

Birth, parentage, marriage and death of William Merigan

This brief evidences the details of the birth, parentage, marriage and death of William Merigan.

Those details are –

The birth date of William Merigan is about 1810, and his birth place is unknown, except that it was very likely in County Tipperary, Ireland.

His father was Michael Merrigan, farmer, but no further details are known about him. His mother is unknown.

William married Ann Keating in Cahir, County Tipperary, Ireland on 16th February 1833.

He married a second time, to Mary Ann Henley, at Saint Monica's Church, Hoxton, on the 6th February 1870.

He died at Shoreditch, London on 8th September 1879.

(The research for this brief was conducted in early 2024).

A note about William's surname

It is difficult to tell if William's surname in his marriage record (see below) is Merigan or Merrigan. The 1851 England Census and the 1861 England Census record his name as "Merrigan".

In key records, however, his surname is spelt "Merigan", for example, in the 1843 baptism record of his son Joseph (see Appendix 1 to the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan), in the 1851 birth certificate for his son William (see Appendix 1 to the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan), and in his 1879 death certificate (see below).

The preponderance of 19th Century County Tipperary records viewed relating to families so named spell it "Merrigan" rather than "Merigan". Nevertheless, as with William, most of the relevant records relating to his daughter, Elizabeth, also spelled her name as "Merigan" – see the brief relating to her.

Accordingly, "Merigan" is the spelling adopted here, notwithstanding that no birth record sufficiently proven to be William's has been located.

(Reference herein to searches said to have been conducted in relation to either "Merigan" or "Merrigan" would also have been conducted using the other spelling).

William's death

William Merigan's death certificate was in Kath Palyga's papers. It states that he died aged 72 years from "senile decay" on 8th September 1879, and apparently in the Shoreditch Infirmary,¹ Hoxton Street, Haggerston. Haggerston was part of Shoreditch borough.²

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH



GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number ... PAS 15.677.12.31

REGISTRATION DISTRICT Shoreditch

DEATH in the Sub-district of Haggerston in the County of Middlesex

No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
270	8 th September 1879 Shoreditch	William Merigan	Male	72	General Labourer	Senile decay Certified by J. H. Walsley M.D.	J. H. Walsley Acting Medical Officer Shoreditch Infirmary Hoxton Street Haggerston	8 th September 1879	A. A. Smith Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 9th day of October 1911.

DXZ 035251

See note overleaf

CAUTION:- It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

Dd 8272006 8106549 50M 3/91 Mer(232050)



A FreeBMD search of the death links an image of the relevant General Register Office index recording the death in the district of Shoreditch in the September quarter of 1879:

¹ Now St Leonard's Hospital. See <https://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/stleonards.html>. The infirmary appears to have fronted Kingsland Road, as well as Hoxton Street.

² In 1965, Shoreditch borough, which included Haggerston, became part of the new Hackney borough. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haggerston>.

MERIDITH, Emma.	35.	Chorlton	8 c.	303
MERIGAN, William.	72.	Shoreditch	1 c.	104
MERITON, Hannah.	47.	St. Geo. East	1 c.	256

We know the following 1851 England Census record includes our ancestor Elizabeth Merigan (named Eliza in the record) and her immediate family (see the brief relating to her for that verification).

³ URLs of Family Search records linked herein include “61903”, presumably a specific member number, and likely need adapting to function.

[Records](#)
[Images](#)
[Family Tree](#)
[Genealogies](#)
[Catalog](#)
[Books](#)
[Wiki](#)

William Merrigan

Census • England and Wales Census, 1851

[SAVE](#)
[EDIT](#)
[SHARE](#)

View on The National Archives, London, England

[VIEW ORIGINAL DOCUMENT](#)

Document Information

Collection Information
[England and Wales Census, 1851](#)

Cite This Record
 "England and Wales Census, 1851," database with images, *FamilySearch* ([https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:SG64-T7F](https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:SG64-T7F?i=9); 9 November 2019), William Merrigan, Saint Leonard Shoreditch, Middlesex, England; citing Saint Leonard Shoreditch, Middlesex, England, p. 38, from "1851 England, Scotland and Wales census," database and images, *Findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com>; n.d.); citing PRO HO 107, The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey.

[Copy Citation](#)

Name **William Merrigan**

Sex **Male**

Age **40**

Birth Year (Estimated) **1811**

Birthplace **Ireland**

Residence Note **Phillips Street**

Marital Status **Married**

Occupation **Laborer**

Relationship to Head of Household **Head**

Event Type **Census**

Event Date **1851**

Event Place **Saint Leonard Shoreditch, Middlesex, England**

Registration District **Shoreditch**

Page Number **38**

Piece/Folio **1537 / 456**

Registration Number **HO107**

Attached in Family Tree to

William Merigan
 1808-1879 • G4BQ-N2W

Similar Records
 No similar records were found.

William Merrigan's Spouses and Children [OPEN ALL](#)

Anne Merrigan	Wife	F	38	Ireland	▼
Eliza Merrigan	Daughter	F	9	, London	▼
Joshua Merrigan	Son	M	7	, London	▼
Anne Merrigan	Daughter	F	3	, London	▼
William Merrigan	Son	M	0	, London	▼

[About](#)
[Volunteer](#)
[Blog](#)
[Find Ancestors](#)
[Site Map](#)
[DNA](#)
[Solutions Gallery](#)
[Mobile Apps](#)
[Contact Us](#)

(An additional piece of information is in the original census record but not the above Family Search extract, namely that William and his wife Ann were each born in County Tipperary. That information could only have come from either or both of William and Ann. See the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan for a copy of the original census record.)

"Phillips Street" is called Philip Street in the 1860 Smith's new map of London,⁴ but (as it is also now called) Phillipp Street in the Edward Weller 1868 map.⁵ In the 1860s, Phillipp Street was the street roughly parallel to, and immediately to the north of, Wilmer Gardens, which in turn was a street 150 metres to the north of Shoreditch Infirmary.⁶

The family also appears in the 1861 England Census. See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2ML-HJLF>.⁷

⁴ See <https://www.loc.gov/item/00556408/>.

⁵ See <https://london1868.com/weller20.htm>.

⁶ See the 1860 map at <https://www.theundergroundmap.com/article.html?id=61721&zoom=16&annum=1860>.

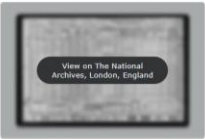
⁷ The 1860s map at The Underground Map, see <https://www.theundergroundmap.com/article.html?id=733&zoom=16&annum=1860>, had no Anns Terrace in Shoreditch. The street name is almost certainly correctly called Ann's Place, see the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan.

Records Images Family Tree Genealogies Catalog Books Wiki

William Merrigan

Census • England and Wales Census, 1861

[SAVE](#)
[EDIT](#)
[SHARE](#)



View on The National Archives, London, England

VIEW ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

Document Information

Collection Information

England and Wales Census, 1861

Cite This Record

"England and Wales Census, 1861," database with images, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2M-HJLF : 3 March 2021), William Merrigan, Shoreditch St Leonard, Middlesex, England, United Kingdom; from "1861 England, Scotland and Wales census," database and images, findmypast (http://www.findmypast.com : n.d.); citing PRO RG 9, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey.

[Copy Citation](#)

Name William Merrigan

Sex Male

Age 52

Birth Year (Estimated) 1809

Birthplace Ireland

Residence Note Anns Terrace

Marital Status Married

Occupation Labourer

Relationship to Head of Household Head

Relationship Code Head

Event Type Census

Event Date 1861

Event Place Shoreditch St Leonard, Middlesex, England, United Kingdom

Event Place (Original) St Leonard Shoreditch, London, Middlesex, England

Registration District Shoreditch

Household Identifier 346238

Line Number 19

Page Number 24

Piece/Folio 244 / 110

Registration Number RG09

Family Tree

[ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE](#)

Similar Records

No similar records were found.

Other People on This Record [OPEN ALL](#)

Name	Sex	Age	Birthplace
Ann Merrigan	F	50	Ireland
Joseph Merrigan	M	18	Ireland
Ann Merrigan	F	12	London,
William Merrigan	M	9	London,

The above extract is for the same family as in the 1851 England Census record above for the reasons given in the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan.

In the 1851 England Census record above, Ann (or Anne) Merigan is recorded as William Merigan's wife.

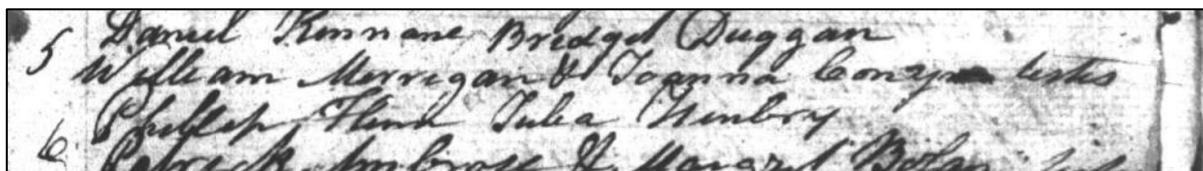
The Family Search person record for William is at <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/G4BQ-N2W>. It states that he married about 1836 in County Tipperary. That information was provided by a Family Search contributor, who speculated in adding to the person record in 2021 as follows:

Marriage about 1836, County Tipperary, Ireland

Reason This Information Is Correct:

Can't find the marriage. But first son DEFINATELY [sic] born in Tipperary, Ireland. So assume marriage is in Ireland, but could have been England.

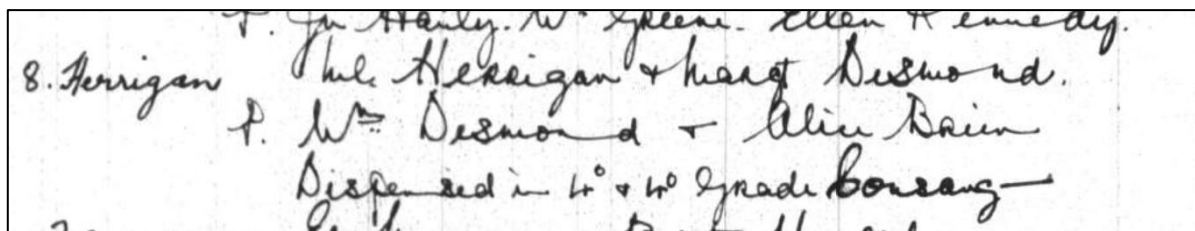
The town of Tipperary in County Tipperary is in Tipperary parish. The parish registers of marriages in Tipperary parish have been microfilmed, and are held online by the National Library of Ireland. At pages 67-76 of "Tipperary Microfilm 02495/05", the marriages from 1835 to 1837 in the Tipperary parish are listed. Only one William Merrigan is named, but he married a Joanna Conyn on 5th February 1837. See <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632773#page/74/mode/1up> at page 74.



("Witness" was the original meaning of "testis": see <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/testis>).

Looking further in County Tipperary, the parish registers of marriage in the parish of Bansha and Kilmoyler have also been microfilmed. Bansha is where William's son Joseph was baptised in 1843 (see Appendix 1 to the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan). At pages 92-101 of "Bansha and Kilmoyler Microfilm 02497/02", the marriages in 1832 to 1839 are listed. Only one William Merrigan (possibly, as it could be Herrigan) is named, but he married a

Mary Desmond on 8th February 1836. See <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632651#page/96/mode/1up> at page 96. This is a close up of the image:



As can be seen from the above census records, and from records in, and also conclusions based on information in, Appendix 1 to the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan, William and Ann had children which were born or baptised as follows –

Date	Name	Location	Evidence of birth/baptism
5 th February 1834	Mary	Cahir	Parish baptism record
19 th November 1835	Michael	Cahir	Parish baptism record
About 1837	James	Co. Tipperary	No record, but beyond doubt
12 th May 1838	Patrick	Cahir	Parish baptism record
About 1841	Elizabeth	Co. Tipperary	No record. Location likely only
8 th April 1843	Joseph	Bansha	Parish baptism record
About 1847	Ann	Co. Tipperary	Census records. Location likely only
2 nd April 1851	William	Shoreditch	Birth certificate

That history suggests a marriage in County Tipperary, most likely Cahir, in about 1833. That also correlates with the ages of William (40 and 52) and Ann (38 and 50) given in the 1851 and 1861 England Census records above respectively, and William's age of 60 given in the 1871 English census (see below), all of which suggest that William was born about 1810, and Ann was born about 1811. Thus, in 1833, William would have been about 23, and Ann would have been about 22.

A search in the Family Search database for "Ireland Catholic Parish Registers 1740-1900" for Cahir parish records for "Annam Keating" ("Annam" being observed often in Latinized Irish records as meaning Ann or similar)⁸ returned the following marriage record, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6KBY-MWP3>:

⁸ See <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Annam>.

