

Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey

Compiled by Michael E. Byczek
4x-great-grandson

Chicago, IL
michael@byczek.pro
<https://michaelbyczek.pro>

Michael E. Byczek's 3x-great-grandparents were James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn. They were married in Ireland where three of their eldest children were born prior to settling in Port Huron, MI. Documents from Port Huron verify that Bridget's parents were John Gaharn and Bridget Munford. There was a wide range of ages for James, Bridget, and their children that were recorded in various documents throughout their lives in the United States. Their exact place of birth was not listed in any known document, except for one reference to Dublin. However, that may have been an approximate location (i.e. near Dublin). It is also possible that the family sought opportunities in Dublin prior to immigration. It is unknown if the word Dublin meant the city or county.

A data science approach to analysis of Irish church records was undertaken to match all known information across three generations of the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families. The overwhelming conclusion is that James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn were from the Collinstown Catholic Parish of County Westmeath. The following verified facts were vital during the research phase:

1. Bridget's parents were John Gaharn and Bridget Munford.
2. The birth order of James and Bridget Flanagan's three Irish-born children were Patrick, Mary, and Catherine.
3. The most accurate estimate for when Patrick was born is 1858. Mary was about one year younger than Patrick. Catherine was about five years younger than Mary.
4. If Patrick was born about 1858, his parents would have been married about one year earlier (1856-57).
5. Bridget's sister Mary Gaharn lived with the Flanagan family in Port Huron. Mary was about two years younger than Bridget.
6. The best estimate for the birth of Bridget is January 1835 and her sister Mary about August 1837.
7. An accurate estimate for when James Flanagan was born is 1822-23. He was a few years older than Bridget (up to ten years older than his wife).
8. Mary, the daughter, was the informant on her sister Catherine's death certificate, which listed Dublin as the place of birth.

An initial assessment of Irish records revealed that the surnames Gaharn and Munford were very uncommon throughout the entire country. Other researchers also commented on how few documents existed for the surname Munford, suggesting that both surnames may have been phonetic. The Gaharn and Munford surnames tended to be clustered in and near County Meath, which is adjacent to County Dublin.

Analysis of church records identified a near-perfect match to all known facts about the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families from Port Huron, MI in the Collinstown Catholic Parish in County Westmeath. Collinstown is about 50 miles away from the City of Dublin. Counties Westmeath and Meath are adjacent.

Verified church records, all from Collinstown, are somewhat illegible and each surname may have been spelled phonetically (i.e. Bumfort versus Munford and Gaghan versus Gaharn):

1. A marriage took place with names that are very similar to James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn in 1855. It was previously estimated that they had been married about 1856-57.
2. A baptism for a child named Bridget Gaharn took place in 1835, which is the exact year that was estimated for her birth. The parents were very similar to John Gaharn and Bridget Munford.
3. A baptism for a child named Mary Gaharn took place in 1838 whose parents were very similar to John Gaharn and Bridget Munford. Her year of birth was previously estimated as 1837.
4. A baptism for a child named James Flanagan took place in 1829. It was previously estimated that he was born around 1822 and that he was a few years older than Bridget. If the 1835 baptism is the correct record for Bridget, that means that James was six years older. The parents of James Flanagan from this baptism record were Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey.
5. There are three baptism records for children of James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn at the church in Collinstown: (1) Patrick in 1856; (2) Mary in 1858; and Catherine in 1861. These are the only three known children born to these parents in the entire parish. These records match the names, ages, and birth order of their children. It was previously estimated that Patrick was born in 1858, Mary in 1859, and Catherine in 1864.

Michael E. Byczek submitted a DNA test in the autumn of 2024, not for genealogy but to intervene as an attorney to promote accurate historical narratives. While the DNA results on ancestry.com do not have adequate data science functionality, there was a positive match with one descendant of Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey from the Collinstown area in County Westmeath. The DNA match does not prove a genetic relationship. It does prove that two users who submitted a DNA test were, within a margin of probability, likely genetic cousins who independently identified themselves as the direct blood descendant of the same Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey from County Westmeath.

The combination of church records in the same parish across three generations, a preliminary DNA match between descendants of common ancestors, and Dublin having been listed as the only known reference to a location in Ireland suggests that on the balance of probabilities, James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn were from the Collinstown Catholic Parish of County Westmeath.

The death certificate and obituary for James Flanagan, husband of Bridget Gaharn, are the only known documents that have not been found that may have listed an exact place of birth. All other documents for the Flanagan and Gaharn families in the United States only listed Ireland for their birth, other than one death record that referenced Dublin.

Even if other possible records are found at another church or in a different county in Ireland, the possibility of Collinstown as the correct origin of the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families cannot be dismissed. It may never be known exactly where the families were from, but Collinstown will always remain a highly probable place of origin because documents from the United States do not appear to ever have included an exact location.

