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Seventeenth-Century Founders of the Quaker Neill Kindred of Lurgan Meeting in County Armagh, Ireland

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Introduction

This paper reexamines the origins of the Neill families associated with the Lurgan Quaker Meeting in seventeenth-century Ulster. Quaker records, deeds, genealogies, oral traditions, and Y-DNA and autosomal DNA evidence demonstrate that individuals later remembered as members of a single biological family actually represented several distinct paternal lineages. The traditional genealogy of the Lurgan Neills is therefore incorrect in important respects: some of its documented lines of descent combine families that were socially related but not descended through the same paternal line.

These discrepancies should not be understood simply as errors in oral tradition or genealogy. DNA research is increasingly revealing that historical family identities could reflect social relationships as well as biological descent.ⁱ The collapse of the Gaelic political order after 1603, followed by the Ulster Plantation, warfare, migration and continuing social insecurity, disrupted established communities and created new relationships among both native Irish and planter populations. Within this setting, marriage, migration, economic association, and participation in the close-knit Religious Society of Friends may have encouraged distinct Neill families to present themselves—and eventually to understand themselves—as members of a broader kindred. Their shared social and spiritual identity was later incorporated into a traditional genealogy that traced several origins to John Neill, or O'Neill, of Lurgan Meeting.

The evidence examined here provides a framework for reconstructing the origins of this extended Neill kindred and for reconciling its traditional genealogy with the genetic evidence of modern descendants. Part I discusses four founding lineages identified through DNA testing and the documentary record. Part II presents these relationships visually through charts and figures, together with supporting DNA evidence. Further Y-DNA and autosomal DNA research will be necessary to connect additional genealogical lines

with their appropriate founding lineages and to refine our understanding of how the Neill kindred developed.

Part I : Founders

Figure 1. Traditional genealogy of Lurgan Meeting Quakers

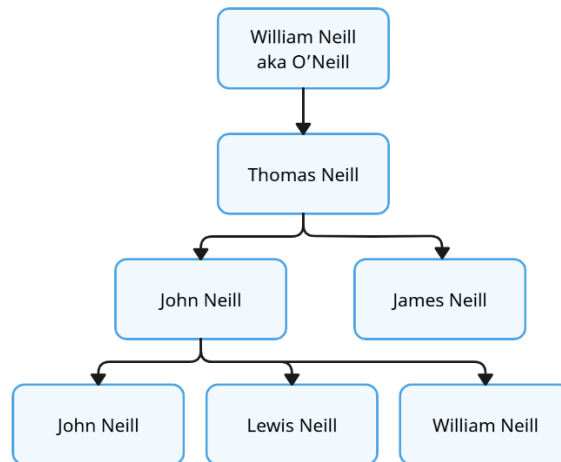
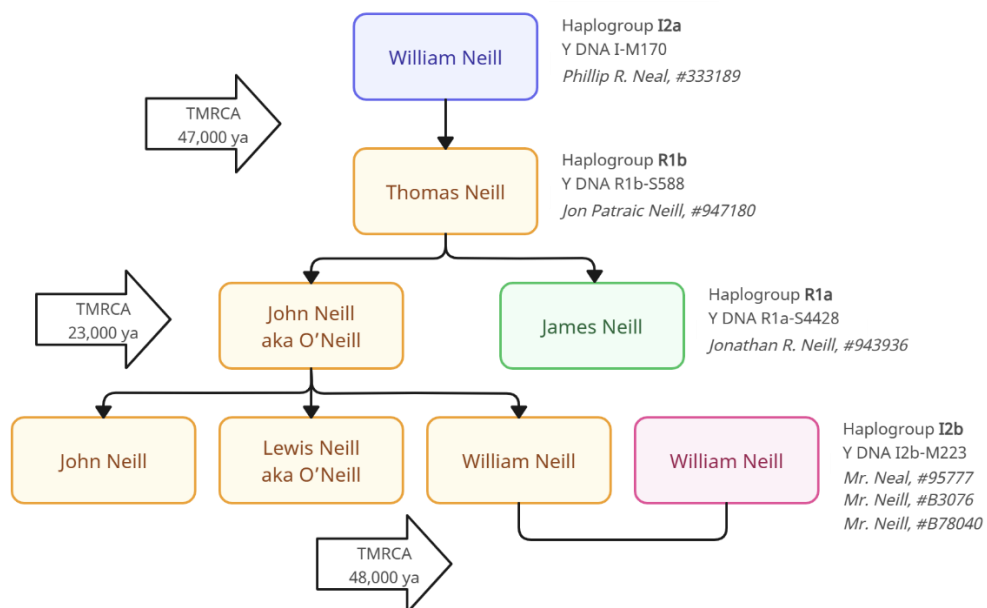


Figure 2. Traditional genealogy of Lurgan Meeting Quakers, with Y DNA juxtaposition



Traditional genealogies of Neill members of the Quaker Meeting at Lurgan, co. Armagh, shown in *Figure 1* are sometimes incorrect. Y DNA testing identified claims from four distinct Neill lineages shown in *Figure 2*, one of which (in pink) is a case of mistaken identity. These results are unambiguous. Haplogroups I2a, I2b, R1a, R1b are not near kindred; they represent four human branches formed between 23,000 and 48,000 years ago (*ya*) as measured by the Time to Most Recent Common Ancestor (TMRCA).

William Neill, atop *Figure 2*, from Leicestershire, England, settled at Mountmellick in co. Laois. Thomas Neill was of a displaced native Irish O'Neill family from Tyrone, who lived in Fermanagh and later Gloucester. James was of a Neal family dating to the fifteenth century, likely in Gloucestershire. William Neill, at bottom, appears of MacNeil Scottish origin.

John Neill, son of Thomas, of Clare Townland, Tullylish Parish, Co. Down, 1694

The first record of the Neill family in Irish Quaker records was in 1690 at Ballyhagan Meeting, county Armagh, when John Neill witnessed the 4 June wedding of William Richardson of Egralougher and Mary Calvert of Turcarra, both of Loughgall parish. It can be inferred from this record that John Neill resided in or near Loughgall parish. Also attending that day was Robert Hoopeⁱⁱ and Mary Boys, who would both come to play important roles in John's life events.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1692, Robert Hoope of Lurgan Meeting provided funds to John Neill to help him move. At the Lurgan Meeting on 8 October, "John Neall having a minde to remove with his family to beyond Charlemont, & being poore, friends have consented that Robart Hoope give him Twenty Shill. Out of friends collection money for assistance in his removeing."^{iv}

Charlemont is southwest of Lurgan and near Loughgall. It is unknown who the other family members were who moved with John. Soon after, John Neill attended Mary Boys's wedding to John Porter on 8 December 1692 also at Ballyhagan. John Porter was from Lurgan, Shankill parish, co. Armagh and Mary was from Drumilly, Loughgall parish.^v

The next year, in 1693, John Neill was residing in Shankill parish, co. Armagh, when he was required to pay a cess for the Church of Ireland in Lurgan. He paid 3 pence, placing him in the lowest 25% of assessable wealth, and paying the same as Shane O'Neill¹ who was identified as one of the few Catholics in Lurgan.^{vi} This record also means since John was of legal age by 1693, he was born no later than 1672.

Sixteen months after the Boys-Porter wedding, John Neill wed at Lurgan. He had announced his intention to marry at the "men and womens meetings near Ballymoney", meaning the Ballinacree meeting in county Antrim. The certificate from the men's meeting

¹ The name *Shane O'Neill* is rendered *John Neill* in the English language.

was provided by William Porter, which was required to demonstrate that Friends from the bride's meeting agreed to the marriage. Ballinacree weekly meeting was established in 1673 and was part of the Antrim monthly meeting. County Antrim had two meetings at the time: Ballinacree on the Vow road near Ballymoney and Lower Grange near Portglenone and Antrim town.^{vii}

John Neill married Esther Reford, daughter of Lewis, on 3 April 1694. He was born in Enniskillen, co. Fermanagh, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Neill of Gloucester, England.² Although not directly stated, it is inferred since they were named in the record that Thomas and Elizabeth were Quakers.^{viii} The Reford (Rafford, Refort, Radford) family were Quakers from Antrim town in co. Antrim.^{ix} "1693/4, 7th day 1st month. At our particular Men's Meeting held at Lurgan the 7th day 1st month. John Neill this day presenting himself hath laid his intention of marriage with Ester Rafford before this meeting and nothing appearing to obstruct his said intention it's the consent of this meeting that he also by said intention before the men and womens meetings near Ballymoney, and that William Porter give him a certificate to friends there of his declaring his so intention to this meeting." ^x