FamilySearch

Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

Records Images Family Tree Genealogies Catalog Books Wiki

Annam Keating

Mentioned in the Record of [Gulielmum Mo*](#) (Annam Keating's Husband)
Marriage • Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900

SAVE EDIT SHARE

Image Unavailable

Document Information

Collection Information
[Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900](#)

Cite This Record
"Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900", database, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6 KBY-MWP3 : 28 August 2023), Annam Keating in entry for Gulielmum Mo*, 1833.

Copy Citation

Name Annam Keating
Sex F

Family Tree
ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE

Similar Records
Anna Keating
Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1740-1900

Annam Keating's Spouses and Children

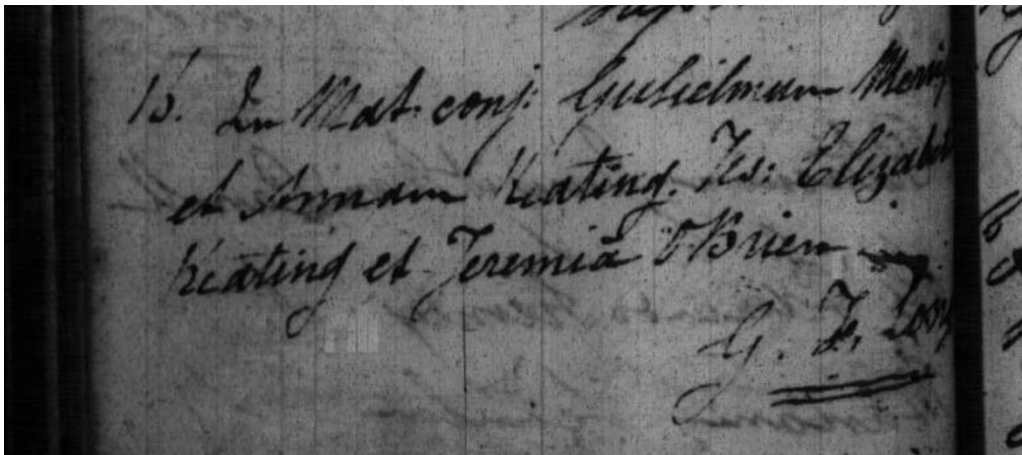
CLOSE ALL

Name	Sex	Relationship
Gulielmum Mo*	M	Husband

Name [Gulielmum Mo*](#)
Sex Male
Spouse's Name Annam Keating
Spouse's Sex Female
Event Type Marriage
Event Date 16 Feb 1833
Event Place Cahir, County Tipperary, Ireland

Obviously, the date and place of marriage correlates, and the husband's first name is correct, "Gulielmum" being Latin for William,⁹ but the Family Search record suggests that the husband's surname in the parish register entry was partially obscured and not scanned in full.

However, going to the original Cahir parish record held online by the National Library of Ireland, more of the spouse's surname is revealed, namely "Merig", or possibly "Merrig", confirming that the marriage record of William and Ann has been located. See "Cahir Microfilm 02460/02", page 180 at <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632132#page/180/mode/1up>. This is a close up:



(Note that the Family Search record does not include the witnesses' names. Note also that one witness (noted as tes, short for *testis*, Latin for "witness")¹⁰ is Elizabeth Keating, presumably the sister of the bride, although possibly her mother or a sister-in-law).

This is the full page:

⁹ See <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Gulielmus>.

¹⁰ See <https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=testis>.

oli | **Carbottoli Market**
Registration all
oli oli

Merigan event in 1843 (Joseph's baptism).¹¹ A further location correlation is that, as noted above, both William and Ann are recorded as born in County Tipperary in the family's 1851 England Census record.

There was only one William Merigan/Ann Keating family in the locale in the 1830s and 1840s

Also, there is no realistic chance of another relevant William Merigan and Ann Keating family in the Tipperary town/Bansha/Cahir area of South Tipperary, and having children, at the time. On the whole of the voluminous records sighted or scanned, Keating was a reasonably common name in the Cahir area at the time, and both Ann and William were common forenames in Ireland at the time.

However, Merigan was significantly less common than Keating in the Tipperary town/Bansha/Cahir area, and also quite uncommon in Cahir, being more prevalent around Bansha. All landholding Merigans were west of the Tipperary–Cahir road (see Appendix 1), with none in Cahir's surrounds. The relative frequency of Merigans and Keatings in South Tipperary is indicated by the fact that searches of Griffiths Valuation for landholders in South Tipperary produced 11 Merigan/Merrigan records (see Appendix 1), and 526 Keating records.¹²

Given the low distribution of Merigans, the chance that another William Merigan in the district married another Ann Keating in the district, such that there were at least two William Merigan/Ann Keating families bearing children in the same South Tipperary locale, and in the same time period, is quite low.

We can thus be quite confident that the William and Ann Merigan named in the 1851 and 1861 England Census records above, who we know from the original 1851 England Census record were both born in County Tipperary, is the same couple as that named in the above Cahir 1833 marriage record.

Accordingly, William Merigan married Ann Keating in Cahir, County Tipperary on 16th February 1833.

William's second marriage

In Kath Palyga's papers, there is correspondence written in the 1990s and following between her and her half second cousin Patricia Burke and her husband Ramon, known as Ray. The correspondence makes clear that the Burkes were also keen researchers of the Merigan family history.

Kath Palyga's documentation included Ray Burke's paper *Our Merrigan Heritage* (apparently written about 2006),¹³ in which Ray Burke stated that "Carol Davis, a Merrigan descendant in England, (Honeywood, Braggs Lane, Herne Common, Kent, CT6 7NP)" had provided him with information that, after the death of William's wife Ann on 28th August 1868, he re-married on the 6th February 1870, and to a Mary Ann Henley.

This second marriage was confirmed from records. Firstly, it is noted in the General Register Office marriage registration index for the first quarter of 1870, which indices are accessible via hyperlinks in searches made in FreeBMD:¹⁴

MERIFIELD, William.....	Crediton	5 b.	615
MERIGAN, William.....	Shoreditch	1 c.	332
MERKS, Sarah.	Clutton	5 c.	879

This is the full page:

¹¹ In Appendix 1 to the brief relating to Elizabeth Merigan, this Joseph is demonstrated to be the son of William and Ann as listed in the 1851 and 1861 England Census records for their family (although incorrectly named Joshua in the 1851 record).

¹² See <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml?action=doNameSearch&Submit.x=35&Submit.y=10&familyname=Keating&firstname=First+Name&baronynname=&countyname=TIPPERARY%2C+SOUTH+RIDING&unionname=&parishname=>.

¹³ The document, which was provided by Tom Moore to Steve Palyga, is a Word document. Under File/Info, it was last printed in 2006.

¹⁴ See https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?r=46834118:4354&d=bmd_1705870475.

HENNING, Catherine.	Stairford	6 b.	33
HENLEY, John.	Camberwell	1 d.	640
— Mary Ann.	Shoreditch	1 c.	392
— Thomas Augustine J.	W. Derby	8 b.	587

¹⁵ See https://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?scan=1&r=46819619:8342&d=bmd_1705870475.



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF MARRIAGE GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 14736661-1

1870. Marriage solemnized <i>at Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Chapel</i> in the <i>district of Shoreditch</i> in the County of <i>Middlesex</i>							
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.
	<i>Sixth</i>	<i>William Merigan</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Stone Mason</i>	<i>7 Wilmer Gardens Hoxton</i>	<i>Michael Merigan Farmer (deceased)</i>
<i>64</i>	<i>18 Feb</i>	<i>Mrs. Ann Stanley</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>Widow</i>		<i>3 St. Leonard Square Hoxton</i>	<i>Robert Stanton Percheron (deceased)</i>

Married in the *Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Chapel* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Roman Catholics* by *Berthoud* by the *Michael Kelly*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *William Merigan* in the Presence of us, *Joseph Shildon* *Margaret Glynn*

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Marriages in the Registration District of Shoreditch
Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 14th day of February 2024

MXJ 857893

CAUTION: THERE ARE OFFENCES RELATING TO FALSIFYING OR ALTERING A CERTIFICATE AND USING OR POSSESSING A FALSE CERTIFICATE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT
WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.


MLW

This is obviously Elizabeth's father William Merigan, given that his wife had died some 17 months earlier (on 28th August 1868) at the same address given as William's residence, namely 7 Wilmer Gardens, Hoxton (see the brief relating to Ann Keating).

It is noted that the certificate records that the marriage was celebrated at "Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Chapel". Saint Monica's Church is in Hoxton,¹⁶ and about ½ mile south of where 7 Wilmer Gardens used to be.

William's birth

Two baptismal records have been said to be William's, namely that of a William Mergin baptised in Tipperary town on 9th May 1808, and that of a William Merrigan baptised at Glendalough, County Wicklow on 14th November 1808. It has also been said that William was baptised in 1808 to Michael Merrigan and Catherine Byrne, and William himself identified his father as Michael Merigan, farmer. These accounts are now examined.

William Mergin baptised in Tipperary town on 9th May 1808

In a letter to Kath Palyga dated 18th September 1992, the Burkes advised that they had –

found a record of the birth¹⁷ of a William Mergin (a perfectly acceptable variation of Merrigan) in Tipperary parish, County Tipperary, on 9 May 1808, whose parents were John Mergin and Catherine Byrne. Nellie Shields has told us that Elizabeth was brought up in County Tipperary ...¹⁸

I, for one, wouldn't have much doubt that this William Mergin was Elizabeth's father. Any possible doubt was virtually demolished with the finding of the birth¹⁹ of a Joseph Merrigan to William Merrigan and

¹⁶ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Monica%27s_Church,_Hoxton.

¹⁷ Actually, a record of a baptism.

¹⁸ Cf. Elizabeth's granddaughter Nell reporting in her memoirs *A Life Story by Nell Victoria Moore* at p[age 1 that Elizabeth "was born in 1840 near Bow Bells in London".

¹⁹ Actually, the finding of a baptism.

Anne Keating in the adjoining parish of Bansha on 3 Apr 1843. Doubtless William Merrigan and Anne Keating lived at some time in the area of Tipperary between Bansha and Tipperary town. These findings are included in material subsequently confirmed in writing by the Tipperary Heritage Unit copies of whose letters are enclosed.

The Burkes enclosed a letter dated 24th August 1992 from the Tipperary Heritage Unit which attached a sheet with four transcribed records listed in type including the following:²⁰

PARISH OF TIPPERARY			
Baptism:			
DATE	CHILD	PARENTS	SPONSORS
1808.05.09	Mergin William	Mergin John Byrne Catherine	Doorty John Burns Kate

William Mergin's baptism year of 1808 is a reasonable match (given age uncertainty of the times) with Elizabeth's father's death in 1879, said to be at age 72. It is also a reasonable fit with his marriage in 1833. Also, Tipperary parish adjoins Bansha parish, which in turn adjoins Cahir parish,²¹ which two latter parishes are the known locale of baptisms for siblings of Elizabeth (see the above list).

However, Family Search searches which might evidence the candidacy of William Mergin baptised 1808 in Tipperary parish as Elizabeth's father William provided no useful information. A Family Search search of the name William Mergin provided no relevant record, in fact only 6 in all,²² and searches for a marriage record in Tipperary parish of a John Mergin or Catherine Byrne,²³ as well as searches for birth records for them in that parish, were also either fruitless, or inconclusive as to whether they actually were records for the same person named as a parent in William Mergin's 1808 baptism record.

²⁰ The comprehensiveness of the 1992 searches by the Tipperary Heritage Unit is questionable. They had previously advised the Burkes by letter dated 6th August 1992 that "after a thorough and detailed search of all 46 parishes in the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, we were unable to locate any information on the Keating of [sic] Merrigan families". Despite this "thorough" search, the four transcribed records in the sheet attached to their subsequent letter dated 24th August 1992 had three potentially relevant Keating or Merrigan records, namely the 1808 William Mergin record, a record of the baptism in Tipperary parish of an Edmund Keating on 11th January 1816, and the record of the baptism in Bansha parish of a Joseph Merrigan on 3rd April 1843. Both Tipperary parish and Bansha parish are parishes of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly. Mistakes and misses no doubt would occur with manual searches but, notably, by this time, all or some of the records of parishes in County Tipperary were digitised and also electronically searchable: in their paper *Irish Genealogy*, the Burkes reported that, on 17th July 1992, the Bansha parish priest had a "computer print-out" of parish baptisms and marriages; and they also reported that the Tipperary Heritage Unit could generate a print out of the results of a general enquiry: "At Tricia's request the girl produced a print-out of all the Johanna Birranes in Tipperary." As to the diligence of the Unit's researchers, the Burkes wryly noted that "for the THU, the Bishop "employed" FAS people – they were on a "work for the dole" venture. Genealogists they weren't." To be fair, the Unit's research at the time probably remained hit and miss, digitisation and search engines not being what they are today. Family Search's digitisation of its 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed genealogical records only began in 1998: see <https://www.familysearch.org/en/newsroom/familysearch-completes-digitization-of-massive-microfilm-collection>.

