

THE FAMILY OF KEE

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SCATTERED THROUGHOUT the United States and Canada, and still to be found in considerable numbers in the northern counties of Ireland, is a family spelling its name *Kee*, but which traditionally is a branch of the McKees.

Amongst the present day Kees there are varying traditions and theories as to the origin of the name, but the predominant tradition seems to be that the name was originally McKee, and that their ancestor came from Scotland to the north of Ireland.

In the present brief account I refer to some of these traditions and theories, and mention a few of the branches of the Kees.

Some years ago the Genealogical Office at Dublin made a search for me of the existing records they had of the name, and in their report to me they said this :

“The records of this office contain a great deal of material on the name MacKee and variants, which is undoubtedly the original form of Kee. MacKee is an anglicization of the Gaelic name ‘MacAodha’, which is a very common surname, especially in Ulster and Connaught. There are several distinct families so called. In County Galway MacAodha was of the same stock as the O’Flahertys, while some of the MacKays of Strathnaver, a well known Scottish family, are probably to be found in the north of Ireland”.

Mr. William Elbert Kee, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a great-grandson of William and Elizabeth Kee who came from Northern Ireland, probably County Tyrone, to settle at Hagerstown, Maryland, about 1804, has written me as follows :

“According to tradition our name was prefixed with “Mc” or “Mac” at one time and was dropped for some unknown reason.

A member of the County Donegal branch of the family, Mr. Percy Hugh Kee, of Ballybofey, County Donegal, wrote :

“The Donegal Branch, as far as I know, came originally from Scotland, but at this time they carried the Mc before their name McKee. There are still second cousins of mine called McKee living at Carricklee, Strabane, County Tyrone”

A Miss Gladys Kee, a school teacher at Laghey, County Donegal, wrote :

“I have heard the story that the Kees were a clan (family) in Scotland which quarrelled and came over to Ireland and dropped the “Mc” and settled down here”

The tradition as to the Scottish origin of the family is very wide-spread amongst the branches.

The late Mr. James Alexander Kee, of Virginia, Minnesota, whose grandfather, James Kee had emigrated from County Tyrone and had settled near New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada, before 1850, wrote me that the Kees had,

“Migrated from Scotland to the north of Ireland”.

The late Mrs. Margaret Kee Attwood, of Ottawa, Canada, whose grandfather, David Kee, had emigrated from Clintagh, County Down, to settle at Ormestown, Quebec, in 1840, wrote me this :

“ About the Scottish origin of my family, I have nothing definite to give. I do not know what reason my father had for saying that his family came from Scotland ”.

Miss Jennie A. Kee, of St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, whose great-grandfather, George Kee, had emigrated from County Tyrone to New Brunswick in 1820, said that :

“ It is interesting that the family originally crossed over from Scotland ”.

The late Mr. Hunter Kee, Phm.B., of Marlinton, West Virginia, whose great-grandfather, George Kee, emigrated from near Strabane, County Tyrone to near Wilmington, Delaware, before 1785, wrote :

“ Some generations before my great-grandfather's day, his forebears came from Scotland to Ireland, but we have no records as to when this migration took place ”.

Another member of the West Virginia branch wrote :

“ As I have heard the story a younger son of the laird of Largg in Scotland fled to Ireland during the religious persecutions ”.

Mrs. Annie Hamilton, of Donemara, County Tyrone, a descendant of Robert Kee, of Gortaleck, County Tyrone, living about 1800, wrote me that the Kees

“ Came with King William at the Battle of the Boyne ”.

Mr. F. Kee, of Trillick, County Tyrone, whose forebears came from County Donegal, also wrote me :

“ Yes, I heard my father say we originated from Scotland ”.

The writer's own particular branch of the family which came from County Tyrone and settled in Peel County, Ontario, Canada, in 1830, also had the tradition that the name was originally McKee, and that the family had come originally from Scotland to Ireland.

Dr. Fred Kee, of Stranorlar, County Donegal, sent me a report on the Kees of County Donegal prepared for him by the County Donegal Historical Society.