After marrying in 1694, John and Esther resided in Lurgan, Shankill parish, then part of Clanbrassil territory, and now in Oneilland East barony, co. Armagh. Rebecca, their first child was born in Lurgan in 1695. Also in 1695, the Lurgan meeting house described as "Maddens tenamont on ye south end of town of Lurgan upon a copy hold lease from Esq. Brownlowe in the name of Robert Hoope" was decided to be replaced. John Neill contributed 1 pound, 8 shilling to build the new meeting house in Lurgan.^{xi} John Neill was a regular participant in the men's preparative meetings, and in 1696, he was among the nineteen members who disowned John Christy.^{xii}

John and Esther Neill resided in Clare townland, Tullylish parish, county Down, by 1697 when their second child, Thomas, was born.^{xiii} Quakers were persecuted for refusing to pay tithes to the established church; their property was confiscated, books burned, and many of them were imprisoned. Quakers made records of these sufferings and compensated individuals, since authorities took property from any individual Quaker on the behalf of all Quakers. "Anno 1699. County of Down. John Neil had taken from him for tithe by the said Demster and for of Dean Lashly and Archdeacon Jenny twenty nine and a half stocks of oats twenty nine stocks of wheat all worth six pounds." ^{xiv}

² Thomas and Elizabeth Neall were 'relations' of Mary Neal who married 7 June 1708 to Charles Shingler at Sodbury Meeting in Gloucester, England, findmypast.ie.

The couple had three surviving sons born in Clare after the infant deaths of sons Thomas and Samuel; Joseph also later died as an infant. John was born 13 June 1701, Lewis born 22 September 1704 and William born 21 April 1711.^{xv}

John Neill was a linen draper from Clare, or fully Clarecleneconnell, when “failing in his circumstances” he executed a series of land transactions from 1728 to 1730. These sales showed that John’s first lease was in 1712, and mentioned sons William, John Junior, and Lewis in a 1718 deed.^{xvi} The 1730 deed in which John conveys land to Lewis is called “Neill to O’Neill”, and the magistrate was scrupulous in establishing the identity of John as O’Neill who no longer used the ‘O’. In this single document, he is variously called John Neal, John ONeil, Jon Neal and John Niel, and he signed his name John Neil. His son is called Lewis ONeil and Lewis Niel.^{xvii} A week later the land was conveyed to John Williams.^{xviii}

John and Lewis emigrated about 1730 to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and by 1733 they were in Virginia.^{xix} John died at Frederick (present-day Clarke) County, Virginia in 1750,^{xx} and Lewis died there in 1776. Lewis was buried at the Hopewell Meetinghouse burial ground in Hopewell, Virginia.^{xxi} William apparently remained in Clare.³

John Neill of Antrim Monthly Meeting, 1695

John and Esther Neill might have had a common connection to Ballinacree meeting as this was not only where her Reford family’s meeting was, there was a local Quaker Neill family. Records of Quaker sufferings recorded for the Antrim monthly meeting show that Thomas Neill suffered each year from 1695 to 1698 by having crops taken by the authorities. (This Thomas could not be John of Lurgan Meeting’s father, as he then resided in Gloucester, England.)

Also in the Antrim monthly meeting records, John Neill in Kilraghts (Killraith) parish had oats, barley and hay taken from him in 1695.^{xxii} John Neill of ‘Kilraghts Parish’ died the next year, as his Will was recorded in Connor diocese in 1696, and was likely this Quaker as there were no more such Quaker records. If there was a surviving male lineage from John, they had left Kilraghts by the 1855 to 1875 time frame, as documented below.

In Kilraghts there was also the prominent and well-documented plantation family of Adam Neill (b. 1683). They were originally from Scotland, settled on land of Macdonnell, Earl of Antrim, while their family—in 1875—*‘has always been Presbyterian’*.^{xxiii} A second John Neill died in Connor diocese in 1699,^{xxiv} who was likely John Neale of Kilraghts (Kilvaghilis) found in the co. Antrim Hearth Money Rolls of 1665.^{xxv} The hearth tax applied to all properties with

³ See Appendix for timeline of John Neill of Lurgan Meeting.

a hearth, but very low-value properties were excluded with an unknown effect on its comprehensiveness. Sometime between 1855 and 1875, a local descendant of Adam Neill wrote, “Mrs. Robinson [Jenny Neill] says they were all very fond of emigrating, and that there is not a family of the name of Neill in that neighborhood (Kilraughts).”^{xxvi}

The Antrim Meeting records infer that John Neill was the elder of the two and possibly Thomas Neill was his son; this would make them, respectively, contemporaries of Thomas Neill and his son John O’Neill or Neill of Lurgan Meeting. Speculatively, John of Kilraughts and Thomas of Gloucester might have been brothers, and if their father was also in Gloucester or elsewhere in England, it would be consistent with the family tradition of being an O’Neill and having left Ireland for England before being in Belfast. Aside from raising this possibility, there is no evidence for this relationship. Answers might be awaiting in archival storage or genetic data, but for now it’s best to respect the lessons of prior generations and avoid connecting these two dots at the risk they are not related.

Samuel Neill of Belfast, co. Antrim, 1839

Belfast, co. Antrim, grew quickly in the mid-1800’s from a port city into an industrial one, drawing migrants from throughout Ulster. It would be expected that Thomas of Gloucester’s descendants might have migrated into Belfast from in or around Clare in co. Down and John of Kilraughts descendants from rural co. Antrim into Belfast. No record explicitly identifies the locational origin of the author’s ancestor, Samuel Neill, prior to Belfast in 1839.

Samuel Neill, born about 1809, died on 22 October 1889, age 80 years in Belfast.^{xxvii} In 1839, he was a grocer at Peter’s Hill in Belfast.^{xxviii} Samuel Neill married Sarah Jane Percy,^{xxix,}⁴ who was born about 1813 in Ballyboley townland of Ballyeaston parish, Ballycor civil parish, co. Antrim, the daughter of John Percy and Sarah (Sara).^{xxx} Ballyboley is located in rural co. Antrim, fifteen miles north of Belfast. There is no early record of Samuel, nor marriage record. The first surviving child of Samuel and Sarah Jane Percy was James Percy Neill, born 1841 in Belfast.^{xxxi} His is the only record for their family found in the vicinity of Ballyeaston, who as a freemason, moved from lodge #246 in Broughshane to lodge #609 in Belfast in 1883.^{xxxii} Broughshane is nineteen miles northwest of Ballyeaston, near Ballymena.

Sarah Jane Neill’s parents, John and Sarah Percy, were included in the census enumerated by the First Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church in 1813. They were both born about 1784 and resided in Ballyboley townland, and he was a schoolmaster.^{xxxiii} In 1826, John was described as schoolmaster of a paid Presbyterian school in Ballyeaston, built of stone and lime, earning £20 annually.^{xxxiv} Their family comprised Elisabeth born about 1804, Samuel

⁴ See full family history. Jon Patraic Neill, *Chronicle of the Neill Family, Volume One*, 2019, Tampa, Florida.

born about 1806, Ann born about 1808, Margret born about 1811, and Sara Jane who was age 3 months in 1813.^{xxxv} Later, son John (Jr.) was baptised 11 July 1816.^{xxxvi} John Percy (Sr.) was a freemason and his residence can be tracked according to his lodge membership: 1811 Ballymoney lodge #725, 1814 and 1818 Ballyeaston-Ballyclare lodge #713, 1825 Ballyboley-Ballyeaston lodge #238. Percy men Samuel, James and Thomas were with John in the 1814 lodge.^{xxxvii} The Ballyeaston-area Presbyterians and freemasons were particularly strong supporters of the United Irishmen in their 1798 rebellion against the Crown.⁵

Autosomal DNA analysis using the Ancestry site confirms descent from the Percy family of Ballyeaston. Using cluster analysis, descendants of Samuel Neill and Sarah Jane Percy were identified, and then Neill descendants eliminated. A remaining relative sharing 10cM in one segment of DNA was user *J.G. by gsgilkey* whose great-great-grandmother was Lillie Percy, born 1831 in Ballyeaston.^{xxxviii}

James Neill of Ballyboley, co. Antrim, 1816

Given the loss of Irish records that present a brickwall in documenting ancestry before 1800, it can only be surmised that James Neill of Ballyboley was the father of Samuel Neill. James was the only Neill family found in Ballyboley townland or Ballyeaston parish.^{xxxix} Irish naming custom supports this identification: the firstborn son of Samuel and Sarah Jane was James, which matches the paternal grandfather (James Neill), and their second-born John matches the maternal grandfather's name (John Percy).

