Ireland

(3a) Eliza McKee
b. 1808
d. 1882, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland
& Thomas Donnell

b. Of Woodend
m. 15 Dec 1836, Magheracoltan, Near Newtownsteward, Co. Tyrone

(3a) William McKee
b. 1818, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
d. 11 Aug 1889, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
& Mary Jane Meldrum
b. 1820, Backtown Carricklee, Strabane, Co. Tyrone
d. 2 Jun 1904, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
m. 25 May 1844, Urney Church, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland



David
McFarland
/Eric McKee
(DNA Testee
No. 194487)
Ulster Branch

(3a) Lydia McKee
& William Knox
b. Of Ballaght m. 27 Dec 1833, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw

(2b) Samuel Kee
b. 15 May 1790, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
d. 1 May 1872, Wawanosh Twp., Huron Co., Ontario, Canada



David Jackson
Kee (DNA
Testee No.
187442)
Canadian Branch

& Mary Dunlap

b. 1792, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Ireland¹³

d. May 1840, Sand Hill, Peel, Ontario, Canada

m. May 1811, Ardstraw, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

(3b) John Kee

b. 7 Mar 1812, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 22 Jan 1905, Albion Twp., Peel Co. Ontario, Canada

& Jane McKeown

b. 1815, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 28 Jul 1894, Albion Twp., Peel Co. Ontario, Canada

m. 12 Dec 1837, Toronto, York Co., Ontario, Canada

(3b) Matthew Kee

b. 1813, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland¹⁵

& Ellen Quinn

(3b) Dunlap Kee

b. 1815, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 22 Jan 1905, Albion Twp., Peel Co., Ontario, CA

(3b) Robert Kee

b. 1816, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

(3b) Mary Kee

b. abt 1828

d. 1905

& James Kee

b. Nov 1821, Co. Tyrone²

d. 1 May 1891, Ontario, CA

(3b) David Kee*

b. 1 May 1819, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 28 Oct 1884, Albion Twp., Peel Co., Ontario, Canada

& Eliza Clarridge

m. 5 Mar 1845

(3b) David Kee*

b. 1 May 1819, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 28 Oct 1884, Albion Twp., Peel Co., Ontario, Canada

& Margaret Clifton

b. 9 Jun 1829, Ireland

d. 19 Aug 1908, Gladstone, Delta Co., MI

m. 1849

(3b) Eleanor Kee

b. May 1823, Magheracoltan, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland^{13,15}

d. 28 Oct 1876

(3b) Elizabeth Jane Kee

b. 29 Mar 1825, Ireland¹

d. 20 Feb 1915, Simcoe, Ontario, CA

& William Switzer

b. 13 Apr 1819, Loughborough Twp., Frontenac, Ontario, CA

d. 7 May 1897, Simcoe, Ontario, CA

m. 5 Mar 1845

(2b) Joseph Kee

b. 1789, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland

d. 14 Jun 1848, Palmerston, Ontario, CA.

& Sarah

b. abt 1793, Co. Tyrone

d. 25 Apr 1876, Wellington, Ontario, CA

(3b) John Kee

b. 13 Nov 1813, Co. Tyrone

(3b) Hugh Kee

b. 17 Jun 1816, Co. Tyrone
 d. 22 Mar 1904, Peel Co., Ontario, Canada
 & Sarah Waite
 b. 1823
 d. 1910
 (3b) Joseph Kee
 b. Oct 1818, Co. Tyrone
 d. 1 May 1891, Wellington, Ontario, CA
 (3b) James Kee
 b. Nov 1821, Co. Tyrone
 d. 1 May 1891, Ontario, CA
 & Mary Kee
 b. abt 1828
 d. 1905
 (3b) Elizabeth Jane Kee
 b. 1825, Ireland
 d. 20 Feb 1915, Simcoe, Ontario, CA
 (3b) Freeborn Kee*
 b. Nov 1825, Co. Tyrone
 d. 5 Jun 1906, Palmerston, Ontario, CA
 & Alice Scott
 b. 9 Dec 1840, Chinguacousy Twp., Peel, Ontario, CA
 d. 7 Jun 1878, Palmerston, Ontario, CA.
 m. 6 Mar 1860
 (3b) Freeborn Kee*
 b. Nov 1825, Co. Tyrone
 d. 5 Jun 1906, Palmerston, Ontario, CA
 & ?
 (3b) Isabella Kee
 b. Sep 1833, Co. Tyrone
 d. 14 Jun 1848
 (3b) Margaret Kee
 b. Sep 1839, Peel Co., Ontario, Canada
 d. Feb 1885
 (3b) Isiah Kee
 b. Co. Tyrone
 d. aft 1848
 (2b) Fanny Kee
 b. abt 1791, Magheracoltan Townland, Ardstraw Parish, Co. Tyrone, Ireland
 & Joseph McKeown b. Co. Tyrone, Ireland