Since I found their report to be very interesting I would like to refer to several passages from it :

“ According to Hill's *Plantation in Ulster* (1877) the McKees, or Mackies, were once a numerous sept in Wigtonshire, and he refers us to Patterson's *Galloway Lands and their Owners*, pp. 318, 462. He mentions this in a footnote relating to a grant of lands in the Mountcharles district made by James I to Sir Patrick McKee. It is very doubtful if this particular individual ever came to Ireland for he cashed in on his grant by alienation ”.

“ From the early 17th century we have one family at least, in the County of Donegal, who were definitely of Scottish origin. These were the Ballindrait-Cavanacor family of Kees. They were described in the Civil Survey of 1656 as Scottish Presbyterians 1656, Richard Kees, son of George Kees, claimed a freehold in Ballindrait. So did a John Kees, a brother or uncle 1689, Thomas Kees and Frederick Kees figure prominently in tradition and record relating to the Siege of Derry. They were engaged in the defence of the city, and their home at Cavanacor was used by James II as his H.Q. 1766 Roger

Kees and his wife Alice (both of Lifford) figure in the will of Mary Barry in relation to lands in the Ballindrait area. So does John Kees of Strabane, Gent”

“Hill tells us that in 1877, variants as above, were quite numerous throughout Ulster, and some of them may have been descendants of :

1656 Hugh Mckey and Daniel Mckey, Scottish Protestants, who claimed a fee farm in a section of Tirkernovan, Parish of Donoghkeedy, barony of Strabane, as heirs of Daniel Mckey, dec'd ”.

The Historical Society does not however overlook the possibility of an Irish origin for the family for they also say :

“There is also the likelihood that Kee, in some instances, is a variant or anglicization of the old Donegal sept of Herenach, MacAoidh, who were medieval custodians of Church lands in the Dunfanaghy-Carrickart district ”.

In dealing specifically with the County Donegal Kees they mention still another possible family connection :

“In 1733 John and James Kee, Yeomen, of Killinacurry, parish Donagheady, County Tyrone, together with the Rev. Mr. McGhee, of Strabane, took a lease from Lord Mountcashell of the townland of Meenagrave, in the manor of Corlecky (See rentals in P.R.O. Dublin) ”. “The McGhees were resident in the nearby townland of Dooish from the middle of the previous century. Unfortunately they know nothing about themselves now One fact however that remains is that there is, inside the lower gateway to the graveyard, a tombstone bearing the McGee coat of arms Another fact may well be a relationship between these early Kees and the Rev. Mr. McGee”

In connection with these McGees, or McGhies, Burke in his *Landed Gentry* says that they were descended from a John Maghee, a native of Scotland, who came from Balmaghie, in Galloway, in 1610, and settled at Strabane, County Tyrone.

Mention has already been made of Hill's reference to Sir Patrick McKee. The following excerpt is taken from that same work :

“MacKee of Laerg : Laerg in the parish of Minnigaff was long known as the estate of the principal family of the MacKies or McKies ; but although Sir Patrick is here styled as of Laerg, the property had passed from his hands Many settlers of this name appear to have come to Ulster from that district and they are numerous represented throughout several of our northern counties at the present time”

The well known *Book of Mackay* also says that :

“Sir Patrick McKie and his successors heavily mortgaged the barony of Larg in the interests of the Solemn League and Covenant. During the religious persecutions that followed three leading McKies were condemned to death. All escaped however but with the loss of their lands”

The late Mr. Hunter Kee, of Marlinton, West Virginia, wrote :

“We have a tradition that has been handed down through almost ten centuries in our branch of the Kee clan that I will give you for whatever it is worth. My great-grandfather gave it to his children and it has come down to us in this form : When William, Duke of Normandy, won the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and thereby became the ruler of England, the followers of King Harold, who was slain in the battle, escaped and went to the north part of Scotland and Ireland. Great-grandfather put a great deal of stress on the fact, as he believed,

that he was a descendant of the heroes of the King at the Battle of Hastings and it seems that he was as cocksure of that as it was possible to be sure of anything".

The West Virginia Kees seem to have been full of traditions and theories as to their early ancestors.