James Neill leased farmland from the Marquis of Donegall in Ballyboley townland, Ballyeaston parish, co. Antrim, on 1 July 1816 containing 8 acres 3 roods 11 perches with annual rent of £1.2.8.^{xl} He resided there ca. 1826-7 when his share of the parish tithe to the established church was three shillings, five pence, an amount that reflected the value of his leasehold property. Of the 18 individuals listed in Ballyboley, only one property was valued lower and tithes for nearby Percy leaseholds were similar, suggesting comparable socio-economic status.^{xli}

The absence of any Neill family from the 1813 Ballyeaston Presbyterian census and from the surviving First Ballyeaston baptismal and marriage registers suggests that they were not Presbyterian adherents. Their residence in Ballyboley, where the 1826 Education Inquiry documents a Wesleyan Methodist schoolmaster, John Gawn,^{xlii} supports the possibility that the Neills were associated with the local Wesleyan Methodist community. This was the

⁵ Consistent with tradition. See "Oral Tradition of William John Neill (1875-1935) Family Origins".

only religious entity then present in Ballyboley. While this explains the family's oral tradition,⁶ no direct evidence of their Wesleyan Methodist affiliation has been identified.

John Wesley was sympathetic to the plight of smaller tenant farmers, as he wrote in his journal, June 15th 1773, "when I came to Belfast, I learned the real cause of the late insurrections in this neighbourhood. Lord Donegal [Marquis of Donegall], the proprietor of almost the whole country, came hither to give his tenants new leases. But when they came, they found two merchants of the town had taken their farms over their heads; so that multitudes of them, with their wives and children, were turned out to the wide world."^{xlvi} Wesley was describing the 'Hearts of Steel' rebellion of 1770, also called the Ulster land war, that prompted large-scale emigration to America. This event was impactful to men in the prior generation like James Neill from whom Wesley drew an audience.^{xlv}

Going back to the 1698 record of Quaker sufferings of Thomas Neill and its context, the Quakers of Ballinacree 'near Ballymoney' had been planning in 1702 to build their own meetinghouse. While there lacked progress on such building by 1707, the small meeting diminished from emigration in the 1730's. In 1796, the Quaker Thomas Scattergood wrote in his journal that he, "Rode to Ballynacree, and on the 22d (1 Mo.) held the preparative Meeting. This meeting-house joins a dwelling, and on sitting down, it seemed like sitting in a cellar; two men, two women and three children composed it."^{xlv} In 1811, Methodists were active in the Ballinacree Quaker meeting. On visiting, Quaker Henry Hull said, "On first-day, the 24th, I attended a meeting at Ballinacree, where the number of Friends is very small; but we had the company of a Methodist preacher and his hearers..."^{xlvi}

No Quaker congregation records for the James Neill family were found. Aside from oral tradition,⁷ the only evidence of Samuel's Quaker affiliation is from his estate's record of investment in Richardson Brothers and Company Limited (his only non-bank asset).^{xlvii} This firm was owned by Quaker industrialist John Grubb Richardson, son of James Nicholson Richardson, and Quakers preferred commercial ties kept within their community. After having managed a linen mill in 1872, Samuel was employed by Richardson Brothers as a storekeeper in Belfast by 1880.^{xlviii} Ties between Neill and Richardson families date to the

⁶ The certitude of the tradition eliminates, based on the 1861 Ulster population, the possibility of being Catholic (50.5%), Presbyterian (26.3%) or Established Church/Episcopalian (20.4%). The remaining 2.8% comprised Methodist (1.7%) and all others (1.1%) among which were Quakers, and included the Neill family.

⁷ Samuel's son John (b. 1843) had traditions of O'Neill origins and early Quakerism (see "Oral Tradition of William John Neill (1875-1935) Family Origins") that seems absent from his brother James (b. 1841) family. John affiliated as Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, and Roman Catholic during his lifetime; his brother James was Presbyterian. Prior Neill generations affiliation with both Quakers and Wesleyan Methodists clarifies the oral tradition.

1690 wedding at Lurgan Meeting (above), and there were particularly close ties between Richardson and Neill of Moyallen into the 1800s (next).

James Neill, of Tullylish Parish, Co. Down, 1702

John Neil witnessed the marriage of James Neil or Nail to Jane Morton 24 September 1702 at Moyallon Meeting in co. Down,^{xlix} roughly five miles from Lurgan. Also witnessing was Robert Hoope, the early benefactor of John Neill. Immediate family appear in the listing of Quaker wedding attendees in the left-side column,⁸ with the bride's father John Morton directly above John Neil. There are no other witnesses with the Neil surname. This place of honor among witnesses points to John Neil of Lurgan meeting. Given that John married Esther Reford only eight years prior, their relationship was clearly not father-son and is reasonably surmised they were brothers. It is implausible, yet not impossible, that James's father or brother in this record was a different John Neil. The genealogy of James Neill's descendants in America is well documented, although his descendant lineages in Ireland have some gaps and uncertainties.

The connection evident between John and James carried into subsequent generations. James was deceased by 1714 and his only surviving child was John, known as John Neill 'the Younger' in reference to the elder John Neill.^l Given that the mother of John 'the Younger' had remarried after the death of James and was subsequently disowned by the Quakers,^{li} it has been speculated that John the elder played an important role as uncle in raising the fatherless child.

When John's son Samuel Neill married Deborah Nicholson in 1766, one of the witnesses was Esther O Neill.^{lii} Esther Reford, wife of John Neill or O'Neill, would have been about age 90 years in 1766, and while unlikely this is her (it would have been her first such appearance in Quaker records) it might have been been a relative (Esther was uncommon for a native Irish first name and is found in the Neale family of Mountmellick Meeting).

Samuel and Deborah had a son, Joseph, whose only known surviving lineage was through his daughter Eliza Neill and her husband Alexander Cornwall. After her death, Alexander emigrated to the United States in 1861, according to their descendants. William John Neill, the grandson of Samuel Neill and Sarah Jane Percy of Belfast (above), emigrated to America in 1876 and later said his only known Neill relatives to also emigrate to America were named Cornwall.^{liii} These Cornwall and Neill families have descendants with shared DNA: Debbie Weaver's grand-uncle Gale Hammond shares 15cM with Connor Neill (Ancestry)

⁸ Fiona Fitzsimmons, *Quaker Records in Ireland*, <https://historyireland.com/kindred-lines-5/>

and her relative Marie Cornwall's brother Bruce shares 11cM with Jon Patraic Neill (FTDNA).^{liv}

John 'the Younger' had another son, John, also later called 'the Younger' who was Samuel's brother. This John is the ancestor of Jonathan R. Neill and there is a corresponding validated paper trail.^{lv} While shared DNA was not detected by genetic testing, they shared 162 relatives in the FTDNA database, equating to 2.2% of Jon Patraic Neill's 7,404 matches and 1.3% of Jonathan R. Neill's 12,772 matches.^{lvi} This points to a common Quaker community and the practice of marital endogamy creating a common kindred group.⁹

However strong the historical record and autosomal DNA support the traditional identification of John and James as brothers, Y-DNA from genetic testing proves they were not brothers. Further, John's Y-DNA was typical of northwest Ireland and James's Y-DNA was typical of England. FTDNA projects show collateral Neal lineages to James's DNA, meaning his ancestors were Neal, just as this data shows John's ancestors were O'Neill (assuming common ancestry with the author). Further mystifying this conclusion is that both men were connected to Gloucester, England. John's father Thomas Neill resided in Gloucester in 1694 and James's Y-DNA indicate his Neal origins were possibly in Gloucester. The data vaguely hint that further research might reveal a commercial or familiar relationship or Quaker affiliation in Gloucester that preceded James's wedding in 1702.

William Neale, of Maryborough, Mountmellick, Co. Laois, 1674

The founder of the Quakers in Ireland was William Edmundson, and its first meeting at his home in Lurgan, co. Armagh, in 1654, included William Neale.^{lvii} The next year, 1655, Edmundson moved to a farm in co. Cavan where Friends from Lurgan joined him. "So, leaving Lurgan Meeting well settled, several families moved with us to Co. Cavan. We held Meetings around in divers places, so that several were convinced and joined with us, particularly John Pim, ... William Neale, ... and many others."^{lviii} Afterward, there was no known Neale or Neill presence among Lurgan Quakers or in their records until John Neill in 1690.