There are multiple baptism records for children of Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey in or near Collinstown in County Westmeath. These documents are presumed to refer to the same family versus a coincidence of multiple families with the same names.

Child	Baptized	Location (Catholic Parish)	Notes
James	8/26/1829	Collinstown	
Christopher	7/14/1831	Taghmon	
Mary	4/4/1833	Collinstown	
Patrick	2/25/1836	Collinstown	
Illegible	10/5/1839	Collinstown	name and exact date illegible

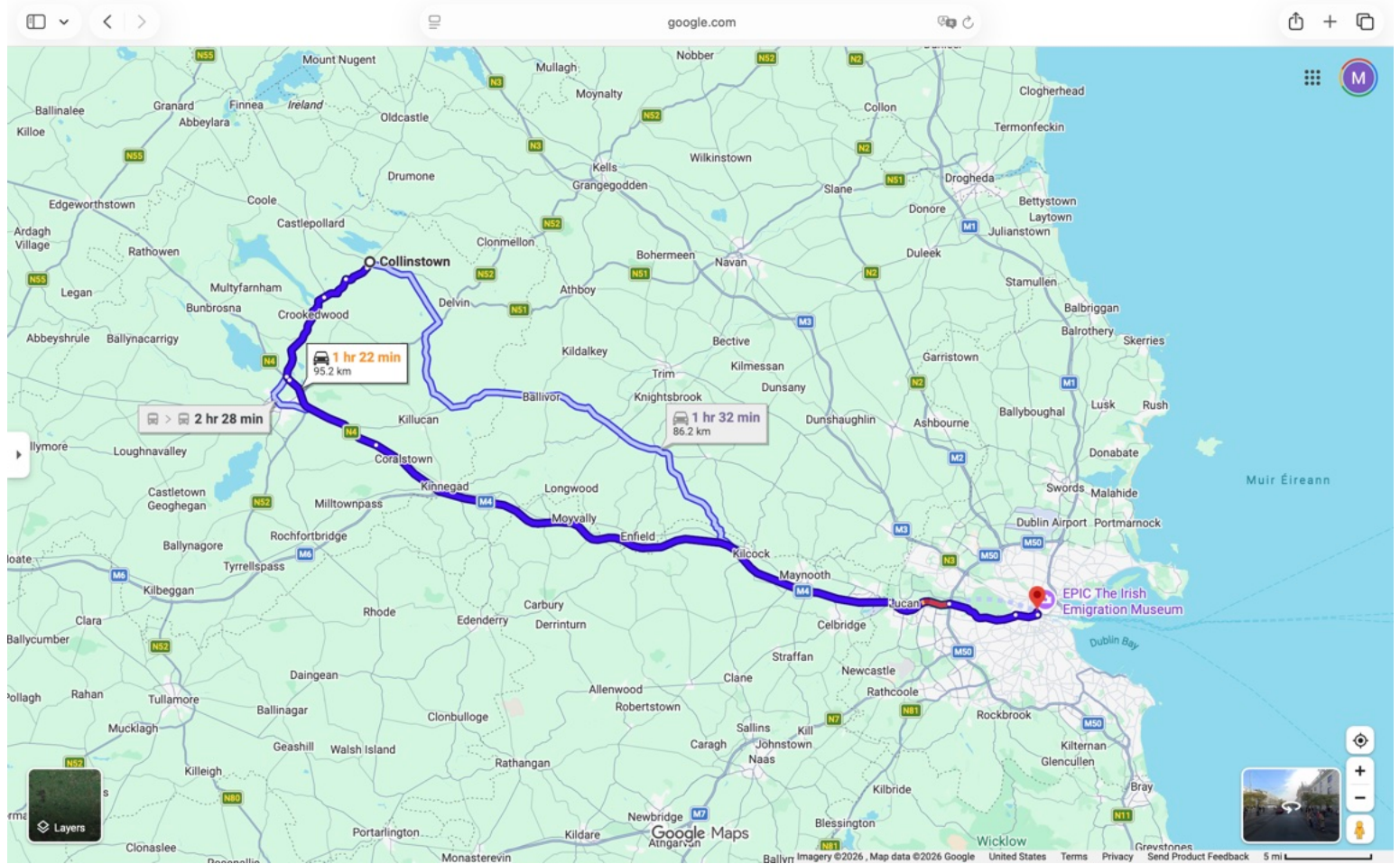
Taken together, these independent records strongly support the conclusion that the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families from Port Huron, Michigan originated in the Collinstown Catholic Parish in County Westmeath.

17th Mar. Patrick Flanagan
and Catherine Casey.
Pres.^t Patrick Casey
and Honor Foley -
1828

A marriage took place in the Coole Catholic Parish of County Westmeath on August 17, 1828
between Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey.

It appears that the Coole Parish is also known as Mayne, which is immediately adjacent to the Collinstown Parish.