The Honourable John Kee, of Bluefield, West Virginia, an attorney there and for many years a State Senator and later a member of the United States House of Representatives, wrote this :

" In making a search as to the Kee family I have discovered that this was a very old family originating in England. The name Kee came from the fact that the founders of the family were originally treasurers to the King. In other words, they carried the ¹key which was at that time spelled ' kee '. The family divided in England and a part of them went to Scotland where they became the Kay family. A part of them went to Ireland where they retained the original spelling of the name, to wit Kee. Those who remained in England adopted the modern spelling of Key".

This is all very interesting but the Honourable John Kee was a great-grandson of Aaron Kee, who emigrated from near Strabane, County Tyrone, before 1785 and settled at Wilmington, Delaware, moving thence into the present State of West Virginia. The traditions in that family do not correspond with this theory.

As a matter of fact, the late Mr. Hunter Kee, whose recollections we have already mentioned wrote this :

" It seems that my family at one time bore the name O'Kee. I have forgotten, if I ever knew, the reason for the prefix ' O ' but I think it was for a political reason even then, which was three hundred years before my grandfather's time, as he said the ' O ' was dropped about 1400".²

There are also a number of families of the name of McKee in Northern Ireland who have a tradition to the effect that four brothers McKee came from Scotland to Ireland with the forces of William of Orange and fought at the Battle of the Boyne. It is said that one brother returned to Scotland but that the other three brothers settled in Ireland, apparently in Counties Antrim and Down.

In the Churchyard at Carncastle, County Antrim, there is or was an ancient ³monument to McKee dating back to 1706 which shows as the coat-of-arms of these McKees three bears' heads couped, as their crest a cross pattee, and as their motto, ' Concordia '.

Future research may yet solve the problem as to the origin of the Kees of Northern Ireland but the excerpts here given at least outline some of the traditions and theories.

The best established of these certainly indicate that the name was in fact McKee, and that the family came at some period from Scotland to Ireland.

¹ This odd tradition meshes neatly with the circumstance that one sept of the McKees in North Ireland has employed a device of a key and the motto *Ne eam in me verte* for perhaps two centuries. This translates as " Turn it not against me ".—R.W.M.

² This account seems indeed blurred. The prefix O' invariably was a clan appellation down through uncounted centuries, and the O' would not have been dropped except under the menace of English law, so that such a cropping would probably not have occurred earlier than the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, during either Elizabeth's or James I's reign.—R.W.M.

³ Armorial bearings were confirmed to John Reginald McKee in 1912 by the Ulster King of Arms, based on this monument of his Boyne veteran ancestor. They are reproduced in this present volume, as are the arms cut on the monument of Robert McKee in 1756 in this same Carncastle Parish Graveyard.—R.W.M.

There is also a strong possibility that they fought for William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne, and that they were Presbyterians.

As to the part of Scotland from which they came, the only tradition seems to be that linking them to Larg, or certainly to the Galloway district.

The writer of these notes has, after considerable difficulty, received from the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Edinburgh, a grant of arms to himself, and to the descendants of his grandfather, Joseph Kee, which are based upon the ancient arms of the McKees (or Mackies) of Galloway. The patent granting these arms recites :

“That by tradition the family, originally McKee, came from Larg, Minnigaff Parish, Kirkcudbright, during the religious persecutions of the Stuarts”,

and the patent goes on to declare that the grantee and his successors are,

“amongst all nobles and in all places of honour, to be taken, numbered, accounted and received as nobles in the noblesse of Scotland”.

The Coat of Arms thus granted to this branch of the Kee family are described as :

“Argent, a raven sable, accompanied by two pheons of the second ; on a chief azure, a lion's head affrontee of the first between two martlets or ; above the shield is placed a helm befitting his degree with a mantling sable, doubled argent, and on a wreath of the liveries is set for crest a raven sable grasping in his dexter claw an arrow paleways, point downwards, sable, feathered argent, and in an escrol over the same this motto, Labora”.

The late Mr. John Lyon Kee, of Buffalo, New York, who had emigrated from County Tyrone in 1910, and who was a great-grandson of one Robert Kee, a farmer at Gortaleck, County Tyrone about 1800, wrote this of the Kees generally in Ulster :

“Take a map of Ulster. In the few miles between Donemara and Strabane lived all the Kees I ever heard of in Tyrone or Derry. They were all cousins of Father All were farmers with occasional excursions into other lines. They were Presbyterians and Liberal Unionist in politics The only other Kees I heard of were several families in County Donegal who claimed relationship with us, but no one bothered just what”

The Kees in County Donegal appear to have been members of the Church of Ireland, at least for the most part, but, as we have already seen, their founders settled in County Donegal from County Tyrone.