William Neale (1609-1674) was born in Castle Donington, Leicestershire, England, and after leaving Lurgan and co. Cavan ultimately settled in Maryborough, co. Laois (formerly Queens co.), and joined the Mountmellick Meeting there.^{lix} He was the son of William Neell, born 1566 in Prestwold, Leicestershire, whom descends from a prominent lineage there.^{lx} William (b. 1609) married Anne Pim and his sister Dorothy married William Pim,^{lxi} and the latter couple's son John Pim rose to prominence in Irish business and industry. John Pim

⁹ Esther Sahle, 2021, "Marital Endogamy." In *Quakers in the British Atlantic World, c. 1660–1800*, pp. 135–154.

and his wife are included among founding ancestors in O'Hart's *Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*.^{lxii}

William (b. 1609) and Anne Neale had two surviving sons, William (b. 1641) and Richard (b. 1663), whose numerous descendants are well documented by Phillip R. Neal, the authoritative source for this family. The descendants of William (b. 1641) are found in Irish Quaker records, and relatively few, while his younger brother Richard had two sons, Robert (b. 1685) and John (b. 1686). Robert's numerous descendants sprang from his son, Henry Neal, who emigrated to Philadelphia. John (b. 1686) was the father of Esther (b. 1712) and Richard (b. 1716).^{lxiii}

This Neale family also had a connection to Ballinacree Meeting in co. Antrim, and might have resided there on their migration to Lurgan. Robert's son Henry Neal married Sarah Mooney in 1739 at the New Garden Meeting in Pennsylvania near Philadelphia. Her father Neal O'Mooney, or Mooney, was from the Ballinacree Meeting and had emigrated to Pennsylvania shortly before his daughter's marriage. Autosomal DNA analysis shows one Jon Patraic Neill match in Ancestry to a descendant of Henry Neal and Sarah O'Mooney, although not through the Neill paternal line, meaning the relationship is derived from maternal ancestry and coincidental.^{lxiv} The direct paternal and direct maternal lines of Jon Patraic Neill were Quakers.

William Neale (b. 1609) can be found in many twentieth-century¹⁰ and present-day online genealogies as the father of Thomas Neill. There is no evidence to link them, other than William's brief presence in Lurgan Meeting and Thomas's son John's presence there a generation later. The error of attributing Thomas as a son of William thereby had the secondary effect of changing William's identity. Prior generations commonly identified John as O'Neill or Neill, which has been proven correct (see deed above, *Neill to O'Neill, 1730*). Yet, following from the inferred relationship, William Neale (b. 1609) was at times rendered incorrectly as William O'Neill, and even attributed to being a Royal O'Neill, including as son of the Earl Hugh.^{lxv}

It is unknown whether there was a specific, ongoing relationship between Neale of Mountmellick and Neill's of Tullylish. The Quakers were a small, persecuted minority. In 1680, when the *Great Book of Tithe* was signed by each Quaker family, there were just 340 families in Ulster and a total of 798 in Ireland.^{lxvi} In general, the Religious Society of Friends, Quakers, was a closed community in which one could not marry a non-Quaker, and that created strong, extended familial bonds throughout the Quaker population.

¹⁰ See, for example, Pigeon MS of Swarthmore College Special Collections (Quaker) containing papers from descendants of Lewis Neill of the Hopewell Meeting in Virginia, identifying William as their ancestor.

William Neill of Rowan County, North Carolina, 1769

William Neill died in 1769 in Rowan County, North Carolina, and is commonly identified in published and online materials as born in 1711 in Clare, co. Down, the son of Quakers John Neill and Esther Reford who married in 1694.^{lvii} As the story goes, William emigrated with brothers John and Lewis to near Lancaster County, Pennsylvania about 1730, and later went to Virginia with them.^{lviii} The definitive record is 15 February 1770 when Sarah Neil, executrix and widow of William, was summoned to the Rowan County courthouse in response to a petition by Samuel Laremore demanding payment of £4 of debt.^{lxix} William Neill witnessed last wills and testaments in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1731 and 1740, and is believed to be the future North Carolinian.^{lxx} The American descendants of William Neill are thoroughly documented by its authoritative researcher, Marcy Porter. Her's is a familiar surname showing up consistently in Neill research, beginning with a 1692 marriage in Ballyhagan, and even in the author's personal experience when, Ruby Porter, a Quaker in Cincinnati in 1988 believed me to be part of the Quaker Neill family of northern Ohio.

William Neill had five documented sons born in Chester County, Pennsylvania: *William*, born about 1725 and died after 21 June 1797 in Burke County, North Carolina; *James*, born about 1730 and died 22 June 1793 in Iredell County, North Carolina; *John*, born about 1732 and died in 1801 in Rowan County, North Carolina; *Alexander*, born about 1733 and married Elizabeth Fairs in 1757 in New Castle County, Delaware; and, *Andrew*, born about 1734 and died in 1814 in Iredell County, North Carolina. There was potentially a sixth son, *Samuel*, born about 1740. Their descendants collectively represent what is most certainly the largest contingent of Neill in the United States.

They figured prominently serving North Carolina in the American Revolution, including wintering at Valley Forge. Post-war, they mostly migrated westward to Tennessee, Missouri and Texas. While large families was their norm, sons William and Andrew in particular had many descendants. A descendant of Andrew's described their Neill ancestry as continuously Presbyterian since their origin in County Down, Ireland.^{lxxi} Andrew's brother William had a son James, who also served in the Revolution. James's son, James Clinton Neill, was a Texas ranger and Colonel in the Republic of Texas Army during the war for Texas independence, and commander of the Alamo. He was on leave when the Alamo fell to Santa Anna.^{lxxii}

Marcy Porter, however, observed problems with William (d. 1769) being identified with William (b. 1711). She believed William was likely born about 1700, given his eldest son was born about 1725. The elder brothers of William (b. 1711), Lewis and John, were still in Ireland in 1730.^{lxxiii} This means William (b. 1711) was age 14 years and living in Ireland when

the first child of William and Sarah Neill was born. Speculation that Sarah's surname was Callender was possibly conflated with the next generation when Isabella, daughter of Capt. Robert Callender, married William Neill of Baltimore, Maryland (b. 1740 in co. Antrim and descended from the Presbyterian family of Kilraghts, discussed above).^{lxxiv} Another source gave Sarah's surname as Falls.^{lxxv}

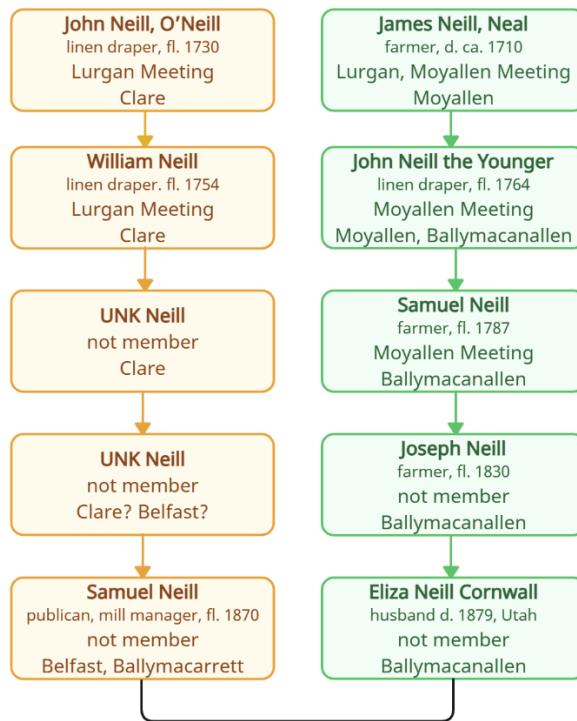
Evidence favors that William Neill (b. 1711) remained in Ireland. In 1762, William Neill was among the linen weavers and manufacturers from Lurgan, co. Armagh, who issued a statement they were not involved in the recent riots at the Lisburn marketplace in co. Antrim.^{lxxvi} In the late 1800's, there were still Neill descendants in Clare, co. Down, with an ongoing presence there. The original source of William (b. 1711) being in America, Jolliffe (1893), acknowledged a lack of evidence of him in Pennsylvania and apparently conflated his identity with his brother John's son, William.^{lxxvii} The authoritative researcher of Virginia Quakers, J. Michael Frost, reviewed Jolliffe's footnote against original land documents in the Virginia archive and noted the 400 acres surveyed for John Neill on 28 November 1749 indicated on the survey's folder the grantee was William Neill, son of John Neill.^{lxxviii} In 1766, William Neill received a grant of 232 acres on the Cacapon River in Hampshire County, Virginia, now Hampshire, Berkeley and Morgan counties in West Virginia.^{lxxix} This means William Neill of Virginia was not William Neill who died in 1769 in North Carolina.

The origins of William Neill (d. 1769) are accordingly undetermined, having disproven genealogical claims that he was William (b. 1711). Y-DNA results from his descendants do not match either Neill of Tullylish family or Neale of Mountmellick. Yet, there are numerous autosomal DNA results that indicate his unknown origins might include a connection to the Quaker community that are worthy of additional study.

