

# **Family histories and geographies: interrelationships between genealogy and geography**

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## Abstract

The basis of this paper is that family history and geography are fundamentally interrelated and that geography can benefit from association with the rapidly expanding field of genealogy. A number of influences has contributed to the huge growth in family history research and it has been facilitated in particular by the internet. Geography is vital to genealogy in part because of the use of maps and administrative areas but especially because of the critical importance of places. The links are beginning to be recognised in geography. Two areas in which genealogy and geography are associated, migration and tourism, are discussed. In these sections and elsewhere in the paper reference is made to the Irish situation.

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## Introduction

Family history has undergone phenomenal growth in recent times to become one of the major leisure-time activities. There are important geographical dimensions to family history and those engaged in it can benefit considerably from geography. Conversely geography has the potential to benefit substantially from associating with and contributing to the popular and fast-growing field of family study and research. This includes giving attention to genealogy in geographical education. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to this by outlining the growth in genealogy and discussing the links between it and geography. This provides a background and justification for including some genealogy in geographic education and research.

The terminology in this field of study is not precise or used uniformly, leading to some confusion (FitzHugh 1998). As narrowly defined, genealogy deals with the descent of a person or family through an ancestral line, involving the relationships between generations within a family. It is concerned in particular with the records of births, marriages and deaths. These enable the compilation of family trees, the traditional diagrammatic method of summarising and displaying the pattern of descent. There are now many software packages to facilitate their compilation. Family history is broader than the narrow definition of genealogy, attempting in a sense to put flesh on the bare bones. This can include the occupations, education, religions and other personal characteristics of family members and the lives they lived, including consideration of the socioeconomic, cultural, political and environmental contexts of the family at different times. Thus family history is much more geographical than a narrow genealogy would be. Even in professional usage, however, the distinction between genealogy and family history has tended to lessen

and no clear difference between them exists in the general popular perception. For this reason and for practicality, the terms genealogy and family history are taken in this paper as being synonymous and interchangeable.

## Growth of interest in genealogy

People's curiosity about their forebears is natural and long-established. Compiling genealogical lines goes back to early Chinese and Biblical times (Herber, 2004, xvi). Knowledge about ancestors, though generally limited to a few generations, was often part of oral family history. More systematic genealogy, however, tended to be limited to the higher levels of society, especially the landed aristocracy, or to people with ambitions to attain those levels (Fowler 2001). Family trees were often compiled in search of inheritances, property rights, privileges, prestigious forebears, aristocratic pedigrees, peerages, etc. Genealogy has also been used in furtherance of notions of racial and ethnic exclusivity and superiority, as it has been under nationalism. Misuse of genealogical information, spurious claims, fictional family trees and fanciful accounts occurred. This was the dark side of genealogy and, while it has largely ceased, its tarnishing of the reputation of family history was slow to dissipate. Probate genealogy, which involves the tracing of inheritance entitlements, is generally a legitimate branch of professional genealogy, as it was in the RTE television series *Dead Money?*.

There has been an extraordinary growth in the study of family history and a great broadening to a wide sector of society. Genealogy has become one of the most popular leisure pursuits. This explosion of interest may be attributed in part to searches for roots and identity in a rapidly changing, mobile and more impersonal world; people seeking explanations for 'who they are' and 'from where they have come'. The appeal of the detective work involved and piecing together of the jigsaw, the excitement of discovery and the ultimate rewards are major incentives to research. There may be feelings of obligations to research the family and to assemble information to pass on to future generations. For individuals, events such as the death of an elderly relative, the birth of a baby and the discovery of old photographs or a family bible may provide the stimulus. The greatly increased number of retirees with the time, education, resources and interest necessary for family history research contributes substantially (Drake, 1994, 1). This applies, however, to younger age groups also.

The ability to do family history research has been aided greatly by the numbers of books, of courses and conferences, and of local, regional and national societies dealing with genealogy (Hey 2002, 1). Local libraries have had an important role in facilitation. The growing number of professional genealogists has contributed by doing research for some people who do not undertake it themselves for reasons such as inadequate time, expertise or inclination and for those distant from sources of records. They have contributed to events such as the genealogical section *Back To Our Past* with stands and lectures added in 2010 and 2011 to the 'Over 50's Show' at the RDS in Dublin and these events have promoted interest in genealogy. There is an Irish section at the annual 'Who Do You Think You Are? Live' in London, the largest genealogical event in the world.