At the moment I am not prepared to guess when the ‘Mc’ was dropped from the name. We have already seen that the Civil Survey of 1656 showed a family of Scottish Presbyterians of the name of Kees living in County Donegal at that time.

The problem is to determine whether “Kees” and “Kee” are the same family.

The earliest actual reference I have so far is in 1733 when John Kee, and James Kee, yeomen, of Killinacurry, parish Donagheady, County Tyrone, took a lease of lands at Meengrave, County Donegal.

These two were brothers, and would probably have been born before 1700 ; there seems to me a strong possibility that they were connected with Hugh Mckey and Daniel Mckey, the Scottish Protestants who claimed a fee farm in the parish of Donoghkeedy, barony of Strabane, as heirs of Daniel Mckey, deceased, in 1656.

The Genealogical Office found a reference to the will of James Kee, of Meenagrave, County Donegal, farmer, probated in 1762, so he probably died about that year.

The County Donegal Historical Society says that Thrift's Index of Wills shows the probate in 1762 of John Kee of Meenagrave, so it would appear that both brothers died in the same year.

In 1768 and 1771 Patrick Kee, of Meenagrave, and George Kee, of Meenagrave, claimed the right to vote as freeholders.

The Genealogical Office has a record of the probate of the will of Patrick Kee, of Meenagrave in 1798, so he apparently died about that time.

The information I have from the present Kees in County Donegal indicates that this Patrick Kee was a son of John Kee and that George Kee was a son of James Kee.

It also appears that this Patrick Kee had a son, William Kee, living at Meenagrave about 1800, and that George Kee had a son, John Kee, who was a freeholder at Meenagrave.

As the County Donegal Historical Society says :

“ By this time the family had spread out over the two parishes, for Thomas Kee of Maghercorn (1774-1825) was the father of William of that townland, and his descendants still reside there ”.

Of the same generation as the John Kee and James Kee who settled at Meenagrave in 1733, and possibly a brother of theirs, there was a William Kee, a farmer at Revernat, County Down. According to the Genealogical Office he left a will probated in 1768, so he probably died about that year.

In the next generation there was a William Kee, who was a farmer at Gortaleck, in Donagheady parish, County Tyrone. According to the Genealogical Office he left a will probated in 1783, so he probably died about that year.

We have a record also of the probate of the will of a Rose Kee, of Gortaleck, County Tyrone in 1787, and one would wonder if this might not be the widow of William Kee.

In their search for wills the Genealogical Office found the probate in 1797 of the will of a William Kee, a publican, of the suburbs of Derry, and in 1834 that of a Margaret Kee, widow of William Kee, of William Street, Derry.

A search of the Land Register Index from 1739 on, unfortunately, was not of much help as to these early Kees.

We did discover in the Index for County Down in 1799 a deed of partition of lands at Clintagh, County Down, between Deborah Kee, formerly Brown, widow of Matthew Kee, and their sons, Matthew Kee, James Kee, John Kee and William Kee. The witness to that deed was a Robert Kee, linen merchant, of Ballymurphy, County Down.

In the Registers for County Tyrone we found a conveyance of lands in 1834 at Maghrecolton, in Ardstraw parish, given by one Matthew Kee to the Marquess of Abercorn.

In the remainder of this account I want to mention very briefly some of the main branches of the Kees, and I do this in the hope that it may be of assistance to some Kees in the future who are interested in their ancestry.

THE KEES IN COUNTY TYRONE

Most of the present day Kees living in County Tyrone seem to be descended from a Robert Kee, who was a farmer living at Gortaleck, in Donagheady parish shortly after 1800.

He was married to a Miss Dunbar, of Plumbridge, and they had six children : Matthew Kee, David Kee, Robert Kee, William Kee, Molly Kee and Maria Kee.

