

Pioneer Irish Families of Maricourt (St Mary of Ely)

By Glen Patrick Carlin

In researching my family history, I was able to determine what I believe were first settlers to the North Ely Township area. We'll see below that the earliest settlers to this area were Irish immigrants that arrived in 1831 and 1832 from the County of Mayo, Ireland. Most were illiterate and settled as farmers.

Marriage, birth and death records of the Catholic Church for pioneer Irish families refer to the North Ely township area as Melbourne or Upper Melbourne or Ely. Over time as families settled in the area a small village appeared and a Catholic church was erected and opened in 1889 named St Mary of Ely. The village subsequently carried this name until 1961 when the government named it Maricourt. Today Maricourt has a population of about 450.

One could question why the immigrants left Ireland; at the beginning of the 19th century, Ireland was overpopulated and there was a potato famine (1830 -1831) in the Counties Mayo, Donegal and Galway. The great potato famine however occurred later (1845 – 1852). Also, Lower and Upper Canada were in search of new immigrants to populate the land and were in competition with the United States to attract immigrants. There was a wave of Irish immigration to British North America that started in 1830.

Kelly Clan

The 1831 Lower Canada census for the village of Drummondville identifies Anthony Kelly (b. 1786 – d. December 11, 1889) as the head of a family of 15. The record indicates Anthony is a renter. In all likelihood the ship that carried the Kelly clan would have arrived at the port of Quebec without passing through the Grosse Isle quarantine station. The said station was opened only the following year in February of 1832. Debarking in Quebec they probably travelled by steamship upstream to Fort Henry (Sorel) and then along an inland road that led to the villages of Yamaska and Drummondville.

The 1831 Lower Canada census took place between June 1st and October 1st so it is during this 4-month period when the Anthony Kelly clan would have been enumerated and found living in Drummondville.

Although the 1831 census only name the head of families, through research I was able to determine that the 15 Irish immigrant family members were the following:

Anthony Kelly and wife Sybil Lavelle (b. 1792 – d. April 20, 1887) and daughters Mary, Bridget, Margaret, Isabella and Mathilda

Anthony Dusy (nephew of Anthony Kelly) and wife Sibby Gaughan and son Thomas Dusy

Lawrence Ruddy and wife Catherine Gaughan and sons Anthony and Hugh Ruddy

Francis Gaughan, brother or father of Sibby and Catherine Gaughan

The January 19th, 1832 birth record of John Ruddy, son of Lawrence Ruddy and Catherine Gaughan indicates that the family clan were now living in the North Ely area. He was baptized at St Frederic Parish in Drummondville. Lawrence Ruddy settled in Range 2 on Lots 190, 191 and 192 in North Ely Township. So, the Kelly Clan likely arrived in the Fall of 1831 before the onset of winter.

The Kelly family homestead was located close by on the North side of what is today known as Chemin de Montréal at the intersection with Chemin Coddington sometimes referred to as Kelly's Corner. These families likely left Drummondville because the earth was too sandy and poor to cultivate.

Anthony Kelly lived a long life, mostly in the St Mary of Ely area for some 58 years (1831 – 1889), he died at the age of 103 years.

Carolan Clan

The next family to arrive to North Ely were those of my ancestors, the Carolan family, headed by Denis Carolan and wife Catherine Malardy in 1832. They were related to the Kelly clan since their son Patrick Carolan was married to Bridget Gaughan, sister of Sibby and Catherine Gaughan that arrived with Anthony Kelly.

Family lore has the Carolan family living in the region of Erris, County Mayo, Ireland, village of Glencullen. The Kelly family were likely neighbours to the Carolans. These families would have travelled by horse driven carts some 250 km from the west of Ireland to the eastern seaport of Dublin.

The Carolan clan counted at least 21 individuals and had a difficult journey, they were aboard the infamous sailing ship the *Carricks* that left Dublin on April 14, 1832. The *Carricks* required 51 days to cross the Atlantic, arriving at Grosse Isle quarantine station, downstream from Quebec City, on June 3, 1832. The Carolans were quarantined for 10 days before their ship could dock at the port of Quebec City on June 13, 1832.

