

Genealogy Basics –Field Trips are Worthwhile!

By Joe Petrie

Introduction: My Prior Field Trips:

Years ago, long before the World Wide Web, whenever possible I made local field trips to the New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS) in Boston; National Archives and Record Service in Waltham, Massachusetts Archives in Boston; Family History Library in Foxborough MA (now located in Franklin MA), and local libraries that had books that I could not borrow through inter-library loan – books like Voters lists. I even went to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

I always thought that I learned a lot while on Field Trips. But for some reason, I stopped doing field trips. I blame it on old age.

My parents were from Cape Breton Island, NS. Every three years I visited my aunts in Halifax and in Dominion. While there, I went to the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and the Beaton Institute.

One year, my wife and I went to the Newfoundland Archives. While we were in in Newfoundland, we went to Bay Bulls, Northern Bay, Carbonear and Harbor Grace, places where my Newfoundland ancestors were from.

Another year, a son and I went Moncton NB to visit Stephen A. White at the Centre d'Études Acadiennes, Moncton University, in search of information on a maternal great grandfather's third wife, a Landry. (Stephen was documenting the Landry Family.) My son and I visited cemeteries in Cape Breton. He did a rubbing of my great grandfather Petrie's grave stone at the Pioneer Cemetery in Dominion.

My brother and I, on our first trip together to Nova Scotia in over 50 years, read every grave stone in three cemeteries in North Sydney – where our maternal Tobin, Ormond and Dooley ancestors are buried.

Background:

Currently, I am concentrating on free consults at Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood MA. I try to schedule them in April and October each year. Until this year, I usually did two a day on two days a week. This October, because of health issues, I cut back to one a day two days a week.

Doing consults is time-consuming. We usually run out of time. At all of the consults, I offer to drive the researcher to the Friends of Irish Research site (henceforth Friends). Last month, I stopped driving at night due to my health issue. One researcher (henceforth Mark) was really impacted because he is unable to drive. Mark went with me almost every Friday night to Brockton for over a year. (I missed a lot of nights for vacation in Florida and recuperation from injury.) Mark is very patient!

On 23 October 2015, Mark was the researcher for my free consult at the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood MA. We started to work on his mother's families. He printed out Marriage Registers, Birth Registers etc. We found 3 generations for one of his families.

It was a day for discoveries. One of the discoveries was that his Carr grandmother was buried in Canton MA. (Canton abuts Norwood.). Another was that his grandmother's Coveney parents were also buried in Canton MA. (I suggested that they were buried with the Carrs.) A third discovery was that a record for the Coveney head stone was on Canton's Old St Mary's RC Cemetery database on the Friends web site.

The latter discovery was especially surprising because on-line cemetery records in Massachusetts are rare. Catholic Cemetery records are even rarer.

Mark and my Field Trip to St Mary's Cemetery in Canton MA:

Mark and I met at the library last Friday by accident. A researcher failed to attend the scheduled consult appointment. I was still at the library discussing an internet problem when Mark appeared. I suggested that we go to the Old St Mary's cemetery in Canton to see his great grandparents' grave stone. After a moment, he told me he was willing. Neither of us were prepared for what we found at the Coveney family grave site in Old St Mary's – the New St Mary's is on the other side of Randolph St.

Our findings:

The photo below is of Mark next to the Coveney grave stone, I did not have a tape measure but I'd guess that it was 10 feet high.



The Coveney grave stone was impressive. Mark's great grandfather, Edward Coveney, an immigrant from Ireland must have been wealthy enough to invest in it. I believed from the inscription that he really loved Anna Duffy Coveney who died young at age 45. It looks like he owned enough plots for twelve people.

It took a while to find the grave stone. The section information from the Friend's database was not usable. There were no cemetery section markers. Mark and I split up and walked the Cemetery counter clockwise starting where we parked my car. (The perfect route would have been clockwise because the grave was on the side that abutted a church – and only about 50 yards from where we parked.)

By the way, the Friends database was created in 1993 but just recently digitized. In the Friends database, there were records for Anna Duffy Coveney, and two sons: Dennis and Daniel. The Friends database had no other names. I believe that there are eight more names, four names on each of the two other sides. I counted 11 names on the base's four sides. (There may be 12 but one of the four sides was almost unreadable.) Mark's great grandfather Edward Coveney is not listed on the grave stone. Oversight?

A photo of the inscription is shown below. It says: "Erected by Edward Coveney in memory of his beloved wife Ann Coveney, Died Nov. 30, 1881, Aged 45 yrs."



The US Census for 1870 and 1880 show that Edward and Anna had 8 children -7 males and 1 female. Mark's grandmother was Margaret.