-----End of Magheracoltan Pedigree Tree-----

(3) William Kee b: 1799, d: 1885 in Castletown, Parish of Leckpatrick, near Strabane
 & Sarah b: 1807, d: 12 Nov 1885 in Castletown, Parish of Leckpatrick, near Strabane



Pedigree Ardstraw
 Branch not tied
 directly to
 Leckpatrick/
 Gortileck
 Following DNA
 test results

(4) Hamilton Kee
 b: abt 1841- 46, d: 16 May 1926 in Castletown, Parish of Leckpatrick, near Strabane
 & Rebecca Ann Fulton b: 05 Apr 1865 in Windyhill, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, Ireland,
 d: 1954 in Castletown, Parish of Leckpatrick

(5) William Kee b: 11 Aug 1888 in Holyhill
 & Isabella Jane Fyffe

(5) Hamilton Kee b: 1891, d: 19 Dec 1974

(5) Edward Kee b: 28 Nov 1891 in Holyhill, d: 23 Nov 1950

(5) John James Fulton Kee b: 01 Jan 1893 Strabane, d: 03 Apr 1980
 & Barbara Anne Hawthorne b: 25 Jan 1903, d: 24 Apr 1979



Robert Kee
 (DNA Testee
 No. 177108)
 Ulster Branch

- | Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- | (5) Robert Henry (Harry) Kee b: 1896
- | (5) David Campbell Kee b: 1897
- | (5) Thomas Baird Kee b: 30 Aug 1898 in Holyhill
- | & Jessie Sayers b: 1898
- | (5) Samuel Kee b: 07 Jun 1901 in Holyhill, d: Sep 1984 in Provost, Alberta,
- | Canada
- | & Catherine Canning b: Scotland, m: Ireland
- (4) Matilda Kee b: 1836
- (4) William Kee b: 1836, d: 06 Aug 1906 in Holyhill
- (4) Margaret Kee b: 1837, d: 09 Oct 1904 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (4) David Kee b: 1843
- (4) James Kee b: 1851
- & Alice McCrea Pollock b: 1864
- |
- (5) Sarah Maggie Kee b: 17 Sep 1888 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) William A Kee b: 1889 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) Matilda (Tillie) Kee b: 22 Mar 1891 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) David Kee b: 21 Apr 1891 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) James Baird Kee b: 1895 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) John Robert Kee b: 10 May 1896 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) Joseph Pollock McCrea Kee b: 24 Dec 1897 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) Alfred Walker Kee b: 30 Aug 1899 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) Alice Elizabeth Kee b: 30 Oct 1901 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland
- (5) Ernest Kee b: 14 May 1904 in Castletown,Co. Tyrone,Ireland

PART IX – (Mc) KEE OF ULSTER ROOTS BACK TO SCOTLAND²⁸

The (Mc) Kees of Ulster appear to be the descendants of the Mckies of Galloway who originate from Larg (Laerg) in Galloway (Parish of Minnigaff; mostly Galloway Forest) and is the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright). Larg lies between the small streams of Palnure and Penkill that flow into the river Cree (near Loch Dee). According to legend Larg was bestowed upon the family who had fought for King Robert the Bruce²⁹. The emigrants from Scotland began in about 1609, but just after that there was turmoil, which could have turned most Scots away from coming. The worst appears to have been in the 1640s with rebellions against the planters and civil wars in Ireland, England and Scotland. According to the 1659 Co. Donegal census³⁰ there were 31 principal McKee families listed (the 1659 census does not exist for Co. Tyrone). Sir Patrick McKee of Larg was listed as a principal 1609 planter (Co. Donegal Precinct of Boyagh 1000 acres), but never appeared in Ulster³¹. His land went to John Murray. According to records he appeared to be too occupied by the Scottish Covenant (fought in the Battle of Newburn in which his son was killed).