Fundamental to the expansion of genealogy has been the extent to which access to an increasing volume of records has been made possible by record offices, libraries and religious organisations. Sometimes there are expert staff to give genealogical assistance, as in the National Library of Ireland, where there is a much-used Genealogical Advisory Service, and in the National Archives of Ireland. The removal of restrictions on access to Roman Catholic parish records by the National Library of Ireland completed in 2008 was an important facilitator. Access to many Church of Ireland parish records is available at its library in Dublin. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), based on its belief in posthumous proxy baptism and eternal reunited families, has played a huge role through collecting, storing and providing access to the largest assemblage of genealogical records in the world and in developing websites and research aids. It has Family History Centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, Derry and Coleraine.

Access to records in Ireland was promoted officially by the Irish Genealogical Project initiated in 1988 but with subsequent delays and other difficulties (Tunney 1990, Gergelyova *et al* 2008, 26). It involved the cooperation of public sector agencies, family history organisations and local groups in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Now under the direction of the Irish Family History Foundation [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie), a network of county heritage or genealogical research centres throughout the island computerise records, provide assistance and do research for individuals on a fee basis.

Both contributing hugely to and reflecting the explosion of interest in genealogy in recent decades have been modern communications, especially the internet and the media. Through digital resources and search mechanisms, the internet has revolutionised family history research and this is one of the main uses of the internet. It has hugely facilitated the search of records by providing much easier access to them for people in their homes and their local libraries, with an ever increasing volume of records being put online. The impact of this is indicated by the fact that the 1901 and 1911 censuses website of the National Archives of Ireland had 13.3 million visits (involving 655 million hits) from when the records began to come online in December 2007 until the end of 2011, though the proportion of these that were genealogical searches is not known. Access to these census data prompted the initiation of an interest in their family history for many people. The availability online of other important records such as the Griffith Valuation and the Tithe Applotment Books has attracted much less attention but nonetheless also contributed to interest; these two sources relating to property are of particular significance because of the almost total absence of census records for the nineteenth century in Ireland. There is now a vast number of websites of organisations and private individuals providing access to records and assisting with genealogical research free or on a fee or membership basis (Christian 2009, Crowe 2011, Paton 2011). Examples of major free websites are [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org), [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com), [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com) and [www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk) and the largest subscription website is [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). Mailing lists, message boards and other internet means of exchanging information are widely used in family history research, there being a high level of cooperation amongst the amateur 'genealogical community'. Many family searches would not be possible without modern communications, a personal example being described in Gillmor (2012). The internet has increased greatly the relevance of genealogy to geographical education and research.

The publication of Haley's (1976) *Roots: the saga of an American family* and its television adaptation in 1977 were major stimuli to family history interest, extending beyond Afro-Americans and the USA. The impact of the media has been greatest through the 'Who Do You Think You Are?' television series broadcast in a number of countries and with large viewerships. The British and American series were shown in Ireland and an Irish version was produced. Programmes such as 'Where Was Your Family During The Famine' (RTE), The Genealogy Roadshow (RTE) and 'Are You Related To An American President?' (BBC Northern Ireland) also had an impact. The media coverage of U.S. President Barack Obama's Irish ancestry attracted much attention. Press treatment of genealogy included the publication of a special supplement of the *Irish Independent* (2011) at the time of the 2011 Census, with the generated demand leading to reprintings. There is a weekly column Irish Roots by Grenham in *The Irish Times*. The level of interest within family history in Ireland now contrasts with the past when it had been associated in the public mind mainly with Americans coming to trace their roots. Data compiled by the National Library of Ireland Genealogy Advisory Service for the period June-December 2011 show that residents of all Ireland comprised 54% of the total 10,139 users, the other sources being USA 21%, UK 14%, Australia 6% and others 5%.

Obviously there are also many people with little or no interest in family history. Some are deterred from engaging in research for fear of finding 'skeletons in the cupboard'. Conversely others relish such finds as adding interest and drama to their search. Also attitudes can change over time, as in Australian convict ancestry perceptions evolving from stigma to honour. To find what happened to forebears or how they lived can be disturbing for some people.

## Administrative areas and maps

Genealogy makes much use of administrative and other spatial units and of information collected, recorded and published for these. Thus it is necessary to be familiar with these units and with changes over time in them and their boundaries, and preferably to have maps of them. The county is the basic unit for much information in Ireland and knowing the county of residence can be the starting point for tracing a family's history. Books on Irish genealogy may list sources by county, as did Ryan (1997, 47-605) and Grenham (2012, 191-557). The heritage and research centres, established under the Irish Genealogical Project, are on a county basis. Other relevant former and current areas that are encountered in genealogical research include baronies, poor law unions, district electoral divisions, parishes and townlands. The significance of these to genealogy is indicated by the publication of an atlas showing them (Mitchell 2002). The familiarity necessary to deal with these areas and their data is essentially geographical knowledge.