²¹ See the Catholic parishes map for Tipperary South at <https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/counties/rcmaps/tipperarysrc.php#maps/>.

²² See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1808&q.givenName=William&q.givenName.exact=on&q.surname=Mergin&q.surname.exact=on>.

²³ One Catherina Byrne, who was baptised in October 1794 in Carrick-on-Suir, was returned, but she would be very unlikely to have had a child baptised in May 1808. Another "Cath. Burne" was baptised in Carrick-on-Suir in 1784, which is a better age match, but not a strong location match, given that Carrick-on-Suir is 32 miles east-south-east of Tipperary town. A third Catherinam Byrn was baptised in Cahir in 1777, which is closer to Tipperary town. She is discussed below. The searches proved that there were many Catherine Byrnes in parishes of County Tipperary surrounding Tipperary parish. Although no others were age-appropriate, their large number, and the fact that the Family Search digitised Irish parish records are an incomplete record as explained in Appendix 2, make any conclusion that any one of these three was William Mergin's mother highly speculative.

Nevertheless, Kath Palyga appears to have accepted the Burkes conclusions as correct, as on a family data sheet she prepared for William, she adopts the baptism date and parents in the William Mergin record:

[illegible]

²⁶ In their paper *Irish Genealogy*, the Burkes reported that, on 30th August 1994, they “scouted the Bansa cemetery seeking familiar names. There was quite a number of Merrigans and a few Keatings”. They also reported that, on 26th June 1996, whilst in Tipperary town: “We visited the St Mary’s cemetery which is now a Church of Ireland establishment but is apparently a cemetery of largely Catholic derivation however found no Merrigans, Byrons or Keatings. We then tried the cemetery at New Inn without finding anybody – we had at least expected a Keating or two.” It seems highly likely that these counts reflect a trend which goes back to the relevant time, and not just a more recent trend.

There was no other evidence in Kath Palyga's papers supporting the birth date and parentage given in the family data sheet. Accordingly, although the Burkes' supposition is not inconceivable, supposition it remains.²⁷

In his later 2006 paper *Our Merrigan Heritage*, Ray Burke agreed that the William Mergin "hypothesis" was problematic. He stated:

Our first documentary evidence of William was his death certificate showing death at a stated age of 72 on 8 September 1879 suggesting that he was born about 1807/8. The Tipperary Heritage Unit in Tipperary town duly searched their records for a relevant birth and came up with a baptismal record in Tipperary parish of a William Mergin on 9 May 1808 whose parents were John Mergin and Catherine Byrne and the sponsors at baptism were John Merrigan and Margaret Walsh. Mergin is an acceptable variant of Merrigan as Byrne is of Byron. That William would have been aged 71 when our known William died. That is a closer than usual match!

So we were happy to accept the likely parentage of John and Catherine.

The real problem with the hypothesis of the John Mergin-Catherine Byrne parentage for William became apparent when Carol Davis, a Merrigan descendant in England, (Honeywood, Braggs Lane, Herne Common, Kent, CT6 7NP), gave details of the re-marriage of William Merrigan after the death of Ann Keating on 28 August 1868. When William re-married to Mary Ann Henley on 6 Feb 1870 he stated his father to have been Michael Merrigan, farmer, then deceased – and coming from him that has a deal of persuasive authority.²⁸

(As to the Michael Merigan details referred to, see the certificate for William's second marriage above).

For the above reasons, it is concluded that the William Mergin baptised on 9th May 1808 in Tipperary town is not Elizabeth's father.

A side note in relation to the Mergin baptism is that the Tipperary Heritage Unit reported that the baptismal sponsors were John Doorty and Kate Burns – see the THU's typed copy of the Mergin record above. But Ray Burke states in the passage quoted above that they were John Merrigan and Margaret Walsh. It is not known where this information came from, or if it is just a mix-up.

Without access to the original Tipperary parish baptism records, whether the male sponsor at William Mergin's 1808 baptism was John Doorty or John Merrigan could not be confirmed. Of course, if one of the baptismal sponsors was indeed a "Merrigan", that does suggest it is correct to equate Mergin to Merrigan, as did the Burkes and the Tipperary Heritage Unit.

But, even if William Mergin was proved to have a relative called John Merrigan, drawing the conclusion that he is Elizabeth's father from that fact alone remains fraught. That is because, given the Merigan population density at the time and in the place, as referred to above, there is a significant chance of other local Merigans who had both a William and John in their immediate or extended family. That fact was apparent from reviewing many

²⁷ The Burkes repeated their position in their paper called *Some 1998 Research*: "We have hitherto accepted that William Merrigan was born to William Mergin and Catherine Byrne in 1808 and baptised at Bansha on 8 May 1808. [Actually, at Tipperary and on the 9th May]. He died in the Shoreditch Infirmary on 8 September 1879 at a stated age of 72 years. That all suggests that he was indeed born about 1808."

²⁸ The family's previous historians were diligent and meticulous. Kath Palyga's genealogical records filled two archive boxes. The Burkes wrote papers about their family history, and were so invested in family research that they spent several holidays "on the ground" in County Tipperary, attending at the Tipperary Heritage Unit, meeting distant relatives, and visiting cemeteries as well as relevant locations. Also, whilst their initial conclusion about William Mergin born 1808 was subsequently retracted, it had a fair basis, as well as encouragement from the Tipperary Heritage Unit, which advised by its letter to the Burkes of 24th August 1992 that it was a "possible" baptism for William Merrigan. And, whilst Kath Palyga accepted the Burkes conclusion, neither she nor they were given to the patently wrong conclusions, even wild guesswork, which some contributors to genealogical websites are happy to put their name to. (Or they admitted to having a guess – see Ray Burke's comment as to a connection "somewhat recklessly assumed" in Appendix 3). Also, they were working with the tools they had, and family history research in the early 1990s was generally slow and laborious. One single record might take months to obtain via written correspondence with an overseas authority. Research in 2024 is far quicker, and able to be far more wide-ranging, as a result of the extensive digitisation of instantaneously available records by registry offices, libraries, archives, cemeteries, subscription-based ancestry websites, online sharing platforms such as Find a Grave, and free genealogical information websites such as FreeBMD and Family Search (which advises at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/newsroom/familysearch-completes-digitization-of-massive-microfilm-collection> that, between 1998 and 2021, it digitised its entire collection of microfilmed records). With more records becoming available in future, and the growing use of artificial intelligence, it seems likely that future research will locate further information relevant to the family, including information which may lead to adjusting conclusions reached in 2024.

contemporaneous County Tipperary records, which review proved that William and John were very common given names in the area and at the time.

Further, if the male sponsor at William Mergin's 1808 baptism was a John Merrigan, he is likely to be a non-first-degree relative of the child's father John Mergin. (He would not be John Mergin's brother, as one would not expect two brothers named John. And he would not be his father, as then one would expect that his surname would also have been spelt "Mergin").

Hence a further line of enquiry which might return some relevant information would be to attempt to locate a John Merrigan related to a John Mergin in County Tipperary at the time. However, no such record was located on a Family Search search.²⁹ And, given the other reservations set out above as to the candidacy of William Mergin baptised 1808 as Elizabeth's father William, the matter was not pursued further.

William Merrigan baptised at Glendalough, County Wicklow on 14th November 1808

William's Family Search person record at <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/G4BQ-N2W> names him as the husband of Anne Keating and the father of Elizabeth, and gives his baptism date and place as 14th November 1808 at Glendalough, County Wicklow. Glendalough is 80 miles east-north-east of Bansha, essentially on the other side of the country given that County Wicklow is on the east coast of Ireland.

That date and place were added to William's person record on 19th April 2023 by a Family Search contributor, who also added a link to the relevant baptism record in the Glendalough parish register, however the image is illegible, see <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000633413#page/8/mode/1up>. The contributor also posted:

Above is the link for the page at the NLI in the Glendalough parish registers, but the page is very faded, or is a horrible scan. I gleaned this information from the index at Rootsireland.ie, which is a paid subscription.

link to index:

http://wicklow.rootsireland.ie/view_detail.php?recordid=245660&type=bch&recordCentre=wicklow&page=1&n=1&backLink=quis.php&sc=0

I will include a copy of the index page in Memories. Index reads as follows:

William Merrigan, son of John Merrigan and Ellen Byrne on Nov 14, 1808 in Glendalough Parish, Co Wicklow, Roman Catholic records. Sponsors are Bernard Brady and Elizabeth Harmon.

This is the document that the Family Search contributor pasted into the Memories section of the person record:

		Church Baptism Record	
Name:	William Merrigan	Date of Birth:	
Address:		Date of Baptism:	14-Nov-1808
Gender:	Male	Parish/District:	GLENDALOUGH
		County:	Co. Wicklow
		Denomination:	Roman Catholic
Father:	John Merrigan	Mother:	Ellen Byrne
Occupation:			
Sponsor 1 / Informant 1:	Bernard Brady	Sponsor 2 / Informant 2:	Elizabeth Harmon
Notes:			
© 2023 Copyright Wicklow Family History Centre		www.rootsireland.ie	

²⁹ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.givenName=John&q.otherGivenName=John&q.otherSurname=Merrigan&q.otherSurname.exact=on&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Mergin&q.surname.exact=on>

No other information is given as to why the contributor thought this particular William Merigan was the husband of Ann Keating and the father of Elizabeth. The lack of proximity of Glendalough to County Tipperary suggests he is not. As does the 1851 England census record, which notes William's birthplace as County Tipperary. That information in the census record could only have ultimately come from William.

William's further averment upon his re-marriage in 1870 that his father was a Michael (see the marriage record above) also controverts the candidacy of this Wicklow William as Elizabeth's father, as that William was the son of a John.

Whilst Merrigan/Merigan was not a very common name in Ireland at the time (a conclusion based on the totality of Irish records viewed), there were significant numbers of them in County Wicklow.³⁰ But there were also significant numbers of them in County Tipperary, especially around Bansha as noted above (as well as west and south of Tipperary town as noted in Appendix 1).

Records viewed also proved that William was an extremely common given name in Ireland at the time, and the numbers of Merigans in both County Wicklow and County Tipperary makes the fact that there would be William Merigans in both areas a certainty.³¹

That makes it dangerous to conclude, in the absence of further evidence, that Elizabeth's father William Merigan was baptised in Glendalough but had migrated to Cahir from County Wicklow by the time of his marriage in 1833. The significant gaps in the Irish public records at the relevant time (see Appendix 2) compounds that danger: unless the candidate matches reasonably compellingly, one can never be sure there was not a better matching candidate in the unavailable records.

It is thus concluded that Family Search contributor, or RootsIreland.ie, has wrongly connected Elizabeth's father to the William Merrigan baptised in Glendalough, County Wicklow on 14th November 1808.³²

William baptised in 1808 to Michael Merrigan and Catherine Byrne

Tom Moore wrote as follows in his 2024 book *Family Ties: The Patriarch and the Matriarch: John Charles Noblet, Elizabeth Jane Merrigan, and their families*, page 86:

William was a stonemason born in 1808 in the Aherlow Valley (or Glen of Aherlow) in County Tipperary, Ireland. His father was a farmer Michael Merrigan, born in 1773, and his mother was Catherine Byrne, born in 1780.

Tom Moore advised Steve Palyga (via email of 21st February 2024) that he believes he obtained William's birthplace, his mother's name, and his parent's birth years, from ancestry.com. (Notably, Catherine Byrne was named as the mother of the abovementioned William Mergin baptised in Tipperary on 9th May 1808).

Family Search searches for a Michael Merigan/Merrigan born anywhere in Ireland in about 1773 proved fruitless, as may be expected given the gaps in the records of the time explained in Appendix 2.

