

THE MULVIHILL VOICE

Spring 2006

Issue Number One

Mulvihills Gather in Strokestown for 2nd Annual Gathering

Once again, Mulvihills from three continents expect to arrive in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon to explore their heritage, meet kinfolk, exchange stories and have a generally fun time near their ancestral tribal lands.

This year's reunion begins on Friday, July 7 at the Percy French Hotel, named for the nineteenth composer and painter. Percy French also hosted last year's gathering. With its spacious lobby, restaurant and pub, the hotel provides a relaxed and ideal environment for getting acquainted with distant and not-so-distant relatives. In addition to the hotel's accommodations, there are a number of Bed & Breakfast places in Strokestown and in neighboring communities that are very convenient for travelers.

Folks are encouraged to bring their instruments, voices and dancing shoes as an evening of music is planned, a perfect way to begin the weekend, as it was in 2005. Nothing like a little Mulvihill music on an Irish summer night!

Saturday morning's schedule includes a coach trip to Clonalais House, an historic country home, repository of documents chronicling the history of the area. It also houses the harp of Turlough O'Carolan, known as the last of the Irish bards. After lunch at Mulvihill's pub in Castlereagh, the group will tour nearby historic sites including Sliabh Ban, a hill not only steeped in Mulvihill history but also that of the Fir Bolg and the Milesians, legendary invaders of ancient Ireland. Later in the day, Clan Historian Father Cathal Stanley and Clan Chieftain James Mulvihill will both speak on Mulvihill history and origins. The day culminates with another evening of music and revelry at the Percy French, and it is guaranteed that the craic will be good!

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**"For an altar and fireside"
Ancient Mulvihill Motto**

Official Mulvihill Clan Status

In February 2006, official clan status was granted to the Mulvihill family of Ireland, it was announced by Father Cathal Stanley of Abbey, Loughrea, Historian and Chairperson for the Clan. The ancient clan system ceased to exist hundreds of years ago for most Irish families, including the Mulvihills. Within the last fifty years, a modern clan movement has emerged. More and more families are applying for recognition under the new system, especially in the last fifteen years.

The goals of Clan Mulvihill, according to its newly elected Chieftain Jim Mulvihill, are many and range from supporting each individual's quest to explore their family history over the last 200 years, to uncovering clues to the ancient

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At the 2005 Gathering

Genetic Genealogy: An Exciting New Window on the Past

By James M. Mulvihill, Chieftain

Researching family history has never been easy. Traditionally, it meant long hours pouring through dusty, illegible records at the local courthouse, or staring bleary eyed at reel after reel of grainy microfilm, only to find that the answer lies in yet the next file. The coming of the Internet made the task far easier, and opened up new horizons for study....making records available that would have been inaccessible before. As a result, more people than ever have taken an interest in their family history.

Now, just appearing over the genealogical horizon is a new approach... one that promises to have as big an impact on family history studies as the Internet. It is called Genetic Genealogy, and its promise is nothing short of astounding. This breakthrough was made possible by biochemical techniques developed during the decade-long unraveling of the human genome. It has allowed short sections of specific areas of DNA in a chromosome to be analyzed at reasonable cost. This advance was paralleled by discoveries by geneticists of key markers that are characteristic various population groups as they migrated over the last 40,000 years to cover the globe. Small mutational changes in these markers over vast stretches of time have resulted in a virtual catalog of human families.

Receiving your DNA analysis is like getting a postcard from the deep, distant past. The postmarks provide clues to your ancestor's locations at various times in the past, as well as with other associated family groups.

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The Mulvihill Voice

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Ancient Echoes

Each season we will feature an ancient site of interest to the Mulvihills as well as to anyone interested in Irish history and prehistory.

In this issue we feature a large group of sites near the Mulvihill reunion rich in antiquarian mystery, known as **Cruachan** or Rathcroghan.

Located by the banks of the Ogula River near the village of Tulsk, between Strokestown and Ballaghaderreen, this Irish heritage site encompasses 60 National Monuments including ringforts, cairns, standing stones, earthworks and ring barrows. Also, part of the complex are ruins of a medieval castle and of a 15th century Dominican abbey, as well as a holy well and crannog.

Although the prominence of its royal Celtic history is controversial, Cruachan is a legendary inauguration site and burial ground for the Kings of Connacht. A 7 ft. standing stone within a ringfort is said to mark the grave of the last Pagan King of Ireland, King Dathi. Many scholars believe Cruachan to be the ancient capital of Connacht, a veritable Tara of the west. By any measure, it was an ancient ceremonial city, a massive complex covering over four square miles with diverse sites of varying antiquity. It may constitute the largest complex of known Celtic monuments.