There was a wave of Scottish immigration to Ulster that took place in the 1690s when lowland Scotland (Galloway) was in crisis (resulting from the Scottish Covenant; known as the “Killing Times” in about 1680-1688), famine and the appeal of Ulster after the Battle of the Boyne. The Ulster Scot Presbyterian population went from 20% in the 1660s to a majority in the 1690s, then to an absolute majority by 1720. (Mc) Kees, according to records, first appeared in Ardstraw (Magheracoltan) in the late 1700s. Robert Kee was counted among the flax Growers in 1796 and Mathew Kee appears in the 1833 Abercorn Papers. (Mc)Kee’s (Key) appeared much earlier, in the 1631 Muster Roll in Gortileck, Co. Tyrone, so they were probably there from the start of King James’ Ulster Plantations, as part of the principal planter Hamilton, 1st Duke of Abercorn, in the early 1600s.

PART X – CONCLUSION AND TIES TO HISTORY

We found through our close collaboration that we could with some confidence form a more complete Magheracoltan (Mc)Kee connection from the pedigrees developed by Thurston (David Jackson Kee in Canada), David McFarland and Bill Howard. Modern advances in Y-DNA testing, the Scottish child naming pattern, some luck along the way, and the internet helped to advance our understanding of the Magheracoltan (Mc)Kee branch beyond the original research Thurston had done in the 1950s, including identifying anomalies within that work. We were able to conclude through DNA testing that the pedigree developed from Thurston's notes was not correct with respect to the (Mc)Kee Magheracoltan branch originating directly from Gortileck (Robert Kee pedigree). We now believe from the testing and family accounts that the (Mc)Kee Magheracoltan branch more likely came from Stranorlar, Co. Donegal around the late 1700's and came across from the district of Galloway, lowland Scotland. We know from the pedigrees that the Magheracoltan (Mc)Kee branch immigrated from 1830's onwards to Canada (David Jackson Kee's pedigree), USA (Bill Howard's pedigree), New Zealand (Family Accounts) and more recently Australia, South Africa, England and Scotland. Few now remain in Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland (David McFarland pedigree).

PART XI – FUTURE WORK

We believe that all primary sources for our (Mc) Kee pedigree have now been exhausted with respect to church records, civil birth, marriage and death certificates and wills held at PRONI and the General Register Office, Belfast. Recommended future work might include:

- Researching the digitization of the British Library newspaper broadsheets such as the Tyrone Constitution and The Strabane Morning Post when they become available on line.
- Research into the papers of the Duke of Abercorn held at PRONI, particularly those pertaining to the townlands of Magheracoltan (Ardstraw) and Castletown (Leckpatrick), known to be our forefathers' ancestral homes³².
- Verification from immigration records of our belief that Joseph McKee (brother of Matthew McKee (1851-1909) immigrated to New Zealand in about 1889-1901.
- Obtain from PRONI the lease deeds of John and James Kee of Donaghedy with respect to Kee family connections with Co. Donegal including contacting the Donegal Historical Society for more information (reference as a potential research source in Thurston Notes)
- Encourage Y-DNA testing results that may verify that the (Mc)Kee Magheracoltan branch came from Co. Donegal as suggested by the land leases in 1733.
- Explore more deeply the probable connection back to the McKies of Largs (lowland Scotland, Galloway)
- Finally, continue to use the Internet to further collaboration with other genealogists.

