

*HUGH CORRIGAN – A RURAL
POSTMAN
BY PETER GIBSON*

Hugh Corrigan's life, work and retirement

Hugh Corrigan was born near the village Trillick in County Tyrone on 14th June 1845. He spent all of his life, except his final year, living in the area around Trillick and the small town of Ballinamallard which is about six miles away, in County Fermanagh. Indeed, in 1872, his first appointment with the Post Office was a messenger between the two places. He was later employed as a postman and worked for twenty-eight years until he retired on grounds of ill health in 1901.

Like some other postal workers, Hugh had other employment at the same time. When he was married in 1880, eight years after joining the Post Office, his occupation was recorded as "shopkeeper". On the record the birth of his first child in 1881, Hugh was a "grocer".

It was likely that Hugh could "hold down two jobs" because other people (often family members) could carry on the business while he was working for the Post Office.

In the years running up to his retirement, Hugh lived on a small farm in the townland of Barragh, on the edge of Ballinamallard. It is probable that he was a part-time farmer, assisted by some of his children.

After his retirement Hugh leased a farm of seventeen acres in the townland of Relagh Guinness, only a mile from his previous farm, but over the county border in Tyrone. By 1913, Hugh had bought the farm under the provisions of the Land Purchase Act of 1909. This legislation gave tenant farmers the right to buy their farms, with the government providing long-term loans, if required.

Hugh's eldest son, Ambrose, ran the farm with Hugh. After Ambrose married in 1921, he and his wife, Mary, moved to Dublin where Ambrose later became a boot repairer.

By 1922, Hugh Corrigan had sold the farm and he and his wife, Margaret, had moved to Dublin to live with Ambrose.

The reason for the Corrigan's move to Dublin is not known but it may have been part of the population movement at the time that was related to the partitioning of Ireland into the Irish Free State (26 counties) and Northern Ireland (6 counties). Some people from the British/Protestant/Unionist tradition in the twenty-six counties relocated to Northern Ireland, sometimes as the result of threats or intimidation. Similarly, some people of the Irish/Catholic/nationalist tradition in the six counties chose to move to live in the Free State.

The Corrigan family may have been part of the latter group. It may, or may not, be significant that Hugh Corrigan sold the farm to James Brunt, a member of the Church of Ireland. Brunt's wider family circle owned many farms in the Trillick area.

Hugh Corrigan died in Dublin on 20th November 1922, aged 68. The cause of his death was "Acute bronchitis, Cardiac failure. Certified".

Serial family emigration

Hugh and Margaret Corrigan married in 1880 and had six children - Ambrose (b.1881), John Francis (b.1883), Teresa Agnes (b.1885), Thomas (b.1887), Mary Ann (b.1890) and Margaret (b.1895).

Three of the Corrigan children stayed in Ireland – Ambrose, John (a saddler) and Margaret who married Arthur McKegney, a grocer's assistant.

The other three children emigrated to the USA in a way that was seen in many Irish families over the decades, since the Famine in the 1840s which had caused emigration to increase dramatically. Typically, one member of the family would emigrate and, subsequently, others would travel to be with them or another family member. This pattern of serial family emigration that was often typical of the period can be seen in the Corrigan family.

Teresa Corrigan was the first of the children to emigrate, but she was not the first in her extended family. When she emigrated in 1905, she travelled to her "cousin", Ellen Donnelly, in Boston. "Cousin" is an imprecise term so we cannot be sure how close the family relationship between Teresa Corrigan and Ellen Donnelly actually was. However the two women may have had a close personal relationship because Ellen paid for Teresa's passage to America.

Teresa later moved to New York and married Robert Sweeney, who had been born in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. By the time of the 1930 US Census, they had raised six children and were living in Rockland County, north of New York City.

When *Thomas Corrigan* emigrated to the USA in 1909, he travelled to his sister Teresa who, at that time, was living in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Like Teresa, Thomas moved to New York where, in 1923, he married Rose Mulvey, a widow who had been born in Ireland.