- James, 1856
- John 1858
- William , 1859
- Edward, 1860
- Margaret, 1864
- Dennis, 1866 - 1887
- Daniel, 1867
- Francis, 1878 - 1894

The following photo of side 2 (moving clockwise) shows that Dennis and Daniel died young. Both were young adults.



Dennis died of an accident. He died in Boston City Hospital on February 3, 1888.

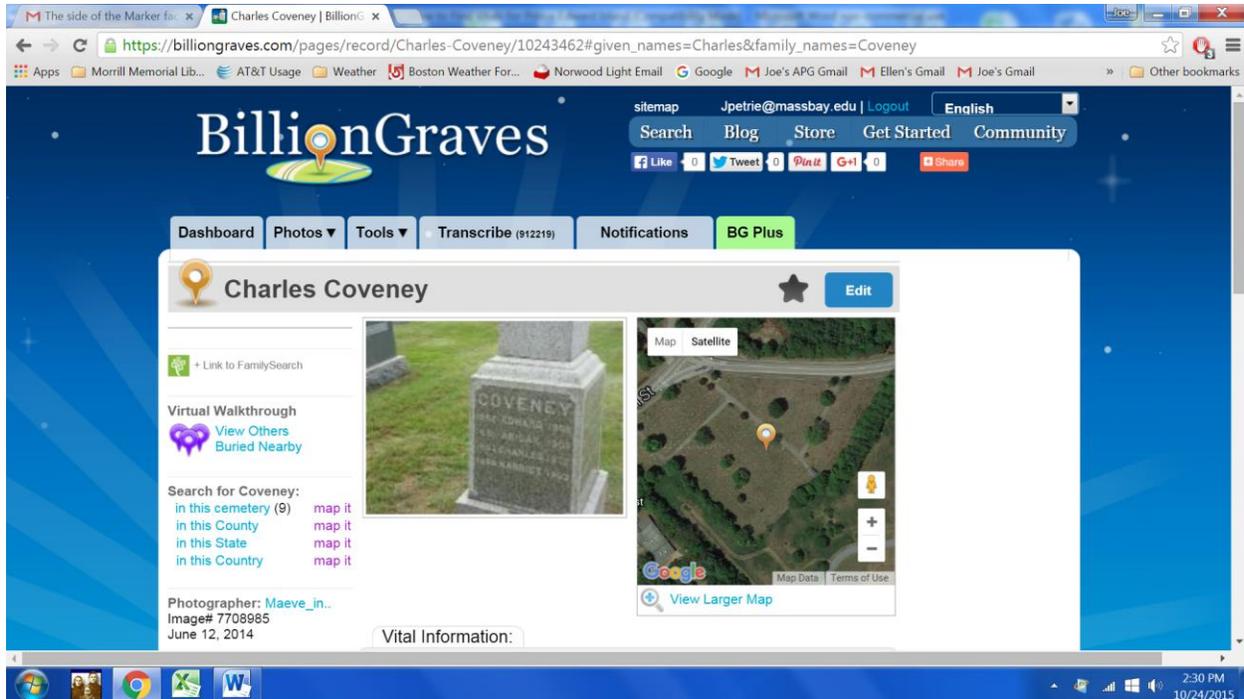
David died of Phthisis, a condition usually associated with TB, on May 22, 1894.

As I said before, the third side is unreadable. I think that it lists four people. Mark believes that it lists his Carr grandparents. I believe that there are two families listed; Hart and Carr. Hart is a new name for Mark.