Part II : Figures and Charts

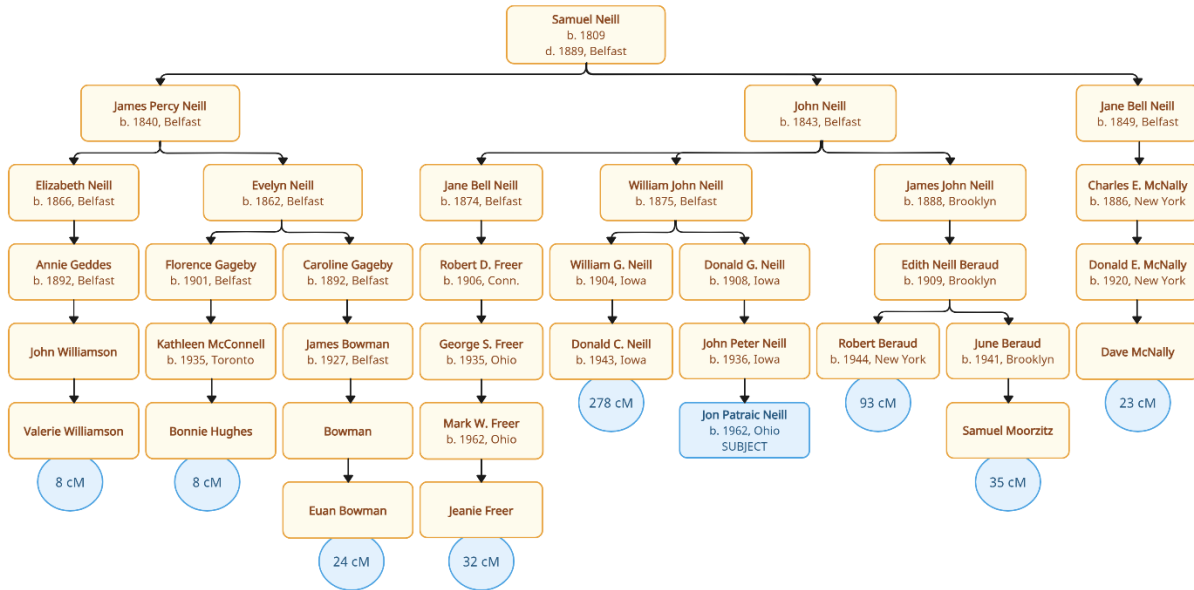
Part II presents a visual synthesis of the documentary and genetic evidence discussed in Part I. Figures 3–5 focus on the author’s Neill ancestry and the relationships among oral tradition, genealogical evidence, autosomal DNA, and Y-DNA. The four genealogical charts then trace the identified founding lineages through their tested descendants, distinguishing supported relationships from those that remain uncertain or incomplete.

Figure 3. Genealogy of Neill lineages that are kindred by oral tradition



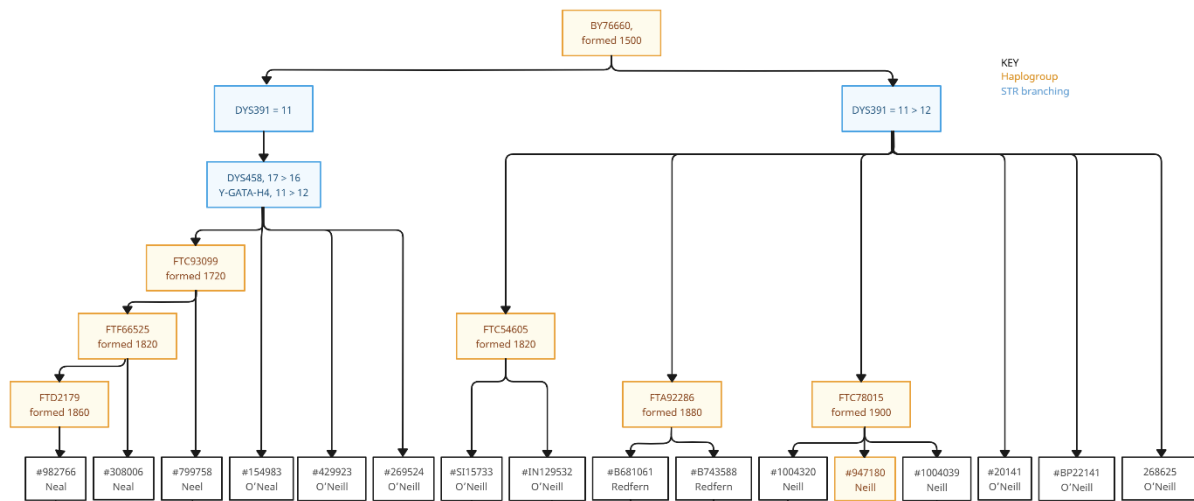
In Figure 3, Cornwall (bottom, right) was the only other branch of the Neill family (left) to emigrate to America in the 1800s, according to oral tradition of William John Neill, 1935. The exact kinship was not stated in the tradition, yet they clearly did not share the same Y DNA. While it is possible they shared no DNA, the tradition puts the families in geographic proximity. There were no Neill families left in Moyallen, Ballymacanallen or Clare by the end of the nineteenth century due to emigration and migration to Belfast.

Figure 4. Samuel Neill descendants with shared autosomal DNA



In *Figure 4*, the Neill ancestry of the test subject, Jon Patraic Neill, is validated through autosomal DNA matches measured in centimorgans of shared DNA. The amounts and ranges of shared centimorgans are consistent with relationship distances in the genealogical chart. In *Figure 5*, the Y DNA inherited from Samuel Neill is identified as haplogroup R-BY76660. The haplogroup is associated with Niall of the Nine Hostages and his son Eóghan, and is mostly O'Neill men.

Figure 5. Y DNA of Jon Patraic Neill, R1b-S588, haplogroup R-BY76660



The Lurgan Quakers shown in *Figure 1* are elaborated in four genealogical charts below. The most important charts for the study of Lurgan Quakers, charts 1 to 3, each have only one Y DNA tester, which presents the potential for error in these genealogies. These figures and charts can change as new information and DNA data becomes available.

The founder of each of the four lineages is shown using the same color scheme as *Figure 1*. Within the chart, colored boxes denote the lineage of the DNA testers back to the founder. Dotted lines represent uncertainty or missing generations.

Blue text within the boxes highlight individuals with historical significance:

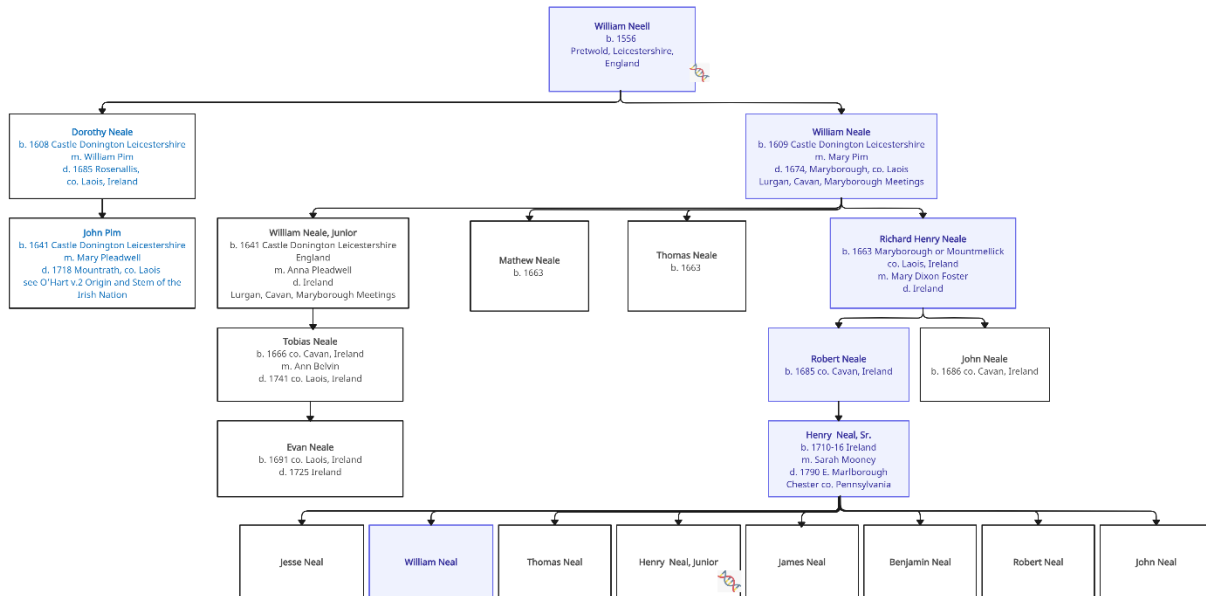
- In *Chart 1*, William Pim and Dorothy Neale are the parents of John Pim, whose genealogy is included in John O'Hart's 1892, *Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*.
- In *Chart 4*, James Clinton Neill was a Texas Ranger and commander of the ill-fated Alamo.