The third member of the family to emigrate to the USA was *Mary Ann Corrigan*. In 1910, like Thomas before her, she travelled to her sister Teresa, who, by then, was in New York.

In 1914 Mary Ann married Robert Agnew, a chauffeur with a taxi company who had been born in Belfast. They had two sons and, at the time of the 1940 US Census, they were still living in Manhattan.

Conclusion

Hugh Corrigan was a rural postman who lived all but the last months of his life in a relatively small area in and around Trillick in county Tyrone and Ballinamallard in county Fermanagh. However his story, and that of his family, reflected two, differently-motivated, movements of Irish people.

Three of his six children were among the millions of Irish people who emigrated (like them, mostly to North America) in the 19th and early 20th centuries in search of a better life.

Along with his wife, his son and daughter-in-law, Hugh may have been among the thousands of people who relocated within the island of Ireland after it was partitioned in 1921.

Further reading

Dooley, Terence A. M. "Protestant Migration from the Free State to Northern Ireland, 1920-25: A Private Census for Co. Fermanagh." *Clogher Record*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1996, pp. 87–132. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/27699401. Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.

Fact Sheet: Hugh Corrigan

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> Hugh Corrigan
<i>Person ID:</i> IR1002
<i>Your name:</i> Peter Gibson
<i>U3A group:</i> Northern Ireland
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
Hugh Corrigan was born in County Tyrone (probably near the village of Trillick) about 1855. This was before the civil registration of births and no baptismal record has been found.
2: Who were your pensioners' parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
According to Hugh's marriage record in 1880, his, then deceased, father was Owen Corrigan , a farmer. The family's religion was Roman Catholic.
3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation)
No records of any siblings have been found.
Part Two: Marriage and children
1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation)
Hugh Corrigan married Margaret Farry on 19 April 1880 in Magerhalough Church, Trillick, County Tyrone. Hugh was a shopkeeper, living in Trillick, aged 25 and his late father had been Owen, a farmer. Margaret was aged 24 and lived in the nearby townland of Dreigh. Her father was Francis, a farmer. Hugh Corrigan died in the house of his son, Ambrose, in Dublin, on 20 November 1922. The cause of death was "Acute bronchitis. Cardiac failure. Certified." Margaret Corrigan (nee Farry) also died in the house of her son, Ambrose, in Dublin, on 17 May 1941.
2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

Hugh and Margaret had 6 children, all of whom were living at the time of the 1911 Census.

1. **Ambrose Corrigan** was born on 22 April 1881 in Trillick.

He married Mary McGrade in Kilskeery Church, Trillick on 08 February 1921. His occupation was farmer, as was his father's. Ambrose seems to have moved to Dublin after his marriage and his father, Hugh, died there at his home in 1922.

Ambrose became a boot repairer. He died on 20 August 1942 in Dublin.

2. **John Frances Corrigan** was born on 07 February 1883 in Trillick.

John was a saddler.

3. **Teresa Agnes Corrigan** was born on 27 June 1885 in Trillick.

On 5 May 1905, Teresa arrived in Boston on board the SS Corean that had sailed from Londonderry. A servant, she was travelling to her cousin, Ellen Donnelly in Boston. Ellen had paid for her passage.

On 2 October 1911, Teresa arrived in New York on board the Caledonia that had sailed from Londonderry. She was travelling to her brother, Thomas, in New York.

On 16 May 1915, Teresa married Robert Sweeney (who had been born in Enniskillen) in Manhattan, New York.

In 1920 Robert, Teresa and their three children (Elaine, aged 3 years 6 months, Robert, aged 1 year 11 months, and Alfred, aged 4 months) lived in the Bronx, New York. Robert was a carpenter.

In 1930, the family lived in Piermont Village, Rockland, New York. Teresa had given birth to four more children – Margaret, George, Vincent and Charles.

4. **Thomas Corrigan** was born on 20 June 1887 in Oghill, near Ederny, Fermanagh.

