

The requested search for the client's ancestor has been completed and the findings presented in the following report. Civil registration of all births, deaths and marriages did not commence in Ireland until 1864. Non-Catholic marriages are registered from 1845. Before these dates virtually the only sources of information which directly relate to family history are local parish registers. However, relatively few of these date from before 1800 and virtually none from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Unfortunately, though not wholly unexpectedly, none of the five parishes along the north coast of Antrim - Dunluce, Billy, Ballintoy, Ramoan and Culfeightrin - have church registers which date from 1800, let alone 1700. This meant that we were denied the chance to examine the most important genealogical source of information on the McNeil family. In order to overcome this handicap we were forced to exploit to the maximum any other potentially relevant sources.

Fortunately, for the purposes of this search the papers relating to the estate of the Earls of Antrim were available to us. This collection of estate papers is one of the largest in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Comprising about 500,000 documents, the material is made up of a very large number of seventeenth and eighteenth century leases, lists of tenants and a survey of the entire estate in 1734. The Antrim estate covered most of the northern part of County Antrim, including, and of most interest for the purposes of this search, Ballycastle.

To begin with we examined the survey of the estate made in 1734 which comprises a series of townland maps and a list of the names of the tenants of each farm on the estate. We found several McNeills including a Charles McNeile of Dowey whose farm totalled nearly 190 acres (English measure). We also found an Archibald McNeile in the townland of North Clogher whose holding was almost 250 acres (English measure). Because of the nature of these documents it was not possible to photocopy the maps of the above townlands.

It was, unfortunately, not possible to find out any more about this McNeile family of Derry. Dowey is presumably Dooey which is a townland in the north coast of Antrim but closer to the town of Bushmills than Ballycastle. It is possible that Charles McNeil, the client's ancestor, may have lived in Ballycastle but possessed a lease of a farm in Dowey which was in turn leased to a sub-tenant. Of course, it is not actually possible to prove this. We then examined the extensive collection of expired leases relating to the Antrim Estate. Recently this collection has been expertly catalogued. However, there is still no index which meant that the calendar covering the

collection had to be examined page by page. No references were found to a Charles McNeil, although quite a few leases were found relating to other McNeills. This included a fee farm grant of lands at Clougher (Clogher) from the Earl of Antrim to Archibald McNeill. However, the date of 1738 indicates that this man could not have been part of the immediate family of the client's ancestor.

At this point a searcher, out of curiosity, picked up the index volume of the Journal of the Association for the Preservation of Memorials of the Dead in Ireland and looked up the name Charles McNeil. A reference was found and when this was looked up a most extraordinary piece of information was uncovered. The reference concerned the church plate in the parish of Culfeightrin, on the north coast of Ireland, and recorded that the paten - the plate on which the consecrated bread is placed in the Eucharist - is inscribed as follows: 'This server, chalice and flagon given to ye Church of Culfaightrin by Mr Charles McNeill, the 1st landwaiter of Ballycastle, Octr ye 25: 1728.' Unfortunately the article continues by lamenting that nothing more is known about this man. However, it is possible to infer a number of things about this Charles McNeill. To begin with, he was a member of the Church of Ireland rather than a Presbyterian. Secondly, his occupation indicates that he was closely involved with the harbour at Ballycastle. He was of some status being the first person appointed to the position of landwaiter in Ballycastle. Thirdly, he was a man of some wealth, being able to afford the costly church plate, while he obviously had a strong attachment to the parish church of Culfeightrin.

This was not the only reference to a Charles McNeill in the aforementioned Journal. A second article was found which noted that the chalice of the Church of Ireland on the inland of Rathlin is inscribed: 'Given by Mr Charles McNeale ye 14 of ffebruary 1719'. If this was the same man as the Ballycastle landwaiter it would appear that he had the curious, but also generous, habit of donating silverware to churches in north Antrim. At the same time there is no evidence that these men were one and the same, although, on the other hand, there is no particular reason to doubt it. Rathlin Island is located about five miles directly north of Ballycastle and there have always been very close connections between the two. If Charles McNeill was associated with the harbour at Ballycastle then, undoubtedly, he would have had numerous dealings with Rathlin. In fact, Charles McNeill may have been living on the island in 1719, though we could find nothing to support this suggestion.