William Neill in *Chart 4* has a nexus to Lurgan Quakers both because of the misidentification shown in *Figure 1* and the large number of his descendants, many of whom had Quaker connections in America.

Double-helix DNA icons in the charts are used to indicate relationships to Jon Patraic Neill identified through autosomal DNA testing results. These results indicate shared ancestry, but existing technology does not identify which ancestors are shared.

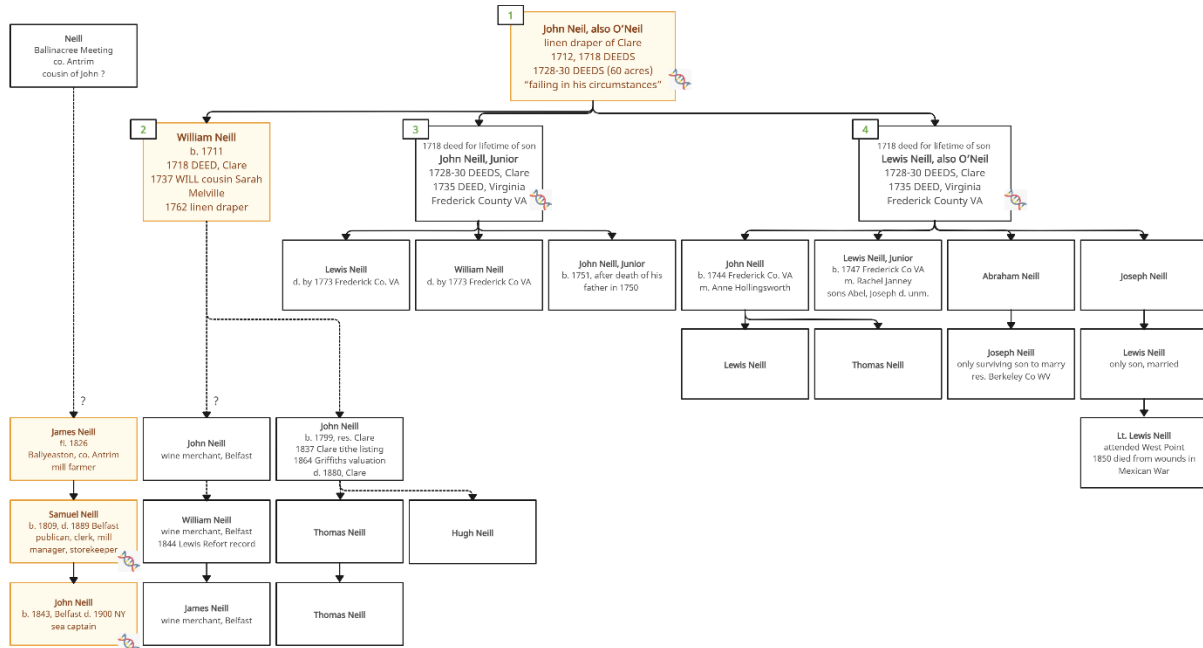
William Neill

Chart 1. William Neill of Maryborough, Mountmellick, co. Laois, 1500—1790



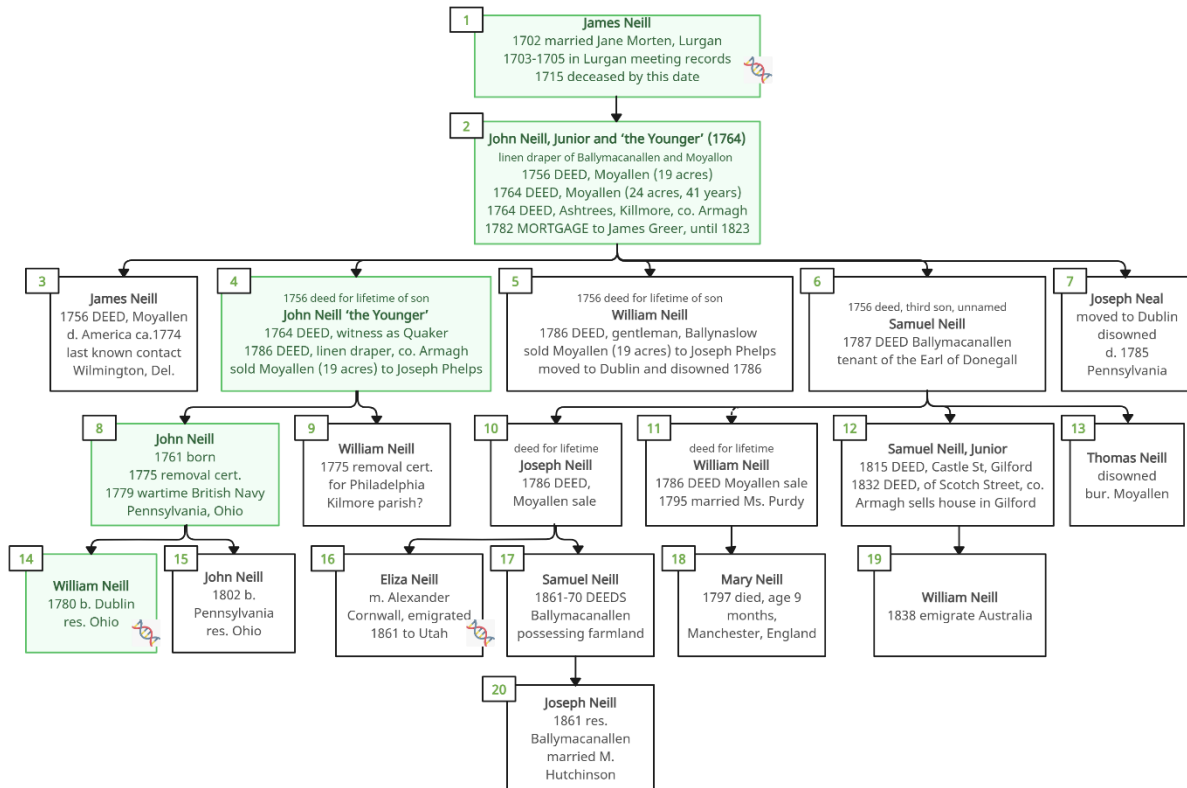
Thomas Neill

Chart 2. John Neill, son of Thomas, of Clare Townland, Tullylish Parish, 1694—1870