Cruachan, often referred to as Rathcroghan for one of it's principal monuments, is generally accepted seat of Queen Medb, known as "The Intoxicating One." It is the legendary site of the beginning and end of the epic Tain Bo Cuailgne (The Cattle Raid of Cooley), the legend of Ailill and Meab and the notorious raid on Ulster. Meab's small rath rises above the countryside and affords a wide vista in all directions, of farmland, forests, hills and sky. Visible from the center of Cruachan is the sacred mountain of Croagh Partick, site of both Christian and Pagan pilgrimages to this day. It is said there is an ancient trackway connecting the two sited, and possibly another linking Rathcroghan to Tara. (continued on page 4)



Mulvihills Gather (continued from page 1)

Sunday's schedule begins with mass at the church ruins in Urney, built by Mulvihills in 1236. Before leaving Strokestown, there will be a guided tour of Strokestown House and Famine Museum, just around the corner from the hotel. The house is a fully restored 18th century Georgian mansion complete with a walled garden complex. The adjacent museum chronicles the heartbreaking story of the tenant farmers, the politics of the time, the evictions, famine and its aftermath. The group will then travel to Athlone, a lovely town on the banks of the Shannon at Lough Ree. After lunch and checking in at the Hudson Bay Hotel and other local lodgings, there will be a tour to the nearby 6th century monastic ruins of Clonmacnois. One of the most important monastic centers of not only Ireland but of Europe, the site is comprised of cathedral ruins, two round towers, high crosses, several churches and a castle.

Enjoying the waterfront bar and the music and friendship of our clan will make for a perfect culmination of the weekend. The reunion ends the following day with goodbyes until next year over the breakfast buffet. Please join us in County Roscommon for this most memorable, educational and fun experience.

SUMMER ISSUE

- Pictures of 2006 Reunion
- Why we meet in Roscommon

Rites of Passage

Please send us your Mulvihill family announcements for the next edition. Thank you.

This spring we celebrate the 80th birthday of Patricia Mulvihill on March 26. Congratulations! She was born Patricia Mahedy in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath and married Paddy Mulvihill (1915-1979) of Coosan, Athlone, Co. Westmeath in 1946. In the photo below she is seen with her 14 children celebrating her special day. Patricia also has 53 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. Her son, Aiden, currently holds the post of Secretary for the Mulvihill Clan.

PIX

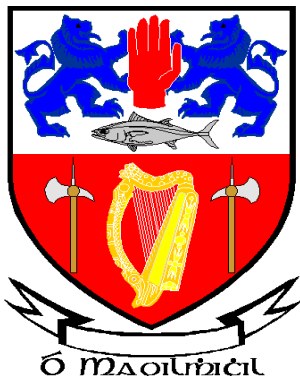
GENETIC GENEALOGY (continued from page 2)

Several broad types of DNA tests are now available, with more to come over the next several years, as costs for ever more complex assays decline. The most popular, and the one with the most direct bearing for most family history researchers, involves the Y chromosome. Alone among the 23 pairs of nuclear chromosomes that comprise the human genome, the Y is passed exclusively from father to son. This means that it tracks the use of surnames in most human societies. However, unlike surnames, which only came into common usage after 1100 A.D., the unique familial character of your Y chromosome retains your genetic "name" over millennia. So, when the paperwork trail runs out; when the written records have been lost destroyed, confused, or are nonexistent, the record inscribed with great precision on the Y remains, indelible and available.

Genetic Genealogy does have its limitations. It will, of itself, never produce a name, or a precise date. It is a comparative tool, which means that a large, broad cross-section of people must be tested and the results available for comparison, before the power of the technique can be fully utilized. To date over 150,000 people have been tested. Many more are needed, especially within Clan Mulvihill. We've just set up a website for the Mulvihill Surname Project, and four people have already signed up!

Please join us in making the most of this exciting new tool to explore our ancestry.

I will be giving a talk on Genetic Genealogy during the upcoming Mulvihill Clan Gathering in Strokestown, and will continue this discussion in upcoming issues of our Newsletter.



