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THE FAMILY OF FRANCIS MARION SHAW



SHEA, TO O'SHEA, TO SHAW

Volume 28 Number 2
September, 2019

The Family of Francis Marion Shaw is a non-profit newsletter published semi-annually, or more frequently, for the benefit of the descendants of Francis Marion Shaw and his wife, Rachel Moore Allen Shaw.

Historical contributions are requested. Your family histories including character traits, religious affiliations, professional pursuits and vital information such as birth dates and places, marriage dates and places, and death dates and places, are all welcome. Photographs help make the newsletter come alive. If you have some special photos of your ancestors which you would like to share with all of the family, please make a copy print of it and send it on to the address below. If original photos are sent, they will be carefully handled and returned, but editor cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Send your manuscripts and photo submissions to:

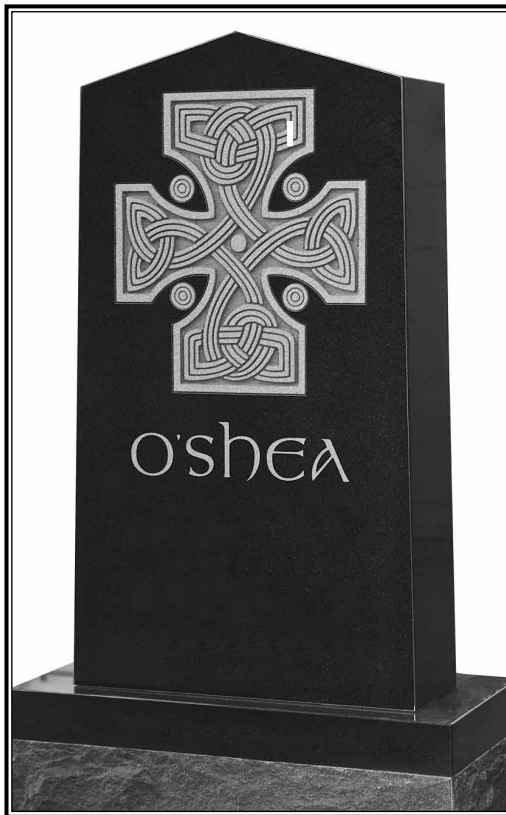
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In my previous issue of June, 2019, "In Search of Our Name," I shared with you the fact that Clyde Thomas "Tom" Shaw, 4th Great Grandson of Jeremiah Shaw, Senior, has recently been pursuing the origins of our Shaw family ancestry through the science of yDNA. I also indicated that through the process of his testing, Tom had become "digital" friends with several others who were engaged in the yDNA search, some who were very well versed in the science and interpreting its genealogical origins.

Two of those specialists were descendants from the Irish family of Shea, or O'Shea—Margaret Jordan, and Rory O'Shea. Both reside in Ireland. Margaret is the administrator of the O'Shea yDNA Surname Project, and has helped Tom link his yDNA to the O'Shea ancestry in the County Kerry, Ireland. Rory is an accomplished historian and genealogist, specializing in Irish history and yDNA science. He too, has linked the Shaw's of South Georgia to the O'Shea's of Ireland.



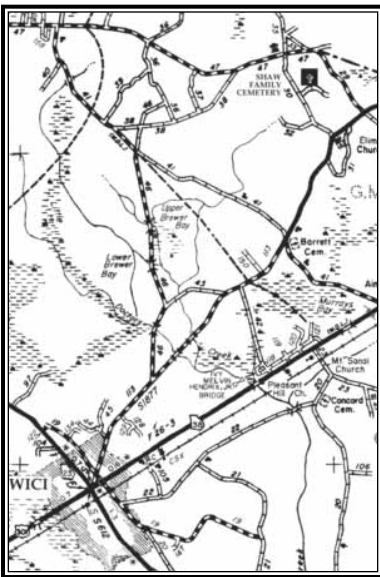
As I openly admitted earlier, I am nearly illiterate in the yDNA science, and would not begin to try to explain how these genealogists have come to their conclusions. But Rory O'Shea was gracious enough to give you a more detailed, yet understandable report of his findings. I present them here, as he shared them:

Did the Shaws in Southeast United States originate in Ireland, and if so what part?

