

O'Connor Family

Catherine O'Connor Family

The O'Connor family of Medina Township in northeast Dane County, Wisconsin had several connections to the Northern Branch of the Kinney family. Catherine O'Connor married Edmond Kinney and is the matriarch of the Northern Branch. Her younger sister Elizabeth married Patrick Cashman and when Elizabeth died at a young age, possibly related to childbirth, her infant daughter Katherine Ellen was raised by Edmond and Catherine. Two O'Connor brothers, along with Elizabeth, probably accompanied Edmond and Catherine on the trek from Dane County to Martell in 1860. Catherine's parents, Patrick and Sarah, purchased land and briefly lived in Kinnickinnic and another probable sister lived for a time in Warren and Kinnickinnic, St. Croix County. Contact with O'Connor relatives was maintained through the second generation in northern Wisconsin, but after that it faded and only the barest outlines of the families' connections were known.

From a variety of sources, it has been possible to learn something about the O'Connor family. From the 1860 census for Dane County we know that Patrick O'Connor and Sarah Kelley, both born in Ireland, had at least eight children: John, Catherine, Patrick, Peter, Thomas, Mary, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Daniel - all were born in Canada.

The 1851 Canadian census for the township of Kitley, Leeds County, Ontario includes a Patrick and Sarah O'Connor who are likely our O'Connors, though we don't yet have absolute proof. Kitley is located along the St. Lawrence River, about 50 miles above Lake Erie. The 1851 census includes some children not found in the 1860 Dane County census, but the ages of parents and children generally match between the Kitley and Dane County listings. The Kitley census lists Patrick O'Connor, Esq., born in Ireland in 1806, occupation farmer, and his wife Sarah, also born in Ireland, in 1810. Their children are: John (21), Bridget (19), Catherine (17), Honore (15), Patrick (13), Peter (11), Thomas (9), Mary Ann (7), Elizabeth (5), Sara (3), and Daniel (2). (The Canadian census lists age as of the person's next birthday, while the U.S. census is by most recent birthday.)

The "Esq." attached to Patrick's name in the census could also be clue. In English usage, Esquire was both a formal status and an informal honorific used to indicate a gentleman and was also applied to barristers, justices of the peace and other officers of the crown. In the U.S. it has been used by lawyers. Edmond B. Kinney, in his brief note on family history, described his mother as "a daughter of a lawyer-farmer of Canada, served as clerk of her father's court a number of years and acquired some knowledge of legal terms and forms." Edmond B.'s claim has not been verified from other sources, but it is suggestive.

Patrick O'Connor was the son of John O'Connor and Sibi Hora. Sarah Kelley was the daughter Donald Kelley and Bridget Coly. It is not known where in Ireland the O'Connors came from, or if Patrick had any siblings in Kitley. The Kelleys may have been from County Tyrone. Sarah had at least three siblings.

Katherine Kelley (1805-1891) married William Judge of Doonanaroo townland in county Mayo where their oldest child was born. Their second child was born in Canada in 1830. There were a number of Judge families in Kitley in the 1851 census. Katherine and William settled in

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Osawkee Kansas in 1856. Michael Kelley (1809-1877) remained in Kitley. His death certificate gives his birthplace at County Tyrone. Younger sister Margaret Kelley (1820-1896) married Patrick Downey (1809-1869) and settled in the Bastard district of Leeds County.

It is not known for certain when Patrick and Sarah arrived in Kitley. There are no O'Connors or Kelleys in a transcript of an 1824 Kitley census, but they had arrived by 1830.

Patrick and Sarah were married on October 17, 1830 at St. John the Baptist Church in Perth, Lanark County, by Father John MacDonald. Sarah's brother Michael Kelley married Mary Kary (Carey) on the same day. William Judge and George Hanna were witnesses for both couples. At least the marriages are recorded in the records of John the Baptist. Perth is about 60 km northwest of Kitley. The Perth Parish was established in 1823, the first Roman Catholic parish in the Ottawa Valley, with Father MacDonald as curate. He also served several missions across the valley. The young couples and their witnesses may have made the journey to Perth, but more likely Father MacDonald was making one of his periodic visits to the Kitley mission. Both couples are described as being "of these missions."

The birth (Sept 9, 1831 in Kitley) and baptism (March 6, 1832) of Patrick and Sarah's oldest son John are recorded in the Perth Parish register. His cousin Donal Kelley (born to Michael and Mary on October 10, 1831 in Kitley) was baptized the same day. Several other Kitley births and marriages are recorded on March 6 and 7, so Father MacDonald was presumably on another visit. The baptisms of two of Patrick and Sarah's children are recorded in the register of St. John Bosco parish in Brockville and youngest son Daniel was baptized in St. Francis de Sales in Smith's Falls.