I know nothing of Matthew Kee as yet. David Kee however was a farmer at Donnemara, was married to Elizabeth Lyon, and had two sons, William Kee and John Kee. William Kee did not marry but John Kee (1836-1917) became a printer in Donegal town and had a considerable local reputation as a poet, several books of his verse being published. He married Harriet Seaton Baird, the daughter of Dr. William Baird, of Donnemara, and had two sons, Robert J. Kee, of Strabane, and John Lyon Kee, who emigrated from Ireland in 1910 and settled in Buffalo, New York. In this account I have already quoted from his letters to me. This John Kee also had a daughter, Anne Kee, who carried on the printing business in Donegal.

Robert Kee was a farmer at Gortaleck like his father. He had a daughter, Nancy Kee, who married Samuel Laughlin, of Gortaleck, and their daughter was the Annie Hamilton, from whose correspondence I have quoted in an earlier part of this account.

William Kee was also a farmer near Gortaleck, and most of the present Kees in that area are his descendants. One of his sons, Hamilton Kee, had a large family of boys, some eleven in number I understand.

Many branches of the County Tyrone Kees emigrated to the United States and Canada, and perhaps we should mention some of them.

THE KEES OF WEST VIRGINIA

There were Kees settled at an early date in the present State of West Virginia.

In the Census Returns of 1782 for Virginia we find in Surrey County the names of Charles Kee, James Kee, Robert Kee, William Kee and Sarah Kee, and in Sussex County the name of John Kee.

In the Returns of 1784 we find the names of James Kee, Robert Kee and William Kee.

In the Returns of 1782 for Orange County there is also a Simon Kee, but in the 1784 Returns the name is given as Simon Key.

The late Mr. Hunter Kee, of Marlinton, West Virginia, wrote that he always understood that about 1785 five Kees came out together from Strabane, County Tyrone, and landed at Wilmington, Delaware. Two of these, John Kee, and George Kee, were brothers. The other three Kees, James Kee, Aaron Kee, and another whose name has been forgotten, were also brothers and were cousins of John and George.

Many years later, Margaret Kee, a sister of James and Aaron Kee, also came out to America with her husband, John Boggs, and their children, and they settled in the present State of West Virginia.

There was also a tradition that a nephew of the original settlers also came to America at a later time.

Nothing seems to be known of the original settler, John Kee.

His brother George Kee is said to have been the youngest of the emigrants. He became a merchant at Franklin, West Virginia, married a Miss Buckleys, and died in 1863 at the

age of ninety-four. They had five children, Joshua Kee, John Kee, William Kee, Andrew Kee, and Hannah Kee.

Joshua Kee and Andrew Kee are said to have had daughters only. William Kee is said to have been a farmer near Marlinton, West Virginia, and to have had a number of children. The second son, John Kee, was born in 1809, married Hester Gwin, and died in 1885. They had some eight children, James Kee (a Captain of Infantry for Virginia, killed in the Civil War), Lucinda Kee, Lewis Kee, Samuel Kee, Dallas Kee, Susan Kee, Hester Kee and Aaron Kee. The last named also served in the Civil War and was the father of Hunter Kee, Phm.B., of Marlinton, West Virginia, from whose correspondence I have already quoted.

One of the original settlers, James Kee, lived near Marlinton, West Virginia, did not marry, and died in 1830.

His brother, Aaron Kee, was also a merchant at Franklin, West Virginia. He was married in 1799 to Catherine Friend and they had John Kee, Joseph Kee (who settled in Illinois), Margaret Kee, and James Kee.

John Kee was a farmer in Lewis County, West Virginia, and was the father of Jasper Newton Kee, who in turn was the father of the Honourable John Kee (b. 1874) of Bluefield, West Virginia, whom we have already mentioned.

We have already noticed Margaret Kee, the sister of the original settlers. She was born near Strabane, County Tyrone, in 1770, was married to John Boggs, and came to America in 1806. They landed in Pennsylvania with their children, James, Nancy, Aaron, Joseph and Isabella, and eventually settled near Franklin, West Virginia.

It is said in this branch of the family that “. the mother of Margaret, Aaron and James Kee was a Morgenthau, born on the Isle of Wight, west of Ireland, and who moved to Ireland when she married”

THE KEES OF MARYLAND AND WEST VIRGINIA

About the year 1804, or earlier, William Kee, and Elizabeth, his wife, sailed from Ireland, apparently from either County Tyrone or County Derry, and settled near Hagerstown, Maryland, moving later to near Morganstown, West Virginia.