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Jackson McKee and Craig McKie whose Y-DNA test results proved invaluable in our research; Trevor McKee and Linda McKee for their work in making available to us the haplotypes of Kee and McKee sound-equivalent haplotypes, many of which have identifications with their pedigree-ancestors; and William Roulston for providing valuable leads about the Kees of Donaghedy.

¹ Howard, William E. III, and McLaughlin, John D., *A Dated Phylogenetic Tree of M222 SNP Haplotypes: Exploring the DNA of Irish and Scottish Surnames and Possible Ties to Niall and the Uí Néill Kindred*, Familia, Ulster Genealogical Review No. 27, pp. 14-50, 2011. See also: http://www.ancestryireland.com/index.php?ai_ebooks

The phylogenetic tree in this paper can be found at:

<http://www.ancestryireland.com/fileadmin/uhf_pdfs/the-phylogenetic-tree.pdf>

² The vast majority of the Y-DNA results come from postings by FamilyTreeDNA, a testing agency in Houston, Texas. See www.familytreedna.com for tutorials, and testing.

³ Hamilton Y-DNA results can be found at:

<<http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/g/a/gah4/HamDNA/H1.html>>

⁴ Hamilton, John Leslie, *The Maymore Hamiltons and Related Families*. Privately published, 2000. Copies have been deposited in the U.S. Library of Congress and in the Family History Library, 35 North West Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84150.

⁵ Some of this history has been summarized in an article on page 18 of the Tyrone Constitution, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, Ulster on October 21, 2010.

⁶ Bill is still searching for a pedigree tie to Mary McKee (1802 Mifflin, PA – 1885 Clarion Co, PA) who married Daniel S. Fackender (1797-1863). Their son Hugh (1839-1864) and Hugh's brother in law, William Huey, served with JME McKee in Co. E, 62nd Regiment. Hugh was killed in action at Cold Harbor, VA on 3 June 1864 during the Wilderness Campaign. All three boys enlisted at the same time in Rimersburg, Clarion Co., PA. Two of Hugh's sisters married Craigs whose father came from Ireland. We note that William McKee and Mary Jane Meldrum in David's line had a daughter, Sarah Jane McKee who married David Craig. These Pennsylvania and Magheracoltan McKees probably have recent common ancestry. We thought that Tom McKee's DNA (Kit No. 232654) might match our line, but our most recent common ancestor lived about 2000 years ago (RCC ~ 46), probably in Scotland.

⁷ Cecil's notes refer to her as "Handsome Betty Blair." It was David McFarland who identified her as Elizabeth (1783-1873).

⁸ www.breadyancestry.com, accessed 5 Sept. 2011

⁹ Groves Collection of Muster Rolls, PRONI, MIC/15A/T81, 82

¹⁰ Roulston, W. J., *Three Centuries of life in a Tyrone parish – A History of Donaghedy from 1600 – 1900*, Strabane History Society, ISBN9780952892069, 2010

¹¹ Simington, Robert C., *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656: Counties of Donegal, Londonderry and Tyrone*, Volume 3, Dublin: Stationery Office, 1937

¹² Abercorn Rental Book, 1794 – 1809, PRONI, D623/C/4/5

¹³ Abercorn papers: No. 259, James Hamilton, Strabane to Earl of Abercorn, 3/8/1783

¹⁴ Calendar of Wills in the Diocese of Derry (1612-1858), Edited by Gertrude Thrift, London: Phillimore and Co., Ltd, 120, Chancery Lane, 1918

¹⁵ Abercorn Rental Book, 1794 – 1809, PRONI, D623/C/4/5

¹⁶ Abercorn Papers: James Hamilton, Strabane to Earl of Abercorn, 3 August 1783, PRONI, D623/A/44/259

¹⁷ Kee, Douglas Thurston Q.C., *The Family of Kee* (Notes compiled on various branches of the Kee family and their connection with the family of McKee and with the Clan

Mackay). The book was compiled by Douglas Thurston Kee Q.C. B.A, a lawyer from Toronto, in 1970. It was never published. A folder was deposited by the compiler with the Society of Genealogists in London.

¹⁸ McKee, Raymond W., *The Book of Kee*, Parts I and II, Hodges Figgis & Co., Ltd., Dublin, 1959.