On 11 October 1909, Thomas, a farmer, arrived in New York on board the SS Astoria that had sailed from Londonderry. He was travelling to his sister, Teresa, in Yarmouth Port, Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

On 9 September 1923, Thomas married Rose Mulvey (a widow who had been born in Ireland) in Manhattan, New York.

5. **Mary Ann Corrigan** was born on 15 May 1890 in Oghill, near Ederny, Fermanagh.

On 1 May 1910, Mary Ann, a laundress, arrived in New York on board the Caledonia that had sailed from Londonderry. She was travelling to her sister, Teresa, in New York.

On 26 November 1914, Mary married Robert Agnew (who had been born in Belfast) in Manhattan, New York.

In 1920, Robert, Mary and their son, Robert, aged 3, lodged in a hotel in Manhattan, New York. Robert was a chauffeur for a taxi firm and Mary undertook housework for a private family.

In 1930 the family had their own home in Manhattan. Robert was still a chauffeur but Mary no longer worked outside the home. Their sons were Robert, aged 14, and James, aged 12.

In 1940 Robert and Mary were still in Manhattan, but their sons had left home. Robert was still a chauffeur and Mary was a maid in a private house.

6 **Margaret Corrigan** was born on 17 April 1895 in Baragh, near Ballinamallard, Fermanagh.

On 20 May 1919 Margaret married Arthur McKegey in Kilskeery Church, Trillick. Arthur, who was aged 24, was a grocer's assistant from Ballinamallard.

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

Hugh Corrigan was appointed to be a messenger between Ballinamallard and Trillick in 1872.

He retired from the Post Office as a Postman in 1901 on grounds of ill health, after 28 years service. He was granted a pension of £31 16s per year.

Hugh had other work during his time working for the Post Office.

In 1880 (marriage record) he was a shopkeeper and in 1881 (Ambrose's birth record) he was a grocer. In birth and Census records from 1883 to 1901 he was a postman. In the 1911 census and in Ambrose's marriage record in 1921, he was a farmer. On his death record in 1922 he was a postman.

Hugh's other work outside the Post Office may have been related to where he lived. This is discussed in part 4, below.

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

In 1901, the family lived at Baragh, Ballinamallard, County Fermanagh. All of the children except Ambrose lived at home. Hugh was a postman and John was a saddler.

In 1911, the family lived in the townland of Relagh Guinness in County Tyrone. John and Margaret were the only children still at home. Hugh was a farmer and John was a saddler and harness maker.

Part Four: Anything Else

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner

Where Hugh Corrigan lived

Records show that, until the last year of his life (when he moved to Dublin), Hugh lived and worked in a relatively small geographical area on the borders of counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. The following map shows the area.

*Map of parts of Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh
Scale: grid lines are 7 miles apart*

The numbers in red show the approximate locations of where Hugh Corrigan lived.



1 Trillick, County Tyrone

It is possible that Hugh was born in, or near, Trillick. In 1872 he was appointed to be the Post Office messenger between Ballinamallard and Trillick. He was living in Trillick at the time of his marriage in 1880 and the birth of his first 3 children – until about 1885. In 1880 and 1881 he was recorded as being a shopkeeper and grocer.

2 Oghill, near Ederny, County Fermanagh

Oghill is a small townland near the village of Ederny. The family lived here in 1887 and 1890 when Thomas and Mary Ann were born. As this is some distance from the other places where Hugh lived, it might be that the Post Office transferred him to Ederny for a few years.

3 Baragh, near Ballinamallard, County Fermanagh

Baragh is a townland on the edge of Ballinamallard. The family lived here when Margaret was born in 1890 and at the time of the 1901 Census. They lived in a third class house with 7 people living in 2 rooms. The property had a stable, two cow houses and a shed and it is possible that Hugh was a part-time farmer alongside his work as a postman.

4 Relagh Guinness, between Trillick and Irvinestown

Relagh Guinness is a townland in County Tyrone, part of which is adjacent to the road between Trillick and Irvinestown.

The family lived here at the time of the 1911 Census. Four people lived in three rooms in what was judged to be a second class house. The property included a cow house, a calf house, a piggery and a fowl house.