Searches for a Catherine Byrne, born in about 1780 in County Tipperary, returned one record of interest out of 34 in total (there were 2,752 records returned for the whole of Ireland).³³ She was a "Catherinam Byrn" baptised

³⁰ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1808&q.givenName=Wm&q.surname=Merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.clues%20Wicklow>

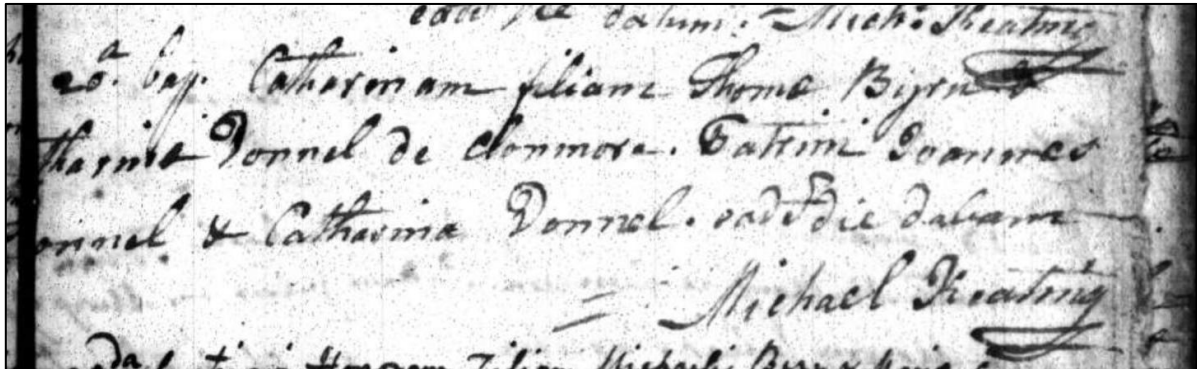
³¹ As is verified by a Family Search search, which also revealed at least two other William Merrigans born in County Tipperary at the relevant time (i.e. 1809 and 1812), although, given they died in Ireland and in 1884 and 1902 respectively, they were not Elizabeth's father. See <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1805&q.anyDate.to=1815&q.anyPlace=County%20Tipperary%2C%20Ireland&q.givenName=William&q.surname=Merrigan>.

³² William's person record at <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/G4BQ-N2W> reasonably correctly lists his later children (Patrick is missing, and it adds a Joshua, but he has the same birth date as Joseph), but it also lists William's siblings, and all but one are said to have been born in County Wicklow. The exception is Patrick. His birth place is not given at all. It follows from the conclusion that the Glendalough William is not Elizabeth's father that these named siblings are not her aunts and uncles.

³³ Or, at least, that was the number of records returned on the date the search was conducted in early 2024. See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1780&q.givenName=Catherine&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Byrne&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland>.

20th April 1777 in Cahir to Thomas Byrn and Catherine Donnel,³⁴ but there was no other information linked to that record, and hence nothing to assist in establishing if this Catherine was William's mother.³⁵

Going to the original parish register entry of the baptism,³⁶ it reveals that the mother was from Clonmore,³⁷ and that the sponsors were John Donnel and Catherine Donnel:



The original record thus provides some details which are not in the Family Search record, but, again, none that assists in establishing if this Catherine baptised in 1777 was William's mother.

In the end, however, nothing in the writings of the Burkes, or in the information and records sighted in the course of extensive research regarding William's birth and also regarding the Merigans in County Tipperary, gives a sufficiently cogent basis for stating that William's birth location was Aherlow, or that the birth year of his likely father Michael was 1773, or that his mother was a Catherine Byrne born in 1780.

It is to be noted, as stated above, that a Catherine Byrne was the wife of a John Mergin, and they had a William baptised in Tipperary town on 9th May 1808. It could be the case that the contributor to ancestry.com may have conflated some of that Mergin information with William's averment on the occasion of his second marriage that his father was "Michael Merrigan, farmer" and that, otherwise, the contributor has guesstimated the birth years of William's parents (a phenomenon commonly seen in Family Search contributions).

A side note is that, additional to Tom Moore, the Burkes also thought that William was, or may have been, born in the Glen of Aherlow to the west of Bansha (see the quote below from Ray Burke's paper *Our Merrigan Heritage*).³⁸ The Aherlow River runs through this valley, as does the Bansha to Galbally road, now Route R663, with Aherlow town about 6 miles west-south-west of Bansha. However, despite extensive searches, no record was located which verifies the Aherlow Valley as William's birthplace. Indeed, save for the presence in the 1840s onwards of landowning Merigans north of Aherlow, referred to in Appendix 1, no record even suggests it.

William himself identifies his father as Michael Merigan, farmer

As noted above, on the occasion of his second marriage in 1870, William identified his father as Michael Merigan, farmer. Given also a probable birthdate for William of about 1810 – see above – a Family Search search for an event involving a Michael Merigan in County Tipperary in the early part of the 19th Century was carried out, but returned nothing of interest.³⁹ Likewise, a search for a William Merigan born in County Tipperary between

³⁴ See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6KFM-QHNR>. Query if the mother's name is Catherine. What appears to be written is "tharnia", but letters are obviously missing at the start of the name. The record is in Latin. The record is reproduced below.

³⁵ Another (and less proximate) "Cath. Burne" was baptised in Carrick-on-Suir, 13 miles west of Cahir, on 21st November 1784, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6P6M-8CQ1>, but, again, the record attached insufficient information to reach any conclusions about a possible connection to Elizabeth's father William.

³⁶ See page 9 of "Cahir Microfilm 02459/03", available at <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632131#page/9/mode/1up>.

³⁷ "De" in Latin means "of" or "from", see <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/de-#Latin>. Clonmore is a village 32 miles north of Cahir. "Patrini" is Latin for sponsors, see <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=35464>.

³⁸ See <https://en-ie.topographic-map.com/map-tmdn/County-Tipperary/?center=52.42765%2C-8.12733&zoom=13>.

³⁹ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.givenName=Michael&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.birthLikePlace2=9%2CIreland%2CCounty%20Tipperary>.

1800 and 1820 and with a father Michael also proved fruitless.⁴⁰ The attempt to locate a plausible William Merigan son of Michael therefore failed. That, of course, does not suggest William was wrong, he was almost certainly right, as he would have known his father's given name, rather the failure to locate the record may be expected given the poor state of Irish public records for that period (as to which, see Appendix 2).

Notably, William also identified that his father Michael Merigan was a farmer (see the 1870 marriage record above) and also that he was by then deceased. As a farmer, Michael Merigan would most likely have either owned or leased a tenement. The Primary Valuation, also known as Griffith's Valuation, was the first full valuation of property in Ireland. It was conducted from 1847 to 1864. Valuations around Bansha appear to have been done about 1848 or so – see Appendix 1. Assuming Michael Merigan was still alive⁴¹ in 1848 (and also still farming at that time), there could well be a record of his ownership or tenancy of a farm in Griffith's Valuation. Any such information might potentially assist in locating William's family.

Accordingly, the Griffith's Valuation records for Merigans/Merrigans in South Tipperary were located and examined. The research done is fully detailed in Appendix 1. Unfortunately, however, for the reasons explained in Appendix 1, the research failed to reveal any cogent link between Elizabeth's father William and any South Tipperary Merigan/Merrigan recorded in the Valuation.

Accordingly, the Griffith's Valuation line of enquiry did not assist to locate William's family. But it did show that most of the Merigans/Merrigans owning or renting land in South Tipperary in the late 1840s were doing so west and south-west of, and within 3 or 4 miles from, Tipperary, and about 2½ miles north of Aherlow.⁴² That concentration of Merigans tends to suggest that the location of William's baptism, although it occurred about 40 years before, might be Tipperary parish, or perhaps the adjoining parish of Galbally & Aherlow (the parish to the west of Tipperary parish, and which is half in County Tipperary and half in County Limerick).⁴³

Unfortunately, as noted above, Tipperary parish baptism records provided on the National Library of Ireland website only commence from 1st January 1810 – see <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0281>. Also, the parish baptism records of Galbally & Aherlow only commence from 9th March 1810 – see <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0264>, and they are also in very poor condition and mostly illegible.

In any case, the latter parish's records are extremely unlikely to be of any relevance as, until the 1830s, its only church appears to have been in Galbally, County Limerick,⁴⁴ which location, although only 4½ miles west of Aherlow, is of limited interest, as there is no evidence to suggest that William was baptised otherwise than in County Tipperary (save for William's averment in the 1871 England Census that he was born in Cork, and notwithstanding that he is recorded in a previous English census as born in County Tipperary. In any event, Cork is in County Cork, so that information does not point one to County Limerick).

Given the information we have, William is most likely to have been baptised about 1810 and, as noted above, there are no accessible microfilmed Tipperary parish records prior to that year. However, in case William's age was more correctly stated in the 1851 and 1871 England Censuses (40 and 60 respectively), and given age

⁴⁰ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.birthLikeDate.from=1800&q.birthLikeDate.to=1820&q.birthLikePlace=County%20Tipperary%2C%20Ireland&q.fatherGivenName=Michael&q.fatherSurname=Merigan&q.givenName=William&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Merigan>. Let there be something in the claim that William might have been born in County Wicklow (see above), albeit with a father Michael rather than John, the same search was done for Wicklow, again without any relevant result being returned. See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.birthLikeDate.from=1800&q.birthLikeDate.to=1820&q.birthLikePlace=County%20Wicklow%2C%20Ireland&q.fatherGivenName=Michael&q.fatherSurname=Merigan&q.givenName=William&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Merigan>.

⁴¹ By 1848, William was likely approaching 40, so his father, if still alive then, would likely be at least about 60.

⁴² There were only two others, Michael Merrigan sen and Catherine Merrigan. Their landholdings were closer to Bansha and Kilmoyler. They were in the townlands of Ardane and Ballydavid respectively, being about 4½ miles and 3 miles respectively west of Kilmoyler (and both being about 3 miles south of Bansha). That area is about 6 miles south-east of Tipperary, and 5½ miles east of Aherlow town, although the River Aherlow is the northern border of the Ardane townlands, and it flows through the Ballydavid townlands. See, further, Appendix 1.

⁴³ See <https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/counties/rcmaps/tipperarysrc.php#maps/> and <https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/counties/rcmaps/limerickerc.php#maps/>.

⁴⁴ By 1837, the parish had a second church, the Church of the Sacred Heart, at Lisvarrinane near Aherlow in County Tipperary (3 miles to the east of Galbally). See <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/22207303/sacred-heart-church-lisvarrinane-co-tipperary-south> and <https://www.swilson.info/rcparishlink.php?seldioceseid=0&seldrcparid=560&parl=1&lmode=map&anch=0&bsrch=>. (St. Sedna's in Clonbeg, Glen of Aherlow, is Church of Ireland, see <https://cashelunion.ie/clonbeg.php>). On a quick scan, there also doesn't seem to be separate records for the two churches after the second one was dedicated.

discrepancies were common in those times, the original Tipperary parish baptism records made available online by the National Library of Ireland were manually examined from 1st January 1810 to the end of 1815, but did not record any baptism for a William/Gulielmi/Guglielmus Merigan/Merrigan/Mergin.⁴⁵

The National Library of Ireland images of records for Galbally & Aherlow parish commencing 9th March 1810 are in extremely poor condition.⁴⁶ However, spot checks using legible entries verified that those entries are recorded in Family Search databases, and Family Search searches for Merigans/Merrigans in the parish provided no relevant record.⁴⁷ The research to locate William's father Michael was therefore unproductive.

Other research

The only thing that can confidently be said based on all of the above information is that William was born about 1810, very likely in County Tipperary, and that his father was Michael Merrigan, farmer.

Many different Family Search searches with many variations on the surname Merigan (including Merrigan, Mergin, Morrigan and Mergan) and also many variations on the forename William (including Gulielmi, Guglielmus and Gulielmum, and the diminutives Gul, Wm and W) were conducted in Family Search, but without success in locating a parish or other record which is verifiably for Elizabeth's father William Merigan, and which identifies his date and place of birth or baptism.

As noted above, the National Library of Ireland has no microfilmed pre-1810 Tipperary baptism records. Likewise, the Cahir parish baptisms from 1793 to 1809 are not microfilmed,⁴⁸ nor are the pre-1820 Bansha parish baptisms.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, since William had a strong connection to Cahir, given he married there and baptised at least three children there (see the list above), the National Library of Ireland's baptism records for the parish commencing (as they do) from August 1809 were manually inspected up to the end of 1815.⁵⁰ No baptism of a William (or Gulielmi, Guglielmus or Gulielmum) Merigan (or Merrigan) was located. (As noted above, the manual examination of the National Library of Ireland's baptism records for Tipperary parish from 1st January 1810 to the end of 1815 proved similarly fruitless. As for Bansha parish, given its microfilmed baptism records only commence from 1820, there are no records for the relevant time available to inspect online).

Notably, the manual review of Cahir's records was not able to be comprehensive in any event as about one-tenth or so of the entries inspected were illegible due to smudging, fading, or poor handwriting. Pages are also missing – the records jumped from August 1810 to April 1812 – see page 30. The exercise did make clear, however, that Merigan was not as common a name in Cahir as in Bansha at the time.