Clan Mulvihill Officers & Staff 2006

Chieftain:	James M. Mulvihill, USA
Chairperson:	Father Cathal Stanley, IRL
Vice Chairperson:	Joseph Mulvihill, IRL
Secretary:	Aiden Mulvihill, IRL
Treasurer:	Ultan Mulvihill, IRL
Tánaiste	
No.America:	Mary Ann Mulvihill-Decker, USA to be elected
Europe:	to be elected
Pacific:	to be elected
Membership:	Thomas Mulvihill, USA
Genealogist:	James M. Mulvihill, USA
Historian:	Father Cathal Stanley, IRL
DNA Project Dir:	James M. Mulvihill, USA

Note from the Editor:

As a third generation American, it was an amazing experience to return to the homeland of the Mulvihill tribe for last year's reunion. To hike up Sliabh Ban, to gaze out over the territory of our ancestors at the same green lands below, to see ruins and sites where trod our foremothers and fathers was inspiring beyond words. Over one hundred and forty years ago my great-grandfather Patrick Mulvihill left Woodford for life in the new world. Little could he imagine that I would find so much love for the land of his birth and would seek the descendents of those he left behind. To have found them is a priceless treasure—and I count the weeks until we return to the kinship of Clan Mulvihill

Ancient Echoes (continued)

Cruachan is situated on a limestone plateau which overlays many coves and fissures. Cave of the Cats, long known as *Oweynagat*, is a modified limestone cave over 130 meters deep. Considered through the centuries to be an opening to the Otherworld, it's mouth has a man-made stone passageway of orthostats, lintels and drystone walling that connects to the natural cave. The entrance has been formed into a souterrain with two lintels bearing Ogham inscriptions. The cave has long been associated with the goddesses Morrigan and Crochan Croderb, apparently for who the site was named and said by some to be the mother Medb.

It is interesting to note that Morrigan has widely been associated with ravens and with war. Perhaps there is a long forgotten connection with our family, for our warriors were of legendary prowess and we are told that Mulvihills are descended from the MacBrennans (in Gaelic Meic Bran-an). Bran was a raven; very popular in Irish and Welsh folk tales.

It's proximity to the Mulvihill reunion reminds us that Cruachan is very much within our ancient tribal range. Our ancestors must have been associated with some of these enchanting mysterious sites.

A small visitor center in Tulsk is open 7 days a week from June-October, 10am-6pm, at the intersection of the N5 and the N61. It is recommended to take a guided tour of it's principle monuments as some of the sites are now on private property and necessitate explanation to appreciate. Extended guided tours are also available by arrangement. The visitor center has a café and gift shop and is accessible to people with disabilities. See www.cruachanai.com or call 353 78 39268 for more information.

Dedication:

Each edition of The Mulvihill Voice will include a dedication to a particular Mulvihill.

I hereby dedicate this first issue to William Patrick Mulvihill(1923-2004) of Sag Harbor, New York, my beloved father and mentor.

He inspired my love for Ireland and for my Irish heritage. A dual citizen, he had a deep love for all things Irish. His grandfather Patrick was born in Clonmoylan, Woodford, Co. Galway in 1846 and set sail for NY as a teenager. Patrick fought in the Civil War, lived a time in Oregon, then settled in Connecticut, had 11 children and became a hatter.

My father William was an author, history and creative writing teacher, environmentalist and peace activist. He fought in Germany in WW 11, raised two girls, traveled extensively and wrote many novels and essays. His novel **The Mantrackers** (also published as **Serengeti**) has been optioned to be filmed on location in Africa.

We miss him dearly. Were he still on earth, he would be a very active member of Clan Mulvihill, its activities and endeavors.

Mary Ann Mulvihill-Decker, Editor and Tanaiste

Clan Official Status (continued from page 1)

migrations of distant relations, probing the deepest ancestry of the clan. Investigating ancient legendary material is also of great interest to the clan's leaders as this holds clues to such matters as the formation of the clan as part of the Corca Achlann tribe, our relation to the Brennan sept of Roscommon and the Mulvihill's alleged descent from Niall, high King of Ireland in the 4th century to name a few.

Protecting and safeguarding cultural traditions and ancient sites, both pre-historical and historical, is of great importance to the Mulvihills. For as rapid change sweeps Ireland, sites that hold secrets of import to all Irish clans and families are in grave danger of destruction from business and modern development at a pace never seen before. Nearly safe for millennia, the "march of progress" threatens to obliterate priceless archaeological evidence for future generations.

The clan is of course also a social group and seeks to create a global family, enjoying each other and working towards common goals. The annual gathering is a great example of this. The clan seeks new members who will contribute their knowledge while gaining a deeper appreciation of their own family history. For genealogy is much more than names and dates. It creates a narrative that gives depth and meaning to the stories of our forbearers and our own as well.