In mid June 2018, Tom Shaw and Rory O'Shea, began exchanging information on the

yDNA test result notifications they received on June 8 from the testing company, **Family Tree DNA (FTDNA).**

Tom had submitted his DNA sample some weeks earlier and when the FTDNA laboratory (Houston TX) analysed his yDNA it gave him a list of people that might share a common male ancestor. Rory's yDNA was tested in 2016 and every time a new person has a yDNA test, the testing company compares the new results with all previous results from existing users of the FTDNA service.



Final resting place of Jeremiah Shaw, Senior, (1768–1845) at the John Shaw Family Cemetery near Ludowici, Georgia. Most Shaw descendants in South Georgia and Florida can trace their kinship back to this early American pioneer.

By Rory's explanation, DNA is genetic material we inherit from our parents and grandparents etc. It can be considered in three main categories:

We inherit yDNA generally unchanged from our male ancestors, however over sufficient generations changes do accumulate. Eventually the differences can be significant enough to be able to say with great confidence that Mr A and Mr B do not share a male ancestor within many hundreds, perhaps thousands of years where the differences are very substantial.

mtDNA is DNA we inherit from our mother, her mother etc. Like yDNA it changes slowly, more slowly probably than yDNA.

Finally, there is **Autosomal DNA**, or **atDNA**, which we inherit typically half-and-half from each parent. This means that about a quarter of our atDNA was inherited from our grandparents, with about one-eighth from their parents and smaller and smaller fractions from each preceding generation. Two siblings will each have 50% of their DNA from their father and from their mother but the DNA each sibling inherits can be different. Over a few generations therefore descendants of a couple could appear to more closely related, or more distantly related, than known from reliable records. Indeed, by the third cousin stage it would be quite normal that the shared atDNA would not give any useful indicator of relationship: it might 'miss' cousins, or might 'suggest' that quite distant relations were more

closely related.

FTDNA offer options to have each type of DNA assessed. For yDNA and atDNA, FTDNA also offer different degrees of testing with different prices for the package chosen. The detailed tests are expensive, so starting slowly makes best sense. If known relations are being tested, deep testing for some of the group could help to understand less detailed results for others in the group.

Returning to the e-mails between Tom and Rory in June 2018, it soon emerged that several descendants of Jeremiah Shaw, Sr. born about 1768 in South Carolina and who is buried in Ludowici, Georgia, were likely to share a common male ancestor with a group of Irish O'Shea relations. This arose because four known Shaw relations, some of them relatively distant to each other, matched in similar ways the yDNA of seven O'Shea relations branching from close family members to second and fourth cousins.