Accordingly, despite extensive searching, William's birth or baptism record has not been located, and his birth date is unknown, although it is likely to be about 1810.

Further, William's place of birth is also unknown, but most likely it was in County Tipperary, Ireland. As noted above, in the 1851 England Census, he gave it as such. However, it is also noted that in the 1871 England Census, he gave it as "Cork" (which could be either the County or the city).

The details of the 1871 census record were noted by Ray Burke in his paper *Our Merrigan Heritage* as follows:⁵¹

In 2006 ancestry.co.uk showed the couple at 3 Clinger Street, Shoreditch in the 1871 Census:

⁴⁵ See pages 4-80 at <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632772?locale=en#page/4/mode/1up>. The entries were all quite legible.

⁴⁶ See <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632715?locale=en#page/4/mode/1up>.

⁴⁷ See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1810&q.anyPlace=Galbally%2C%20County%20Limerick%2C%20Ireland&q.anyPlace.exact=on&q.surname=Merrigan&q.surname.exact=on>.

⁴⁸ See <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/1097>.

⁴⁹ See <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0245>.

⁵⁰ See <https://registers.nli.ie/registers/vtls000632133#page/1/mode/1up>, pages 1 to 80.

⁵¹ The record is also in Family Search's 1871 England Census database at <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRJX-N9N?lang=en>. See also <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRJX-N9J?lang=en>. For further records as to Mary Ann Merigan, see <https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyPlace=Shoreditch%2C+London%2C+England%2C+United+Kingdom&q.givenName=Mary+Ann&q.surname=Merrigan>.

William	Merigan	Head	Mar	60	Yardsman	Ireland, Cork
Mary Ann	do	Wife	Mar	57		Middx, City

The address is within a hundred yards of the former residences in Phillipp St and Wilmer Garden. In 1851 William said that he came from Ireland, Co Tipperary; in 1861 he was content to say simply that he came from Ireland; then in 1871 he proclaimed his origins to be in Ireland, Co Cork.

A Family Search search for a William Merigan/Merrigan born or baptised about 1810 in County Cork returned no relevant record.⁵² And William's known connections with Cahir and Bansha referred to above make it unlikely that he was born in Cork.

(It is still a faint possibility, as the County Cork boundary is just over 12 miles south-west of Cahir. The Cork parish at that boundary is that of Mitchelstown. There were no Merigan/Merrigan records for Mitchelstown in Family Search.⁵³ There are also no National Library of Ireland microfilmed baptism records between 1801 and 1814 for that parish).⁵⁴

A post by a William Merigan descendant at <https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/history-and-genealogy/ancestor-database/william-merrigan> recounts that a "family tradition has it that the family came from Clonmel in Tipperary but it seems it may have been the Bansha/Ballinleenty area". A Family Search search for a Clonmel, County Tipperary record of the time for William Merigan proved fruitless,⁵⁵ and it is noted that the post questions the location in any event.

Ray Burke likewise concluded that William's place of birth was most likely in County Tipperary. In his paper *Our Merrigan Heritage* (after lengthy research and enquiry), he said:

Our William's place of baptism is therefore unknown and such material as we have is ambivalent as to whether we should look to the parishes of Bansha, Kilmoyler⁵⁶ or Galbally (the Glen of Aherlow) as the more likely accepting that there just remains no record of it as none of those parishes have records extending back to 1810.

As to William's parents, his father was almost certainly Michael Merrigan, farmer. No other details of his parents have been located.

⁵² See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1805&q.anyDate.to=1815&q.anyPlace=County%20Cork%2C%20Ireland&q.givenName=William&q.surname=Merigan>.

⁵³ See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1810&q.anyPlace=Mitchelstown%2C%20County%20Cork%2C%20Ireland&q.anyPlace.exact=on&q.surname=Merigan&q.surname.exact=on>. See also <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1810&q.anyPlace=County%20Cork%2C%20Ireland&q.anyPlace.exact=on&q.surname=Merigan>.

⁵⁴ See <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0081>.

⁵⁵ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1800&q.anyDate.to=1820&q.anyPlace=Clonmel%2C%20County%20Tipperary%2C%20Ireland&q.anyPlace.exact=on&q.givenName=William&q.surname=Merigan>.

⁵⁶ Bansha and Kilmoyler are in fact the same parish – see <https://registers.nli.ie/parishes/0245?locale=en>. The area of Kilmoyler is north of the N24 which runs between Bansha to Cahir, and about halfway between the two towns. Its Roman Catholic church is Our Lady of the Assumption, see <https://cashel-emly.ie/church/kilmoyler/our-lady-of-the-assumption/>. The Church was built in 1805, see <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/22207501/catholic-church-of-our-lady-of-the-assumption-kilmoyler-tipperary-south>. See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilmoyler>.

Appendix 1

Griffith's Valuation research

The Primary Valuation, also known as Griffith's Valuation, was the first full valuation of property in Ireland. It was conducted from 1847 to 1864. The details of the valuations were then published.

Those details included, for each lot, the name of the property occupier (and head of the household) and their immediate landlord, and the area and value of the property held.⁵⁷ The Valuation also has a basic description of the property concerned, such as "land", "house", "house and land", "office", "garden", "plantation", "grave-yard" etc.

Capital letters used after map reference numbers in the Valuation designated areas within a lot of different soil type (Griffith concluded that soil and sub-soil types were the proper basis to value land), lower-case letters indicated a single property held in common by a number of listed occupiers, and lower-case italic letters indicated built structures, such as houses ("a" denoting the house of the main householder, and other italicized lower-case letters denoting other habitable houses on the same lot).⁵⁸

Given the information included in the Valuation, it does not provide the sort of detail which assists much in ascertaining family relationships. It is more useful to establish the fortune in life of a known ancestor in a known location. However, in some circumstances it may allow a conclusion that a family relationship exists, for example, if there is a very limited number of persons with the same surname in a location known to be relevant.

Griffith's Valuation started in the south-west of Ireland in 1847, and finished in the north-east in 1864.⁵⁹ The valuations for County Tipperary were published in 1851.⁶⁰ No doubt the underlying data was compiled shortly beforehand so that the published volumes could be an accurate record as at publication of occupiers, immediate lessors, value assessments etc.

The original valuation office field books for the Valuation are available in a Family Search database ("Ireland, Valuation Office Books, 1831-1856"). Family Search says: "These records are the original notebooks that were used when the property valuations were conducted by the Office of the General Valuation of Ireland".⁶¹

An original notebook referred to below and relating to a relevant area of County Tipperary (Ballinleenty townlands and their surrounds, see below) is said to date from 1848. The following search results are therefore taken to be a snapshot of landholdings as at 1848.

Griffith's Valuation is searchable at <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>. A search returned 11 records for the name Merrigan in Tipperary South Riding (that is, South Tipperary),⁶² and none for the names Merigan, Mergin, Mergan, Marrigan or Morrigan.⁶³

This is the list of 11 records (note that the parish referred to is a civil parish, not a Catholic church parish – the two types of parishes are completely different):⁶⁴

⁵⁷ See <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/valuation-office-records/>.

⁵⁸ See <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/understanding-the-valuation/>. See also the more detailed explanation at <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Richard-Griffiths.html>.

⁵⁹ See https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/4/4d/Ireland_Griffiths_Primary_Valuation.pdf.

⁶⁰ See <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/what-is-griffiths-valuation/years-of-publication/>.

⁶¹ See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2329951>.

⁶² County Tipperary was divided between 1838 and 2014 – see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Tipperary under the heading "History". In summary, a "riding" refers to a division of a county, and was specifically used for County Tipperary, which was divided into North and South Ridings in 1838 due to the inconvenient location of the county town, Clonmel, for grand jurors from the north. Those ridings became separate administrative counties in 1898, eventually known as North Tipperary and South Tipperary. See also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riding_\(division\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riding_(division)) under the heading "Ireland".

⁶³ The search facility also allows one to select the County as "Tipperary" as well as "Tipperary North Riding" or "Tipperary South Riding". The same searches for "Tipperary" all returned no results.

⁶⁴ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_parishes_in_Ireland. A map of the Civil Parishes in County Tipperary is available at https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/county_civil.php?county=Tipperary.

Occupier Surname	Occupier Forename	County	Parish	Details	Original Page	Map Views	Upload your content for this record
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	JOHN	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	JUDE	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	JOHN	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	WILLIAM	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	CLONPET				
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	TEMPLENEIRY				
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	TEMPLENEIRY				
MERRIGAN	MICHAEL	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	TEMPLENEIRY				
MERRIGAN	CATHERINE	TIPPERARY, SOUTH RIDING	TEMPLENEIRY				

Results 1 to 11 of 11

The linked “Original Page” for the first search result above is page 36 of the relevant valuation book, and it also contains the second and third results. Those three results being for Michael Merrigan jun, John Merrigan and Michael Merrigan sen. They occupied map references 20B, 21 and 22 respectively on the map for the Townlands of Ballinleenty, Civil Parish of Clonpet (Ordnance Survey map 66).

PRIMARY VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.							
PARISH OF CLONPET.							
No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Net Annual Value.		
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.	Total.
	BALLINLEENTY —continued.			A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
21	Michael Merrigan, jun.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Land,	4 0 21	4 10 0	—	4 10 0
22	John Merrigan, .	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	13 2 0	15 0 0	1 15 0	16 15 0
23	Michael Merrigan, sen.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	13 1 30	13 5 0	1 5 0	14 10 0
24	Patrick Mulcahy,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	15 1 20	17 0 0	2 0 0	19 0 0
25	Patrick Ryan (Wm.), .	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	23 1 14	26 0 0	3 10 0	29 10 0
26	John Finnane, .	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, and land,	30 0 26	42 15 0	3 15 0	46 10 0
27	Matthew Maher,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	19 1 8	21 0 0	2 0 0	23 0 0
	John Neill, .	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	9 1 33	9 5 0	0 15 0	10 0 0
			Total, .	373 1 35	410 15 0	43 15 0	454 10 0
	BALLYGLASS, LOWER. (Ord. S. 67.)						
1	James Sadlier, Esq.	Jas. H. Smith Barry, Esq.	Land,	91 0 8	113 0 0	—	113 0 0
			Total.	91 0 8	113 0 0		113 0 0

The linked "Original Page" for the fourth search result above is page 35 of the relevant valuation book, and it also contains the fifth result. Those two results being for Jude Merrigan and Michael Merrigan sen. They occupied map references 9 and 20A respectively on the map for the Townlands of Ballinleenty, Civil Parish of Clonpet (Ordnance Survey map 66). (Note also a Patrick Keating at map reference 4).

BALLINLEENTY. (Ord. S. 66.)							
1 A	Patrick Ryan, senr.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Land,	1	2	27	2 0 0
— B	a Patrick Ryan, senr.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, & land,	19	0	36	23 0 0
2	Patrick Louergan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, & land,	7	1	14	8 10 0
3	Catherine Sanders,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	2	3	35	3 5 0
4	Patrick Keating,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Herd's-house & land,	4	3	2	5 5 0
5	Ellen Ryan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	13	3	11	16 0 0
6 A	Denis Ryan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Land,	1	1	4	1 10 0
— B	a Denis Ryan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, & land,	11	3	2	13 0 0
— A	a Daniel Ryan,	Denis Ryan,	House,	—	—	—	0 10 0
7	Mathew Quillinan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Land,	10	3	15	17 10 0
8	Patrick Ryan, junr.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	17	3	29	20 5 0
9	Jude Merrigan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	1	2	21	2 0 0
10 A	Thomas Molony,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	Land,	8	1	38	8 15 0
— B	a Thomas Molony,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, & land	30	0	26	35 0 0
11	Margaret Donovan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, & land,	14	2	15	14 0 0
12	Ellen Fitzgerald,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	House and land,	1	1	7	1 10 0
13 A	Michael Connell,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	Land,	17	0	7	19 0 0
— B	a Michael Connell,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	House, offices, & land,	11	3	34	13 10 0
14	Catherine Chamberlain,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	House and land,	1	3	2	2 10 0
15	William Quirk,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	House and land,	5	0	4	0 0 0
16	John Heelan,	Reps. Rev. Mark Clarke,	House and land,	4	2	7	5 10 0
17	Philip Ryan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, and land,	10	0	6	10 0 0
18	Patrick Ryan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, office, and land,	5	0	33	6 5 0
19	Thomas Prendergast,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	16	3	5	17 5 0
20 A	a Michael Merrigan, sen.	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	9	2	23	10 10 0

The linked "Original Page" for the sixth search result above is page 37 of the relevant valuation book, and it also contains the seventh result. Those two results being for John Merrigan and William Merrigan. They occupied map references 1 and 2 respectively on the map for the Townlands of Gortagowlane, Civil Parish of Clonpet (Ordnance Survey map 36).

