

FINDING TWO-BOATER PATRICK DAY

By Claire Smith

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When I first starting my genealogy journey in 2001, I was curious to find out more about my great grandmother, Jennie Day. My dad told me that she'd come from Nova Scotia to Boston, Massachusetts where she married Frank Smith in 1894.

There have been many false leads in my research journey, so I was excited when my cousin Joan sent me a certified marriage record which included the names of the bride's parents, John and Annie. Success! I could move on to the next generation.

Tip: Errors can be made when a record is transcribed.

It took me a while but by tracking down the original record, I found out that Jennie's father was actually Patrick, not John, Day. Try googling "Patrick Day" and you'll understand how this made my research a lot more challenging!

I couldn't find any record showing Jennie living with her family. Did you know that Jennie is a nickname for Mary Jane? I eventually found Mary Jane's birth record by ordering a microfilm of Nova Scotia births from the Family History Library. I also found out that Jennie liked to lie about her age. While everyone else aged ten years between censuses, Jennie aged less, sometimes 8 years or as few as 5 years. My dad told me that Jennie didn't practice any religion either.

Jennie's parents, Patrick and Annie, were both born in Guysborough, Nova Scotia. Patrick Day was the youngest of ten children and worked as a farmer. Life was hard and some of his children, including Jennie, moved to Massachusetts, pursuing opportunities for better lives.

A trip to Guysborough in 2003 and a visit to the historical society there gave me access to the 1838 and 1871 census records, long before they were available online. The 1871 census showed Jennie's father, Patrick Day and his entire family. Now I had a list of Jennie's siblings to research.

Tip: Always research your collateral ancestors, not just your direct line. That's often



JENNIE DAY

how we break brick walls. The record for a sibling may list that critical piece of information.

The 1871 Canada census also lists religion, a vital clue. I was surprised to find that the Days were Catholic, especially since Jennie was clear that she didn't practice any religion.

I didn't know yet who Patrick's father was, but the 1838 census, listing only the head of household, showed only one Day family in Guysborough township, headed up by another Patrick, likely his father since this was the only Day household in town. There were two more Days in the county, both named John.

Before returning to Seattle, we stopped at the Guysborough Registry of Deeds where I got a copy of Patrick Day Sr.'s will. It showed the names of his children, including a Patrick. So, it looked like I had a strong candidate for Patrick's father and Jennie's grandparents, Patrick and Mary Day. I was able to confirm this relationship with other records later.

Who were Patrick and Mary Day of Guysborough? They were a mystery for a very long time. They didn't leave a lot of records but eventually I had enough to put a lot of the pieces together.

Nova Scotia didn't start recording vital events until 1864 so I had to rely on other records. I made an appointment with the priest at the local Catholic church, St. Ann's in Guysborough, but he didn't show up and we flew back to Seattle the next day.

I ordered all of the records I could from home but couldn't find any sign of a marriage record for Patrick and Mary or a death record for Patrick, both potential sources for names of parents and birthplaces.

Mary Day, a widow, died in 1867 at the age of 70. So, I know that Patrick died after he wrote his will in 1864 and before Mary's death in 1867. Her death record listed her birthplace as "Kilkinney." That sounds a lot like Kilkenny, a county in southeast Ireland. The Days lived in Salmon River, which was an Irish settlement in Guysborough so that fits. Was Patrick Irish too?

I investigated Guysborough too and built a comprehensive list of resources.

Tip: It's always a good idea to build a resource guide for a new place you're researching and update it whenever you find something new.

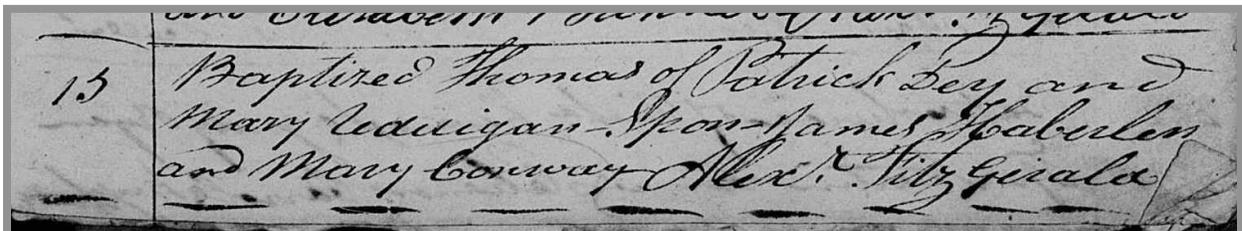
My Day research went into hibernation for a long time. I'd check for new Nova Scotia records periodically, and sometimes glean new information. Several years ago, St.

