

Genealogy Basics – How I Found Mom’s Tobin Family that Immigrated to Newfoundland from Gowran, Kilkenny, Ireland

By Joe Petrie

BACKGROUND:

Mom was Loretta Elizabeth Tobin. She was born in Glace Bay in 1904. Her father was William Richard Tobin, a Barrister, who was born in Newfoundland. Her grandfather was Richard Tobin, a Sea Captain, who was born in Northern Bay, Conception Bay, Bay de Verde, Newfoundland. Mom’s grandfather Richard’s Banns to marry Honora Dooley in her North Sydney home town listed his parents as Richard a Planter in Northern Bay and his wife Mary.

I had been researching my Roots for nearly 40 years. I started in a Family History Center in Foxboro MA. I also went to genealogy libraries in Massachusetts and in Nova Scotia and even in Newfoundland. My memberships included the Family History Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (FHSNL) in St John’s.

For years, I could never identify where Mom’s Tobin Great Grandfather (Richard) was born, who his parents were and where they were from.

One evening, I was reading the quarterly issue of the *Newfoundland Ancestor*, a publication of the FHSNL. There was a short article indicating that the 8 Volume set of books entitled “*The Search for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in the Boston Pilot, 1831 – 1920*” had Newfoundland Immigrants in it. (Henceforth: Missing Friends.) The set of books was published by the New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS) in Boston in 1989. The authors were Ruth-Ann Harris and Emer B O’Keeffe. Later, Ruth-Ann was identified as the Principal Investigator.

I hated to travel to Boston to the NEHGS library. Many a Saturday was spent there. The train trip to and from Boston was a chore. The cost was \$5 round-trip; fairly reasonable compared to today’s \$22 round-trip and railroad parking cost.

I called local libraries. I found the books in the Franklin Massachusetts Library. Franklin was not too far from Norwood.

I found the Tobin family using the Index in the back of each book. (Today, I can read the books at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICCNE) in Canton Massachusetts where I am a volunteer genealogy consultant.) In fact, last night, there were two volumes in the Used Books Sale at ICCNE.

I asked Edward-Vincent Chafe (a Certificated Canadian Genealogist, an author, a teacher and a former Trustee of FHSNL) to validate my find. He did! He has provided lots of records and tons of encouragement! He lives in Gull Island which is the next northern town to Northern Bay.

Finally, my eldest son recommended that I write about different ways that I find ancestors. Kudos!

INTRODUCTION:

Three organizations have databases: Boston College; NEHGS; and Ancestry.

I’ll show the results for my Tobin Family Search in all 3.

One more item: Ancestry Library has over 96,000 records as a result of indexing all names. There are almost 3600 records for Irish who immigrated to Canada or Canadian Provinces. There are no comparable figures for the Boston College and NEHGS versions.

BOSTON COLLEGE (informationwanted.bc.edu):

According to Dave Barrett, the ICCNE Librarian who is responsible for the Genealogy Program at ICCNE, Boston College’s version was first.