Based on the year and location, it is presumed to be the correct marriage.

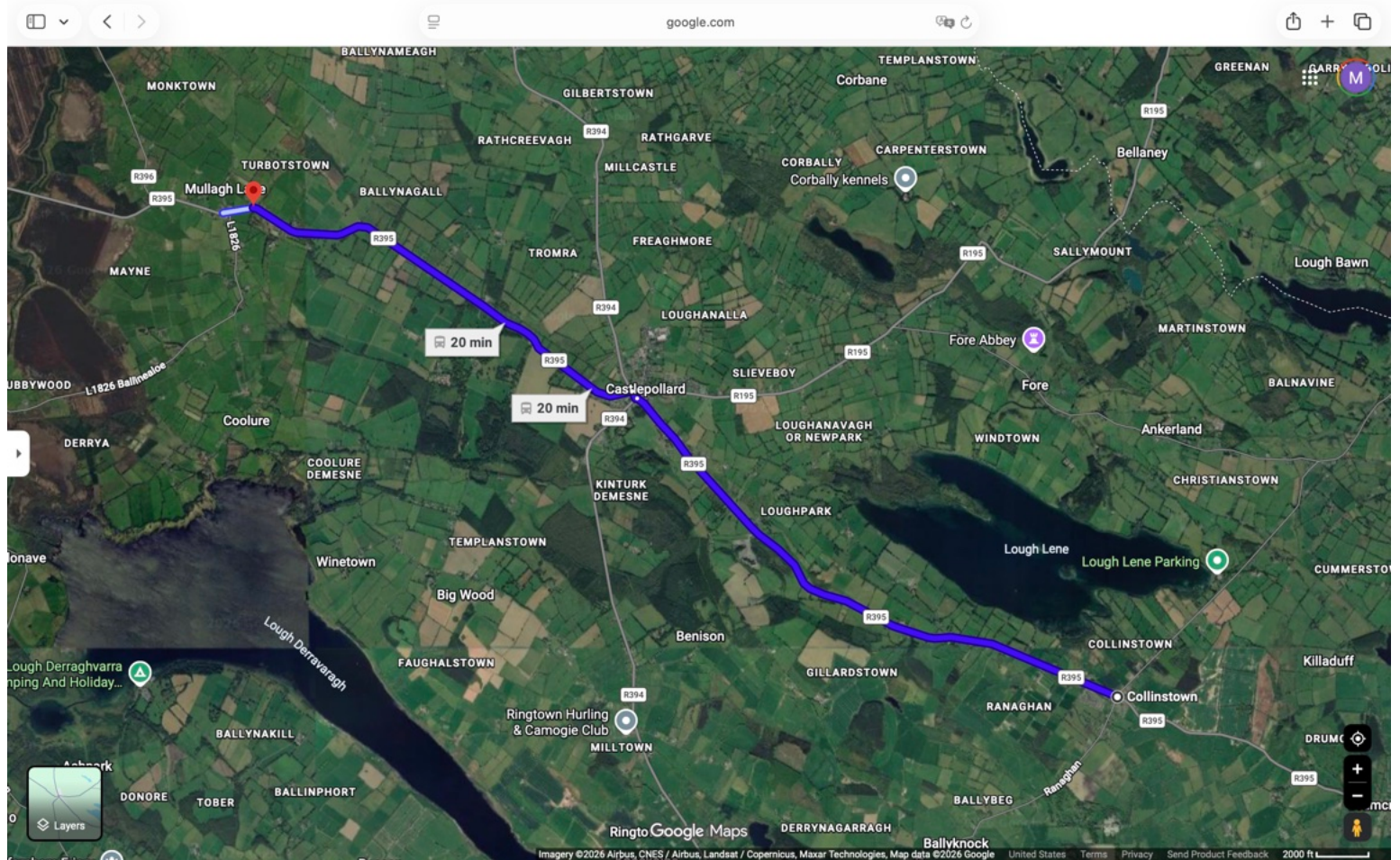


Proximity of Collinstown and Dublin
Source: Google Maps



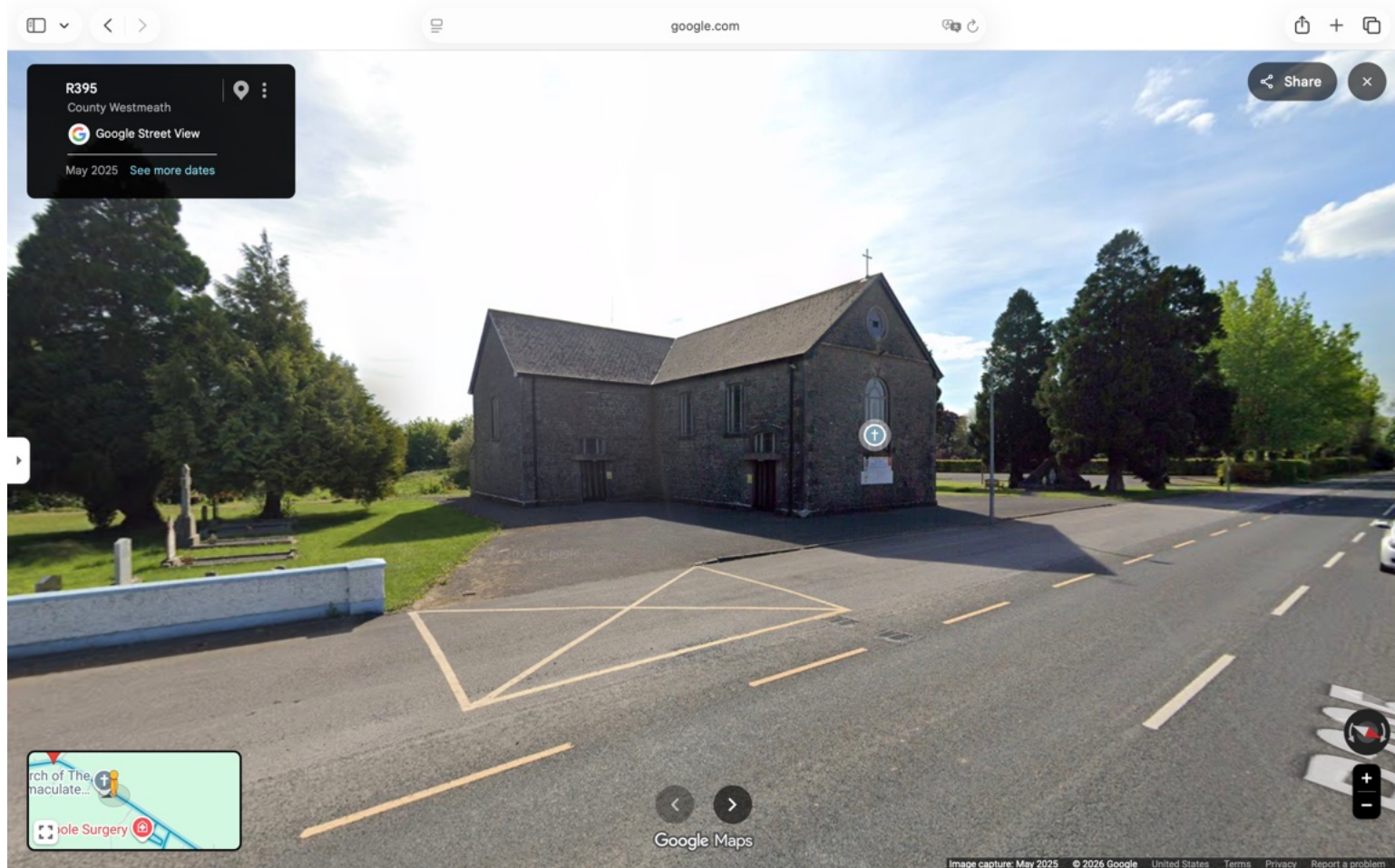
Present-day St. Mary's Catholic Church
Collinstown (County Westmeath, Ireland)

Source: Google Maps (Street View)