Kitley was surveyed in 1797 and a 1798 account reported 39 families in the township. A brief history on the Heritage Place Museum website states:

"Irishmen formed the backbone of old Kitley Township 150 years ago, and this tiny farming community boasted a fair sampling of sons of Erin (*Ireland*) along with UEL folk, some of whom came from the deep south of the United States. In the 1820's, Irish, English and Scottish settlers flooded into Kitley, helped by free passage over the Atlantic, guaranteed by the government and an offer of 100 acres of free land per family." [UEL= United Empire Loyalists, Americans who fled to Canada in the years after the Revolutionary War]

On Feb. 10, 1841 Patrick O'Connor purchased the west half of lot 27 (100 acres) of the fourth concession from the Hon. Peter McGill. The purchase price in the sale record is obscured. A concession is a term in the Canadian land survey, comparable to the range and township of the U.S. survey. (Peter McGill, born Peter McCutcheon in Scotland, was the nephew and sole heir of John McGill, a former British soldier in the American Revolution who later served at Fort York in Ontario. He held several political/government offices in Upper Canada and became a significant property owner. Peter, who changed his name at his uncle's request, was a founder of Canada's first railroad, head of the Bank of Montreal and the second mayor of Montreal.) It is not known if Patrick and Sarah were living on this property before they purchased it, or somewhere else in Kitley. Patrick O'Connor in turn sold the same property to Michael Donovan on the 6th of April 1854 for the sum of 237.10 pounds.

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According to the 1851 Agricultural Census, Patrick owned the 100 acre parcel in concession 4, lot 27 of Kitley township. He had 40 acres under cultivation: 34 as cropland, 5-1/2 in pasture and 1/2 acre of garden/orchard. The remaining 60 acres was described as "wood/wild." The cropland included 11 acres of wheat (which produced 80 bushels), 7 acres of rye (70 bushels), 7 acres of oats (30 bushels), 1 acre of buckwheat (10 bushels), 1 acre of Indian corn (10 bushels) 2 acres of potatoes (100 bushels) and 5 acres of hay. The woodlands produced 80 pounds of maple syrup. Livestock included four bulls, oxen or steers, 3 milk cows, 6 calves, 4 horses, 13 sheep and 10 pigs. The farm's other produce for the year is listed as 150 pounds of butter, 2 barrels or hundredweight of beef, four barrels of pork, and fifty pounds of wool. It was likely the women of the family who turned the wool into 15 yards of fulled cloth and 28 yards of flannel.

Michael and Mary Kelly are listed as the neighboring household in the 1851 census.

On October 19, 1854 Patrick O'Connor purchased two parcels of land from M.P. Ashley in Medina Township -- an 80-acre tract in section 22, and 15 acres in section 34. The larger parcel, where the home was located, was about one mile southeast of the settlement of Hanchetville (now Marshall). It is not known if the entire family had moved to Wisconsin at that time or if Patrick had come ahead to purchase land, but Patrick O'Coner (sic) is listed in the 1855 state census for Medina with a household of 6 males and 3 females. That accounts for Patrick and Sarah's five sons in the 1851 Kitley census but only two of the six daughters.

Patrick and Sarah sold their original 95 acres to Edmond Kinney for \$3500 on December 12, 1857. Just two weeks later, a deed from Edmond and Catherine seems to transfer the property back to Sarah O'Connor. On October 19, 1858 Patrick purchased an additional parcel of roughly 60 acres in section 15 from Ashley. The 1861 plat for Medina shows P. O'Connor as owner of all three parcels.

Patrick and Sarah O'Connor are listed as being 53 and 51 years old in the 1860 Medina census. They had two children living at home -- Sarah, 12 and Daniel, 9. Patrick is listed as a farmer with real estate valued at \$1000 and personal property worth \$100. However, judging from their sequence in the census, it appears Patrick and Sarah may have been living in the village of Hanchetville. Edmond and Catherine Kinney, their young sons Andrew and Patrick, and Catherine's brothers John and Thomas were living on the farmstead.

The O'Connors began purchasing land in Kinnickinnic in St. Croix County, not too far from where their daughter and son-in-law Edmond and Catherine Kinney had settled. Sarah O'Connor is recorded as selling a 40-acre parcel in the SW 1/4 NW 1/4 of section 1 to Henry Kean for \$800 on April 4, 1867. We have not found when she acquired the property.

