

Subj: **FER-GOLD KEYS in Derryvullan and Canada**  
Date: 7/13/2008 11:12:54 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
From: [apeiron@vif.com](mailto:apeiron@vif.com)  
Reply-to: [fermanagh-gold@rootsweb.com](mailto:fermanagh-gold@rootsweb.com)  
To: [fermanagh-gold@rootsweb.com](mailto:fermanagh-gold@rootsweb.com)

Dear List,

During the Keys family reunion in Ireland in the summer of 2007 cousin Harry presented me with letters written by sons of Coolaness from Canada to their family spanning the period from the 1830s to 1850s. One of the letters is authored by Johnston Keys, several are from a Royal Keys, and a final letter is from the hand of Royal's daughter Dorothy. The letters contain a wealth of new genealogical information, but also raise difficult questions.

Royal, who is my ancestor, explains that he was forced to leave Ireland because his cattle had been impounded. Yet there is no record of Royal in any of the usual sources, and it is therefore impossible to date this event or to determine where Royal and Mary may have resided in the period before they departed for Canada in 1830. Could Royal have been banished or imprisoned?

Furthermore, in the letters he enumerates his children, all of whom appear to have emigrated together, although they did not all settle in the same township. Once again, there appear to be no records of the births of these children. However, it is possible that their names appear in the 1821 census as boarders with other families. What can we infer from this about the fate of Royal around the time of the 1821 census?

I would be very happy to receive suggestions or comments that may shed light on this mystery or help to identify people and places.

Anyone wishing to consult PDF copies of the letters (thanks to Nick Young) may download them from my website at <http://redshift.vif.com/files>.

Best wishes to all,

Roy

Johnston Keys writes from Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1831 where he is stationed with the 34th regiment of foot (see more at <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~crossroads/regiments/regiments-infantry.html>). In his letter he reveals the following genealogical information:

Johnston is son to William

Johnston is brother to (Thomas)

Richard is cousin to Johnston

Johnston is nephew to Royal Keys

Royal and Edward Fletcher came to America in spring of 1830

Mary Keys survivor of a shipwreck

Sergeant Fletcher and family are well (who is Sergeant Fletcher?)

Royal Keys and daughter Dorothy write from Marmora, Hastings County, Ontario. A tombstone and death records indicate that Royal was born in 1765 in Fermanagh and died in 1871 in Marmora.

Royal is brother to William

Royal is married to Mary

Children of Royal and Mary: Hugh, Isabella, Catherine (married to John Wilson) live at Tyendinaga (Roslin, Hastings County); Dorothy, John, Mary, Anne live in Marmora (Hastings County)

Jack Armstrong of Keeran is in Montreal with son William

Royal is nephew to Christopher Humphreys and William Humphreys of Crevenish

Thomas, son of William came to Canada, stayed with Royal's daughter Dorothy and husband Andrew Gawley (from Rosslea)

Brother William had a daughter Elizabeth who married Robin

Black Jack (Armstrong?) lives near Prescott (Grenville County, Ontario)

Thomas (son of William) speaks of going to America (USA)

Royal sends greetings to: Hugh and Bell and children; William and Dorothy and children

William Keys of the Hollow

Padrick Corrigan of Castle Hill

Thomas of the Hill

John of the Hollow

Hugh of Drumbulcan and sister Bell

William Keys of the Hollow and sister Dorothy and children

(What do the expressions Castle Hill, the Hill, and the Hollow refer to?)

Dorothy mentions the following relations:

Hugh Keys and Aunt Bell and children

William and Aunt and children

## Notes:

Johnston Keys can be identified in the 1821 census as Johnston Keys (20yrs, labourer, household of John Fletcher, Drumdravy). No other records of him have been found in Fermanagh.

William Keys is the father of Johnston. His family appears in the 1821 census as follows:

Household 011

Hugh Keys, 83yrs, farmer, 31? acres, Cooleness

Dolly Keys, 74yrs, wife

William Keys, 48yrs, son

Mary Keys, 22yrs, daughter-in-law

Christopher Keys, 1yr, grandson

Thomas Keys, 22yrs, grandson

Henry Keys, 11yrs, grandson

Note: Mary must be William's second wife (unless Mary was married to another son of Hugh and Dolly, e.g., Royal). When Johnston refers to "brother" in all likelihood he means the Thomas living in that household.