Our next step was to examine the indexes of Connor wills and administration bonds in the hope of finding a reference to the will of Charles McNeill. We did not find one. However, we did find a reference to the administration bond of Charles McNeill of Brughanlea, dated 1739. Brughanlea is a townland on the north coast of Antrim located very close to the town of Ballycastle. The date is the date of the administration bond which could have been several years after the death of the testator. It is very unfortunate that we do not have a copy of this bond - it having been destroyed - as it means we cannot pursue this avenue of research further. However, there are strong grounds for arguing that this administration bond is in relation to the death of the client's ancestor. The two years between the date of death and the date of the administration bond may have been due to the difficulties encountered when trying to wind up the estate of a man who had drowned several thousand miles from his homeland.

Interestingly, we found in a list of Protestant householders in the parish of Culfeightrin two Widow McNeals. Although it has been assumed that Charles McNeil drowned along with his wife in 1737, could it be that she did not accompany her husband on his fateful voyage, perhaps planning to join him at a later stage, and, in fact, one of the above Widow McNeals was his relict? Several other parishes along the north Antrim coast we found to have McNeal inhabitants in 1740, though no McNeals lived on Rathlin Island at this time.

An index of the Belfast Newsletter newspaper, founded in 1737, has been compiled for the pre-1800 editions and we searched this in the hope of finding an account of the shipwreck in which Charles McNeil met his death. This necessitated a visit to the Linenhall Library in Belfast where the index is stored on microfiche. Unfortunately, however, the Newsletter was not launched until September 1737 while the shipwreck of the Catherine took place in July of that year. Nevertheless, we still looked at the index in the hope that there would be a later reference to the incident. However, we failed to find anything of relevance.

Following this disappointment we turned our attention to grand jury record which for Co Antrim have survived from 1711-21 and then from 1727. We checked the surviving records up until c.1738. The available material is mainly concerned with payments to various individuals regarding services carried out on behalf of the grant jury. We found quite a few entries concerning McNeills, though none to Charles McNeil. We had hoped that a man of his status would have appeared at least once. An Archibald McNeale was present in Carrickfergus as part of a jury assembled there in 1720. However, this is not likely to have been the son of Charles

McNeil as he would almost certainly have been too young. One interesting entry referred to Hector McNeill, who was High Sheriff of Co Antrim, who in 1734 was paid £60 for transporting certain people to America.

It had been pointed out to us that the client's ancestors had been active masons in America and that we ought to investigate whether they had previously been masons in Ireland. In order to follow this up we contacted the Dublin headquarters of the Irish freemasons where extensive records relating to the organisation are stored. However, we were informed that the earliest records of the lodge at Ballycastle date from the 1760s. In fact, there is no evidence that there were masons in the town before this.

We found a number of references to McNeill pedigrees in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. We examined each of those but only one appeared to have any relevance to the enquiry in hand and even this is doubtful. This pedigree referred to the McNeills of Gigha and Taynish, places in Scotland, and included a Charles McNeill who was the son of Torquil and the grandson of Lachlan (born 1604?) by his first marriage. Unfortunately, other than his name, nothing is given about Charles McNeill - not even a date of birth or death. He did have an uncle and two cousins called Archibald though whether there is any significance in this is not clear. What is interestingly is the fact that a grandson of Charles' uncle was called Neill McNeill who lived at Colliers Hall in Ballycastle. This pedigree may refer to the family of the client's ancestor, but, at the same time, we really can't be sure.

We consulted a number of other sources and also read several books dealing with north Antrim and the town of Coleraine. The additional primary sources checked included the Names' Index to the Registry of Deeds which was established in 1708. We found quite a few instances of the name McNeil, in its various forms, though unfortunately no references to an Archibald McNeill in the index so we decided that a full investigation of all these references would be too time consuming and probably not worthwhile. We also tried, and failed, to find any shipping records of the early eighteenth century relating to ports on the north coast of Ireland.