On June 26, 1868 Patrick O'Connor Jr. (Patrick and Sarah's fifth child) purchased a 40 acre parcel (NE 1/4 SE 1/4 of section 2) in Kinnickinnic Township from C.D. Parker for \$400. The Kinnickinnic River flowed through the west edge of the property which was "subject to the right of Frederick Slater to install a dam to raise water to a level that will run a grist mill."

The same day Patrick O'Connor Sr. purchased lot 2 of Block "A" of Aldrich's Addition to Willow River (Hudson). He paid Sarah Hedges (Hodges?) \$525 for the lot on the west side of

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Main Street just south of Buckeye Street. Less than a year later, on June 10, 1869, Patrick sold the Lot to David M. Keen, listed as a saloonkeeper in the 1870 census. At the same time, Patrick Sr. and Sarah retained their farm in Dane County.

Patrick O'Connor Jr. and his wife Bridget sold their recently purchased 40 acres to Patrick Sr. and Sarah on October 10, 1869 for \$1000. In the 1870 Kinnickinnic census (taken on August 3rd) Patrick and Sarah are listed as owners of a farm valued at \$2000. Living with them was their youngest son Daniel, age 19, and grandson Michael Mannix.

Patrick O'Connor, Sr. died October 4, 1870. It is not known for certain if he died in Kinnickinnic or back in Dane County, but presumably it was in St. Croix County as that is where his probate case was filed. He is buried in St Anne's cemetery just outside Deerfield in Dane County. Also buried in the small rural cemetery are his daughters Sara, who died in 1864, and Mary O'Connor Mannix who died March 23, 1865.

At Partrick's death all the Kinnickinnic property passed to his widow Sarah. By the terms of his will the Medina property was to be divided between youngest son Daniel and his grandson Michael Mannix. Two years later Sarah sold the three lots in Hammond to her son-in-law and daughter Patrick and Bridget Sweeney. The Sweeneys, who had been farming just over a mile to the north in Warren Township, then purchased the 40-ares in section 2 on 12/22/1873. The Sweeney's and their ten children were living on the farm 1880.

The widowed Sarah returned to Medina where, in 1880, she was living on the old farm in the household of her son Daniel and his wife Ann Bannon and Michael Mannix, described as their stepson.

At some point ownership of all the Hammond and Kinnickinnic properties seem to have passed back to Sarah O'Connor. A deed was recorded on 10/20/1877 in which Sarah O'Connor "of Madison, Wis." sold the three Hammond lots to Michael Tierney of Kinnickinnic for a price of \$300.

In April 1883 she was granted a tax deed on the 40-acre parcel and then took out a \$200 mortgage on it from Lemuel North in June 1883. The mortgage was satisfied a year later. Thomas Hawkins eventually acquired the farm, - he is shown as the owner on the 1895 plat map. It has not yet been determined when he acquired it or if he got it directly from Sarah.

It is not known when or where Sarah O'Connor died.

What we know of Patrick and Sarah's children varies from the bare minimum given in the 1851 Kitley census to more detailed accounts based on census, church and land records, the probate of Patrick's estate, a few obituaries and some ancestry.com and other internet sources. Here is a brief summary for Catherine O'Connor Kinney's brothers and sisters.

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John O'Connor, the oldest child of Patrick and Sarah is listed as 19 years old in the 1851 census for Kitley. He, like all the male children (even 2-year old Daniel), is listed as a "labourer." In the 1860 Medina census John is recorded as a boarder in the household of Edmond and Catherine Kinney. In his father's probate records he is listed as living in Crow Wing, Minnesota. This is the last documentation known for John.

Bridget (or Brigid) O'Connor, born in 1833, is listed in Patrick and Sarah's household in the Kitley census even though she may have been living elsewhere. In the census she is listed as being married and in column headed "Residence if Elsewhere" the word "Bedford" is written in but then apparently crossed out. Circumstantial evidence suggests she was married in Canada to Patrick Sweeney, a native of Ireland, born about 1824. There were several Sweeney families in and around Kitley, but we have not been able to identify either Patrick or their daughter Ellen in Canadian census or other records.

Bridget moved to Wisconsin about 1857 (according to the 1900 census). The 1860 census for Medina, Dane County lists a Bridget Sweeney, age 26, born in Canada with children Ellen (4 born in Canada), Mary (2 born in Wisconsin) and William (5 months). Her occupation is given as "washerwoman" with real estate valued at \$100 and personal property worth \$50. (values typical for a laborer). Her sequence in the census suggests she is living in the village of Hanchetville. Her husband is not listed in the census.