Ann's transcribed their parish registers and put them online. I didn't find a burial record for Patrick Day, so he's apparently not buried with his wife. I was able to find the baptism records for Patrick and Mary's children, who were born in Guysborough, matching them up with some of the children named in Patrick's will. I took another crack at tracking down Mary's maiden name too. That's a story for another time though.

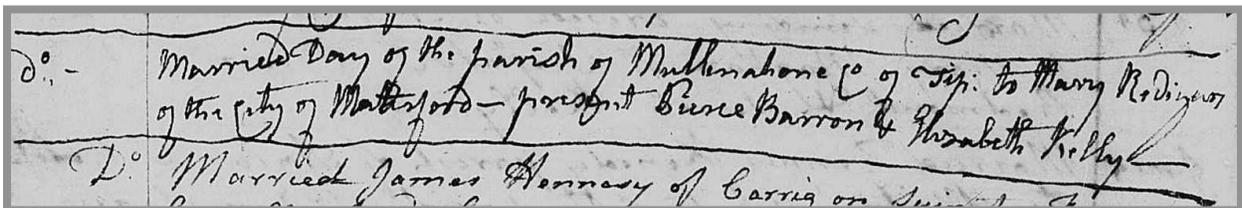
Patrick remained a mystery though until I started researching another ancestor in Newfoundland after the church records had been imaged and became available online. I had a vague recollection of someone else from there and finally remembered that Patrick Day Sr.'s two eldest sons listed Newfoundland as their birthplace in the 1871 census.

Tip: Research the children after their parent's deaths. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have known to look in Newfoundland.

The Newfoundland records were not indexed, and some were difficult to read, but I spent several weeks digging through them, recording, and saving the records I found. I eventually located the 1821 baptism record for Thomas, son of Patrick Day and Mary Reddigan, at the Catholic Basilica of St. John the Baptist in Newfoundland.



I also found an 1814 marriage record for an unnamed Day and Marry Reddigan. Could this be my Patrick? Yes, the bride's name matches the baptism record for Thomas. The groom's last place of residence is Mullinahone, County Tipperary, Ireland and the bride's Waterford City, not Kilkenny. I checked a map and saw that Waterford City is just across the river bordering County Kilkenny which correlates with her death record.



Since then, I've visited the Newfoundland Archives and examined the rest of baptism

records for Patrick and Mary's other children born in Newfoundland, Catherine, James, and Mary. The names match some of the children in Patrick's 1864 will in Guysborough, tying the Nova Scotia records to the Newfoundland records, proof that it is the same family.

There was a second marriage record that I found for a John Day, also from Mullinahone Tipperary, in Newfoundland. Mullinahone is both a townland of less than a square mile and a Roman Catholic parish, either way a tiny place. It can't be a coincidence that both Patrick and John Day both came from there to Newfoundland and married in successive years.

John moved from Newfoundland to Guysborough, Nova Scotia too, just a few years after Patrick did. I was able to find a death record for John, listing the name of his parents, Thomas and Catharine. Could John and Patrick Day be brothers? If so, those could be Patrick's parents too. Surely, they're closely related, cousins if not brothers.

So, here is Patrick's story, at last. He emigrated from Ireland and settled in Newfoundland, before 1814, when he married Mary Reddigan at the Roman Catholic Basilica at the Church of St. John the Baptist in St. John's, the capital. He probably worked in the cod fisheries, the prevalent industry there.

Patrick and Mary were probably part of the large influx of immigrants from southeast Ireland who arrived in Atlantic Canada in Newfoundland during the late 1700s and early 1800s. Many settled in one place for a few years and moved on to another province or to the United States and were sometimes called "two-boat Irish."

Newfoundland, a British colony, recruited Irish from the port of Waterford as cheap reliable labor for the cod fisheries. It started as seasonal labor and transitioned to permanent settlements, with the men working at the fisheries marrying the Irish women brought over as servants.

Patrick and Mary stayed in Newfoundland, having their first four children there, until the early 1820s when they moved to Guysborough, Nova Scotia and had at least five more children. Patrick became a farmer and was able to buy land. They both lived there for the rest of their lives.

I learned a lot exploring Jennie Day's ancestry. Researching Patrick Day's children, not just my direct ancestor, was critical in finding out where he came from. Looking at records after his death led me to his marriage record. Researching the history of the places he lived and the people who lived there gave me a view into his life that I wouldn't have seen just by looking at records.

This has been an ongoing research project since 2003 and there's still more to do to continue telling Patrick and Mary's story.