Time did not permit further investigation. A large number of sources were consulted and anything we believed was potentially relevant was extracted. Unfortunately the lack of appropriate church records prevented us from finding out any definite information on the family history of Charles McNeil. However, there are strong grounds for believing that the client's

ancestor was the landwaiter who donated the silverware to the parish church of Culfeightrin in 1728. He may also have been the Earl of Antrim's tenant in Dowey in 1734. Aside of these scraps of information, we regret to say that every little else was uncovered despite an extensive search. We do hope, however, that the information contained in this report may prove of interest.

## **Source List**

### **Estate Papers**

Antrim Papers, leases - D/2922/3A

#### *Cary barony:*

D/2977/3A/2/1/1A-B - 27 Dec. 1605, copy fee farm deed from Sir Randal McDowell to Hugh McNeill of the constableness and keeping of the fort at Dunynie, quarterland of Clare Castle etc.

/2 - 9 Nov. 1611, copy fee farm deed from Sir Randell McDowell to Hugh McNeill of various lands and the constableness and keeping of the market towns of Dunynie and Ballycastle.

/30 - 4 Nov. 1720, Earl of Antrim to John McNeill, Currysheskin, counterpart lease for 31 years of one quarter of Currysheskin and Cregballynoe

/37A-B - 11 Mar. 1739, Earl of Antrim to John McNeale, Currysheskin, counterpart fee farm deed forever of quarterland of Currysheskin and Cregballynoe

/12/1A-C - 7 Dec. 1738, Earl of Antrim to Archibald McNeill, Clougher, counterpart fee farm grant forever of quarterland of Clougher

/24/1A-B - 5 June 1696, John O'Neill and Hugh McCollum to Robert McNeile of Lisbellanagroagh for 13 years.

/2 - 15 May 1713, Earl of Antrim to Robert McNeale, counterpart lease for 31 years of quarterland of Lisbellanagroagh More

/27/1A - 29 May 1738, Earl of Antrim to Hector McNeill, Dunseverick, fee farm deed forever of quarterland of Tonduff

#### *Dunluce barony:*

D/2977/3A/3/1/27-10 Mar. 1673, lease from Marquess of Antrim to John McNeill, vicar of Coole of various lands for 41 years

/85A-B - 24 Aug. 1738, Earl of Antrim to Neale McNeile, Cushendun, of quarterlands of Toberdoney and Islandrose

/2/10/3 - Nov. 1706, Earl of Antrim to John McNeal; lease for 31 years of the Demesne of Ballymoney

/15/1 - 30 May 1864, lease from Earl of Antrim to Archibald McNeale, clerk, of Clogher, of the quarterland of Carnanreagh for 32 years

/19/2 - 6 July 1739, lease from Earl of Antrim to Daniel McNeill, Drunkendult of half of West Drunkendult for 3 lives

D/2977/3B/19 - notebook giving details of land letting

Currysheskin, parish of Ballintoy, originally granted in fee farm to John McNeill on 11 March 1739

Clogher North, parish of Billy, originally granted in fee farm to Archibald McNeill on 7 Dec. 1738

Tonduff, parish of Billy, originally granted in fee farm to Hector McNeile on 29 March 1739

Tonduff Mountain, as above

D/2977/3B/17 - Notebook giving details of leases

Renewable lease of quarterland of Moninea, parish of Loughguile, dated 17 Mar. 1762, between the Earl of Antrim and Rev Alexander Clarke. Lives in lease included Daniel and James McNeill, sons of Neal McNeill of Ballycastle and nephews of the lessee

D/2977/3B/16 - Notebook containing extracts from rent ledger

Fee farm deed, dated 29 March 1738 from Roger McNeill of Tonduff to Hector McNeill of Dunseverick Esq of the quarterland of Tonduff. Fine £200, rent £6.

