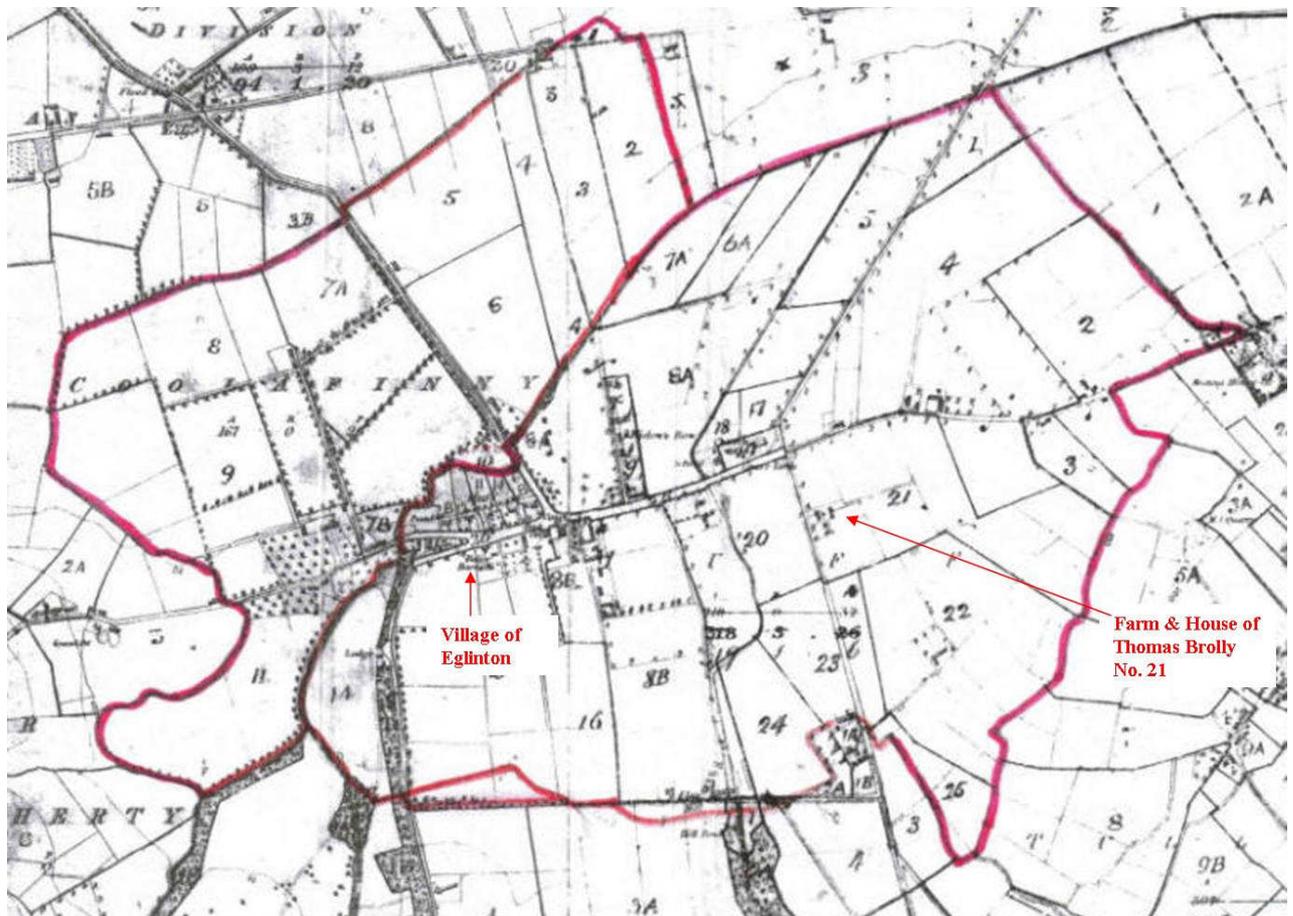
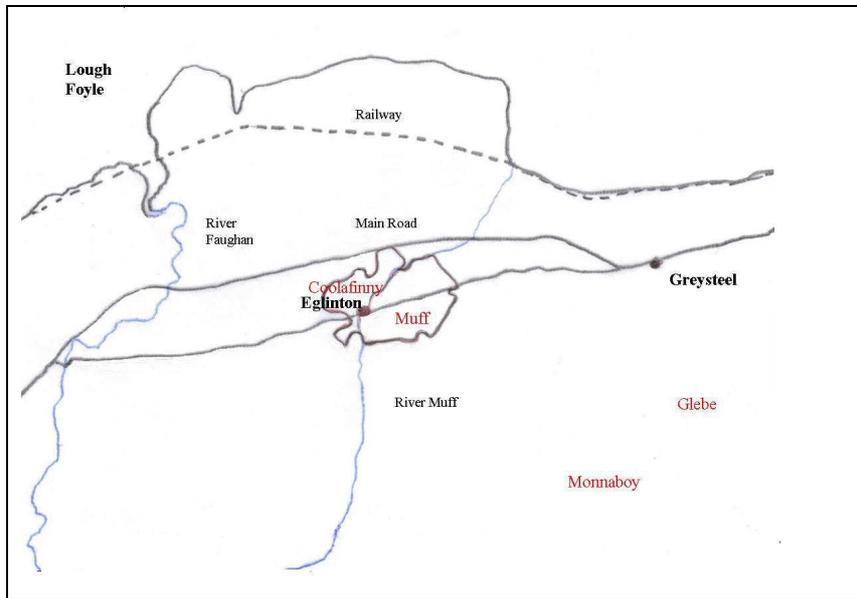