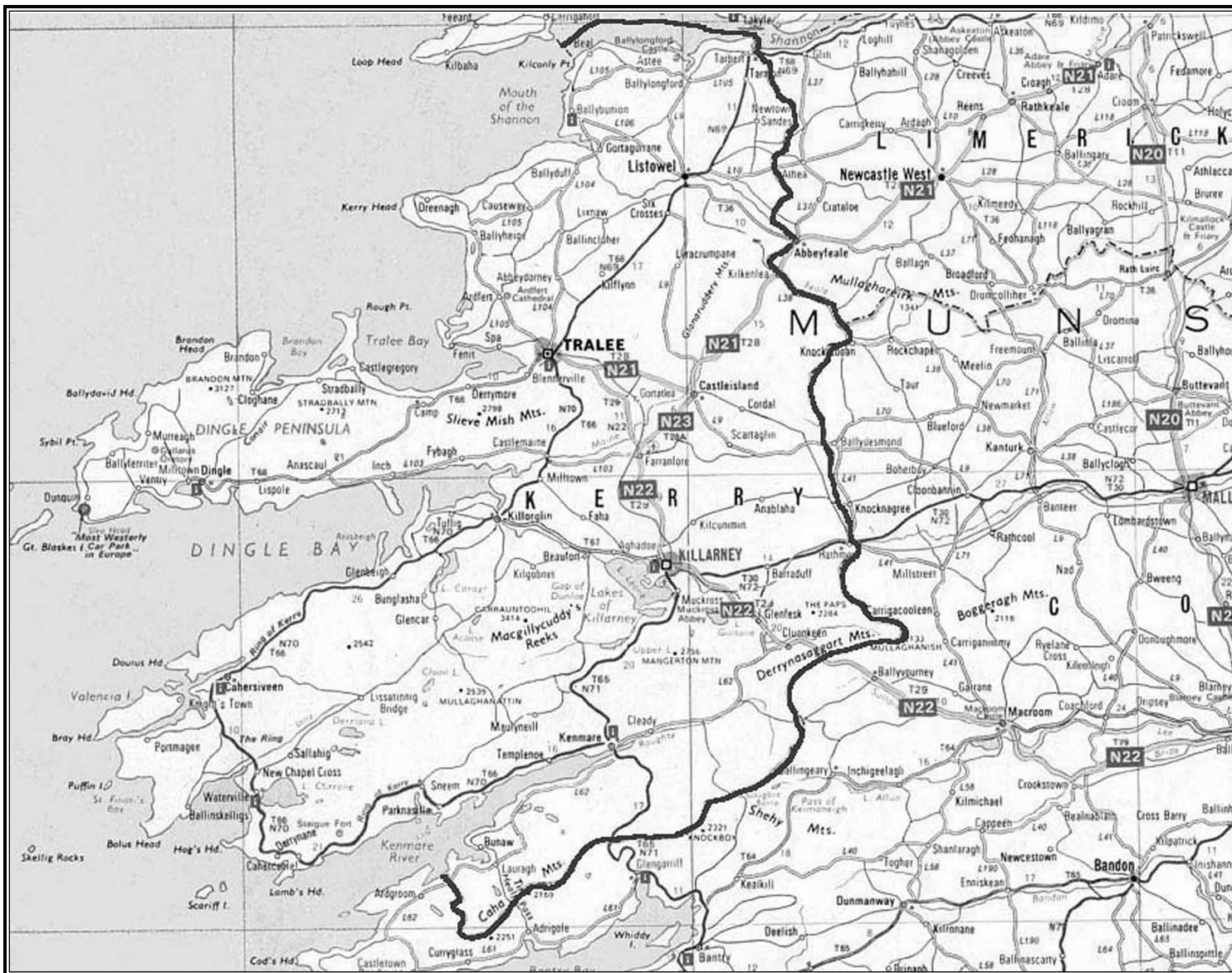
The Shaw group have invested in detailed yDNA tests (Big Y), something that is always going to be valuable to their Shaw relations, and which provides a shared 'gold-standard' or benchmark for potential Shaw connections. Similarly, the O'Shea group include several deep yDNA and other tests and similarly there is a shared benchmark established for their 'long lost' cousins.

The two benchmarks are sufficiently close that, statistically, it is highly probable that they shared a common male ancestor. Furthermore, it is highly probable that this male ancestor belonged to one of the O'Shea families documented in County Kerry, Ireland from much earlier times.

The rest of this note discusses what is known by Rory about the seven O'Sheas and on factors that increase the confidence that the similarities between the Shaw and O'Shea yDNA benchmarks are not some accidental convergence or regression that suggests, inaccurately, the range or degree of probable relationships between the groups.