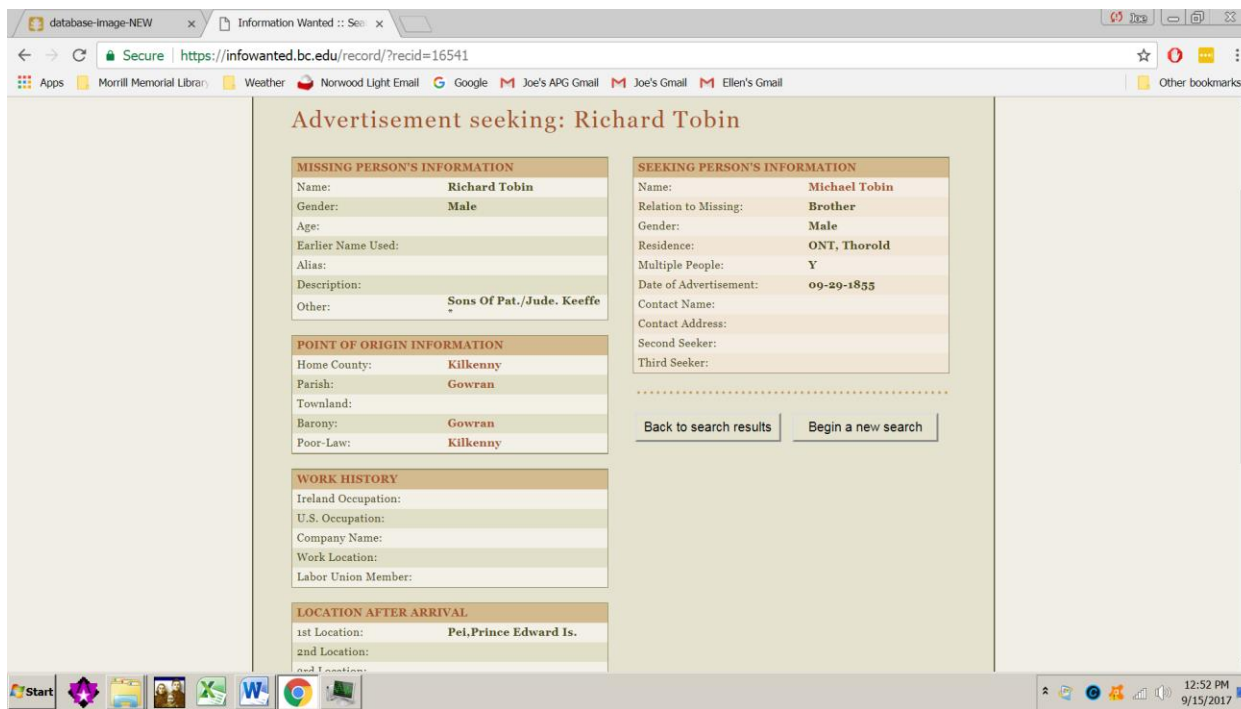
I tried to search different combinations of Tobin with First Names etc. Finally, the only way to successfully retrieve the Tobin record was to search for all Tobins.

When you compare the advertisements in the other two results screens, you’ll find the following Boston College transcription errors for my Tobin family record. The family did not land in PEI. Also, the mother’s given name (Judith) was truncated to Jude.

Goran, which Michael misspelled in his Pilot advertisement, was corrected to Gowran, a townland (or Barony) in Kilkenny.

By the way, years ago, I wrote Ruth-Ann Harris at Boston College and asked her to get the record fixed. She replied that she could not. Only computer staff could retrieve and fix the record. I gave up!

The Boston College result screen is shown on the next page.



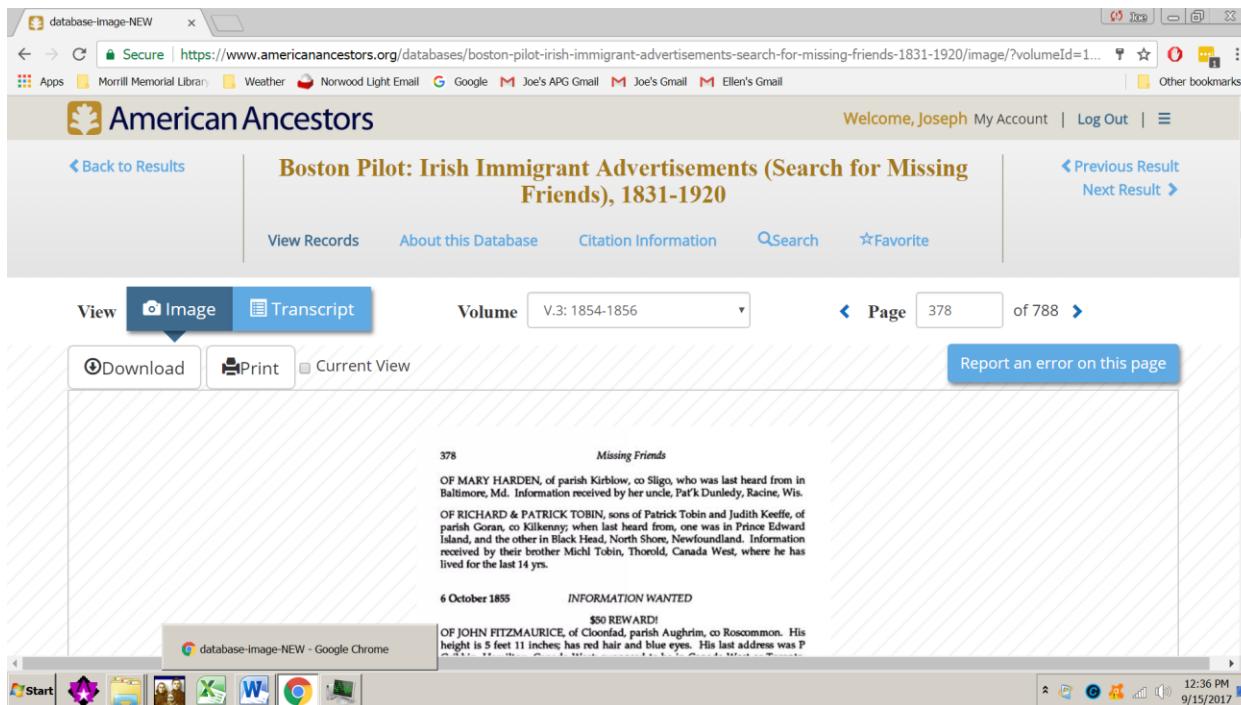
NEHGS (americanancestors.org)