They apparently had four children, William Kee (1805-1882), Nancy Kee (1807-1888), John Kee, and James Kee (1813-1886).

William Kee married and with Elizabeth, his wife, settled in 1853 in Illinois.

James Kee was married in 1834 to Mary A. Knight, and was for many years a local preacher in the Methodist Church. They had five children, Elizabeth Kee (1835-1896), Lindsay Morgan Kee (1836-1897), Sarah Jane Kee (1839-1892), Mary L. Kee (1842-1877) and Amanda Kee (1845-1920).

Lindsay Morgan Kee was married in 1860 to Mahala Hopson, and they had four children, Ida May Kee (b. 1861), James Robert Kee (b. 1864), Frances E. Kee (1866-1933), and Lindsay Morgan Kee (b. 1869).

This Lindsay Morgan Kee was married in 1891 to Mary Evelyn Powers and had a large family, the eldest child of whom was William Elbert Kee, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to whose correspondence we have referred.

THE KEES OF NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

In 1820 four Kees, three of whom were brothers and the other a cousin, came from near Strabane, County Tyrone, to the Province of New Brunswick, Canada, and settled near St. John.

The two cousins were each named George Kee, and each was born in 1796. One branch of the original Kees died out, but one settled in York County, where there are said to be still descendants, and one moved to Queen's County, where there are also descendants; the third remained in St. John.

In 1869, James Kee, who had been born in St. John in 1849, moved to Boston, Massachusetts, and in 1875 went on to settle in Chicago, Illinois. One of his sons, Mr. C. J. Kee, was at one time National Grand Commander of the American Legion.

THE KEES OF COUNTY PEEL, ONTARIO, CANADA

There were two branches of the Kees from County Tyrone who settled in the present County of Peel, in Ontario, Canada, as well as one branch which came from County Down to Canada.

The County Tyrone branches were descended from two brothers.

Samuel Kee, a native of County Tyrone, was born 15th May, 1790, lived in the parish of Ardstraw, near Strabane, was converted to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in May, 1802, and was married in May, 1809, to Mary Dunlap, of Strabane, who was a relative of the American Revolutionary patriot and printer, John Dunlap, of Philadelphia. This Samuel Kee came out to Upper Canada, now Ontario, in the year 1834 with his wife and family; they settled in the present County of Peel, near a place called Sand Hill. Samuel Kee was a local preacher both in County Tyrone and afterwards when he came to Canada, and he continued in that work until he died on the 1st May, 1872. He is buried at Donneybrook, Ontario, while his wife, Mary, who died in May, 1840, is buried at Sand Hill.

Joseph Kee, the brother of Samuel Kee, also left County Tyrone in 1834 with Sarah, his wife, and their children, and came to Canada, also settling in the County of Peel. This Joseph Kee died June 14th, 1848, and his wife, Sarah, died April 25th, 1876.

Miss Annie Kee, of Donegal, who is a granddaughter of David Kee, of Larchill, Donemara, County Tyrone, and a great-granddaughter of Robert Kee, of Gortaleck, wrote me this:

“ I had heard of two brothers who emigrated to America from Strabane long years ago but further than that I know very little ”

There seems to me to be a strong possibility that these two brothers were Samuel Kee and Joseph Kee, and it may well be that they were brothers of Robert Kee of Gortaleck.

We have already seen that in 1834 one Matthew Kee sold to the Marquess of Abercorn his farm at Maghrecolton, in Ardstraw parish.

Because of the year 1834 and because of the Ardstraw parish, one wonders if there may not be a close connection here, perhaps even the father selling his farm when the two sons left Ireland.

Unfortunately time does not permit me to go into these two branches in detail. However, Samuel and Mary Kee had possibly eight children : John Kee (1810-1905), David Kee (1819-1884), Matthew Kee, Robert Kee, Mary Kee, Elizabeth Kee (1824-1914) and, it would appear, Eleanor Kee (1823-1876).