Maps other than those of administrative areas are also important tools for the genealogist (United States Geological Survey 2006). This is evident in relation to land holdings, for example, as in the online Ordnance Survey maps associated with the Griffith Valuation and on which holdings are delimited. Study of maps of the area in which ancestors lived can help understanding and appreciation of their daily lives, including the streets they frequented, the schools and churches they attended, the

towns and villages where they shopped and the transport routes at that time. The Ordnance Survey six inch maps may be particularly useful in understanding the local spatial context. It may be possible even to identify the residences of ancestors, especially if they lived in larger properties. The use of maps and geography by genealogists has increased greatly with more appreciation of their value in research, the growing need to track the mobility of people and the availability of Google Maps, digital historical maps and other online resources. Ancestral Atlas [www.ancestralatlas.com](http://www.ancestralatlas.com) is a map-based genealogy site using maps as a basis to search for family links.

The significance of administrative areas and of maps in genealogy has led some to use the term 'geo-genealogy'. Under this heading, Mann (2006) stated that "Geography can be a genealogist's best friend". He pointed out that understanding jurisdictions assists the location of records and directions of research. Another use of the term geo-genealogy was in the title of a map of Irish surnames (Field and Beale 2009). Lambie (2000) used the term 'genealogical geography' in the title of his paper dealing with the complexities of area units and how map and geography librarians can serve the needs of genealogical researchers. Maps, geography and genealogy are linked in the RootsWeb site Ireland's History in Maps: History + Geography + Genealogy (Walsh 2009).

Maps and genealogy are associated in the study of human migration and settlement patterns. In order to trace global movements, the National Geographic Society has developed its Genographic Project using DNA sampling of small indigenous populations combined with DNA donations from people who are researching their own genealogies and seeking distant relatives in this way. Cavalli-Sforza *et al* (1994), using a huge number of maps, had shown how genetics and geography are interlinked. In 2000 the Royal Irish Academy launched a research campaign Irish Origins: the Genetic History and Geography of Ireland. Genetic mapping of Ireland is demonstrating the great potential it has to contribute to better understanding of genealogy and of settlement geographies (Adolph 2007, 186-188). The Irish DNA Atlas Project was launched by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and the Genealogical Society of Ireland in October 2011, combining population study and medical objectives. The practical medical contribution of genealogy relates to knowing about medical conditions that run in families as an aid to understanding the health of current members. Thus in 2011 the U.S. Surgeon General declared Thanksgiving to be National Family History Day to encourage discussion and the compilation of family health histories.

## The importance of place

That place is important in genealogy goes far beyond administrative areas and maps and the fact that researching family history varies by where it is being done and to where it relates, as between different countries, between the old and new worlds, between developing and developed worlds, etc. As genealogist Smith (2011) wrote, "I was reminded of the need to be familiar with the geography of the places we're researching." and "Learning about the places where your ancestor lived is an important part of your family story". In the Irish context, Smith (2001, xv) stated that geography has always been a significant aspect of genealogical concerns. It is not

only the history of a family that is significant but also the geography of the family; they are inextricably linked, with the family extending over both time and space. Genealogy can be viewed as a narrative of family and place (Meethan 2006). The RootsWeb site enables people who are researching the same geographical area to communicate with one another, reflecting the significance of place. An Irish example is the series of books on genealogy in thirty-three towns in the Republic of Ireland, the most recent by their author being on Tipperary Town (Farrell 2007). The significance of place in genealogy is suggested by the subtitle and the many pictures of places in *Tracing your roots: locating your ancestors through landscape and history* (Wheeler 1996). The present geography of the family is one of the important matters to determine in the initial stages of researching a family's history and historical geography.

The history and historical geography of the family interact with and inform one another. Where ancestors lived will have influenced their opportunities, occupations, spouses and many other aspects of their lives. Knowing the physical, economic, social and cultural environments in which forebears lived greatly informs interest in and understanding of their lives. This is essentially their historical geography and it enables study of the family's genealogy to go beyond the listing of names and dates of births, marriages and deaths. It promotes study of the conditions pertaining in the area at the time when ancestors lived, as was encouraged by Finnegan and Drake (1994) and Hey (2004). This was provided for by the National Archives of Ireland in issuing materials on the conditions of the time when putting the 1901 and 1911 censuses online. Family history has become closely associated with local and community studies, especially since the development of modern technology (Reid 2003, Blatchford 2012). Understanding the local and broader geographies of people adds new dimensions and interests to genealogy. Not only does geography benefit genealogy but, conversely, genealogical information can contribute to knowledge about the evolution of a place and hence to understanding its past and present geographies, with the potential for substantial contributions to geographical research.