Proximity of Collinstown and Coole
About 7 miles

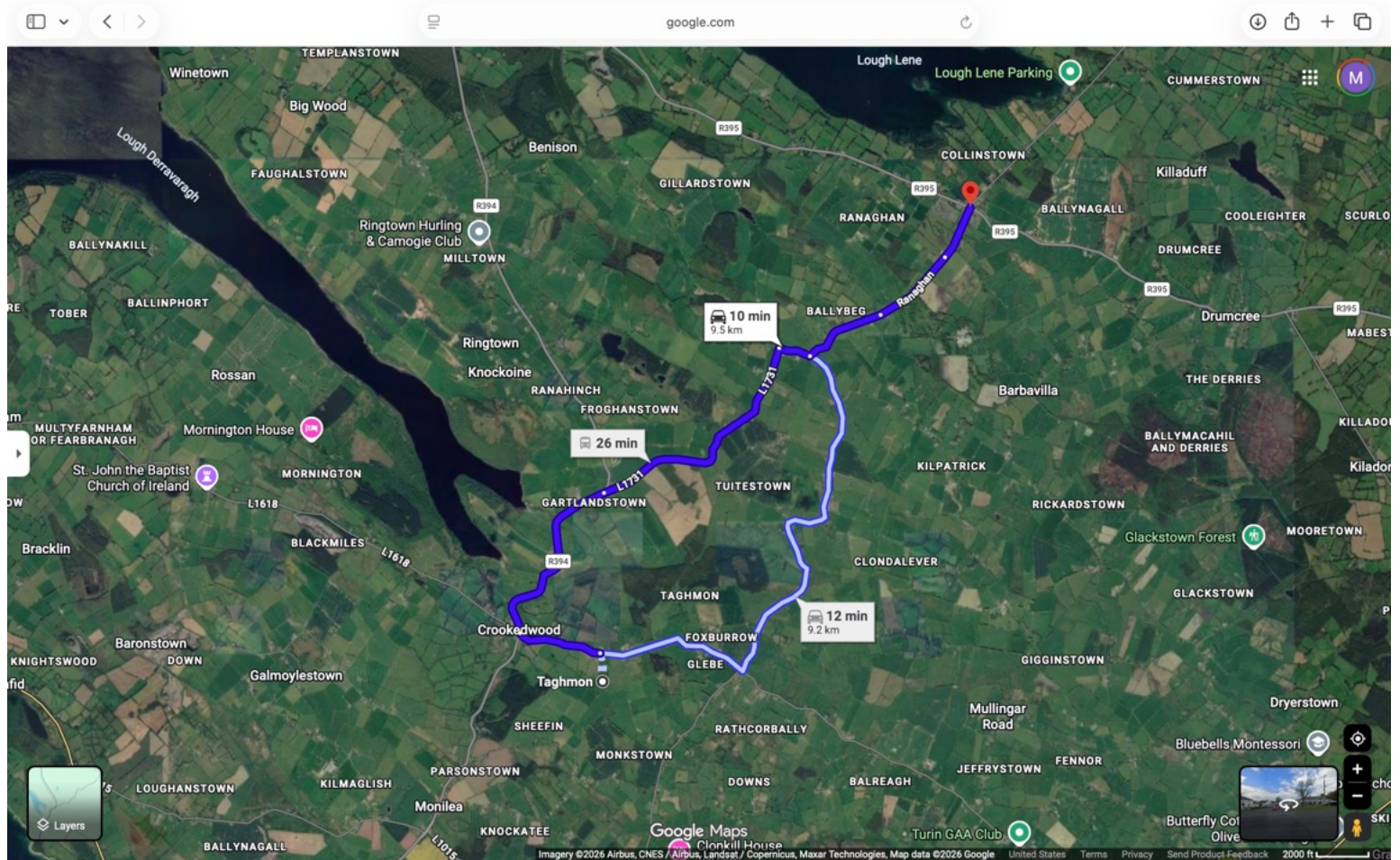
Source: Google Maps



Present-day location of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