We know that the Carolan family was on board the *Carricks* since Mary Carolan (aged 14) was treated at the Immigrant Hospital on Grosse Isle in 1832. The hospital record* indicates she was treated for Typhus (ship fever) and was a passenger on board the *Carricks* ship.

**Return of Sick treated at Grosse Isle, from the 27th April to the 31st October 1832, Appendix to the 42nd Volume of the Journals of the House of Assembly of the Province of Lower-Canada, November 19, 1832 (Library and Archives Canada).*

The Grosse Isle quarantine station was opened in February 1832 in anticipation of a possible outbreak of cholera from European immigrants. Cholera had affected the British Isles the previous year.

Records from the Port of Quebec <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/Arrivals/1832b.shtml> note the following:

“Capt. Park of the Astrea [sailing ship] arrived yesterday, [he] spoke [of] the Carricks, [commandeered by Captain James] Hudson, [ship came] from Dublin, at Grosse Ile, on Saturday. The Carricks lost 42

passengers, her carpenter and one boy, on the passage, from some unknown disease. The remainder of the passengers and crew are now in good health."

The notice below was published by the Quebec City Board of Health on June 8, 1832 in the local newspapers as follows:

*"Various reports having circulated that a vessel had arrived at Grosse Isle in which there were several persons ill of the Asiatic cholera, public notice is hereby given, that the Health Commissioner, having proceeded to Grosse Isle by order of the Board, had reported that the brig **Carricks**, James Hudson, Master, from Dublin, arrived at the Quarantine station on the 3rd instant; that there were on board, at the time of her arrival, one hundred and thirty-three passengers, all of whom have been landed, and are in the Emigrant shed; that the vessel is undergoing the usual processes of disinfection; and that at the time of his departure on the evening of the 7th instant, there was not a case of Asiatic cholera on the island."*

The day after the publication of the public notice on June 9, 1832 six persons died of Cholera in Quebec City and was the start of the First Epidemic of Asiatic cholera in Lower Canada.

The public notice confirms that all of the Carolans were quarantined and kept at the Emigrant Shed at Grosse Isle after having been examined for infectious disease.



***Cholera in Quebec 1832* by Joseph Légaré (National Gallery of Canada)**



Library and Archives Canada

The Carricks anchored at the port of Quebec in 1832

(The Anchorage at Quebec City, 1832 - Watercolor by Henry Byam Martin)

The peak of the immigrant wave in 1832 occurred during the week ending June 9 when 10,000 immigrants (mostly Irish) arrive in the month of June. The Carolans were part of this peak wave and this was the week before cholera broke out. The population of the City of Quebec before the wave was only about 27,000 so a major problem of housing immigrants ensued and a tented camp for 500 persons was opened on the Plains of Abraham using tents lent by the army. The Quebec City Board of Health opened the camp on June 15, 1832* (2 days after the Carolans arrived in Quebec City) and used it to house those named by the Quebec Emigrant Society.

* *The First Epidemic of Asiatic cholera in Lower Canada, 1832* by Geoffrey Bilson, Medical History - 1977

In Quebec City a cemetery was opened known as the Cholera Burial Ground. More than 5000 Irish and French victims of Cholera were interred here.

Fifteen years after the arrival of the Carolans, the *Carricks* now named the *Carrick of Whitehaven*, left the port of Sligo, Ireland in 1847. The ship broke into pieces and sank off of Cap des Rosiers on the Gaspé Peninsula, killing 119 of its 187 passengers. A monument was erected in 1890 by Montreal's St Patrick's parish, honoring the deceased. An Irish flag flies at the monument site all year round. Later, the bell from the ship, washed ashore in 1966 and became part of the monument.



Carricks Memorial - Cap des Rosiers, Gaspé Peninsula

The Carolans built their homestead along Ely Road in North Ely Township. In the summer of 1841 Denis Carolan changed the family surname to the derivative Carlin. The Carlins were present in St Mary of Ely for 166 years (1832 – 1998).

The two founding patriarchs of St Mary of Ely, Anthony Kelly/ Sibby Lavelle and Denis Carlin/ Catherine Malardy are all buried in Richmond in the common grave at St Bibiane cemetery.