One important aspect of family geography is the strong sense of place which many people have in relation to where they live, sometimes reputedly to be particularly strong amongst the Irish. It includes but is much broader than the personal and family attachment to land amongst the farming community. This emotional attachment to place reflects the varied and complex relationships between people and places (Massey and Jess 1995, Holloway and Hubbard 2001). One aspect of this in Ireland is attachment to the county of origin, reflected in the recording of the county from which the deceased came on the gravestones of many Irish immigrants in North America (Gillmor 2003, 46). The county of origin is often one of the main facts, and sometimes the only one, that descendants abroad know about their Irish ancestors. Pearce (2000) found that more than one-tenth of the inscriptions on the 10,000 gravestones in a Boston cemetery included an Irish placename, some more detailed than the county of origin. Emigrants sometimes named their new place after the one they had left in Ireland, as did the father of American President James Buchanan who called his new location in Pennsylvania Stony Batter after the place near Rathmelton, Co. Donegal where he was reared.

The sense of place can extend through generations, resulting in identification with and attachment to the places that ancestors left. One indication of this is use of the term

‘homeland’ or ‘motherland’. Basu (2001, 342) referred to both person and place being intertwined in the narrative in his exploration of the notions of home and homeland in the Scottish diaspora. This sense of place is reflected in and strengthened by travelling to experience the current physical and human geographies of where ancestors lived. This can be very meaningful and emotional for people, making them feel closer to and having a bonding with their forebears and their landscapes. It can provide contextualisation, identity, authentication and understanding for their family histories. It can be a spiritual pilgrimage experience for some, as Basu (2004) found in the Scottish Highlands. Nash (2002, 37) found that people wanted to connect themselves with a specific location within Ireland, “matching up genealogy and geography”. Seeing the schools or churches attended by forebears and their workplaces may generate feelings of closeness to their lives and finding an ancestral residence or farm is likely to be particularly significant.

Participants in the various ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ series are generally taken to places associated with their ancestors, done to access records and for visual effect and variety in television, but also it demonstrates the strong and moving impact which visiting those places has on participants. This includes also ancestral burial places, with headstones, graves and cemeteries functioning in a sense as present-day tangible connections with the ancestors’ lives and deaths. The cemetery can be a memoryscape, a reflection of homeland (Climo and Cattell 2002, 105). Instead of feeling an association with only one place, a person could have multilocational attachments to places, either to those where different ancestors lived or to those where a single migrant predecessor had resided. These places may be in different countries, especially for people with multi-ethnic backgrounds.

## Geographers and genealogy

Important as the historical geography of the family might seem to be, genealogy has attracted little attention from geographers. This is the situation even with increased significance of narrative in social sciences, the ‘cultural turn’ in geography and the later attention to more personal and emotional geographies (Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005; Smith, Davidson, Cameron and Bondi 2009). Geographer Rose (2010, 7), in her book on family photography, pointed out that the public sphere in general has become more emotional. In the increased attention given to heritage by geographers, McCarthy (2005) and in a lecture course at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology seems to be one of the few dealing with this most personal aspect of peoples’ heritage. While the reasoning of Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000, 4-5, 256, 260) as to why heritage is central to contemporary conceptualisations of geography applies also to this personal heritage, they did not include consideration of family history in their book. A unique and widely cited paper on genealogy by a cultural geographer is that by Nash (2002) based on interviews with people researching their Irish ancestry. Her book (Nash 2008) is about ancestral origins, identity and belonging with questions of connections between people and to places. Attention by geographers had been mainly in relation to genealogical tourism (Coles and Timothy 2004). That the significance of genealogy in geography has begun to be recognised is indicated by the inclusion of an article on genealogy and family history (Otterstrom 2009) in the *International encyclopedia of human geography*, stressing

that the two disciplines have much in common and that there is a natural overlap between them.