Coole (County Westmeath, Ireland)

Note: The Coole Parish is also known as Mayne

Source: Google Maps (Street View)



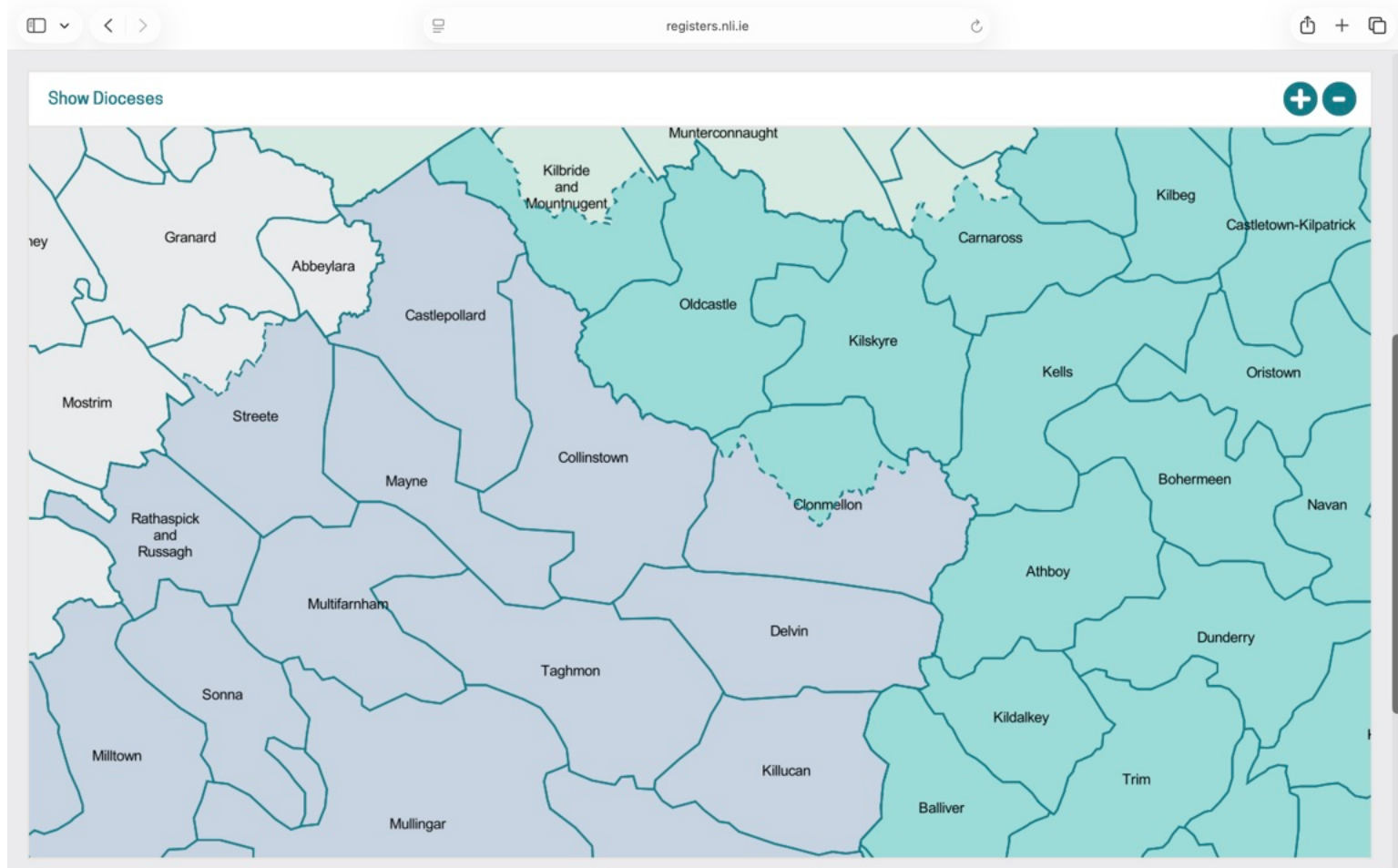
Proximity of Collinstown and Taghmon
About 6 miles