## The Family of Thomas Brolly living in the Townland of Muff in 1901

This particular case study is about the family of a Thomas Brolly who, in 1901, lived on a farm just outside the village of Eglinton in the townland of Muff. Below is a map showing the general area of the county where the townland of Muff and the village of Eglinton were located and another map showing the location of the farm.



PRONI: VAL/2/A/5/14 & 15, 1856

The map [which is the valuation map that accompanies the Griffith's [Tenement] Valuation of 1858] shows that this property was situated on the outskirts of the village of Eglinton [formerly called Muff] beside the road leading to Faughanvale Presbyterian Church. The Griffith's Revision Books for the townland [VAL/12/B/32/6A-E] show that Thomas Brolly was a recent arrival in the townland. The occupants of the farm from 1859 to 1901 are summarised in the table below.

No. in Griffith's 1858	Occupier 1858	Description of Property 1858	Valuation of Buildings 1858	Occupier 1858-c.1900
21	David Rolleston	House, offices & land 25.2.5	£6.00	1872 Robert Rolleston. 1894 David Rolleston. 1901 Reprs. David Rolleston. 1901 Thomas Brolly.

The information in this table would suggest that Thomas and his family only arrived in the townland around the time of the 1901 Census. Previous to that the farm had been in the hands of the Rollestons [probably Roulston] since 1859. Reprs. 1901 shows that the last Rolleston, David, had died. Below you will see the limitations of this particular evidence, but for now we will look at the details of Thomas Brolly's family in the 1901 Census Returns.

### 1901 Census [Eglinton DED] [PRONI: MIC354/5/18]

On the night of the 31st March 1901 when the Census was taken, there were 10 persons resident in the house – Thomas and his wife Ellen and their 8 children. The house had a slated roof, 8 front windows and 7 rooms, suggesting a substantial property. In 1858 the house and outbuildings were valued at £6 - a figure well above the average for houses throughout the country.

House No. in Census	Forename	Surname	Relationship	Religion	Education	Age	Sex	Profession	Marriage	Where Born
4	Thomas	Brolly	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Read & write	44	M	Farmer	Married	Co. Londonderry
4	Ellen	Brolly	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read & write	42	F		Married	Co. Londonderry
4	Margaret	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	17	F	Seamstress	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Rose	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	15	F	Seamstress	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Catherine	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	13	F	Seamstress	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Nora	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	11	F	Scholar	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Bridget	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	9	F	Scholar	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Bella	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	7	F	Scholar	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Louisa	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read only	5	F	Scholar	Not married	Co. Londonderry
4	Thomas	Brolly	Son	Roman Catholic	Cannot read	3	M		Not married	Co. Londonderry

Initially, I chose this family because I thought the family had moved from the Bovevagh/Dungiven area to the Muff area at the end of the nineteenth century. This theory was based on one fact and one assumption.