GORTAGOWLANE. (Ord. S. 36).				208	1	4	176	0	0	11	0	0	187	0	0
1	John Merrigan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	18	1	32	21	5	0	2	0	0	23	5	0
2	William Merrigan,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	19	2	15	21	10	0	2	10	0	24	0	0
3	Thomas Elligott,	Nicholas Sadlier, Esq.	House and land,	5	0	33	4	15	0	0	15	0	5	10	0
Total,				43	1	0	47	10	0	5	5	0	52	15	0
LACKANTEDANE. (Ord. S. 36.)															

Note the listing of a William Merrigan. The Ballinleenty Michael Merrigans, senior and junior, lived literally over the Tipperary-Rathkea road, and about half a mile south. Could this be Elizabeth's father William, the son of Michael Merrigan, farmer? It is unlikely, as he had probably emigrated to England (or was getting ready to) by 1848, given that his son William was born in England in April 1851 (see the list above). Also, William's presence in Cahir for events in 1833, 1834, 1835 and 1838 (see the list above) indicates he was not on a Gortagowlane farm then, so he was probably not later either. A Gortagowlane farmer's parish would be Tipperary, given that the townland is 2 miles west of the town.

Also, apparently being a town dweller in the 1830s, William probably was in a non-farm occupation, and this is supported by the fact that he was later named as a labourer in the 1851 and 1861 England Censuses, a mason's labourer in his daughter Elizabeth's 1863 marriage certificate (see the brief relating to her), a stonemason in the marriage certificate for his 1870 re-marriage, a yardsman in the 1871 England Census, and a general labourer in his death certificate. Of course, it is possible that he was forced to change occupations when he emigrated from rural Ireland to the city of London. Or that he was a farm "labourer", but not more specifically described as such in the English records.

In the end, we have William's 1870 marriage certificate information that his father was a Michael Merrigan, farmer, and we have the near proximity in Ballinleenty in about 1850 of a William Merrigan and a Michael Merrigan, but that is insufficient to connect the two without corroboration. Indeed, for the reasons just given, William Merrigan the Gortagowlane farmer is unlikely to be Elizabeth's father, and it would be dangerous to conclude otherwise in any event given the strong likelihood of other "William Merigans" in the area (see above).

The linked "Original Page" for the eighth search result above is page 167 of the relevant valuation book, and it also contains the ninth and tenth results, all presumably for the same person, Michael Merrigan (especially given that capital letters in map references indicate different soil types, and not multiple occupiers of the same numbered lot, see above). He occupied map references 38A, 38B and 38C respectively on the map for the Townlands of Ardane, Civil Parish of Templeenry (Ordnance Survey map 74).⁶⁵

- D	a	William Peters,	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	Land,	1 0 34	0 13 0	—	0 13 0
38 A		Michael Merrigan,	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	House, office, and land,	3 0 21	1 0 0	1 0 0	2 0 0
- B		Michael Merrigan,	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	Land,	4 2 26	2 10 0	—	2 10 0
- C	a	Michael Merrigan,	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	Land,	1 2 28	0 18 0	—	0 18 0
39 A		Daniel Desmond, jun.	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	9 0 9	4 15 0	1 0 0	5 15 0
- B	a	Daniel Desmond, jun.	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	Land,	2 3 10	1 5 0	—	1 5 0
- C		Daniel Desmond, jun.	John Henry Ashe, Esq.	House and land,	3 3 4	2 10 0	0 10 0	3 0 0
			John Henry Ashe, Esq.	Land,	6 1 34	1 15 0	—	1 15 0

[E]

2 U

The linked "Original Page" for the eleventh and last search result above is page 171 of the relevant valuation book, and being for a Catherine Merrigan. She occupied map reference 16 on the map for the Townlands of Ballydavid, Civil Parish of Templeenry (Ordnance Survey maps 67, 74 and 75).⁶⁶

PRIMARY VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.								171
PARISH OF TEMPLEENRY.								
No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Net Annual Value.			
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.	Total.	
	BALLYDAVID—con.			A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
-	b	Patrick Dunn,	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	House,	—	0 15 0	0 15 0	
-	c	Michael Prendergast,	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	House,	—	0 10 0	0 10 0	
-	d	John Carroll,	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	House,	—	0 15 0	0 15 0	
-	e	Vacant,	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	House and offices,	—	3 15 0	3 15 0	
8		Rev. G. Cole Baker,	Thomas Finnane,	Garden,	0 2 10	0 5 0	0 5 0	
9		Rev. G. Cole Baker,	William Baker, Esq.	Osiery,	3 0 21	2 5 0	2 5 0	
10		John Keating, jun.	George Baker, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	31 0 14	26 10 0	1 5 0	27 15 0
11 A		William Baker, Esq.	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	Plantation,	5 0 8	1 15 0	1 15 0	
12 A	a	George Baker, Esq.	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	Plantation,	5 0 8	1 15 0	1 15 0	
13		George Baker, Esq.	Rev. G. Cole Baker,	House, offices, and land,	52 0 12	56 15 0	13 10 0	70 5 0
14	a	John Callaghan,	William Baker, Esq.	Land,	7 0 36	6 10 0	—	6 10 0
15	b	Jeremiah Dwyer,	John Callaghan,	House, offices, and land,	63 3 15	48 5 0	2 10 0	50 15 0
16	a	John Donnell,	William Baker, Esq.	House,	—	0 17 0	0 17 0	
17 A		Judith Barron,	William Baker, Esq.	House and land,	4 0 33	3 5 0	0 15 0	4 0 0
	b	Thomas Tobin,	George Baker, Esq.	House and garden,	0 1 23	0 7 0	0 8 0	0 15 0
		Edmund Loughnane,	George Baker, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	19 3 34	16 10 0	1 5 0	17 15 0
		Catherine Merrigan,	George Baker, Esq.	Land,	3 0 21	1 5 0	—	1 5 0
		Margaret Nolan,	William Baker, Esq.	House, offices, and land,	14 1 18	10 10 0	1 0 0	11 10 0

Accordingly, in about 1850, Merrigans held map references 9, 20A, 20B, 21 and 22 in the Ballinleenty townlands, map references 1 and 2 in the Gortagowlane townlands, and map references 38A, 38B and 38C in the Ardane townlands. (We may disregard the Catherine Merrigan in the Ballydavid townlands, as she is obviously no-one's father).⁶⁷

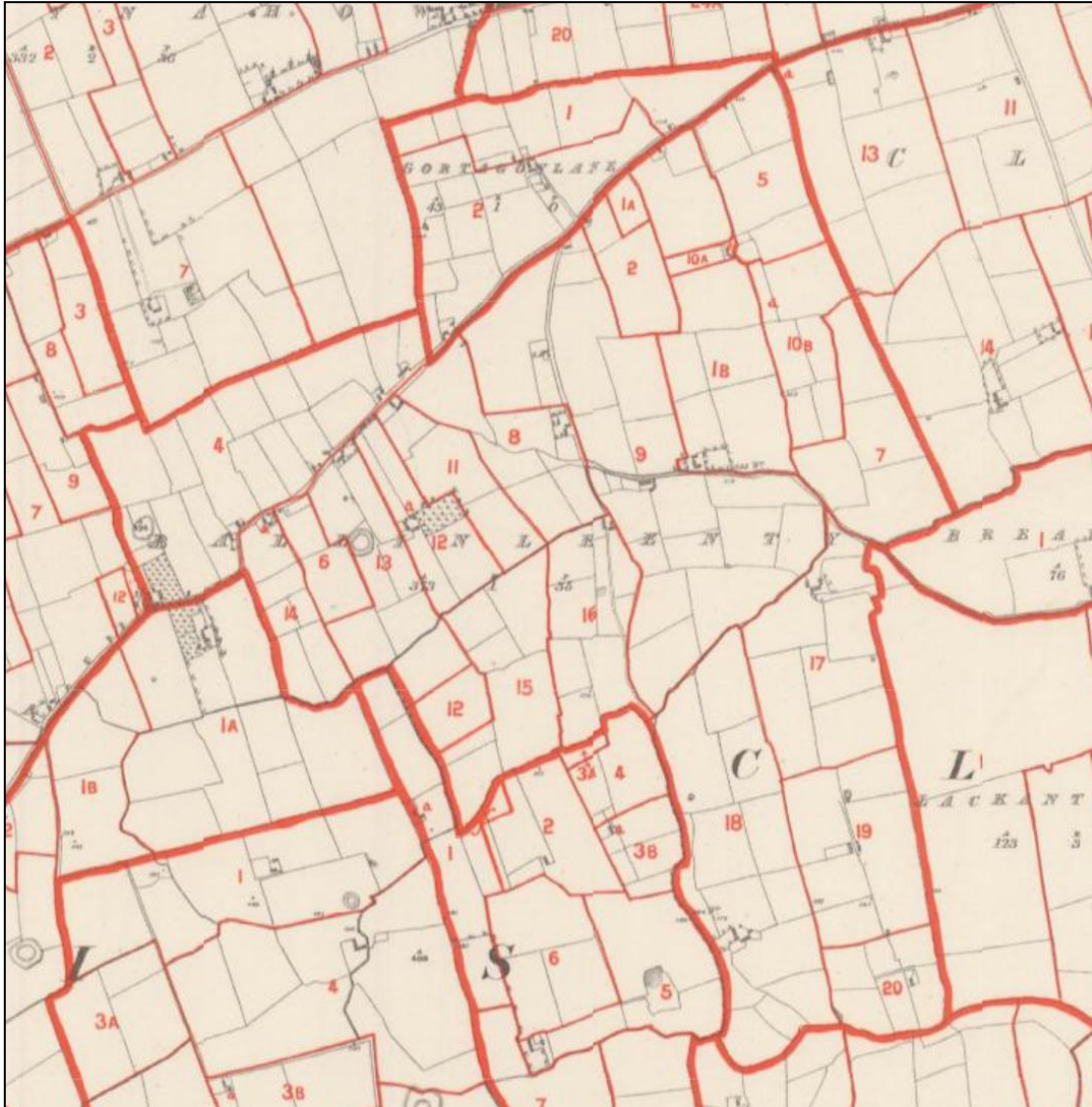
⁶⁵ A Richard Keating was noted on the same page.

⁶⁶ A John, Margaret and Patrick Keating were all noted on the same page.

⁶⁷ Although, an interesting theory might be that she is the Catherine Mergin nee Byrne, the mother of William Mergin baptised in Tipperary parish on 9th May 1808. Possibly not, as that Catherine would by 1848 be at least about 60 and more likely rising 70. In any event, the Mergins have been excluded as William's parents for the reasons given above).

The Ballinleenty townlands are 2½ miles south-west of Tipperary, the Gortagowlane townlands are immediately to their north and over the Tipperary-Rathkea road (and 2 miles west of Tipperary), the Ardane townlands are 3 miles south of Bansha and 4½ miles west of Kilmoyler, and the Ballydavid townlands are 3 miles south of Bansha, and 3 miles west of Kilmoyler. The Ballydavid townlands are to the east of the Ardane townlands, and separated only by the narrow Clohernagh townlands.