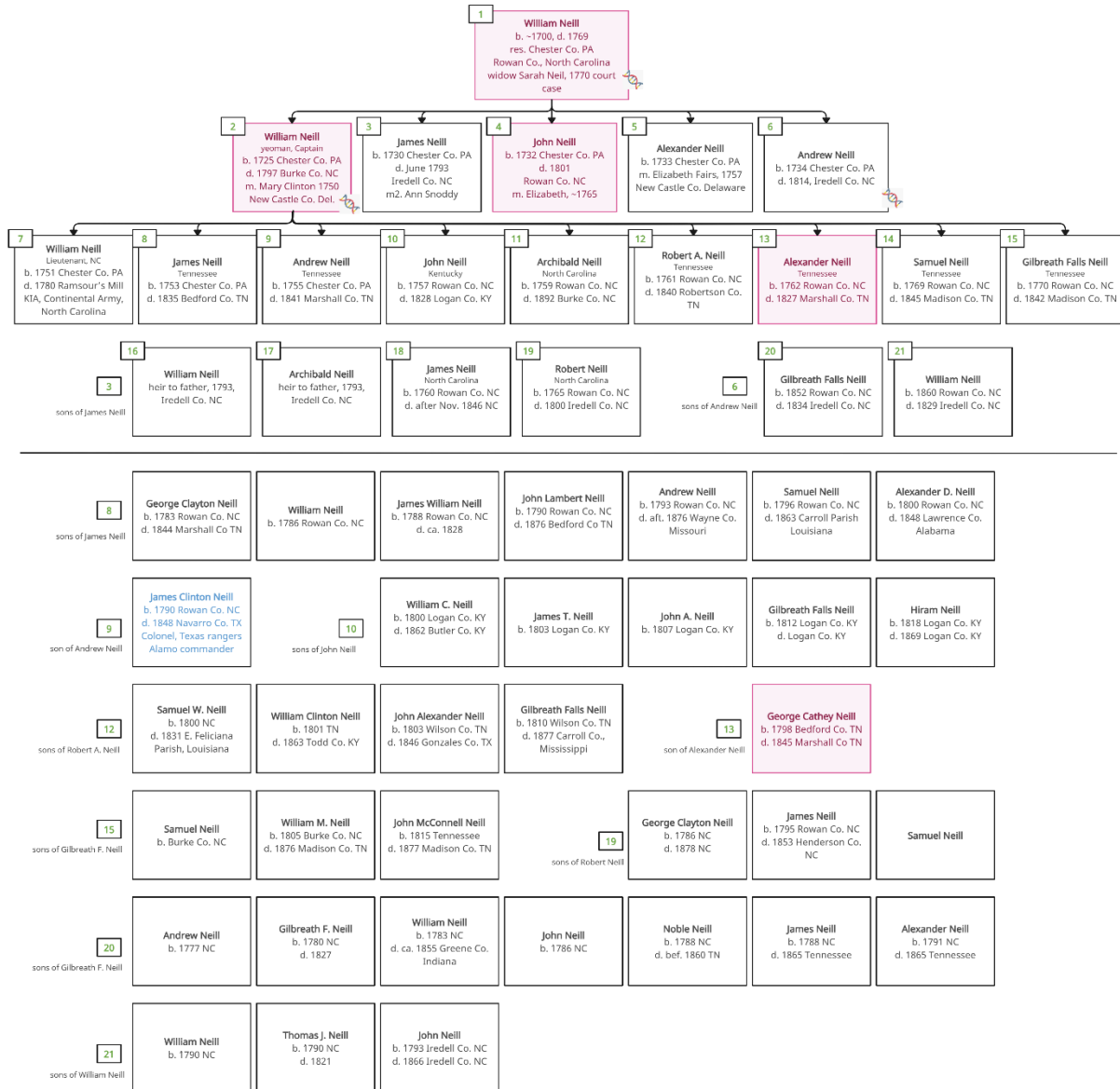
James Neill

Chart 3. James Neill of Tullylish Parish, County Down, 1702—1870



William Neill

Chart 4. William Neill of Rowan County, North Carolina, 1700—1870



Conclusion

The documentary and genetic evidence demonstrates that the Quaker Neill kindred of Lurgan did not descend through a single paternal line but incorporated at least four distinct founding lineages. These findings do not invalidate the shared Neill identity preserved in family tradition. Rather, they suggest that relationships formed through marriage, migration, economic association, and membership in the close-knit Religious Society of Friends gradually came to be understood as biological kinship. The social disruption that followed the collapse of the Gaelic political order, the Ulster Plantation, and subsequent warfare may have contributed to the formation of this broader kindred.

Although the tradition of native Irish Quaker O'Neill descent endured in the author's family—and is supported by Y-DNA evidence for the paternal lineage of Samuel Neill—it was later extended to, or conflated with, genetically unrelated Neill and Neale families. The still-unexplained connections with Gloucester, England, including Thomas Neill's documented residence there and the apparent English paternal origins of James Neill's lineage, raise the possibility that relationships predating the families' appearance in Ulster may yet be discovered. Further documentary, Y-DNA, and autosomal DNA research will be necessary to distinguish these lineages more completely while preserving the broader history of the social and spiritual kindred they collectively formed.

Appendix

John Neill of Lurgan Meeting Timeline

Year	Age	County	Location	Description	Source	Key Names
ca. 1672	~18	Fermanagh	Enniskillen	birthplace from 1694 marriage record (1672 if age 18)	Lurgan Meeting	
1690	18	Armagh	Ballyhagan	witness to William Richardson - Mary Calvert wedding	Ballyhagan Meeting	
				<i>Richardson from Turcarra, Loughgall, Oneilland West</i>		Richardson
				<i>Calvert from Eagralougher, Loughgall, Oneilland West</i>		
1690	18	Armagh	Lurgan	given 20 shillings from Quakers' wartime relief fund	Lurgan Meeting	
				<i>Battle of the Boyne ended war of King James II and King William</i>		
				<i>benefactors Robert Hoope and Thomas Walker</i>		Hoope
				<i>removing with family toward Charlemont, Co. Armagh (~10 miles)</i>		
1692	20	Armagh	Ballyhagan	witness to John Porter - Mary Boys wedding	Ballyhagan Meeting	Porter
				<i>Boys from Drumilly, Loughgall, Kilmore parish, Oneilland West</i>		Boys
				<i>Porter from Lurgan, Shankill parish, Clanbrassil</i>		
1693	21	Armagh	Shankill	paid the government cess administered by the Church of Ireland	local history	
				<i>paid the same amount as Catholic man in Lurgan, Shane O'Neill</i>		
1694	22	Antrim	Ballymoney	permission to marry from William Porter of Men's Meeting	Lurgan Meeting	Porter
1694	22	Armagh	Lurgan	wed Esther Reford at Lurgan Meeting	Lurgan Meeting	
1695	23	Armagh	Lurgan	donated 28 shillings for building the Lurgan Meeting House	local history	
				<i>leaseholder for the meetinghouse was Robert Hoope</i>		Hoope
1695	23	Armagh	Lurgan	daughter Rebecca born	Lurgan Meeting	
1697	25	Down	Clare	son Thomas born	Lurgan Meeting	
1700	28	Down	Clare	son Samuel born	Lurgan Meeting	
1701	29	Down	Clare	son John born	Lurgan Meeting	
1702	30	Down	Lurgan	witness to James Neill - Jane Morton wedding	Lurgan Meeting	Neal / Neill
				<i>both from Tullylish, Co. Down</i>		
1703	31	Down	Clare	crops seized to pay tithe to Church of Ireland	Lurgan Meeting	
1703	31	Down	Clare	host at his house to Joseph McNeece - Margaret Christy wedding	Lurgan Meeting	
				<i>Christy from Moyallen, Tullylish, Co. Down</i>		
				<i>McNeece from Charlemont, Co. Armagh</i>		
1704	32	Armagh	Lurgan	witness to Abel Porter - Elizabeth Harwood wedding	Lurgan Meeting	Porter
				<i>Harwood from Donaghelony, Dromore parish, Co. Down</i>		
				<i>Porter from Lurgan, Shankill parish</i>		
1704	32	Down	Clare	son Lewis born	Lurgan Meeting	
1704	32	Dublin	Dublin	half-yearly meeting from Ulster with Hoope, Boys	National Meeting	Hoope, Boys
1704	32	Armagh	Lurgan	witness to John Lockert - Mary Mathews wedding	Lurgan Meeting	
				<i>both from Lurgan, Shankill parish, Clanbrassil</i>		
				<i>Lockert, Lockart, Lockhart longstanding neighbors to Neill in Clare</i>		Lockhart
1705	33	Armagh	Lurgan	witness to William Rea - Elizabeth Rae wedding	Lurgan Meeting	
				<i>William Rea from Lurgan, Shankill parish, Clanbrassil</i>		
				<i>Elizabeth Rea from Tullylish parish, Co. Down</i>		
1704	32	Down	Clare	crops seized to pay tithe to Church of Ireland	Lurgan Meeting	Neal / Neill
1705	33	Down	Clare	crops seized to pay tithe to Church of Ireland	Lurgan Meeting	Neal / Neill
1706	34	Down	Clare	son Joseph born	Lurgan Meeting	
1711	39	Down	Clare	son William born	Lurgan Meeting	
1712	40	Down	Clare	leased 26 acres from St John Rawdon of Moira, Co. Down	deed	
1718	46	Down	Clare	leased 72 acres from St John Rawdon of Moira, Co. Down	deed	
1727	55	Down	Clare	leased 5 acres of his farm in Clare to George Bright	deed	
1728	56	Down	Clare	mortgage on Clare farm to Williams	deed	
1729	57	Down	Clare	sold 26 acre lease to son Lewis O'Neil of Clare, Co. Down	deed	O'Neill
1730	58	Down	Clare	release of mortgage on Clare farm	deed	
1730	58	Down	Clare	now "failing in his circumstances" as linen draper sold lease	deed	
1730	58	Pennsylvania	Chester	sons John and Lewis emigrate to Chester Co. Pennsylvania	local history	
1735	63	Virginia	Frederick	sons John and Lewis survey 640 acre tract in (now) Clarke Co.	deed - Virginia	
1736	64	Antrim	Coleraine	mentioned in will of Sarah Melvin, sister of Esther	findmypast	

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^{li} Jane Neal, 1714, Ireland, Society Of Friends (Quaker) Congregational Records Image, retrieved February 13, 2024, <https://search.findmypast.ie/record?id=S2%2FIRE%2FQUAKERS%2FL-B-M-5-1%2F0014&parentid=IRE%2FQUAKER%2FULSTER%2FCON%2F074174>

^{lii} Samuel Neill, “Ireland, Society Of Friends (Quaker) Marriages” image and transcript, accessed November 4, 2018, <https://www.findmypast.ie/transcript?id=IRE/QUAKER/ULSTER/MAR/001679/G>, <https://www.findmypast.ie/transcript?id=IRE/QUAKER/POUR1/MAR/031190>

^{liii} Author, “Oral Tradition of William John Neill (1875-1935) Family Origins”, January 16, 2024, <https://cenel-eoghain.blog/pdf-library/>

^{liv} Email correspondence from Debbie Weaver, geneweaverdw@gmail.com, July 10, 2022 and July 22, 2022.