The fact was that the couple were married in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Dungiven on 22nd February 1881. I had acquired this information from the *Irish Genealogy: Central Signposting Index* and *Emerald Ancestors*. At this stage I did not know where the couple were living at the time of their marriage.

The assumption, which seemed reasonable at the time, was that Thomas Brolly was probably living somewhere in the Roe Valley, most probably in parish of Bovevagh. The assumption was based on the fact that 67% of Brollys listed in the 1858 Griffith's Valuation lived in the barony of Keenaght. In fact half of all Brollys listed in the county at that time lived in the parish of Bovevagh. You can carry out this search for yourself in both the 1858/59

Griffith's [Tenement] Valuation database and the earlier 1831 Census database. Both of these databases will identify the areas within the county where the surname Brolly was concentrated.

### Marriage of Thomas Brolly and Ellen Doherty

When I looked up the details of the marriage in the *Derry ~ Londonderry Genealogy: Marriage Records for Co. Derry* online database I found the following information. Thomas Brolly, farmer, of Monnaboy married Ellen Doherty of Camnish in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on 22nd February 1881. The fathers, both farmers, were William Brolly and Paul Doherty respectively. The witnesses were James Leach and Ellen McCloskey.

Clearly Ellen Doherty was from the Dungiven area which explained why the marriage took place in Dungiven. She was in fact from the townland of Camnish which lies between Dungiven and Burnfoot beside the main road to Limavady, and is in the parish of Bovevagh. A Paul Dogherty is listed in the 1858 Griffith's Valuation occupying a farm in Camnish. Whilst we cannot be absolutely sure, this is probably the Paul Doherty on the marriage certificate.

However, my assumption about Thomas Brolly was completely wrong. At the time of his marriage he was living in the townland of Monnaboy. This townland lies on higher ground to the south east of the townland of Muff, about three miles from the village of Eglinton. It is part of the parish of Faughanvale I checked the 1858 Griffith's Valuation for a William Brolly and found one - not in Monnaboy - but in the nearby townland of Glebe.

Now that I knew that Thomas lived in Monnaboy, it was short journey from there to Muff. As shown above, the Griffith's Revision Books indicated that he had moved to Muff c.1900. Again, a look at where his children were born made me revise this theory further

### Births of the children of Thomas Brolly and Ellen Doherty

As will be shown later the couple had 10 children, of which 9 were still alive in 1911. The 1901 census table above lists 8 of these children and provides us with their first names. In the 1911 census, four of the 1901 children were listed as young adults. That being the case there is one child whose first name we do not know.

I carried out a search for the children in the *Derry ~ Londonderry Genealogy: Birth Records for Co. Derry* online database it should be possible to find each of the children listed in the census and, hopefully, the two missing children. Below is part of the initial search for the children of Thomas Brolly. Inserting the 1884 +/- 4 years date in the search concentrates the search on the relevant time period when Thomas and Ellen's children were born - 1882 to c.1900. Note, however, that +/- 4 years is the maximum span available, so this search will not go beyond 1888.

13 matches for the search criteria: **Brolly (plus variants) 1880-1888**

Action	Source	Surname	First Name	Year	County
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	William	1882	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Civil Birth	Brolly	William	1882	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	Margaret Anne	1883	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Civil Birth	Brolly	Margaret Jane	1883	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Civil Birth	Brolly	Margaret Ann	1884	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	Mary A.	1884	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Civil Birth	Brolly	Rose	1885	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	Catherine	1886	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Civil Birth	Brolly	Catherine	1886	Co. Derry
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	Catherine	1887	Co. Derry

Pages :  
1 2 >Next

**Free Index Search for Co. Derry**

Type\*:

Surname\*:

Firstname\*:

Year\*:  +/-

Father Surname:

Father Firstname:

Parish / District:

Surname Match\*:

As you can see below, a further two searches were necessary to ensure full coverage of the time period of births. All of these children, except Margaret Jane, Mary A. and Catherine 1886 are Thomas's children. How do I know that? Firstly, I can eliminate Mary A. who was born in 1884 because that was the year that Margaret was born. I know from the 1911 Census that Thomas Brolly's Margaret was Margaret Anne, so that eliminates Margaret Jane. I also checked this by carrying out the search shown below. I was fairly certain that the children were baptised in Faughanvale Roman Catholic Parish, so I selected Faughanvale (RC) in the Parish/District box, and as you can see, this eliminated Margaret Jane.