Source: Google Maps



Present-day Catholic Church of the Assumption
Taghmon (County Westmeath, Ireland)

Source: Google Maps (Street View)



Map of Catholic parishes in County Westmeath (dark gray)

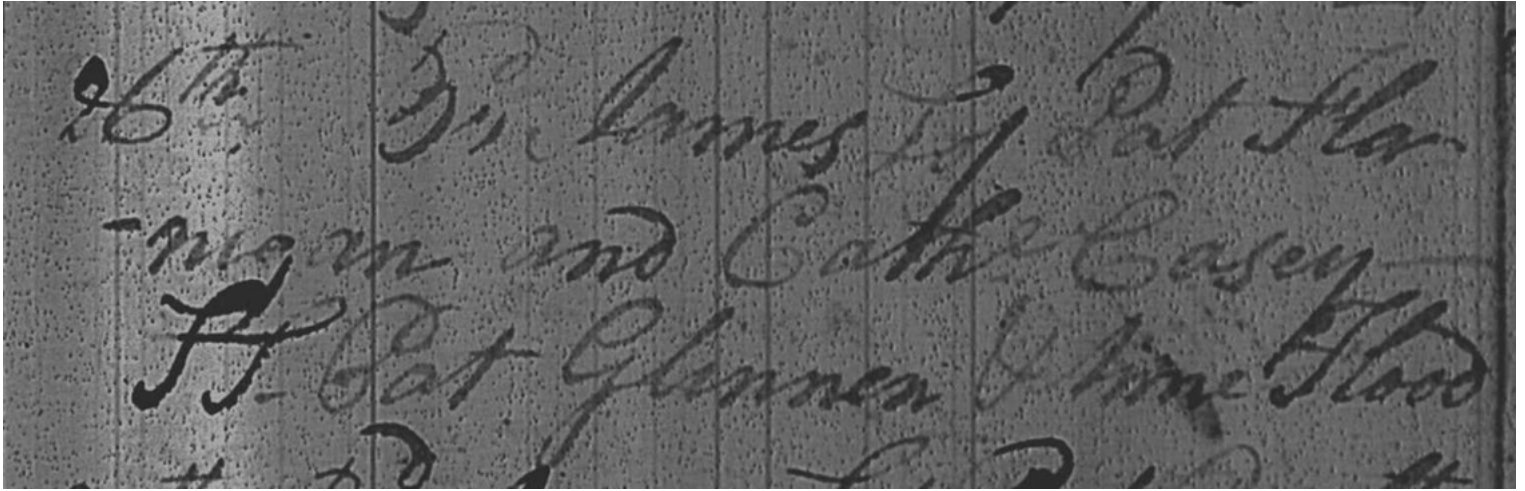
The parishes of Collinstown, Coole (Mayne), and Taghmon are adjacent

Source: <https://registers.nli.ie/>

Note: the dark green segment is County Meath
County Dublin is immediately adjacent to County Meath to the right of this image

