

Letter to her Uncle Dick (Richard W) Woulfe in USA from Jane (Dollie) Woulfe

The Glen, Sunday—5<sup>th</sup> January 1947

Dear Uncle Dick,

I was very much surprised (pleasurably) to get your letter the other day. I found a solid satisfaction in presenting myself with a couple of things I have received most respectfully, and vainly, for quite a long time. They did not include a hat though. I have a perfectly new one, which was bought in November for a visit to Scotland. Many thanks for your kindness. Speaking of Glasgow—my uncle has as his successor—“Sir Patrick Dollan” which looks to me suspiciously like Paddy Doolan or Dolan. Environment is a wonderful thing. It really reminds me of Papa’s story of the inspector in the village school, in his young days, who made the rafters ring, calling for role purposes an elusive Patrick Guinea (pronounced as the coin). He roared in vain till the dominie, with a faint “Excuse me” said, in an ordinary tone, “Patsheen Guin-ah”, to receive a hearty “Here, sir”, from the missing one. I should have liked to see the Inspector’s face.

About the history of the Woulfe family I shall be very pleased to tell you the main outlines as I know.

As you know, the Woulfes were originally from Corbally—a lovely place just east of Limerick City. The Bishop’s palace is there now, in some corner of it. How they got it is explained, I should think, by the simple explanation that they took it. The Normans, one can’t deny, were not welcome visitors, and in fact would not have seen Ireland at all, but for an invitation of a certain gentleman (whose wife had shown great good sense in preferring someone else to him) to come and avenge his hiat?? vanity. The second party can’t possibly have been a bigger scoundrel and was probably a good deal better than No. 1. All the same you and I wouldn’t have been here but for that domestic imbroglio, so I need not go out of my way to abuse him. In the wars—1580 and so on—the Corbally folk sallied out to fight Elizabeth’s deputy “Carew”, the president of Munster, and were defeated. In 1582 Gerald de Bul was killed fighting near Rathkeale. They (the family) were gradually forced back till they reached here. They did settle for a while at Croagh, near Rathkeale, but probably in the Cromwell wars, they left there and settled in that place known as Incheragh near the village of Athea. And the first positive thing we know there is the marriage of Maurice Woulfe in 1650. We know nothing of his birth or his death, but in 1651 he had a son James Maurice Woulfe (who died in 1704). This James Maurice was with a brother, named Richard, I think—ploughing one day near his house in Inchereagh when they saw a man running across the fields towards them. After crossing a fence, he disappeared. After a while James told his brother to go and see what had happened. He found the man lying senseless in a dyke. They brought him to and found out he was a messenger from Limerick to the Fitzmaurices, Lords of Kerry to tell them of the fall of Limerick to William of Orange. So that places their stay in Inchereagh—1690. In that year was born James’s son—Maurice James Woulfe—the one who took Cratloe in its entirety from Gorrygloss to Corriegawn Glosa, a brast??? (piece of land) 4 miles long by 11 1/2 miles wide, approximately. Maurice was 14 years when his father died, of what I don’t know—he was a young man. Probably an accident as there was, and is, no delicacy whatsoever in the family. But in that time Maurice has acquired at least one brother and six sisters. Then, for some reason, the family left there and settled in Benmore, nearer still to the village. You know Synon’s gate? Two fields past that, there are large hummocks (on the right-hand side of the road) in the centre of the field. That shows where—those show, I should say, where the old house stood. Maurice was early thrust into the care of

a family. Before he married—at the age of 40—late for those days—he had given fortunes to his six sisters, who all married in the parish, which is the reason why we are related to every Dalton, Liston, Donnelly in the place who ever signed their name. As grandpa saw,—the first Sunday I went to mass in the village, that the moment I got inside the door of the chapel I could safely wager that I was related to everyone inside except for “emergency men”. I don’t know were any of them there. Probably not. Times were peaceful.

The one brother that Maurice had, Richard, he sent on a message to the Burkes of Ballinathubber, near Newcastle West, (you turn off at Rollinsons bridge to get there) and there he died—19 years old, I think, and very likely pneumonia that accounted for his death—as so deep was the snow that they were unable to bring him home, and he lies in Monegay Churchyard, I have often thought of that lad and does he know just how he is left there, away from his own. How Maurice must have cursed that unlucky errand. Well Maurice having married off his sisters—married himself—a Catherine Reardon, in 1730. The date of her death is given as 1750, but that is impossible, as her youngest son and child was born in 1753. Shortly after that she died, and Maurice—who was sincerely fond of her found the sight of Temple Athea—visible from every point in his land and probably some of his windows—to be intolerable. So, he left Benmore and came to Cratloe, some time. I should say, between 1753 and 1760. As you know the house below—Patses—was then tenanted by r and Mrs Lacey—parents of Bishop Lacey, who all fled from Limerick from the Williamite persecution. His tomb (the Bishops) is in Ardagh churchyard (1753). From this I deduce he fled as a young priest and later became a Bishop. The Lacey’s went to Coole, and built a house where Jim Dalton built his new house a few years ago. They got some old floors digging out the site. Maurice then came to Cratloe (65 or 70) and he divided Cratloe between his four sons, after a while he had a fifth son, Edmund, who settled in Upper Athea, probably married before his father left Benmore. Short Dick stayed below at Patses, Maurice had a house in James’s haggard, and The Barrister had East Cratloe, and James had West Cratloe. Maurice, senior, died x-mas eve 1792, after eating his supper, still sitting in his chair, went out like a candle. He had every tooth intact, except for one—which was in his waist coat pocket. Poor profession—Dentistry—in those days. Short Dicks son was old Paddy—another son was “Ned”—your grandfather. Edmund, known as Ned built this house in 1815—and had two sons—Richard and Edmund, Nell og, Aunt Mag, Aunts Jule, Joan, Kate. So, you are in this line of decent—

Maurice,	g.g.g.g.g. grandfather
James	g.g.g.g. grandfather
Maurice	g.g.g grandfather
Richard	g.g grandfather
Patrick	great grandfather
Edmund	grandfather
Richard	father
Richard W Wolfe.	My father
Grace: Daughter	Maurice: Son
Mark: Grandson	John Maurice: grandson

Which makes ten generations!