^{lv} Jonathan R. Neill, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Neill-1198>

^{lvi} FamilyTree DNA kits #947180 Jon Patraic Neill and #943936 Jonathan R. Neill, <https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/neal-2/dna-results>

William Neale, of Maryborough, Mountmellick, Co. Laois, 1674

^{lvii} Albert Cook Meyers, 1901, *Immigration of the Irish Quakers into Pennsylvania, 1682-1750 : With their early history in Ireland*, https://archive.org/stream/immigrationofiri00myer/immigrationofiri00myer_djvu.txt), pp. 374-375.

^{lviii} Jane Marion Wakefield Richardson, 1895, *Six generations of Friends in Ireland (1655 to 1890)* (3rd ed.), pp. 14-15.

^{lix} William Neale, Mountmellick Meeting, 1675, Ireland, Society of Friends (Quaker) Congregational Records Image, <https://search.findmypast.ie/record?id=IRE%2FQUAKER%2FMMVG-1%2F0035&parentid=IRE%2FQUAKER%2FCONG%2F701527> ; see *Research of the Neale Family in Ireland, 1654-1700*, by Jon Patraic Neill, Tampa, Florida, April 2, 2019 (Includes images of digitized Quaker records accessed from Findmypast.ie). *Research of the Neel Family in England, 1300-1654*, by Jon Patraic Neill, Tampa, Florida, April 2, 2019.

^{lx} Phillip R. Neal, Ancestry Tree “Neal-Beadle-Dingman-Hatt Immigrant - DNA VERIFICATION”, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/53092518?cfpid=13453539694&dtid=100>, retrieved 29 January 2024. (Neal is a descendant of Henry Neal and Sarah Mooney.)

^{lxi} “John Pim (1641 - 1718)”, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Pim-107>

^{lxii} John O’Hart, 1892, *Irish Pedigrees; or, The Origin and Stem of the Irish Nation*. <https://www.libraryireland.com/Pedigrees2/pim-addenda.php>

^{lxiii} Phillip R. Neal, Ancestry Tree “Neal-Beadle-Dingman-Hatt Immigrant - DNA VERIFICATION”, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/53092518?cfpid=13453539694&dtid=100>, retrieved 29 January 2024. (Neal is a descendant of Henry Neal and Sarah Mooney.)

^{lxiv} Deborah Davis, “Davis Family Tree”, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/7140175/family/pedigree?cfpid=150010507772>, retrieved 29 January 2024. (Veracity of these claims has not been evaluated.)

^{lxiv} Sir William O’Neill, son of Earl Hugh O’Neill, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/G4P6-RJH>

^{lxvi} Phil Kilroy, 1994. *Protestant dissent and controversy in Ireland, 1660–1714*, p. 90.

William Neill of Rowan County, North Carolina, 1769

^{lxvii} C. Richard King, 2002, *James Clinton Neill: Shadow Commander of the Alamo*. Eakin Press.

^{lxviii} William Jolliffe, *Historical, Genealogical, and Biographical Account of the Jolliffe Family of Virginia, 1652 to 1893*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1893, p. 176.

^{lxix} Marcy Porter, *Neill Descendants*, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~marcyptx/NEILL/d1.htm#g1>. Rowan County Estate Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History. File furnished by Jim Trabue, 23 January 2003.

^{lxx} Marcy Porter, *Neill Descendants*, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~marcyptx/NEILL/d1.htm#g1>. Will of Edward Henderson, New London Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, dated 16 February 1731, and proven 7 April 1732 (Will Book A, p 360); Will of James Adams, Londonderry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, dated 2 December 1740, and proven 27 October 1741 (Will Book B, p 101).

^{lxxi} Phyllis Neill Gryder, 1980, “Neill, 471”, in *The Heritage of Iredell County*, The Genealogical Society of Iredell County, Statesville, North Carolina 28677, pp. 430-431.

^{lxxii} C. Richard King, 2002, *James Clinton Neill: Shadow Commander of the Alamo*. Eakin Press.

^{lxxiii} *Neill to O'Neill*. 1730 (April 10), "Ireland records," images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSN1-6Q4W-Z?view=fullText> : Apr 2, 2025), image 99 of 608; . Image Group Number: 008088372. Original in Volume 63-64, Page 175, Memorial 43094.

^{lxxiv} William Neill, Memorial ID 37179573, www.findagrave.com. He was born 1740 in co. Antrim Ireland and died 8 April 1785 at Baltimore, Maryland. He was the son of Adam Neill and Janet Holmes, and married Isabella Callender; see, Rev. Edward Duffield Neill (1823–1893), *John Neill, of Lewes, Delaware, 1739, and His Descendants*, Philadelphia, 1875. Adam Neill was born in 1683 in Kilraughts, co. Antrim, near Ballymoney; died in 1762 in Balleney, co. Antrim, in Armoy and near Coleraine. The family were 'Scotch Presbyterians' who were early settlers from Scotland to Macdonnell, Earls of Antrim lands (pp. 57-58). "Our family has always been Presbyterian" (p. 61); see, *Ulster Muster Roll of 1630*. In Dunluce barony (which included Kilraghts parish) in 1630, there were four Neal militia from "MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim's British tenants": Adam, William, William, and Henry. Additionally, there was John Neal from Cary barony from "MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim's British tenants on his natives land"; see, FTDNA kit #84679 from this Neill family in the O'Neill Project under haplogroup R-M222, <https://ulsterhistoricalfoundation.com/genealogy-databases/muster-rolls-ulster-2>

^{lxxv} John Neill, Memorial ID 77344720, www.findagrave.com. John b. 1740 Chester Co., Pennsylvania, son of William Neill (b. 1711) and Sarah Falls.

^{lxxvi} William Neill, Lurgan drapers' petition, Friday, May 28, 1762, p. 3, *Belfast News-Letter*, www.irishnewsarchive.com

^{lxxvii} William Jolliffe, *Historical, Genealogical, and Biographical Account of the Jolliffe Family of Virginia, 1652 to 1893*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1893, p. 176.

^{lxxviii} [Virginia] Land Office/ Northern Neck Patents & Grants, Title: Land grant 6 October 1750. Creator: Neill, William, grantee. Creation Date: 1750 - 1006 Description: Location: Frederick County. Description: 400 acres beginning on the north side of Opeckon Creek. Source: Northern Neck Grants G, p. 424 (Reel 292). Original survey exists (LVA Accession LOI 108). Source: Virginia State Land Office Northern Neck Surveys Reel No. 17. Part of the index to recorded copies of land grants issued by the agents of the Fairfax Proprietary between 1690 and 1781 and by the Commonwealth between 1786 and 1874. Original and recorded surveys are also indexed when available. This land was surveyed for John NEILL on 28 November 1749, and the folder for that survey indicates that the grantee, William NEILL, was a son of John NEILL.], https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma990008586590205756&context=L&vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&lang=en&search_scope=MyInstitution_noAER&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Correspondence from J. Michael Frost, 26 May 2021.

^{lxxix} [Virginia] Land Office/ Northern Neck Patents & Grants, Title: Land grant 29 September 1766 Creator: Neill, William, grantee. Creation Date: 1766 - 0929 Description: Location: Hampshire County. Description: 232 acres on the south side of Great Cacapehon River. Source: Northern Neck

Grants N, 1766, p. 244 (Reel 295). Original survey exists. Part of the index to recorded copies of land grants issued by the agents of the Fairfax Proprietary between 1690 and 1781 and by the Commonwealth between 1786 and 1874.

https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma990008586600205756&context=L&vid=01LVA_INST:

[01LVA&lang=en&search_scope=MyInstitution_noAER&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=LibraryCatalog&query=any,contains,william%20neill&sortby=title:](https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma990008586600205756&context=L&vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&lang=en&search_scope=MyInstitution_noAER&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=LibraryCatalog&query=any,contains,william%20neill&sortby=title:)

Correspondence from J. Michael Frost, 26 May 2021.