

CAJUNS, CREOLES, PIRATES AND PLANTERS

Your New Louisiana Ancestors Format

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By Damon Veach

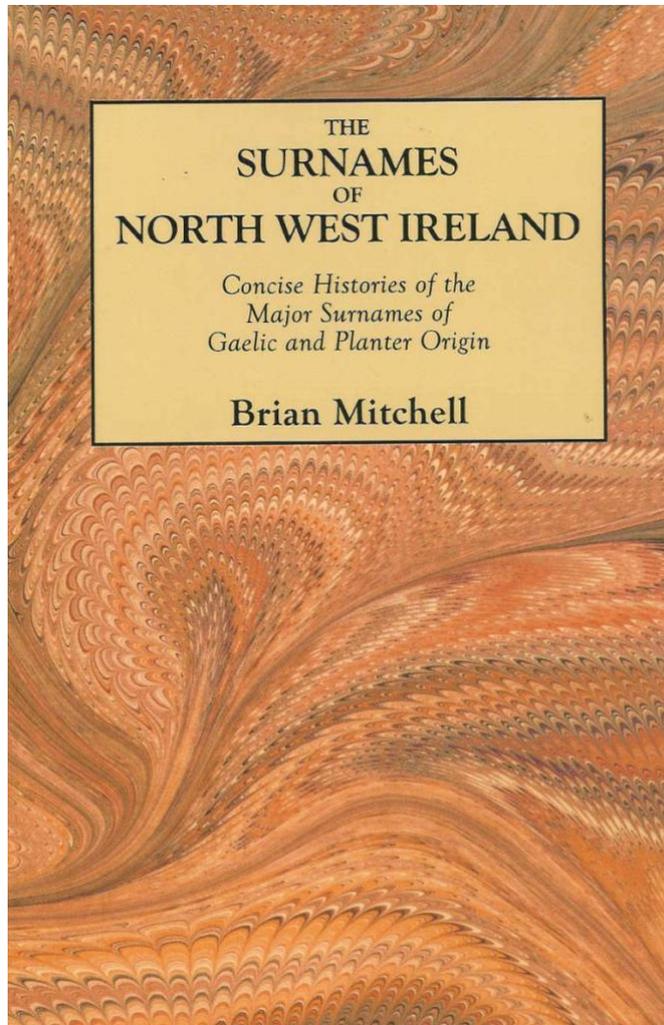
FLORIDA PARISHES: Louisianians will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the West Florida Revolt this year, an event recognized as leading to the annexation of West Florida to the United States. A variety of events will be held in the state's eight Florida Parishes – East Baton Rouge, East and West Feliciana, St. Helena, Livingston, Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany.

Le Raconteur is commemorating the event by issuing a special issue pertaining to the Florida Parishes and a few contiguous areas. Leading off is a transcription of Pensacola burials, births, and christenings from 1768 to 1771. Pensacola was the capital of British West Florida, and many of its residents moved westward into Louisiana following Spain's conquest in 1781. This article is followed by four Spanish documents identifying residents at Baton Rouge and nearby Manchac; an 1819 letter to Fulwar Skipwith, the West Florida Republic's former and only president; an 1822 St. Helena letter; an 1838 letter regarding a relative at Bayou Sara; an 1839 letter from Ohio relatives to a Feliciana visitor; transcriptions of 1848 property transactions in Baton Rouge; and indexes to business licenses issued in Washington and Tangipahoa Parishes. This issue illustrates the depth of material readers have come to expect in this journal, which begins its 30th volume this year.

Subscriptions are available at \$15 until February 28th. After that date, they are \$20. To subscribe for 2010, send payment to Le Comité des Archives de la Louisiane, P.O. Box 1547, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. For a membership application and more information on the society, visit their website at www.lecomite.org.

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IRELAND SURNAMES: North West Ireland--bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west, by the Glens of Antrim to the east, and by the lakes of Fermanagh to the south--refers to counties Derry, Donegal, and Tyrone. Not only was this region the last stronghold of powerful Gaelic tribes, it also became home to many settlers from England and, in particular, Scotland during the Plantation of Ulster in the 17th century. North West Ireland was home to many emigrants of Gaelic and Planter descent who departed in significant numbers during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries for new lives in North America, Great Britain, and Australasia.



Brian Mitchell has compiled concise but informative histories of the principle surnames that are most closely associated, through numerical strength or uniqueness, with North West Ireland. Drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources, the author has produced 324 single-page histories of surnames that either originated in or became established in North West Ireland. Owing to spelling variations, these histories apply to an additional 57 common surnames for the region (e.g., variant spellings of Doherty include Daugherty, Docherty, Dockerty, Dogerty, Dogherty, Dorrety, Dougherty, O'Doagharty, O'Dochartaigh, O'Doghartye, O'Dogherty, and O'Doherty). Mitchell estimates that these histories document the surname origins of over 80% of people with roots in North West Ireland.

As the author explains in his Introduction, surnames of Gaelic Irish origin frequently confirm membership of a sept. It was assumed that members of an Irish sept had a common tribal ancestor. Thus, even today, Gaelic Irish surnames are still very dominant and numerous in the very localities where their names originated. For example, the surname McCloskey both originates and predominates

today in the Dungiven area of County Derry, while 80% of McLaughlins in County Donegal are still concentrated in the Inishowen peninsula, the ancestral homeland of the McLaughlin sept.

Most of the specific histories included in Mitchell's book describe the geographic prevalence of the name in North West Ireland today, the ancient origins of the name's founders, the name's meaning, the expansion/contraction of the name often in association with military campaigns, surname variations, and much more. These characteristics distinguish Brian Mitchell's new book as the most important addition to Irish onomastics in many years.

When reading and studying a book of this type, it is only natural to wonder if some of your early ancestors weren't a part of this area's history. That is why I took note of the surname Wilson. Even though I haven't traced the connection back to this part of the world, I have through family notes determined that this surname connects me back to Ireland. That is the reason I have long encouraged interviews with older relatives to get the past history first hand even though it is hand-me-down information. It is something to prove or disapprove. My grandmother often mentioned her Irish roots, and therefore, I find this information on the Wilson family to be quite interesting.

According to Mitchell's records, Wilson is one of the thirty most common names in Ireland and the third most common in Ulster.

If you are interested in purchasing this book, you can contact Clearfield Company, 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211. The price, including postage and handling, is \$44.95. If you don't order this for your personal library, check with your local genealogical librarian and see if a copy is available for public perusal.

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DESOTO PLUME: It is always nice to see a copy of *DeSoto Plume*, and the current issue is filled with information on the Mansfield Female College Glee Club. It is also filled with color pictures of current members of the DeSoto Historical Society at various events and locations. Included also is an interesting article on the history of Mansfield College.

The next meeting of the society will take place at the Mansfield Female College Museum on Sunday, February 21, 2010, 3 p.m. Membership is only \$10, and the society has back issues available of *DeSoto Plume* and other publications of interest to researchers with ancestries in this part of northwest Louisiana. Liz Chrysler is editor and associate editors are Gay Griffith Means and Nathaniel Griffith Means. Membership fees can be sent directly to George Meriwether Gilmer Jr., Treasurer, DeSoto Historical Society, P.O. Box 300, Stonewall, LA 71078.

The Veach-Foshee Memorial Library Collection is located in this museum.