This is the map of the Ballinleenty and the (triangular) Gortagowlane townlands (the heavy red line delineates townland boundaries):⁶⁸



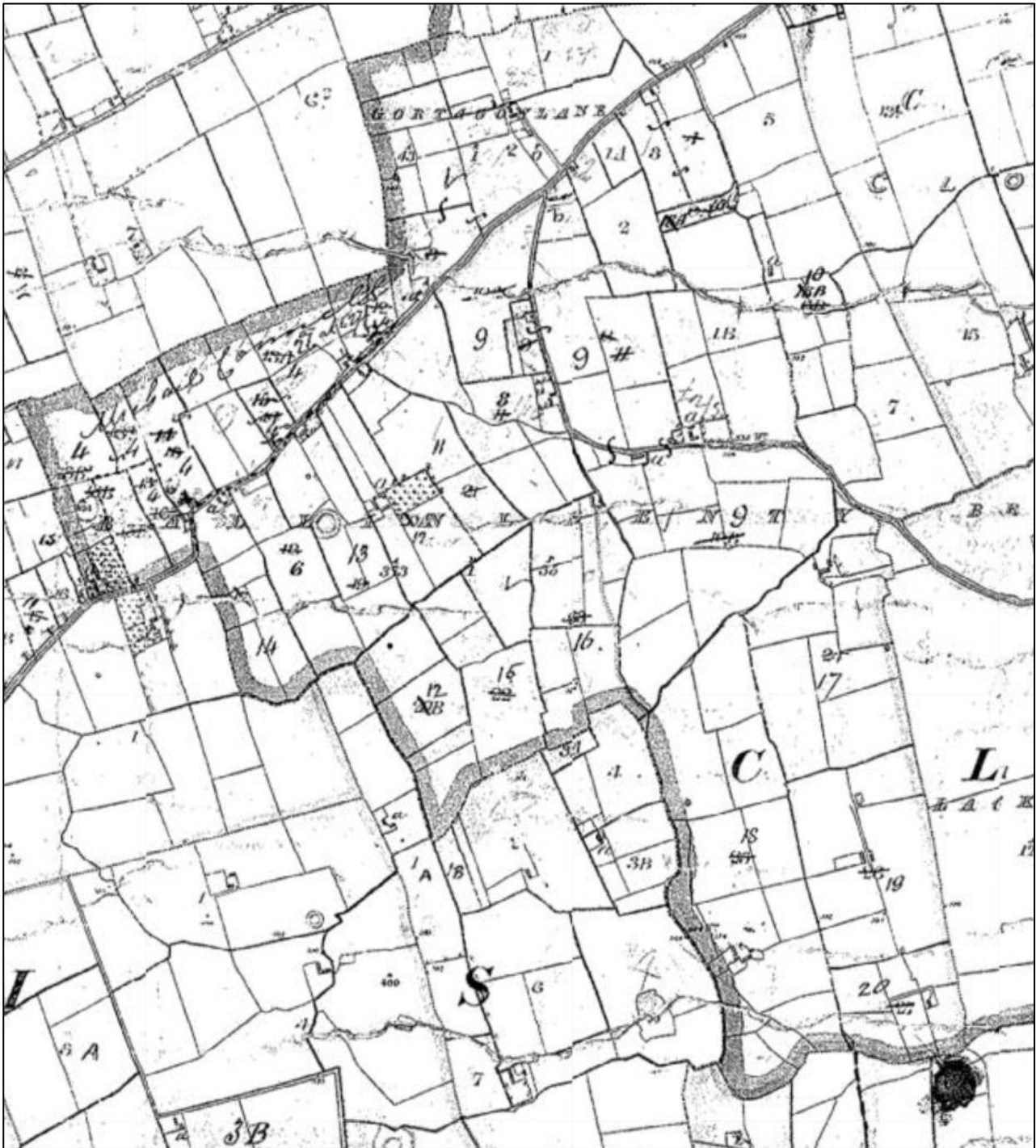
The above coloured map is a later version of the original black and white Griffith's map of the Ballinleenty and Gortagowlane townlands. This is the original map:⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See also the Townland maps at <https://www.townlands.ie/tipperary/clarwilliam/clonpet/tipperary-rural/ballinleenty/> (Ballinleenty) and <https://www.townlands.ie/tipperary/clarwilliam/clonpet/tipperary-rural/gortagowlane/> (Gortagowlane).

⁶⁹ The differences between the coloured map and the original map are not material for present purposes. They are as follows. The southern corner of map reference 2 in the Gortagowlane townlands in the coloured map was designated as map reference 3 in the original map. As to the Ballinleenty townlands –

- the southern piece of map reference 12 in the coloured map was designated as map reference 20 in the original map (and map reference 20 has been re-assigned to another lot in the coloured map)
- the southern piece of map reference 11 in the coloured map was designated as map reference 21 in the original map and
- the southern piece of map reference 15 in the coloured map was designated as map reference 22 in the original map.

Also, map reference 10 and a part of map reference 11 in the original map for the Ballinleenty townlands form part of map reference 9 in the coloured map (with map reference 10 being re-assigned to other lots in the map).

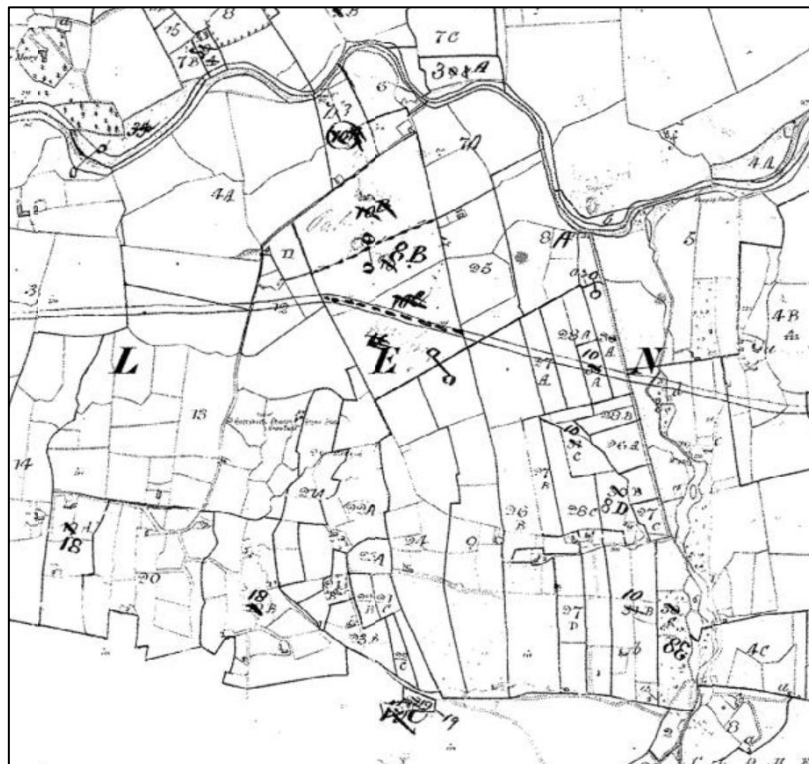


As stated, the Ardane townlands are 3 miles south of Bansha and 4½ miles west of Kilmoyley, and the Ballydavid townlands are not far away to their east. This is a map of the relevant area of the Ardane townlands (the unshown southern part is undivided, and thus apparently uncultivated), as well as an enlargement of map reference 38:



Notably, the townlands are bounded on the north by the Aherlow River.

This is the original black and white Griffith's map of the north-eastern part of the Arlane townlands (and, interestingly, map references 38A, 38B and 38C were not separately delineated back then either):



Neither the distribution of the Merrigan-held tenements listed in the Valuation, nor the nature of their holdings, give any clue as to who of them (if any) might be related to Elizabeth's father William.

Some of the Michael Merrigans named in the Valuation might be the same person. There is a minimum of two (Michael sen and Michael jun), and a maximum of either three (assuming the two references to Michael Merrigan

sen are to the same person), four (assuming that only one Michael held all three map references in the Ardane townlands, which is probably the case, as noted above, and also given that a single map reference 38 was delineated in the original Valuation map) or six (assuming that different Michaels held the three map references in the Ardane townlands).

So if William's father Michael held a tenement, there are multiple candidates for him. Even if it is the lowest number of two, it is still possible that Elizabeth's father born about 1810 could be the son of either Michael Merrigan sen or Michael Merrigan jun⁷⁰ as recorded in the Valuation in about 1848 (if one was about 80 plus and the other about 60 plus). But there is nothing in the Valuation to help determine if it was the minimum of two.

There also could have been other Michael Merrigan tenement holders who had passed away in the 40-odd years since William's baptism.

And, of course, one does not even get that far unless one assumes that William's father Michael must have held a tenement to be a farmer. A "farmer" usually refers to an owner or lessee of farmland, but not necessarily so, such as if the person was farming on a share basis with a landowner or a relative. Or William's father Michael may have actually been a farmhand, rather than a "farmer" and the holder of a tenement.

It might be suggested that, as William was probably in or near Bansha in 1843 given the location of his son Joseph's baptism, the Ardane Michael of the landholding Michael Merrigans is the most logical candidate to be his father. That Michael's farm was 3 miles south of Bansha, whilst the farms of the Michaels at Ballinleenty/Gortagowlane were 6 miles west of Bansha (and probably 8 miles by road). It also seems more likely that those Michaels would be parishioners at Tipperary. But any conclusion based solely on nearest proximity,⁷¹ without more, lacks cogency, especially when there are other candidates not much further away.⁷²

As noted above, the original valuation office field books of the time are also available in a Family Search database (“Ireland, Valuation Office Books, 1831-1856”) (in search results, these are listed as a “Land Assessment”).⁷³ These also provided no further elucidation. As an example, here is the page of the 1848 valuation office field book which relates to the abovementioned Michael Merrigan jun, John Merrigan and Michael Merrigan sen who respectively held map references 20B, 21 and 22 in the Ballinleenty townlands:⁷⁴

[illegible]

⁷⁰ Being named as such in adjacent records in the Valuation, it seems likely that they were father and son.

⁷¹ Except, of course, if the persons concerned were living in the same house or immediately adjacent.

⁷² Also, William's location could easily have changed between 1843 and 1848.

⁷³ Some search results refer to the County of the Cross of Tipperary, which is the same as County Tipperary – see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_Tipperary.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L94J-9HPV?i=6>.

So the Griffith's Valuation research was inconclusive.

Ray Burke similarly drew a blank in his paper *Our Merrigan Heritage*:

A survey of the Griffith's Valuation and a perusal of the prior notes of John George Colgan (a great grandson of Elizabeth Merrigan) on the Tipperary valuation showed at least four potentially relevant Michael Merrigans, one at Ardane in the Aherlow Valley; a Michael senior and Michael junior in the Ballyglass area (Ardloman)⁷⁵ and a Michael at Ballinleenty.⁷⁶ The locations are stated to be as at 1850. Once again, even the indefinite signposts are pointing in different directions. Realistically the likelihood of William's father being alive at the time of Griffith's Valuation is not high!

Interestingly –

- at just 11 records in number, there were surprisingly few Merrigan tenement holders in South Tipperary
- there were none holding town allotments⁷⁷
- there were none in Cahir's surrounds
- all Merrigan tenement holders in South Tipperary were localised within two small areas about 7 miles apart, each being about a mile in diameter, one centred 2½ miles south-west of Tipperary, and one centred 3 miles south of Bansha and 3½ miles west of Kilmoyler, and
- compared to the 11 Merigan/Merrigan records, there were 526 records of tenement holders in South Tipperary named Keating.

⁷⁵ An obvious reference to the Michael sen and Michael jun in the above results, as Ardloman is immediately south of the Ballinleenty townlands, within ½ mile, and Ballyglass is immediately east of Ardloman.

⁷⁶ The Ballinleenty Michael is named "Michael Merrigan sen", so he is probably the same as the one already so named by Ray Burke.

⁷⁷ A check search was made to ensure searching the Valuation picked up lots in town plans.

Appendix 2

The state of 19th Century Irish public records

There are a number of specific difficulties with the state of Irish public records, especially those from the first half of the 19th Century and before. That is apart from the usual issues with public records anywhere, which is that they may previously have existed but they are now lost, destroyed or damaged, or they may exist but be illegible, misspelt, out-of-order, unable to be searched by a search engine, in Latin, or obscured (wholly or partially) by faded ink, water damage or for other reasons, or they may be difficult to locate, or they may be incomplete or inaccurate due to the copying or microfilming process, such as due to being copied out-of-order, or due to the difficulty of flattening bound books for copying, or due to the scanning software incorrectly understanding and/or transcribing entries.

Aside from such issues, the website irishhistory.com reports that other particular difficulties with Irish public records include –⁷⁸

the impact of historical events on the records themselves. The Great Famine (1845-1852) caused widespread death and suffering, with an estimated one million people dying and another million emigrating This mass exodus resulted in the loss of significant portions of parish records as many churches closed, and records were either destroyed or scattered.

Irish parish records are often fragmented and inconsistent ... Records were kept in different formats, depending on the time period and the parish's resources. Some parishes maintained their records meticulously, while others were less diligent, resulting in gaps and inaccuracies. Additionally, the records are dispersed across various repositories, including local churches, diocesan archives, and national institutions, making it difficult to locate specific records.

Many records have been lost due to natural disasters such as fires, floods, and storms. Furthermore, Ireland's turbulent history has led to the intentional destruction of records during conflicts and uprisings ...

Many records are still held in local parishes, with limited public access or no access at all. Additionally, some records held by national institutions may be subject to copyright restrictions, preventing their reproduction or publication online.

The website ancestralfindings.com reports that “Irish genealogy is notoriously challenging”, and identifies some additional difficulties particular to Irish public records as follows:⁷⁹

The most significant setback in Irish genealogy research is the loss of vital historical records. In 1922, the Public Record Office in Dublin experienced a devastating fire during the Irish Civil War, destroying countless valuable documents. This loss includes census returns, wills, parish registers, and more. With these pivotal documents gone, the foundational records ... are missing. ...