D/2977/35/1 - Maps of the Antrim Estate, Cary barony, 1734

<u>Townland</u>	<u>Tenant</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>English measure</u>
Cregfadd	Neile McNeile	Arable & meadow	108 2 4
		Mixed pasture & rocky	26 2 35
		Heathy pasture in dispute with Doomacatter	
Coolrasheskan	John McNeile	Arable & pasture	322 3 23
Lissballynagroaghmore	John McNeile	Arable & pasture	126 1 15
		Mixed pasture	59 3 29
		Turf bog in dispute	4 0 7
Dowey	Charles McNeile	Arable & pasture	101 3 2
		Conny Warren partly as the former	87 1 34

**Grand Jury Records***Grand Jury Presentment Book for County Antrim, 1711-21*

12 Jan. 1714-5 - Jury at Ballymena included Neale MacNeile gent.

c.1715 - £4 given to Neale McNeile and John Miller for erecting a new bridge on the Farting [sic] born

c.1716 - £10 given to Loughlin McNeale and John Donaldson for repairing road between Cushendun and Glenarm

c.1716 - £20 given to Laughlin MacNeale to repair mountain road between Red Bay and Clogh

c.1717 - £20 given to Captain Malcolm McNeill for 'his extraordinary service in apprehending and bringing to justice' Laughlin McQuoy and Patrick Hoddy Offerrelly, both tories.

c.1717 - £5 given to Captain Malcom McNeil for capturing 'Silvester alia Silester? McMahan, who was executed at Dundalk

1717 - Laughlin McNaill and Cornelius O'Cain had been paid £60 for building a bridge which collapsed. Called before jury to explain how they had spent the money.

c.1716 - Neale McNeale, high constable of Dunluce

c.1719 - £10 given to Captain Malcom McNeale for capturing Gregory Burns, a tory

7 April 1720 - John McNeale present in jury assembled in Carrickfergus

28 April 1720 - Archibald McNeale present in jury assembled in Carrickfergus

*Grand Jury Presentment Book for County Antrim, 1727-c.1738*

11 Jan. 1728 - Jury in Antrim included Daniell McNeill

c.1728 - 5s given to Malcum McNeill of Dunseverick for killing an otter

13 April 1728 - Antrim jury included Laughlin McNeall, gentleman

23 July 1728 - Antrim jury included Hector McNeill Esquire, and John McNeill, gentleman

c.1733 - £20 awarded to Hector McNeill, High Sheriff of Antrim and ED Wilson for repair work on the gaol

c.1734 - £60 given to Hector McNeill for transporting various individuals to America

1734 - £2 given to Neale McNeale to repair bridge at Cushendun

1734 - £3 given to Neale McNeale for building a wall at Altmore bridge on road from Cushendun to Ballycastle

1734 - £3 given to Hector McNeal for transporting James McCay to Armagh

c.1736 - £10 given to Neale McNeale for his 'extraordinary good service' in capturing Henry Duff McAuley, a 'notorious robber'

14 July 1737 - Jury at Carrickfergus included Archibald McNeill

6 Oct. 1737 - Jury in Antrim included John and Robert McNeile

### **Protestant Householders, 1740**

Ramoan parish - John McNeal, Patrick McNeal

Culfeightrin parish - Widow McNeal x 2

Ballintoy parish - Widow McNeal, John McNeal x 3

Neal McNeal, Laughlin McNeal

### **Wills and Administration Bonds**

Index to Connor Wills

William McNeal, Ballymoney, 1745

John McNeale, Ballymoney, 1683

Laughlin McNeale, Rasharkin, 1721

Daniel McNeall, Billy, 1667

John McNeall, Drumaul, 1715

Laughlin McNeall, Culfeightron, 1732

Revd Archibald McNeile, Billy, 1718

Jane McNeile, Billy, 1730

Robert McNeile, Ballintoy, 1726

Index to Connor Administration Bonds

Hector McNeall, Ahoghill, 1717

John McNeill, Billy, 1720

Hector McNeill, Billy, 1723

Capt. Neill McNeill, Rasharkin, 1723

Archibald McNeill, Billy, 1724  
Daniel McNeile, Billy, 1729  
Hector McNeill, Brochshane, 1736  
Robert McNeill, Teckmacrean, 1738  
Mary McNeill, Ramoan, 1738  
Charles McNeill, Brughanlea, 1739  
Neill McNeill, Ramoan, 1741  
Penelope McNeill, Drumawillin, 1742  
John McNiel, Gort, 1745  
Index to Prerogative Wills  
Sarah McNeale, Caleresaken, 1743  
Neil McNeil, Belfast, 1738