The eldest son, John Kee, had come out to Upper Canada in 1830 and was married in 1837 to Jane McKeown, who was also a native of Ardstraw, County Tyrone. They had ten children : Samuel Kee (1838-1918), Joseph Kee (1840-1919), John Kee (1842-1907), Robert Kee (1844-1922), Jane Kee (1846-1906), David Kee (1848-1911), Mary Kee (1850-1929), Matilda Ann Kee (1853-1926), Rebecca Ellen Kee (1855-1874) and William Nelson Kee (1858-1939).

Joseph Kee (1840-1919), the second son of John and Jane Kee, was married in 1874 to Isabella Crawford, and their second son, Joseph Albert Kee (1876-1950) was the father of the writer of these notes.

David Kee (1819-1884) was a farmer near Brampton in Peel County until about 1856 when he moved with his wife, Margaret Clifton, and their family to near Donneybrook, Ontario. They had seven children : David Noble Kee, M.D. (1851-1935), of Gladstone, Michigan ; Mary Kee (1850-1932) ; William John Kee (1852), of Newbury, Michigan ; Elizabeth Kee (b. 1854) ; Joseph Charles Kee (1855-1906) of Gladstone, Michigan ; Margaret Jane Kee (d. 1913), and Matthew Wesley Kee (1868-1924), of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Matthew Kee was married to Ellen Quin, and farmed for some years near Creemore, Ontario, moving later to the Province of Manitoba. They had at least six children : Mary Kee, James Kee, Samuel Kee, Joseph Kee, Robert Kee and Jennie Kee.

Dunlap Kee did not marry, but farmed and died near Creemore, Ontario.

Robert Kee left Ontario and went to the United States at the time of the Civil War.

Coming back now to the Joseph and Sarah Kee branch of the family we find that they had eight children : John Kee (b. 1813), Hugh Kee (1816-1904), Joseph Kee (b. 1818), James Kee (1821-1891), Freeborn Kee (1825-1905), Isiah Kee (b. 1830), Isabella Kee (b. 1833) and Margaret Kee (1839-1885).

Of their eldest son, John Kee, we have no record and their sons Joseph and Isiah are said to have died unmarried. Their second son, Hugh Kee was married to Sarah Waite, lived at Streetsville, Ontario, and had several children. Their son, James Kee, married his first cousin, Mary Kee, daughter of Samuel and Mary Kee, lived at Hillsburg, Ontario, and had several children. Their son, Freeborn Kee, married Alice Scott, lived at Palmerston, Ontario, and had several children.

I have already mentioned that one of the branches of the Kees who settled in Peel County came from County Down in Ireland.

This was the branch of Thomas Kee (1845-1920), who emigrated from County Down to Ontario about 1870, married Celesta Calhoun, and was a farmer near Cooksville, in Peel County. They had six children : John Kee (1882-1934) ; Thomas Kee (b. 1886) ; Susannah Kee (b. 1889) ; William Kee (b. 1892) ; Margaret Kee (b. 1894) and Robert Kee (b. 1897). There are quite a number of the name living around Cooksville, although the youngest, Robert Kee, moved to Detroit, Michigan.

THE KEES OF NEW HAMBURG, ONTARIO

Another branch of the County Tyrone Kees emigrated to Ontario, Canada, sometime before 1850 when one James Hamilton Kee married Eliza Kee and emigrated from Carmagh, County Tyrone and settled near New Hamburg. They appear to have had several children : James Hamilton Kee (1830-1890), who farmed near Guelph, Ontario ; William Kee, who farmed near Strabane, Ontario ; John Kee, who settled at Gananoque, Ontario ; Robert Kee, who emigrated to Jamestown, North Dakota ; and Tillie Kee.

The eldest son, James Hamilton Kee married Margaret Kentch, and had several children. One of his sons was the James Alexander Kee, of Virginia, Minnesota, from whose correspondence I quoted in the early part of these notes. Another son, Walter Robert Kee, lived for many years at Spokane, Washington.

The Robert Kee who settled in Jamestown, North Dakota, is also said to have had a large family.

THE KEES OF ORMESTOWN, QUEBEC, CANADA

In the early part of these notes I made mention of a branch of the Kees living in 1799 at Clintagh, County Down, and we have already seen that one branch of the County Down family came to Canada and settled in Peel County, Ontario.