By 1870 Patrick and Bridget Sweeney were living in Warren Township in St. Croix County (east of Hudson, north of Kinnickinnic). Their children were Ellen (15, born in Canada), Mary (12, born in Wis.) Rose (8), John (5), Elizabeth (3) and Daniel (6 months). William, 5 months old in the 1860 census, is not listed, presumably he had died as a child. St. Patrick's Church in Hudson records list the christening of Daniel Sweeney on 10/13/1868. His mother was Bridget O'Connor and sponsors were Patrick Cashman and Sara O'Connor.

In 1873 Patrick and Bridget purchased her parents farm a mile or so to the south in Kinnickinnic. By the time of the 1875 state census the Sweeney home in Kinnickinnic included 4 males and 6 females. In the 1880 federal census the household included Patrick (50) and Sarah (47) and 10 children: Ellen (23, dressmaker), Mary (19, working out), Rose (17, working out) John (15), Lizzie (13), Daniel (11), George (9) Jane (7) Frank (5), James (2).

Patrick and Bridget Sweeney and at least their son Frank, later moved to North Dakota. Patrick died in 1898 in Hankinson, North Dakota. Bridget died March 10/1904, also in Hankinson. Their son Frank died in 1909. All are buried in Calvary cemetery in Hankinson.

Of Patrick and Bridget Sweeney's children, the only one for whom much is known is Rose. She married Walter Butler, a senior member of Butler Brothers Construction Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. Walter, the son of Irish immigrants Patrick Butler and Mary Ann Gaffney was born in Iowa but raised on a farm in Lakeville Minnesota. He moved to St. Paul where he worked as a bricklayer and was a founding member of the St. Paul local of the bricklayers' union. In 1877 he joined his brother William to form Butler Brothers construction company. Three other brothers eventually joined the firm, with Walter serving as president. A younger brother, Pierce Butler,

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served as counsel for the firm and was later appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Butler Brothers was the main contractor for the building of the Minnesota State capital and numerous landmark buildings in the Twin Cities and several mansions on Summit Avenue. The company was later involved in iron ore mining on the Mesabi Range and shipbuilding in Duluth.

Walter and Rose were married in 1884 and had four sons and one daughter. Rose Sweeney Butler died in 1901 in Chicago at just 39 years of age. [According to her headstone and an Illinois death record, however, in the 1900 census Rose is not listed the household and Walter is listed as widowed.] Walter remarried on 10/2/1902 to Helen Wood. Walter died at 75 in 1933, Helen in 1959. All three are buried in the Butler family plot in Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul. Walter's grandson, also Walter, was married to the notorious St. Paul political gadfly and city council woman Rosalie Butler.

Catherine O'Connor, born ca. 1835 in Canada moved to Medina with the family and married Edmond Kinney in 1856. See Edmond Kinney story and chart.

Honore O'Connor, Patrick and Sarah's fourth child, is listed in the Kitley census, born ca. 1836. No further documentation has been found about her.

Patrick O'Connor, Jr., born ca. 1837, has not been positively identified in census or other records. Baptismal records at St. Patrick's in Hudson note the christening of Agnes Ellen O'Connor on July 10, 1868, daughter of Patrick O'Connor and Brigitte Sweeney. Sponsors were Daniel O'Connor and Christina Hawkins (Patrick Jr's brother and a Kinnickinnic neighbor). Patrick O'Connor, Jr purchased the Kinnickinnic farm in 1868 and then sold it to his parents. In 1869. He is mentioned in a deed as "Patrick O'Connor Jr. of Kinnickinnic." It is not known if Patrick Jr's. wife Bridget was related to Patrick Sweeney. He apparently left Wisconsin after selling the Kinnickinnic farm. At the time of his father's death in in October 1870, Patrick O'Connor Jr. was a resident of Grant County, Minnesota.