Children of Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey

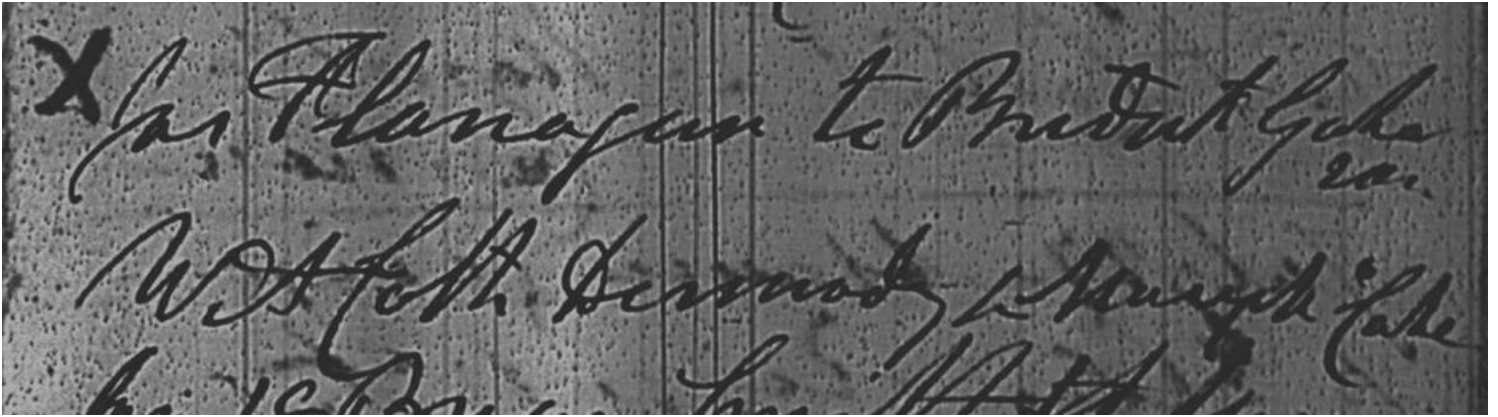
Representative documents are shown below.



Baptism of James Flanagan
Collinstown Parish
Baptized on August 26, 1829

Parents: Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey

Presumed baptism of James Flanagan who settled in Port Huron, MI after his marriage in 1855 to Bridget Gaharn



Presumed marriage record of James Flanagan and Bridget Gahan
Married on 12/1/1855
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

This marriage record is somewhat illegible.

The groom is, without question, James Flanagan.

The bride's first name is Bridget. The first four letters of her surname is "Gahan" followed by what appears to be two letters.

be made later.

Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan

Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan, widow of James Flanagan, died at her home 1113 Kearney street, last evening. The deceased was eighty-five years of age, and had lived in this city for the past fifty years. She was well known throughout this county and her many friends will regret to learn of her death. She leaves a son John Flanagan, of Los Angeles, California; also two daughters, Mrs. Catherine Hogwood, of Chicago, Ill., and Mrs. Minnie McCullough of this city. The funeral will be held Saturday morning at 8:30 o'clock, from St. Stephen's church. Interment in Mt. Hope cemetery.

Bridget (Gaharn) Flanagan Obituary
Port Huron, MI - Times Herald
1/8/1914

Note: The death certificate and obituary of James Flanagan have not been found.

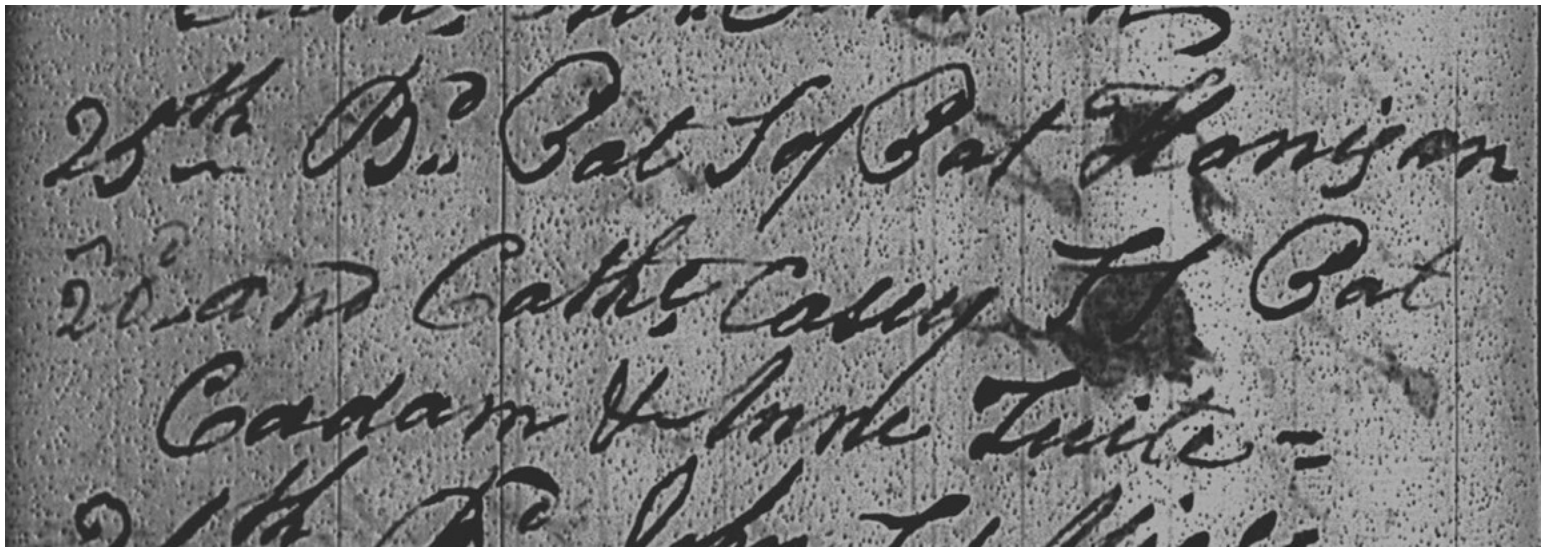
14. Bap. Michl. Carey & Co.
e. And. Carey. & Hester & Co.
P. & M. Connolly & Mary Connolly
14 Bap. Christopher Flanagan
14 Pat and Catherine Casey
14 Edw. Green & Mary Murray