AmericanAncestry is not free. Free AmericanAncestry is available in many Massachusetts and New England libraries.

The screen print is the image from page 378 in Volume 3. The publication date was September 29, 1855, which was not shown on page 378.

I could not retrieve the image from the usual americanancestors.org browse screen.

I searched for "Missing Friends" in the Browse Databases selection and was able to retrieve and open the database. Then I searched to retrieve the Tobin page. I searched for Richard, my gg grandfather, who married Mary Hogan. (I wonder if Richard and his brothers were born in Newfoundland.) I believe that Mary Hogan was born in Newfoundland. Her father William was a Planter who settled first in Ocher Point and later in Northern Bay.



ANCESTRY (ancestry.com):

Please remember that I use Ancestry Library. It is available at my local Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood, MA.

I searched for the Tobin record using the Begin Searching button on the Home Page. I entered: Richard's father Patrick (my ggg grandfather) in the First Name field; Tobin in the Last Name field; Gowran in the Lived In Field (Kilkenny was autofilled); and 1770 in the Birth Year field.

The second results record was the "Missing Friends" record. The following screen print resulted from my selecting the second results record.

The image is on the left. It is identical to the image on americanancestors.org print screen.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Ancestry.com search results for Patrick Tobin. The browser's address bar shows the URL: search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=nbY1546&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true&gss=angs-g&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=Patrick&gsfn_x... The browser's taskbar shows the Start button and several application icons. The Ancestry.com website header includes the logo and navigation links: HOME, SEARCH, MESSAGE BOARDS, LEARNING CENTER, CHARTS AND FORMS, NEW COLLECTIONS, and MORRILL MEMORIAL LIBR... The main content area displays the search results for Patrick Tobin, including a thumbnail image of a document, a table of personal information, and a "Send Your Find Home!" section. The table of personal information is as follows:

Name:	Patrick Tobin
Origin:	Goran, Kilkenny, Ireland
Publication Date:	29 Sep 1855
Relationship:	Self (Head)

The "Send Your Find Home!" section includes a "SEND DOCUMENT" button and a "View printer-friendly" link. The source information section provides details about the data source: Ancestry.com, Searching for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in "The Boston Pilot," 1831-1920 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013. This collection was indexed by Ancestry World Archives Project contributors. Original data: Harris, Ruth-Ann M., Donald M. Jacobs, and B. Emer O'Keefe, editors. Searching for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in "The Boston Pilot 1831-1920". Boston: New England

SUMMARY:

Morrill Memorial Library has both American Ancestors and Ancestry Library.

Having both allows me to validate the retrieval.

Because it is easier to use, I'd use Ancestry first. Because of a transcription error, I'd rarely use Boston College's version. There is no image to validate the transcript!

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at:

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Please note that Friends of Irish Research is the repository for my published genealogy articles in the *Newfoundland Ancestor*; and in *EZINE*, the electronic magazine of the Cape Breton Genealogy and Historical Association. (See friendsofirishresearch.org; specifically the Tabs for Publications and Joe's Free Web Sites.) I am the author of the Genealogy Basics Series.