#### **Personal Names Index, PRONI**

Archd McNeal, 1676 & 1680, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
Dan. McNeal, 1677-8, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
Crissal McNeal, 1678, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
John McNeal, 1677, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
John McNeal, 1678, Dervock?, Co Antrim, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
Lieut. McNeal, 1677-8, Rowan Acct Bk - T796  
Malcum McNeal, 1738, Rathlin Island - D/354/100  
Neal McNeal, 1640, lease - D/265/80 (Antrim Deeds)  
Robt McNeal, 1677, Rowan Acct Bk, T/796  
Archd McNeale, 1684, lease - D/265/125 (Antrim Deeds)  
Donel McNeale, 1663, Antrim JP - T/780  
Neale McNeale, pre-1716, freeman of Carrickfergus - D/162  
Nola og McNeale, 1679, Rowan Acct Bk - T/796  
Daniel McNeall, 1739, lease - D/265/264 (Antrim Deeds)

Hector McNeill, 1684, lease - D/265/124 (Antrim Deeds)

John McNeill, 1673, lease - D/265/95 (Antrim Deeds)

Robt McNeill, pre-1716, freeman of Carrickfergus - D/162

McNeile family pedigree, 1612-1885 - T2366/20

Archd family pedigree, 1612-1885 - T/2366/20

Neal McNeile, 1738, lease - D265/256-7 (Antrim Deeds)

Robert McNeile, 1683, Carrickfergus - T/707

McNeill, 1738, Tullynacroy - D342/12

McNeill family, Cushendun etc - T/1071

Alex. McNeill, 1637, lease - D265/5 (Antrim Deeds)

### **Hearth Money Roll, Co Antrim, 1669**

Parish of Billy:	Ballylaght - Andrew McNile
	Crankerke - Daniell McNeale, Wm McNeale
	Clogher - Arch McNeale
	Ardwagher - Widdy McNeale, Neale McNeale
	ffeghcowne - John McNeale
	Croghbeg - John McNeale
Parish of Ramoan:	Ballylig - Daniell Bane McNeale, Daniell McNeale
	Corwelly - Daniell McNeale
	Acklack - Ector McNeale
	Claircastle - Lt McNeale (2 hearths)
Parish of Culfeightrin:	Creevagh - Widdow McNeale
	Ballytryn - Widdow McNeale
	Turmore - Daniell McNeale
	Laghadaghtowne - Ector McNeale
Parish of Armoy:	Moninagloy - John McNeile, Dan McNeale
	Ballyny - John McNeale

Parish of Belfast:	Archbold McNeale
Parish of Carnmoney:	Carnmoney - John McNeale (2 hearths)
Ballymoney parish and town -	John McNeale (2 hearths), Daniell McNeale, Peter McNeale
Parish of Loughguile:	Ballybregack and Maganer - Daniell McNeale
Parish of Kilraghts:	Makererowne - Hector McNeale
Parish of Billy (part of)	Tobbenoory - Daniell McNeale (2 hearths)
	Maherintamy - Daniell McNeale
	Carnanmore - ffergus McNeale
	Ballyloghbeg - John McNeale
Parish of Ballyrashane:	Hector McNeale (one hearth and a forge)
Parish of Derrykeighan:	Ballyginity - Neale McNeale
	Ballavafagan - Gary McNeile
Parish of Rasharkin:	Ballyculmore - John McNeale
Parish of Drummaul:	Ballygraby - Turl McNeile
	Gortcarne - Aghin McNeile
Parish of Duneane:	Cargin - Lochlin McNeile
Parish of Portglenone:	ffinkillough - James McNeile
Barony of Toome:	Ballymenock - James McNeale
Parish of Tickmacrean:	Glencay - John McNeile, Neile oge McNeile
	Mogley - Don McNeile
Parish of Layd:	Waperclogh - Aghan McNeill

### **Miscellaneous**

High Sheriff, Co Antrim - D/302/1

1733 - Hector McNeill of Raghey

### **Registry of Deeds**

Names Index - MIC 7/16 (covering 1708-c.1740)