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet (Shakespeare, Romeo & Juliet)

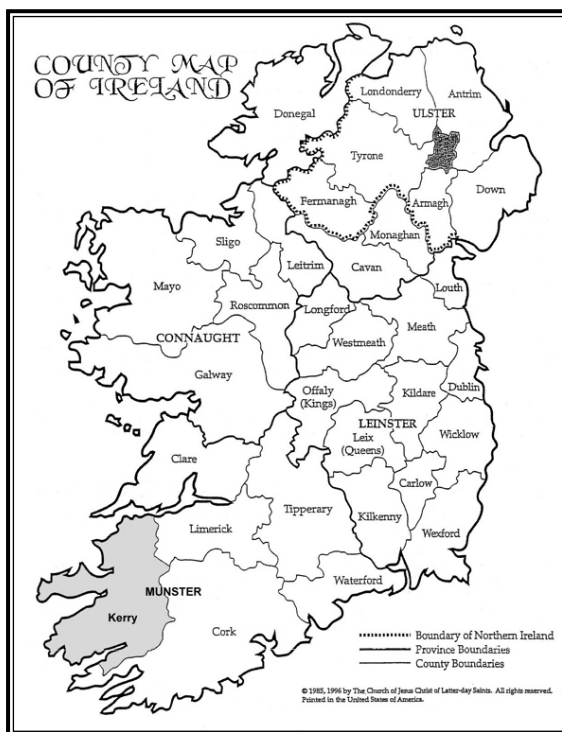
Shaw as a surname suggests a probable link with Scotland, and if associated with a suspected Irish ancestry, would 60% of the time point to the North of Ireland (Ulster), with a less than 1% probability of a Shaw connection in counties Kerry and



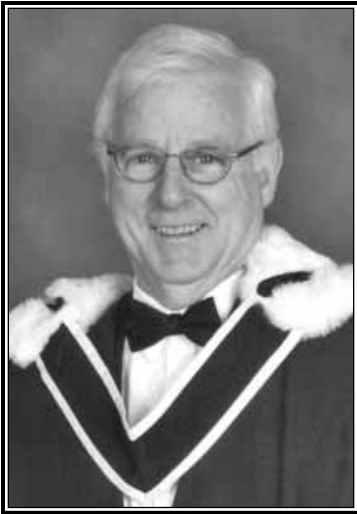
Clare. More probable would be a morphing from the Gaelic pronunciation of the surname Shea (Séaghdha – the ‘h’ makes the preceding consonant almost silent in speech).

There were few families (8 in total) with the name Shaw or Shawe identified in a survey in the year 1659 of people whose property was liable to be confiscated and used to pay soldiers’ wage arrears; none in Kerry. By contrast 41 families with the surname Shea or Shee were identified; with 5 in county Kerry. The 1659 lists of those considered for dispossession dramatically understate the reality. In Kilkenny alone about 30 families with the surname Shee/Shea were dispossessed. Many of them remained in Kilkenny as tenants but others had to relocate to the West of Ireland, typically to county Clare or else they went to the Americas or to France or Spain.

There were also further mass evictions across Ireland following the success of William of Orange, c1690.



Present day road map of County Kerry, Ireland, above, from which the descendants of the Jeremiah Shaw, Senior family have confirmed their early origins, through the yDNA testing process of the Family Tree DNA laboratory in Houston, Texas. County Kerry is located on the adjacent map, on the south western coast of Ireland.



Rory O'Shea, Dublin, Ireland

Rory O'Shea (FICS, CITP, BA, medieval history) lives in Dublin, Ireland. He is a retired public servant. He managed agencies in Ireland and Africa and subsequently consulted with multinational management consultants on public sector modernisation.

Rory's O'Shea ancestors are documented in West Clare, Ireland since 1770 but little is known about earlier periods. Rory's paternal ancestry is very definitely Irish with strong DNA associations with a specific branch of the O'Shea families who live in County Kerry. His maternal ancestry is more complex including Scottish and English settlers in County Antrim, Northern Ireland.

The discovery in 2018 of strong DNA associations with a group of Shaw cousins (Dan, Clyde, Stacey & Mark) is an exciting breakthrough. This allows Rory to refocus on his ancestry per-1770 and investigate probable historical trigger events in the 17th century that prompted the branching of the Shea & Shaw cousin groups. Very deep yDNA analysis of the O'Shea & Shaw representatives is regarded by experts as conclusive evidence that both groups share a common male ancestor whose descendants are mainly associated with County Kerry, Ireland and who are from ancient Irish forbears. As each new cousin undertakes yDNA tests the pool of knowledge increases significantly and, hopefully, will, over time, permit more precise estimates of when and why the branching occurred.