Work out anything like that—Mayflowerites!

Having listened to the stealthy sounds of the Mayflowers trying to efface themselves, I'll tell you of a very singular case of extension of lives. Aunt Hannie, whether she remembers it or not (I can remember when I was 18 months old) she was three, most certainly knew her grandfather. He died in 1876. He used to go for walks with his grandfather, old Maurice—being then 4 years old. So, three lives—and Hannie is a comparatively young woman yet—have bridged to 1690—257 years. I think that bids fair to be a record.

The Maurice who lived in the house down James's haggard was the father of the men who settled in Iowa. Paddy Maurice, his son, was married twice. First to a Mc Auliffe girl, who died a year later. Her son went to live in Ballogh with his grandfather Mc Auliffe, who used to ride to Millstream to see his daughter (on horseback) when he was a long way over a hundred. He died at 120 years. That daughter was the maternal ancestors of the Leahys of the Millstream. Paddy Maurice's second wife was Joney Welsh, James Paddy's mother.

Maurice James Paddy's son—Father Maurice Woulfe—w, Dick Woulfe—as home from Buffalo last autumn, and so was his brother Dick Woulfe, from Rhodesia S. Africa. Singularly enough, there are six cousins, of the Woulfes are scattered throughout Africa. There is Maurice's son, John, in the royal Engineers, now stationed at Nanyuki—130 miles north of Nairobi—and one mile from the Equator. Father Michael Murphy (Aunt Mags grandson in the Cameroons. Fr. Michael Woulfe—(Jack Dick Maurice's nephew) on the Gold Coast. Fr Mc Elligott (Aunt Julies nephew) also Gold Coast. Fr. White (Tadey Scrute's son). Dick Wolfe—Rhodesia (James Paddy's son). An imposing list. Maurice, my nephew, is halfway to being a veterinary surgeon. Richard, the third son—will be a solicitor in another two years. My brother Maurice had a very bad time last Sept twelve months. He got a stroke, due to a tropical week and a good deal of worry over a new house they are building in Abbeyfeale. He cycled back and forth to Abbeyfeale from here, and over exertion executed. I was so stunned that I was quiet off my usual path. I could take an interest in nothing and I really think I felt as bad as he did. I was so staggered at any of the Woulfes getting anything of the kind that I thought it was a nightmare from which I would never wake up. However, he has recovered perfectly and has his blood pressure monitored monthly. He sleeps in Abbeyfeale for five days and the trap goes in for him on Saturday evening and he spends the weekend here. The rest of us are all fine. I haven't got very far with your growing (garden?). The winter came in so wet that no one could stick a spade in the ground. No one living ever saw the ground so waterlogged as last winter and gum boots were unobtainable because of rubber scarcity, but I shall do the job at the first available opportunity. Last year was a terrible year as no doubt you saw in the papers. Half the hay in the country had to stand still till it seeded and became useless. Everyone has practically cleared out their day stock. I only own one heifer and two calves. Had to sell everything else (except the cows of course) for hay shortage. And what a price hay will be in the Spring—I shudder to think. I shan't have to buy any, as I'll have enough now, and good deal of rye (to cut green) a couple of months ago. Did you know Maurice Mickey of Clonmel—the ex excise officer. Mickey Woulfe of Gragure was his father—a brother of Old Phils. He was 94—a widower, he was married to, Annie Foley—but they had no family. He, we understand, had compiled by himself a history of the Woulfes. He gifted it along with a number of other books, for some obscure reason, to St Muncheon's College Limerick. You would have thought he could see it was no earthly value to them but was of inestimable value to the family. He, I believe—got old records and documents relating to us that I never even heard of—and did really know more than anyone does now—unless we get a hold of that book. Mickey Phil, one of the Crustees, was here last night, and he and I have decided, in a kind of a way, to approach the St. Muncheon authorities about selling us the book. They can't fix but a nominal price on it, as it is no value

to anyone but ourselves. He was very short sighted not to see this for himself. I shall do my best to get a hold of it, you may be sure.

Tom Woulfe of Ballogh's wife died too. She was a pretty good age. Joney Crone? is now 94, and as keen as ever in her faculties. I am always proposing to go up there, and get some anecdotes of the past from her, but somehow, I am going to wind up this letter, because it is not fair not to acknowledge your letter, and I have been sometime writing this, but I shall write again in a week or so as I have a lot of other stories in mind. You would like to hear how your grandfather was involved in a faction fight, through no fault of his own indeed, and for he was a man of peace and detested violence, but you can not make a doormat of yourself entirely. I was in the very storm centre of a faction fight myself once—through no fault of mine either, you may be perfectly certain, but the cyclone sprang up around me. The last ever seen in Abbeyfeale too—the Keeffes and the Leahys. I seem fated to be in these melees—I was just opposite the GPO on Easter Monday in Dublin when the 1916 rebellion broke out. Kind of a stormy petrel, I suppose. I must have a sound heart.

Well I'll close this letter till today week or so. I hope you get it in good time. Best wishes to Aunt Helen, Grace and Mark. I saw a beautiful photograph of you all in Abbeyfeale. Very little change in any of you except Mark, of course.

Yours affectionately,

Dollie