<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Vol.</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Number</u>
McNeale	Archibald Southwell	15	163	7064
	Archibald Stewart	26	340	15646
	Archibald Ward	54	9	34670
	Daniel Goola	6	352	2253
	Daniel Cooke	7	219	2254
	Daniel Mills	18	255	8984
	Daniel Montgomery	43	137	2766
	Daniel Allen	61	210	41319
	Elizabeth McNeile	6	224	1988
	Mary McNeile	6	224	1988
	Malcolm McNeile	51	481	34428
	Rochfort Gunning	7	312	2507
	Mary McNeile	6	224	1988
	Malcolm McNeile	51	481	34428
	Rochfort Gunning	7	312	2507
McNeill	Archibald Martyn	26	427	16001
	Neile McNeile	18	35	8259
	Neile Hodgkinson	31	222	18830
	Neile McCartney	35	121	21374
McNeale	Bay Neale? ?	96	13	21374
	Christopher ?	97	197	66170
	Daniel Proctor	63	299	43638
	Daniel ?	65	452	43638
	Hector Kenny	70	259	48284
	Henry Elwood	72	421	51354
	John Bacon	74	452	52036
	John Cathcart	86	39	59192

	Malcolm	McNeale	87	513	62880
	Malcolm	Sinson	89	213	62880
	Malcolm	Reilly	90	469	65683
	Malcolm	Kennan	97	197	67937
	Malcolm	Walls	98	145	67938
McNeale	Malcolm	Reilly	99	416	69834
	Malcolm	Reilly	100	290	70519
	Malcolm	Kennedy	102	332	71012
	Malcolm	Maginnis	102	474	71886
	Malcolm	McNeale	87	412	62391
McNeill	Archibald	McNeill	84	60	37969
	Archibald	Harrison	87	371	62174
	Archibald	Stewart	102	328	70985
	Archibald	Stewart	101	402	71994
	Daniel	McNeill	70	106	47532
	Daniel	McNeill	68	450	48914
	Daniel	McNeill	69	399	48915
	Daniel	McNeill	68	451	48916
	Elizabeth	Dixie	95	273	56405
	Hector	Close	75	189	5250
	John	Close	70	106	47532
	John	Close	68	450	48913
	John	Close	68	550	48914
	John	Close	69	399	48915
	Laughlen	Close	70	106	47532
	Laughlen	McNeill	68	450	48913
	Laughlen	McNeill	69	399	48915
	Laughlen	McNeill	68	451	48916

Margaret	Dixie	95	273	66468
Neill	McNeill	74	240	50944
Neill	McNeill	77	252	53579
Parke	Ogle	66	195	45786

### **Journal of the Association of the Preservation of Memorials to the Dead in Ireland**

Vol i, p.125 - Church plate in Culfeightrin parish includes a poten inscribed as follows: 'This server, chalice and flagon given to ye Church of Culfeightrin by Mr Charles McNeill, the 1st landwaiter of Ballycastle, Octr ye 25: 1728'

Vol i, p.132 - Church plate in Rathlin parish includes a chalice inscribed as follows: 'Given by Mr Charles McNeale ye 14 of ffebry 1719'

Vol i, p.283 - Stone set into north wall separating new and old churchyards in Billy parish - 'Prope hic jacet corpus Reverendi/Archibaldi McNeile, Evengeli praeco/nis una cum

Uxore patre avo et/phurimus alus consanguineis/qui obut 4 to die 7 bris 1718

### **Clergy of the Diocese of Connor**

Archibald McNeale, rector of Ballintoy, 1679

Daniel (or Donald) McNeale, vicar of Ramoan, Culfeightrin and Loughguile, 1661; vicar of Billy, 1664; vicar of Armoy, 1679

Hector McNeale, curate of Carnmoney, 1679, curate of Skerry and Racavan, and curate of Coleraine, 1732

John McNeale, vicar of Donegore and vicar of Templepatrick, 1664; vicar of Layde, 1666; vicar of Carnmoney 1668-78

Robert McNeale, vicar of Emigall and Killead, 1631

### **Books consulted**

A history of the Church of Ireland in Ramoan parish, H A Boyd

North Antrim Families, T J G Bennett

Families of Ballyrashane, T H Mullin

Coleraine in Bygone Centuries, T H Mullin

Antrim and the McNeills, R McNeill

Journal of the Association for the Preservation of Memorials of the Dead in Ireland

**Copies of parish and townland maps and certificates together with background histories of the localities plus explanatory notes on the sources used are provided with each bound report where appropriate.**