The major development in the geographical treatment of genealogy was the publication of *Geography and genealogy: locating personal pasts* (Timothy and Guelke 2008). The twofold objectives of the book were to discuss how geographical research skills can inform family history and how understanding family history can generate new insights about society amongst geographers. Because of the significance of this book and to indicate some of what can be dealt with in this combined field, greatly abbreviated chapter topics merit listing: introduction; using maps; use of GIS; environmental impact assessment; an emigrant's letters; the internet and digital archives; genealogical tourism; genealogy and genetics; genealogy and the Mormons; personal perspectives. Even as these topics may suggest, there is substantial content in the book that might be regarded as not strictly geographical by some.

## Genealogy and migration

Migration and tourism are truly geographical phenomena, involving movements of people, differences between places, spatial distributions and environmental relationships. With regard to migration, research has demonstrated that even in the past the movement of people was much greater than often had been assumed, as developed by Hey (2002, 62-109) in his book on family history. A completed Irish family tree that did not have any member that had lived outside Ireland would be a unique one. The migration of each individual person alters the current and future geographies of themselves and of their families, it impacts on genealogy. This results in a composite family historical geography made up of many different individual geographies. While the geography of a family is of major interest even if the family, or at least the narrow present surname line, has remained in the one place throughout its known history, it becomes all the more interesting in the more normal multi-locational situation where the family unit and especially individual members of the family have come from or moved to other places, even within the same city, region or country. This reflects the mobilities and connectivities of societies and it makes the family history seem in a sense even more geographical. For the genealogist, shipping records and the records of immigration centres such as Ellis Island [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) constitute links between the geographies of the places from which people came and the geographies of the places to which they were going.

The term diaspora has come to be widely applied in Ireland since used by President Mary Robinson and associated with her placing of a lighted candle in a window of Aras an Uachtaran to symbolise Ireland reaching out to and welcoming its diasporic people. In accordance with this popular usage, the term Irish diaspora is taken in this paper to relate to all those living outside the country who are either emigrants themselves or have some Irish ancestry, generally stated to total 'over 17 million' worldwide. This is a much broader and more practical application than that of Cohen (2008) who in this major work treated the Irish diaspora as being what he interpreted as forced emigration associated with the Famine. Use of the term, however, must not conceal the diversity of changing attitudes amongst members towards their Irish ancestry, as was found in Britain by Walter (2005) and occurs between what in the



USA are generally regarded as the Irish-Americans and the Scots-Irish (Leyburn 1962, Webb 2004, Meagher 2005, Lee and Casey 2006). Nash (2008) discussed the complexity and plurality of Irish origins. Furthermore many members of the Irish diaspora have mixed ethnicities from different countries and diasporic linkages with hybrid identities; yet many Americans refer to themselves as being Irish even though that component may be quite small in their genealogical makeup.

It is stated in Article 2 of the Constitution that the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage. The relationships between Ireland and the diaspora have varied over time, however, with attitudes sometimes being divergent, contradictory and ambivalent (Daly 2008). With regard to the impacts of financial contributions from overseas, remittances to relatives contrasted with the Irish-American support of violence. With the onset of the current national financial difficulties, a reinvigorated effort is being made to engage with the diaspora and to mobilise and exploit its economic potential (Jennings 2011). This has been done in a number of countries in relation to their diasporas.

A significant Irish effort began on a local community volunteer basis with the launch of the South-East Galway Diaspora Pilot Project in October 2010 in Loughrea, evolving into the Ireland Reaching Out (Ireland XO) Project ([www.irelandxo.com](http://www.irelandxo.com)). Under this project emigrants and their descendants from parishes are traced through genealogical research and letters are sent to them inviting them to an annual organised Week of Welcomes, 24-30 June 2012 being the second. Instead of waiting for the diaspora to engage with its roots, the normal process is reversed by reaching out to members, many of whom otherwise might never have made contact. While the Ireland Reaching Out Project has heritage and cultural dimensions, it is hoped that it will promote employment through tapping into entrepreneurial and tourism potential. It was extended statewide officially in March 2012.

A highlight event in relation to the diaspora was the second Global Irish Economic Forum in Farmleigh, Dublin in October 2011, attended by influential people with Irish interests, including the former US President, Bill Clinton. It was designed to explore ways in which the diaspora might contribute beneficially to the Irish situation. A particular effort is being made to engage with people of Irish descent in senior positions in the worlds of commerce and industry. Another measure was the initiation in 2011 of the Certificate of Irish Heritage, the official certificate from the Government of Ireland, available to those who can demonstrate descent from an Irish ancestor, [www.heritagecertificate.ie](http://www.heritagecertificate.ie). A major effort in relation to the diaspora is to promote genealogical tourism, as discussed in the next section. These developments are of considerable relevance to the geography of contemporary Ireland.