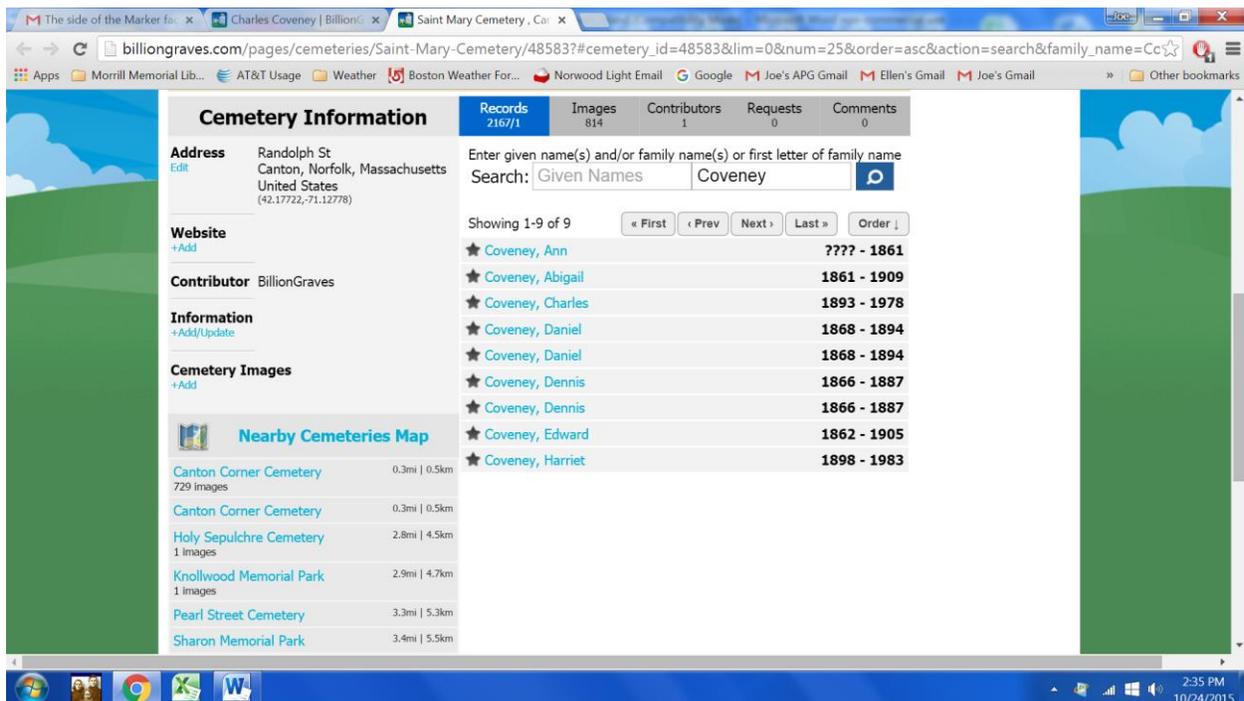
I plan to do a rubbing for Mark. I need to find an Art store with the appropriate materials.

As I write this, I think of my son's search in Cape Breton where he spent most of a morning collecting the appropriate materials.

The following screen print contains an image of the fourth side - from another database. (I wish I knew about before we left for the cemetery on a cold and blustery day because their map would have helped.)



The following screen lists the Coveney family members on three of the four sides.



Please note that Daniel is listed twice. Edward, Abigail Charles and Harriet may be of Edward and Anna's son Edward and his family. Son Edward's date of birth is inconsistent with the Census dates.

Notes about the Cemetery:

The cemetery was well kept. The grass was mowed etc.

There were a few grave stones that had tipped over. I suspect that the new Parish Administrator (who took over in September 2015) had not visited yet. My reading of him at Mass is that he is committed to keeping up all the Parish facilities. But, fallen or broken grave stones may not be in his bailiwick.

Notes about the Friends Database

I expect that Richard Reid, the Director of Friends and the Friends Webmaster, will add the names to the database. There surely is a way to amend the database to include and flag the new information. Also, there is a map on the wall at the Friends office in Brockton showing the sections boundaries. I'll suggest that Richard add the map to the items that are available for downloading. One Friends option that I especially like is the downloadable Excel file. I have downloaded it more than once.

Summary:

The Field Trip was important because Mark learned a lot from it. He was pleased! When we left the cemetery we went to the Canton Starbucks to warm up, to get refreshments and to celebrate a successful field trip - to a cemetery in the next town.

It was obvious to Mark that his great grandfather Edward Coveney, an immigrant from Ireland, was successful enough to pay tribute to his wife by erecting a wonderful monument.

One unexpected item was that Edward Coveney's name is not on the list of people enumerated on the grave stone. I suspect that he is buried there but not listed on the grave stone.

Finally, Edward Coveney is the subject of an Ancestry Public Member Tree. Please see the following screen print. I have started to browse the images of the pages for the Bandon, Cork RC Parish in the National Library of Ireland web site (nli.ie). To date, I have found one Coveney record – but it is not the record for Mark's great grandfather. (Browsing can be tedious!)

Edward Coveney
Birth 1827 in Bandon, County Cork, Ireland
Death 24 Jun 1898 in Canton, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA

Media Gallery
No photos, stories, audio or video have been added yet.

Timeline

1827	Birth	Bandon, County Cork, Ireland
1887	Residence	Canton, Massachusetts, USA Age: 60 1 Source
1898	Death	24 Jun Canton, Norfolk, Massachusetts, USA Age: 71

Family Members

Parents

- No Father
- No Mother

Spouse & Children

- Ann Duffy (1828 - 1881)
- James Edward Coveney (1856 - 1918)

Source Information

Ancestry Family Trees
This citation provides evidence for Edward Coveney

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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