Matthew Nodwell

Written by Jennifer Nodwell Monday, 26 January 2009 17:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 18 November 2009 19:59

In 1789 the French Revolution produced a new democratic French republic. About this same time the United Irishmen (who consisted of Protestants and Catholics alike) declared their belief in a peaceful future for Ireland in which Protestants and Catholics could live together in peace and with equality. They wanted to set up a French-styled democratic Ireland, which was independent of Britain. Supporting French Republicanism by the British considering they were at war with France. the was seen as treasonous United Irishmen (who consisted of Protestants and Catholics alike) declared their belief in future for Ireland in which Protestants and Catholics could live together in peace and with equality. They wanted to set up a French-styled democratic republic in Ireland, which was independent of Britain. In 1798, French troops joined the Irish in battle, but they were defeated. While the French were taken prisoner, the local Irish were massacred as a punishment for treason. In 1800, Britain passed the Act of Union which formed a new country ("The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland") by uniting England, Ireland and Scotland. Irish Catholics and dissenting Protestants were not allowed to participate in Parliament.



It was into this newly formed country that our Protestant ancestor Matthew Nodwell was born in the parish of Drumachose, in the County Londonderry, in Ireland, in 1804. What took place between his birth and the year 1834? What prompted him to move his wife Catherine and two small daughters to Canada? Even before the Potato Famine of 1840, Ireland was in a recession. Politically, it was difficult for Protestants at this time. Whatever the reason, the family braved the Atlantic crossing and ultimately settled in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Between 1834 and 1850, Matthew and Catherine had seven more children, a total of nine: Maryann, Eliza, William, James Henry, Catherine, Thomas, Matthew, Elizabeth, and Martha. Matthew presumably died in 1850, but Catherine was still there in New Brunswick with her youngest son during the 1881 census taking. And today, the indelible mark these brave pilgrims to a new world made can still be seen. Their descendants are still found in New Brunswick today.



Descendants of Matthew Nodwell

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Nearly all of the facts cited for Nodwell family member information was taken from the research conducted by Brenda Ayers. Countless hours of reading blindingly bad copies of 100 year old documents and combing through dusty books went into the collection of Nodwell information that she has so graciously shared with all of us. Her compilation of Nodwell births and marriages is invaluable.