## Genealogy and tourism

One major way in which geography and genealogy interact and in which genealogy impacts on contemporary geography is in tourism. Travelling in search of records and other information on families and to visit the places in which ancestors lived contributes to tourism movements, both international and domestic. The intricate interrelationships between diaspora and tourism were explored in Coles and Timothy

(2004). Such travel is termed genealogical tourism in this paper but alternatives used by some are genetic travel, roots tourism, personal heritage tourism and diasporic tourism, and McCain and Ray (2003) applied the term legacy tourism in a paper in which Ireland figured prominently. Genealogical tourism is actively promoted by many state tourism organisations and there are specialist travel companies dealing with this special-interest market segment.

With the increasing amount of records becoming available online, assembly of much information can be achieved without travel but this can be more than offset by the growth of interest in genealogy promoting the combined effects of the wish to access archival material not available online and the desire to visit places associated with the family. This includes their burial places, so that cemetery tourism makes a major contribution to genealogical tourism (Deering 2010, 85-86). The areas affected most by the reception of genealogical travel are those places from which there has been much outmigration. Also there can be a much smaller reciprocal movement of people from such origin areas to explore destinations to which family members in the past migrated. Genealogical tourism has major economic impacts but, as part of the cultural economy, there are also cultural and heritage dimensions. From the tourism perspective, this can be taken to include the geography of the contemporary family and the travel of people primarily to visit relatives, distant or close.

Motivation and destination decision making in genealogical tourism are quite different from those in most tourism considered by Urry (1990) and Suvantola (2002). In relation to Ireland, geographer Lowenthal (1996, 10) wrote that “Dublin is deluged with enquiries from Sons of Erin abroad, some seeking a long-lost legacy or an heir on whom to bestow one, others just hoping to find someone who remembers Uncle Seamus”. Motivation is much broader than this and the pull of ancestral places dominates, with people wishing to experience their geographies. Descendants of emigrants refer to the general importance to them personally of experiencing the country, county and locality of their forebears, and of meeting the present inhabitants of these places. An American visiting a village in the west of Ireland told Meethan (2004, 139-140) that her motive was “to stand in the shoes of my ancestors”, a form of what he termed ‘diasporic identity’. In current genealogical tourism promotion, Failte Ireland (undated, 18) states that “The ultimate experience is to walk the ground once familiar to them, to look out on the world from their homestead and try to see it through their eyes”. However, while Rains (2003) discussed Irish-American diasporic images of Ireland, there has been little or no treatment of genealogical aspects in even recent works on Irish tourism and imagery, such as Clancy (2009).

Genealogy is a significant part of Ireland’s heritage tourism industry (McCarthy, 2005, 40-41, Gergelyova *et al* 2008). The mean annual numbers of overseas visitors who gave genealogical activity as their principal reason for coming to Ireland over two five-year periods were 91,000 in 1996-2000 and 99,000 in 2006-2010. In 2010, 50% were from North America, 25% from Great Britain, 9% from mainland Europe and 17% from elsewhere. In addition, it is certain that substantial numbers participated in genealogical activity but had recorded visiting friends and relatives, holiday, sport, business, etc. as the principal purpose of their visit. There is a significant number of clan gatherings and family reunions each year. Genealogical visits to the places which emigrants left tend to be more dispersed and less concentrated on the major tourist destinations than is other tourism.

Irish state tourism organisations have done some promotion of genealogical tourism since the 1950s targeting the diaspora. This includes the production of pamphlets to encourage and assist those researching family history. Tourism development was the major incentive for the establishment of the Irish Genealogical Project. The Gathering Ireland 2013, referred to as the biggest tourism initiative staged in Ireland, is aimed to attract 300,000 extra diasporic visitors. It is to involve a year-long programme of festivals and other events by public bodies and local organisations, communities and families, with substantial overseas promotion. Homecomings were held in Wales in 2000 and in Scotland in 2009.

## Conclusion

It has been contended in this paper that genealogy is highly geographical, with geography and family history intersecting. The interrelationships have increased with the huge growth in genealogy in response to changes in society and technology. The associations derive substantially from the use of maps and administrative areas in genealogy and the vital importance of place in family history. Migration and tourism are two areas of geographical interest to which genealogy is relevant. For these reasons and to benefit geography, it is proposed that some considerations of genealogy should be included in geographical education and this is being treated in an associated paper in preparation.

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