In the early 19th century, list of units (typically indicating a family) assessed for Tithes (a tax paid to the State religion by all landholders (mainly Catholic tenants) shows 356 'Shaw' versus well in excess of 2,000 'Shea' units.

A census in 1901, listed 870,000 heads of household in all of Ireland. Shaw accounted for 723 families, less than 0.1%. 20% of the Shaw 'heads of household' were Catholic. 2,500 heads of household were 'Shea'.

Even excluding any reference to yDNA the historical context taken in conjunction with the earliest known Shaw records in the modern US, point to a reasonable possibility that 'Shaw' and 'Shea' could be considered as variations of the same name.

Looking more deeply at the yDNA evidence, a common ancestral yDNA profile was generated when contrasted with a large randomly selected set of yDNA results for an excess of 20,000 persons with a known Irish connection or who live in areas where many persons with Irish connections reside or who had indicated some connection with Ireland in information they provided to FTDNA.

The 70 cases that most closely resemble the 'ancestral profile' show the following: 70% have Ireland as their origin 65% have a similar surnames, O'Shea (26), Shea (10), Shaw (5) or Shay (1)

The next most common surname is 'Nicholson'— 5 cases, with Scotland as their origin. There are grounds for associating Nicholson with the Kerry O'Shea clan, but this topic has not been assessed by Rory, other than a reference in a recent eMail from one of our Shaw /Shea more distant cousins.

Experienced DNA genealogists frequently assert that there are firm grounds for saying there are quite distinct yDNA O'Shea/Shea groups in Ireland and that even with the Kerry /Cork region, a branching can be distinguished based on a particular marker value (Y-GATA-A10).

From work with another Irish family (Langton), families that have lived as neighbours since at least the 1770s, Langton households were just 0.004% of Irish households in 1901. However, the yDNA evidence suggests they separated thousands of years ago. Rory's first cousin has more yDNA differences from him than his second cousin or his two fourth cousins. Rory's wife's first cousins are closer to her than one of her siblings. In

other words, yDNA (and other DNA) estimates of relationship should not always be interpreted as dogma or Sacred Scripture. They are guides, important and instructive, but not hard fact.

Returning briefly to his O'Shea ancestry, Rory offered a small description and finished with a question. Rory's O'Shea ancestors first 'appear' in West Clare, Ireland in about 1770 when a John Shea arrived as a penniless day-labourer who travelled from Kerry or Limerick to West Clare and who quickly became established, leaving three substantial (by the standard of the time for Native Catholic peasants) farms to his sons and whose successors had repeated dealings with the powerful Anglo-Norman-Irish Stackpoole family and some of whom who became attorneys, medical doctors and shopkeepers with other remaining farmers and improving their landholding.

A description of the conditions in the district in a book written by Mary John Knott in 1836, (when conditions were beginning to improve but with the devastating famine just 10 years away) shows how extraordinary such a rags-to-riches story should be interpreted.

It must be assumed that John Shea had resources that had evaded the expropriations in earlier generations, had powerful sponsors and/or that he had made money overseas before returning to his ancestral country.

Rory O'Shea leaves us with these questions:

Has Rory descended from his American cousins' ancestors?

Is the New World his family's "Old World"?

In respective of those possibilities, it is a quantitative fact that Rory's American Shaw cousin group from Southeastern US, have Kerry, Ireland roots and they are almost certainly distantly related to Rory's West Clare O'Shea clan.

So the family tradition of the Shaw's being Scotch-Irish may be partially true, for there may well be a maternal line whose male yDNA traces its gene back to Scotland. However, I believe it is about time that we reorient our thinking to scientific proof that our Shaw name is a derivative of Shea, or O'Shea of Ireland..

And if you are making plans to visit your Old World homeplace, book your passage to County Kerry, Ireland. And when St. Patrick's Day rolls around again, pin on the green and proudly proclaim your rights as an American O'Shea.

—Bryan L Shaw