¹⁹ Logue, Faye Lynsyl (Donaghy) ed., *Strabane and West Ulster in the 1800s: History from the Broadsheets; Selections from The Strabane Morning Post (1812-1837)*, Carroll and Gray, Main Street, Strabane. Published by the Strabane History Society, 2006.

²⁰ The naming convention was not always followed, but

The 1st son was usually named after the father's father

The 2nd son was usually named after the mother's father

The 3rd son was usually named after the father

The 4th son was usually named after the father's eldest brother

The 5th son was usually named after the mother's eldest brother

The 1st daughter was usually named after the mother's mother

The 2nd daughter was usually named after the father's mother

The 3rd daughter was usually named after the mother

The 4th daughter was usually named after the mother's eldest sister

The 5th daughter was usually named after the father's eldest sister

See also: <http://www.johnbrobb.com/Content/TheScottishOnomasticPattern.pdf>

²¹ We recognized by this time that some McKees probably changed their surname to Kee, so we adopted a shorthand designation, calling the line (Mc)Kee.

²² Some Lowland families in Scotland with Mac/Mc surnames supposedly changed from Mac to Mc in defiance of the British and added two small hash marks (underscore lines) under the little "C" in names like McKee. This was supposedly recognized in Scotland to stand for remaining "true to the Bruce", in Ayrshire. It was also supposed to be an indication of being Protestant instead of Catholic. The Catholics for some reason remained "Mac." That certainly did not apply to emigrants to what is now Canada who were all recorded as Mc at first. Then they started dividing into Mc and Mac in the 20th century, mainly down Irish/Scottish lines.

²³ The Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation maintains a searchable DNA database. See <http://www.smgf.org/pages/sorensondatabase.jsp>. Ancestry.com is a large, popular subscription service for genealogy. See <http://www.ancestry.com>. Y-search is a repository for results of DNA testing and can be found at <http://www.ysearch.org>.

²⁴ Howard, William E. III, and Schwab, Frederic R., *Generating a Dated Phylogenetic Tree Directly from Y-DNA Haplotypes*, Journal of Genetic Genealogy, 7, Fall 2011. See: <http://www.jogg.info/72/files/Howard.htm>

²⁵ The RCC time scale and the correlation technique used to assign dates to pairs of Y-DNA haplogroup marker strings are described in the following two papers:
Howard, William E. III, *The Use of Correlation Techniques for the Analysis of Pairs of Y-Chromosome DNA Haplotypes, Part I: Rationale, Methodology and Genealogy Time Scale*, Journal of Genetic Genealogy, 5, No. 2, Fall 2009, p. 256. And,
Howard, William E. III, *The Use of Correlation Techniques for the Analysis of Pairs of Y-Chromosome DNA Haplotypes, Part II: Application to Surname and Other Haplotype Clusters*, Journal of Genetic Genealogy, 5, No. 2, Fall 2009, p. 271.

²⁶ <http://www.familytreedna.com/public/McKee%20Group/default.aspx?vgroup=McKee+Group§ion=yresults>

²⁷ <http://www.cotyroneireland.com/index.html>

²⁸ Various Papers by The Rev Hugh Crockett McKee (Scottish Genealogy Society)

²⁹ Mackay, Angus, *Book of McKay*, 1906. The text can be found at:

http://www31.us.archive.org/stream/bookofmackay00mack/bookofmackay00mack_djvu.t
[xt](http://www31.us.archive.org/stream/bookofmackay00mack/bookofmackay00mack_djvu.t) and at: <http://archive.org/details/bookofmackay00mack>

³⁰ Census of Ireland Circ 1659 Seamus Pender Transcribed (Linen Library Belfast)

³¹ The Scotch Irish or The Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America by Charles A Hanna Vol. 1 1902

³² PRONI references of interest are D623/B/10 relating to title deeds and leases for Churchlands Ardstraw and Urney, D623/D/28 relating to valuations of twelve townlands in Ardstraw 1861-1904 and T2728 relating to Sunday School Records for Ardstraw, Church of Ireland 1821-1857.

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