Peter O'Connor, born ca. 1840 in Canada has not been located in the 1860 census but it is probable he was in Dane County as he seems to have accompanied Catherine and Edmond Kinney on their journey to Martell in 1860. Peter, and his brother Thomas, enlisted for service in the Civil War at Prescott on Aug. 29, 1861, giving his address as Martell, Wisconsin and occupation laborer. He was assigned to Company F of the 1st Wisconsin Infantry. The initial enlistment was for three months, but the company was reconstituted and both Thomas and Peter signed up for a three-year enlistment. Company F was composed mainly of recruits from Pierce, St. Croix and Polk counties. The First Wisconsin saw significant action in Tennessee, Georgia and Kentucky, including in the battles of Chattanooga, Chickamauga and Kennesaw Mountain. Thomas was wounded at Chickamauga. Both Peter and Thomas were mustered out October 15, 1864. In the filing of his fathers will on 10/1870 Peter is listed as residing in Kinnickinnic, but has not been found in the 1870 census taken in August 1870. We know little about Peter beyond this. On September 6, 1877 a Peter O'Connor signed a land contract to purchase 80 acres in section 25 of Hudson township from what had been the estate of Augustus Wilcox – land that would later be part of Patrick Henry Kinney's farm.

Thomas O'Connor, born ca. 1841 in Canada. He was living and working on the farm with

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Edmond and Catherine Kinney in Medina in 1860 and made the journey to Martell with them. He enlisted in the Union Army with his brother Peter in August 1861 and mustered out in 1864.

[Bernard and Mary Ann both spoke of remembering or hearing about an Uncle Tom and Aunt Jo O'Connor. This Tom would have been great-great-uncle to them. Jo O'Connor is pictured in the group photo at Kate Cashman Kinney's wedding in 1903 and in a Kinney picnic photo ca. 1926. Thomas and Josephine may have had at least one daughter, Mary Amelia, born in Wisconsin circa 1870. She married Charles B. Nunan in Duluth, Minnesota in 1895. He was born in Canada ca. 1865 and arrived in Duluth in 1895 where he operated a retail grocery store. Charles and Mary had two children Agnes Mary (1897-1976) and William Alfred (1900-1975). Charles Nunan died in 1926 in Duluth. Mary O'Connor Nunan died 9/15/1950 in Duluth. [We have photos of Mary and Agnes. Mary's has an annotation in Bernard's handwriting "her mother was an O'Connor."]

Mary Ann O'Connor, born in Canada, ca. September 1844. She has not been found in the 1860 census. She married Michael Mannix in about 1859 and their son Michael was born ca. 1860. Mary Ann died March 23, 1863 and is buried in St. Ann's Cemetery just outside Deerfield in Dane County (just south of Medina). The only known record of her husband is from her tombstone inscription. Her son Michael was living with his grandparents Patrick and Sarah in Kinnickinnic in 1870 and with his uncle Daniel and grandmother in Medina in 1880. We have not been able to trace him after that.

Elizabeth O'Connor, born 1845 in Canada. In 1860 she appears to be working as a domestic servant in the household of Benjamin Copp in Madison. She accompanied Edmond and Catherine to Martell in 1860 and was sponsor at the baptism of their son Thomas in 1861. She married Patrick Cashman in 1868. See Kate Cashman Kinney story.

Sara O'Connor, born November 1847 in Canada, she was living with her parents in Medina (in the village of Hanchetville) in 1860 census. She died August 2, 1860 and is buried in St. Ann's Cemetery with her sister Mary and father Patrick.

Daniel O'Connor, born ca 1851 in Canada. He was living with his parents in Medina (Hanchetville) in 1860 and in Kinnickinnic in 1870. After his father's death in 1870, the original O'Connor property in Medina passed to Daniel. The 1876 plat map shows Daniel as the owner and he is head of the household in 1880 that includes his mother Sarah.

Daniel married Ann Bannon (born ca. 1850 in Massachusetts) about 1879. They moved to Gettysburg, South Dakota ca. 1887 (possibly after his mother died?). In Gettysburg Daniel was in the real estate business and served for a time as Register of Deeds for Potter County. He also sold insurance for the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the oldest of the "fraternal benefit" societies. Daniel and Ann had five daughters: Sarah Ellen (Sadie) O'Connor Dodd (1882-1965), Mary Gertrude O'Connor (1884-), Julia A. O'Connor (ca. 1886-), Kathryn O'Connor Mahon (ca. 1884-1944), and Agnes Rose O'Connor Stevenson (1892-1964).

Daniel purchased house in Aberdeen, South Dakota in 1906. The 1910 census shows the family living in Aberdeen with Daniel working as an insurance salesman. Daughter Julia was working

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as a stenographer, Katherine and Julia were both school teachers. Agnes was teaching in Clear Lake South Dakota

Daniel O'Connor died in 1917. Ann Bannon O'Connor died in 1928 in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Both are buried in Sacred Heart cemetery in Aberdeen. There is a photo, from about 1912, of Dan O'Connor with his nephew Andrew Jackson Kinney, who was about 7 years younger than Dan.