The first wife of William Keys, father of Johnston Keys, may have been a Fletcher, since Johnston refers to Edward Fletcher (perhaps with the meaning that he is an uncle: remains to be confirmed). This Edward is alleged to have come to America with Royal Keys in 1830.

This Thomas and a younger brother Henry were apparently born to William Keys and his first wife Dorothy (Fletcher?), since Henry is listed as born in Tullanaguiggy. This would seem to establish a connection with Tullanaguiggy.

Since Royal is brother to William, and Royal refers to uncles Christopher and William Humphreys, Dolly must be Dorothy Humphreys born 1748 in Drumard, daughter of Christopher Humphreys (1715-1805) and Maria Beatty (1720-1802). Dorothy was buried 25 Jan 1824.

(IGI has Christopher Humphreys Jr. born 1749 buried 11 Sep 1823; William Humphreys born 1751 buried 5 Jul 1834)

The Humphrey(s) family arrived in Fermanagh prior to 1659, since a Thomas "Umpfrey" gent. appears in the census of that year living in "Tullinigin" Magherycoolmony and an Edward Humphry gent. is resident in Rossquire Derryvullan. The first Keys in Fermanagh may have occupied land held by Humphreys.

The lineage of Hugh Keys Jr., father of Royal and William, extends back to Hugh Keys 1659-1733 buried at Lisnarick, through Hugh Sr.

The son of Jack Armstrong, William, may appear in the 1881 Canadian census as living at Wolford, Leeds and Grenville North County, Ontario. John and son William are to be found in the 1821 Fermanagh census living in Keeran.

Hugh and Bell must be the family living in Drumbulcan in the 1821 census

Household 029

Hugh Keys, 48yrs, farmer, 10acres +8acres elsewhere, Drumbulkin

Isabella Keys, 35yrs, wife

Thomas Keys, 6yrs, son

Catherine Keys, 4yrs, dau

Isabella Keys, 1yr, dau

Robert Keys, 15yrs, son

John Haron, 16yrs, house servant

Ann Keys, 12yrs, house servant

William and Dorothy also live in Drumbulcan (could this be the Hollow?)

Household 025

William Keys, 44yrs, farmer, 4 acres, Drumbulkin

Dolly Keys, 38yrs, wife

Hugh Keys, 10yrs, son

John Keys, 6yrs, son

William Keys, 4yrs, son

Adam Keys, 2yrs, son

Dolly Keys, 9yrs, dau

(N.B. This family subsequently moves to Irvinestown and a son Royal is born in 1828.)

Royal also refers to sisters Bell and Dorothy in connection with Hugh and William. Does this mean that Hugh and William married Keys cousins? (In the same connection Royal's daughter Dorothy makes reference to Hugh Keys and Aunt Bell and William and Aunt.) Could marriages with cousins have been arranged in order to preserve title to land?

Derryvullan North marriage records do show a William Keys of Magheraculmoney

married to a Dorothy Keys on 29 Jul 1808. This Dorothy Keys must be a daughter of Hugh and Dolly, and a sister to William and Royal. Hugh (married to Isabella) must be Hugh born 1773 died 1856 and buried at Lisnarick, and his wife Isabella must have been born in Drumbulcan.

A suitable Richard Keys does not appear in any records.

For the children of Royal and Mary, the following tentative identifications are put forward:

Hugh - my 2nd great grandfather, farmed at Roslin, Hastings County; no record in Fermanagh. Married Jane Graham born in Creevy, near Ballyshannon.

Isabella - no record

Catherine – possibly in the 1821 census, Catherine Keys, 22yrs, house servant, household of Mathew Johnston, Drogon

Dorothy (married Andrew Gawley, Marmora, Hastings County): no record in Fermanagh

John - possibly appears in the 1821 Fermanagh census in this entry: John Keys, 22yrs, journeyman weaver, household of William Fletcher, Drumdrany

Mary

Anne - in the 1821 census, possibly a lodger with Thomas Johnston, Schoolmaster, Nockrow.

Living in the same household as Anne are a George and William Keys. Could these also be children of Royal? Could other of his children be boarding with other families (e.g., Christopher Keys a labourer in the household of Charles Johnston, Nockrow)?

Plain Text

-----  
To unsubscribe from the list, please send an email to [FERMANAGH-GOLD-request@rootsweb.com](mailto:FERMANAGH-GOLD-request@rootsweb.com) with the word 'unsubscribe' without the quotes in the subject and the body of the message