Matthew Kee, who was a farmer at Clintagh, County Down, about the year 1800, had at least two sons, Robert Kee and David Kee.

Robert Kee was a farmer at Clintagh like his father and is said to have had at least eight children : James Kee, John Kee, Robert Kee, Matthew Kee, Eliza Jane Kee, Nancy Kee, Mary Ann Kee and Sarah Kee.

The second son, David Kee, was married to Martha Bateson, a relative of Sir Robert Bateson, Baronet, and they emigrated to Canada in 1840 settling at Ormestown, Quebec. Martha Kee died and is buried at Ormestown, but in the eighties David Kee, with part of his family emigrated to Humbolt, Iowa, where they settled. David and Martha Kee had a large family : Nancy Kee, Margaret Kee, Matthew Kee, Martha Kee, Ellen Kee, Mary Kee, William Kee, and Jennie Kee.

Matthew Kee (1841-1934) was married to Adelaide Hood, and lived at Ormestown, Quebec. It was their daughter, Margaret Kee Attwood, from whose correspondence I have already quoted, and a son of theirs, F. W. Kee, M.D., lived at Sheldon, Illinois.

THE BOOK OF McKEE
THE KEES OF COUNTY DONEGAL

I have so far left to be considered the Kees settled in County Donegal in Eire. As we have already seen they were settled here at least as early as 1733 when the two brothers, James Kee and John Kee acquired a lease of lands at Meenagrave. There are today quite a number of families of the name living in Donegal who are the descendants of these two brothers.

From the information which I have been able to gather together, it is difficult to connect these into one pedigree, due in part at least to the fact that so many of them bore the same names.

One of the main branches was that of the Kees of Stranorlar, County Donegal.

William Kee (1800-1882) was a native of Meenagrave, who was married at Stranorlar in 1828 to Alice Davis, of Cappy, and they appear to have had a large family : James Kee (b. 1829) ; George Kee (b. 1831) ; William Kee (b. 1833) ; Henry Kee (b. 1836) ; John Kee (b. 1838) ; Charles Kee (b. 1841) ; Thomas Kee (b. 1844) and Anne Kee (b. 1847).

I believe that all of these sons married, some of them apparently more than once and there are a great many Kees in County Donegal descended from this branch.

One of these sons, Henry Kee, appears to have married two cousins. The first was Margaret Kee, the daughter of Samuel Kee of Moyne, County Donegal, and the other was Eliza Kee the daughter of a William Kee, of Ballinacoss, County Donegal.

There are also numerous Kees living in Maghrecorn in Conroy parish descending from a Thomas Kee (1774-1825) who was settled there.

29 Third Street,
Chatham, Ontario.
March 31st, 1958.

Mr. Raymond W. McKee,
4855 East 52nd Place,
Los Angeles 22, California, U.S.A.

RE : KEE.

Dear Sir :

I returned from a golfing excursion in North Carolina to find your letter awaiting me, and had been wondering how your work was progressing. I will be anxious to see the brochure when it is released.

I do think I may have run across a clue as to the branch of the McKees from which I am descended.

You will recall that the earliest of the County Tyrone Kees I traced came from a place called Gortaleck in Donagheady parish and they were there (as Kees) at quite an early date as I have discovered that the County Donegal branch of the Kees is descended from two brothers, John Kee and James Kee, who came in 1733 from Killinacurry in Donagheady parish and took a lease of lands at Meenagrave in County Donegal. They both died in 1762.

In 1651 Hugh McKey and Daniel McKey, Scottish Protestants, as heirs of Daniel McKey deceased, claimed a freehold of lands at Tirkernovan in Donagheady parish, County Tyrone

and the Ulster Scot Historical Society believes that the Kees were descended from these McKeys, and frankly it seems more than likely to me.

In the Muster Roll for County Tyrone in 1631 the name appears of Daniell McKey as a settler of Sir William Hamilton and of Gilbert McKee as a settler of the Countess of Abercour, so it seems likely that this branch came over during the Ulster settlement under the Hamiltons. This would support the tradition that they came from the Galloway part of Scotland.

Even though I have been quiet lately, you may be assured my interest in our ancestors is as strong as ever.

Sincerely,

Sgd. D. THURSTON KEE.