1 match for the search criteria: **Brolly (plus variants) Margaret 1880-1888 Parish: FAUGHANVALE (RC)**

Action	Source	Surname	First Name	Year	County
<a href="#">VIEW</a>	Church Baptism	Brolly	Margaret Anne	1883	Co. Derry

**Free Index Search for Co. Derry**

Type\*:

Surname\*:

Firstname:

Year\*:  +/-

Father Surname:

Only enter if different from child's surname

Father Firstname:

Parish / District:

Surname Match\*:

I had a similar problem with Catherine but solved this by using the same technique. This eliminated Catherine of 1886. I also surmised that William was the missing first child born a year after their marriage. I carried on with the two more searches to complete the time period by selecting the dates 1890 and 1898. These three dates 1884, 1890 and 1898 cover the period within which Thomas and Ellen's children were born. I also used similar techniques, as described above, to rule in and rule out alternative birth years for certain children. I discovered the second child - Lawrence Joseph Bradley born in October 1901, which explains why he did not appear in the 1901 Census. Sadly Lawrence Joseph died in 1904 which explains why he is not in the 1911 Census.

I was able to find his death in the *Ireland, Civil Registration Indexes*. The result his shown below.

Name: Laurence Joseph Brolly  
 Registration district: Londonderry  
 Record type: DEATHS  
 Registration date - quarter and year: Apr - Jun 1904  
 Estimated birth year: 1902  
 Age: 2  
 Volume: 2  
 Page: 129

My real interest in the birth records was to discover where the family were living when each child was born. However before I turn to that here is a summary of the year when each child was born.

William [1882], Margaret Anne [1883], Rose [1885], Catherine [1887], Ellen [1889], Bridget [1891], Isabella [1893], Louisa [1896], Thomas [1898] and Lawrence Joseph [1901]. Note that Ellen was called Nora in the 1901 Census.

For me, the most useful information was where the children were born. All of the children up to Bridget [1891] were born in Monnaboy. Isabella [also called Bella and Nora] was born on 29th November 1893 at 114 Spencer Road on the Waterside. It looks as the family had decided to try their fortune in the city. However, their stay in the city only lasted a short time, because the next child, Louisa, was born in Eglinton in 1896, as were Thomas and Laurence Joseph.

As we saw above, the Griffith's Revision Books show Thomas Brolly in a farm which had been previously occupied by a David Rolleston [Rouston] - No. 21 in Griffith's. The date given for this change is 1901, yet we now know that the family had been in Eglinton from 1896. Of course, they could have been living in a different house for a time but the Revision Books do not indicate that. As we know the dates in Griffith's Revision Books are only approximate and must be treated with caution.

Now that the 1911 census is online I was able to look for the family in 1911. However, when I looked in Muff there was no Thomas Brolly. A search of the census found the family residing in Crindle Town in Myroe.

**1911 Census** [Townland of Crindle Town - Myroe DED] [NAI: 1911 Online Census]

House was thatched, had 4 front windows and 5 rooms.

House No. in Census	Forename	Surname	Relationship	Religion	Education	Age	Sex	Profession	Marriage	Where Born
9	Thomas	Brolly	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Read & write	54	M	Farmer	Married	Co. Derry
9	Ellen	Brolly	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read & write	52	F		Married	Co. Derry
9	Margaret Ann	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	27	F		Single	Co. Derry
9	Isabella	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read & write	17	F		Single	Co. Derry
9	Louisa	Brolly	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Read only	15	F	Scholar	Single	Co. Derry
9	Thomas Paul	Brolly	Son	Roman Catholic	Cannot read	13	M	Scholar	Single	Co. Derry

Thomas was now a publican. This set me thinking. Had Thomas been a publican in the Waterside in the 1890s? I searched the PRONI online database of Street Directories and found a Patrick Brolly, publican, Strabane Old Road in the 1895 Belfast and Ulster Street Directory - but not a Thomas Brolly.

**Conclusion**

This particular example has been done without any contact with possible descendants. I included it because it illustrates the importance of birth certificates and the 1901 and 1911 Census in tracing the movements of a family in the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century.

Although not one of my initial reasons for inclusion, this case study illustrates the dangers of assumptions. These, if heeded too much, can set you off on a completely wrong track.

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