Valuation Revision records show that Hugh Corrigan occupied a farm of almost 17 acres from about 1906. The farm was about ½ mile from the townland of Baragh, in County Fermanagh, where Hugh lived previously. Around 1913, Hugh purchased the farm under the provisions of the Land Purchase Act of 1909.

At the time of his marriage, in February 1921, Hugh's son, Ambrose, was recorded as being a farmer residing in Relagh Guinness.

It would appear that Ambrose and his wife and his parents, Hugh and Margaret, moved to live in Dublin before Hugh died there in November 1922.

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

Hugh Corrigan (HC, Postal Pensioner)

- Post Office appointment 1872: British Postal Museum and Archive; Series: *POST 58*; Reference Number: 84
- Marriage 1880:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1880/11034/8035188.pdf
- Census 1901:
<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000778722/>
- Census 1911:
<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai003453882/>
- Death 1922:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1922/05064/4388114.pdf
- Valuation Revision Books – accessed at:
<https://apps.proni.gov.uk/Val12B/Search.aspx>
 - 1) VAL/12/B/40/1D (1898 – 1912), page 67
 - 2) VAL/12/B/40/1E (1913 – 1929), page 48

Margaret Corrigan (nee Farry) (wife of HC)

- Death 1941:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1941/04705/4256268.pdf

Ambrose Corrigan (son of HC)

- Birth 1881:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1881/02828/2037186.pdf
- Marriage 1921:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1921/09225/5337619.pdf
- Death 1942:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/

deaths_1942/04680/4247588.pdf

John Corrigan (son of HC)

- Birth 1883:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1883/02749/2010015.pdf

Teresa Corrigan (daughter of HC)

- Birth 1885:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1885/02647/1976081.pdf
- Emigration 1905:
<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record/browse?id=us%2fpass%2fma%2f005103169%2f00190>
- Journey to New York 1911:
<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger-details/czoxMjoiMTAxMjA1MTQwMDk0Ijs=/czo4OjItYW5pZmVzdCI7#passengerListAnchor>
- Marriage 1915:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24Q4-4PM>
- US Census 1920:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RXZ-S1C?cc=1488411&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AMJGK-RXM>
- US Census 1930:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9RZ5-ZB6?i=1&cc=1810731&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AX4TN-RJY>

Thomas Corrigan (son of HC)

- Birth 1887:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1887/02549/1943207.pdf
- Emigration 1907:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9R1-S8V5?i=572&cc=1368704&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AJX26-H6F>
and
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9R1-S82V?i=573&cc=1368704>
- Marriage 1923:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:248C-GCP>

Mary Ann Corrigan (daughter of HC)

- Birth 1890:
https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1890/02430/1904842.pdf
- Emigration 1910:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T3-P362-N?>

i=406&cc=1368704&personaUrl=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AJJNSH5M
and
[https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T3-P36T-Z?
i=407&cc=1368704](https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T3-P36T-Z?i=407&cc=1368704)

- Marriage 1914:
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:24QQ-YNN>
- US Census 1920:
[https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/6061/images/4313924-
00614?
treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce10&_phstart=successSource&
pId=110452934](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/6061/images/4313924-00614?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce10&_phstart=successSource&pId=110452934)
- US Census 1930:
[https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/6224/images/
4638850_00297?
treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce14&_phstart=successSource&
pId=43201758](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/6224/images/4638850_00297?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce14&_phstart=successSource&pId=43201758)
- US Census 1940:
[https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/m-t0627-02640-
00575?
treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce24&_phstart=successSource&
pId=12737838](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/2442/images/m-t0627-02640-00575?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=gce24&_phstart=successSource&pId=12737838)

Margaret Corrigan (daughter of HC)

- Birth 1895:
[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/
births_1895/02216/1836386.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1895/02216/1836386.pdf)
- Marriage 1919:
[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/
marriages_1919/09674/5508234.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1919/09674/5508234.pdf)