The Irish have a tradition of reusing a limited set of first names over multiple generations. It's common to name children after their parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents. Consequently, numerous families might have several members bearing the same name, living during overlapping time frames. Such similarities [make it difficult] distinguishing one individual from another in historical records. ...

In many countries, records are maintained centrally, offering easier access. However, records are often dispersed in Ireland among various repositories, libraries, churches, and even private collections. ...

Irish surnames have seen numerous changes over centuries. Variations in spelling, pronunciation, and sometimes meaning are not uncommon. ...

⁷⁸ See <https://www.irishhistory.com/genealogy/parish-records/preserving-irish-parish-records-challenges-and-solutions-for-genealogists-and-historians/>.

⁷⁹ See <https://ancestralfindings.com/why-irish-genealogy-is-so-difficult/>.

Additionally, as to Catholic parish records in County Tipperary, the Irish Government's record searching website reports that "a significant number of local historical and family history societies have made transcripts of their church records available online".⁸⁰ However, in the case of the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, it apparently claims copyright over its parish registers, and has given the Tipperary Family History Research Centre exclusive access to them.⁸¹

In their paper *Irish Genealogy*, the Burkes referred to this problem of access to parish records in County Tipperary. They reported that, on 24th June 1996, they went to the Tipperary Heritage Unit, which –

is the milch cow of the Bishop of Cashel & Emly. The National Library in Dublin has microfilm of ALL parish records in the Republic. However the Bishop of Cashel & Emly (Tipperary) and the Bishop of Kerry forbid the Library giving access to the public of their records without the written consent of the bishop – and the Library says it has never been granted. So the only access to Tipperary records is to persuade the parish priest to allow you access or use the bishop's THU.

This access problem results in issues such as the one noted above, namely even though a record of the 1808 birth of William Mergin exists, and was located and described by the Tipperary Heritage Unit (now the Tipperary Family History Research Centre), that record cannot be inspected except locally as it has not been made available online by the National Library of Ireland, nor has it made its way into the Family Search database of Irish parish records.

Further, pre-First World War Irish census records are mostly lost – 1901 and 1911 are said to be the only "two full censuses".⁸² No records for County Tipperary are in the Family Search databases for the 1821 or 1831 censuses.⁸³ The 1841 census database only has records for only one parish in County Tipperary, namely Thurles.⁸⁴ The 1851 census database only has records for two parishes in County Tipperary, namely Clonpet and Roscrea.⁸⁵ There are no Family Search databases for the 1861, 1871, 1881 or 1891 censuses.

The North Mayo Heritage Centre describes how these gaps in Irish census records came about as follows:⁸⁶

The returns for 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 were, for the most part, destroyed in 1922 in the fire at the Public Record Office at the beginning of the Civil War.

The returns for 1861 and 1871 were intentionally destroyed by government order in 1877 after statistical information had been extracted.

Those for 1881 and 1891 were pulped during the First World War, allegedly due to a paper shortage.

Interestingly, however, some random fragments of 1841 and 1851 census information for County Tipperary have survived, in the form of pre-1922 applications to search 1841 or 1851 census records.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ See <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/irish-records-what-is-available/church-records>.

⁸¹ See <https://www.genealogistsforum.co.uk/forum/showthread.php?t=17793>.

⁸² See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1626180> and <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2854327>.

⁸³ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=https://www.familysearch.org/service/cds/recapi/collections/2345228/waypoints> (the 10 pages of records for an "unknown" location contain no familiar names) and <https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=https://www.familysearch.org/service/cds/recapi/collections/2334949/waypoints>.

⁸⁴ See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=22WX-RQ8%3A1078300162%3Fcc%3D2346276>.

⁸⁵ See <https://www.familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=SMDQ-DT6%3A1078301181%3Fcc%3D2340880>.

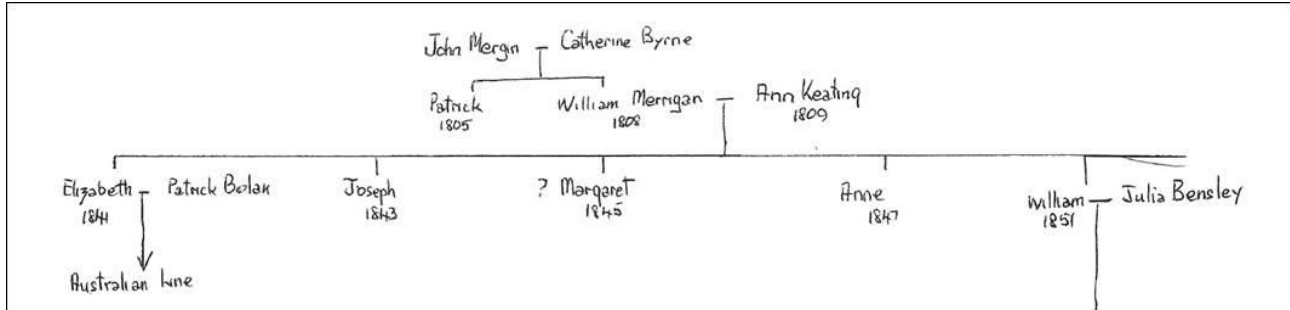
⁸⁶ See <https://www.northmayogenealogy.com/post/lost-found-the-troubled-history-of-the-irish-census>. See also <https://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/help/pre1901.html>.

⁸⁷ Copies of these applications to search census records have been microfilmed by Family Search, but they are not indexed, and therefore presumably they are not electronically searchable. See, for example, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-894N-TXZY?wc=SMDQ-MJM%3A1078303503&cc=2346275>. There appears to be 1,788 such applications to search census records relating to County Tipperary. See the top right hand corner of <https://www.familysearch.org/records/images/image-details?page=2&place=208&endDate=1841&startDate=1841&lifeEvent=102243&rmsId=M99V-W4H&imageIndex=0&singleView=true>.

Appendix 3

Tangential research

The Burkes provided Kath Palyga with a family tree which suggested William had a sibling Patrick born in 1805:



It is unknown what basis the Burkes had for this surmise. Possibly Elizabeth told someone she had an Uncle Patrick, and this was relayed to the Burkes. There was nothing in the Burkes' writings or in Kath Palyga's papers which evidenced his existence. Nevertheless, it was investigated because, if a local Merigan family of the time with both a Patrick and a William could be located, a lead to the relevant William might be found.

(It is also to be noted that there is some evidence, albeit of very slight weight, pointing to such a sibling, in that William and Ann named a child Patrick – see the list above. There was a high representation of both Patricks and Williams encountered in reviewing County Tipperary baptism records for the early 19th Century).

On a Family Search search, however, no record of a Patrick Merigan/Merrigan born about 1805 in County Tipperary was located.⁸⁸ A wider search for a Patrick (also Pat, Pk, Patk and Patritius) and a William (also Gulielmi, Guglielmus) in the same Merigan family in County Tipperary at about the time provided only four records (including William and Ann's Patrick), but no record for the time of William's generation.

Another line of enquiry arose from the Burkes' above family tree. In it, they suggested (with a question mark) that William had a daughter Margaret born in 1845. However, no relevant Margaret (or Margaritam or Margarita) Merigan (or Merrigan or Morrigan) born about 1845 in County Tipperary in Ireland was located on a Family Search search.⁸⁹ And, also, on a FreeBMD search, no Margaret Merigan or Merrigan was born in England between 1st July 1837 and 31st December 1847.

Ray Burke stated in his paper *Our Merrigan Heritage*:

We have included a Margaret born 1845 among the off-spring on an intuitive basis. The children are fairly elegantly spaced at two year intervals except that there is a four year break between Joseph and Ann. There is certainly an infant death of a Margaret Merrigan in Shoreditch in 1846 – (Shoreditch 11 284). We have, somewhat recklessly, assumed it to be an infant death of a child of this couple.

A Margaret Merigan did indeed die in Shoreditch in 1846, with the death registered in Shoreditch Volume 2 page 284, see <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2JM6-WM5>:

⁸⁸ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1805&q.givenName=patrick&q.surname=merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.birthLikePlace2=9%2CIreland%2CCounty%20Tipperary>.

⁸⁹ See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1845&q.givenName=margaret&q.surname=merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.birthLikePlace2=9%2CIreland%2CCounty%20Tipperary>.

[Family Tree](#)
[Search](#)
[Memories](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Activities](#)

StephenPalyga

[Records](#)
[Images](#)
[Family Tree](#)
[Genealogies](#)
[Catalog](#)
[Books](#)
[Wiki](#)

Margaret Merigan

Death • England and Wales Death Registration Index 1837-2007

SAVE
 EDIT
 SHARE

No Image Available

Document Information

Collection Information
[England and Wales Death Registration Index 1837-2007](#)

Cite This Record
 "England and Wales Death Registration Index 1837-2007," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2JM6-WM5:31 December 2014>), Margaret Merigan, 1846; from "England & Wales Deaths, 1837-2006," database, *findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com> : 2012); citing Death, Shoreditch, London, England, General Register Office, Southport, England.

[Copy Citation](#)

Name Margaret Merigan

Event Type Death

Event Date 1846

Event Place Shoreditch, London, England

Registration District Shoreditch

Page 284

Volume 2

Affiliate Line Number 156

Registration Quarter Jan-Feb-Mar

Registration Year 1846

Family Tree

[ATTACH TO FAMILY TREE](#)

Similar Records
 No similar records were found.

This is the full page image linked to the relevant FreeBMD search record:

[illegible]

This is a close-up of the relevant record:

HINES	Thomas	Taunton	10	331
MARGAN	Margaret	Shoreditch	2	284
MURPHY	Sarah	Horncastle	14	265

Notably, no age is given. But, on commencing an application to the English GRO for Margaret's death certificate, the GRO ordering page noted that this Margaret died aged 28:

Name: MERIGAN, MARGARET ☐ GRO Reference: 1846 M Quarter in THE SHOREDITCH DISTRICT Volume 02 Page 284	Age at Death (in years): 28
---	---------------------------------------

So it wasn't an infant death, and the Margaret concerned, having been born about 1818, could not be William's daughter. Nevertheless, that a Merigan died in Shoreditch in 1846 is not only an unusual event (because there weren't many Merigans in England at the time),⁹⁰ but also, the known Shoreditch location of William's family seems unlikely to be a coincidence, raising the prospect that Margaret is in fact William's sister.

However, a Family Search search for such a Margaret born about 1818 in County Tipperary did not locate a record for her.⁹¹ Accordingly, to further pursue the line of enquiry, a digital image of Margaret's death certificate was obtained from the English General Register Office, as follows:

No.	When Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
479	Twenty seventh January 1846 181 Kingsland Road.	Margaret Merigan	Female	28 years	Wife of Edmond Merigan Licensed Victualler	Phthisis 12 months Certified	Edm ^d Merigan present at the Death 181 Kingsland Road.	Twenty first January 1846	George Garrow Registrar.

Margaret is clearly not William's sister, as Merigan was her married name. (It is unclear what the "2" under "Female" refers to, but the age at death is clearly noted as "28" and, without doubt, Margaret, being described as a "Wife", died as an adult).

Of course, the same factors (the paucity of Merigans in England, and the Shoreditch location coincidence) might mean that Margaret's husband Edmond Merigan, Licensed Victualler, of 181 Kingsland Road, was William's brother or other relation. (181 Kingsland Road is 280 yards south of where Wilmer Gardens previously met Kingsland Road. It is now a set of flats known as "James Anderson Court").

However, a Family Search search for such an Edmond/Edmund born in County Tipperary did not locate a record for him.⁹² Accordingly, searches to locate a Merigan/Merrigan family at the time with a Margaret as a daughter or sister to William, or an Edmond/Edmund as a brother or other relation to him, all failed. It can be confirmed, however, that the Margaret Merigan who died in Shoreditch on 27th January 1846 was not an infant, nor was she William's daughter. But it does seem quite feasible that her husband Edmond, and hence also Margaret herself, was related to William in some way.

⁹⁰ FreeBMD searches for England returned only 43 Merrigan births, deaths and marriages, and 55 Merigan births, deaths and marriages, in the whole of the 33½ year period from 1st July 1837 to 31st December 1870.

⁹¹ See

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.anyDate.from=1818&q.givenName=Margaret&q.recordCountry=Ireland&q.surname=Merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.birthLikePlace2=9%2CIreland%2CCounty%20Tipperary>

⁹² See, for example,

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?count=20&q.givenName=Edmond&q.surname=Merigan&c.birthLikePlace1=on&f.birthLikePlace0=9&c.birthLikePlace2=on&f.birthLikePlace1=9%2CIreland&f.birthLikePlace2=9%2CIreland%2CCounty%20Tipperary>