1831 Baptism of Christopher Flanagan
Taghmon Parish - Village name was not listed

Note: There was a Casey baptism on the same day

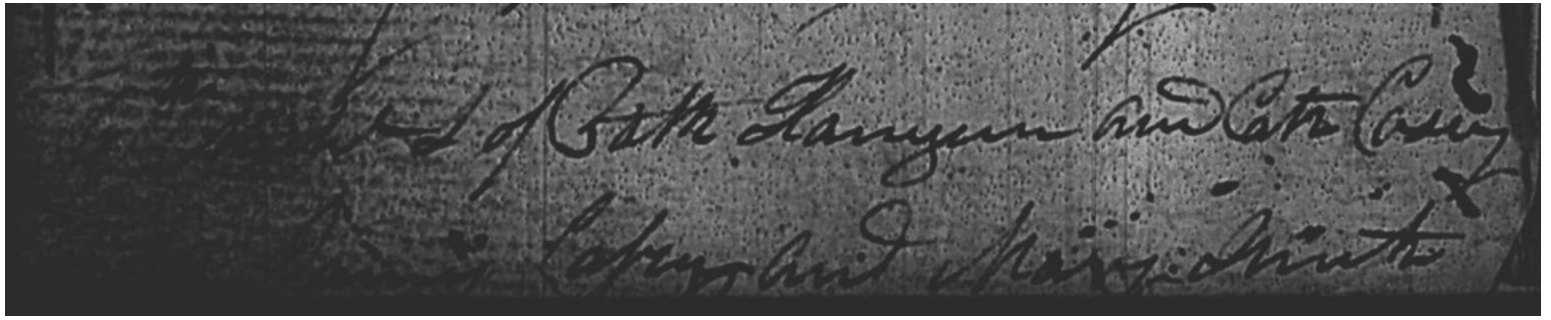
April 1833 -
The B^d Mary D^d Pat Fla
-nigan and Cath^e Casey
J^d Thos Gekerty and Cath^e
Tomsett -

1833 Baptism of Mary Flanagan
Collinstown Parish - Village was not listed



1836 Baptism of Patrick Flanagan
Collinstown Parish - Village was not listed

Illegible



1839 Baptism of a child whose name is illegible
Collinstown Parish - Village name was not listed

Additional Information

Michael E. Byczek, an Illinois attorney and managing real estate broker, has compiled original records for genealogy since 1992. Research and analysis have been published on family websites for over 30 years. A project to compile comprehensive digital, print, and video documentaries for every direct blood ancestor began in September 2024 for accurate online genealogy.

Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey are Michael E. Byczek's 4x-great-grandparents. Their son James Flanagan (3x-great-grandfather) married Bridget Gaharn, most likely in 1855 in Collinstown (County Westmeath). Their eldest child, a son, Patrick J. Flanagan (2x-great-grandfather) married Anna Kane at Sacred Heart Church in Chicago in 1886. Their second eldest child, a son, Martin J. Flanagan (great-grandfather) married Marie T. Talbot at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago in 1922. Their eldest child, a daughter, Marie C. Flanagan (grandmother) married Michael S. Byczek at St. Bridget's in the Bridgeport neighborhood in 1950. Their eldest child, a son, Michael M. Byczek (father) married Betty A. Bykowski in 1974 at St. Helen's on Augusta and Oakley in Chicago. They have two children. Michael E. Byczek is the eldest and was born in Bridgeport.

Revision History:

7/8/2026
3/8/2026
6/14/2025
12/31/2024

michael@byczek.pro
<https://michaelbyczek.pro>

Copyright © 2026. Michael E. Byczek. All Rights Reserved.