Toomey Family Reunion Newsletter

Published to inform family members of the reunion details

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The Reunion is Drawing Nearer

With the Christmas season now well behind us it is hoped that things are settling down for you and your family in 2010.

The reunion is now only two months away and the feedback has been very encouraging. We anticipate there will be over fifty people coming to the reunion which is in response to our advertising by word of mouth, this newsletter, the internet web page and details in magazines and newspapers, such as the *Gatton Star*, *Australian Family Tree Connection*, *Descent* (the journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists) and *The Argyle Bulletin* (the journal of the Goulburn & District Historical Society, Inc).

If you still have not made your accommodation arrangements for the reunion, you are urged to do so as soon as possible because there is only one motel in Gatton and we are unsure how many unreserved rooms are left (several attendees have already booked).

Unique Wedding Photograph

One of the most wonderful things to have come out of organising the Toomey reunion is the generosity of people in providing family photographs. At the end of January this year, Pat Victor sent me this beautiful photograph at left of Don Bauer and Olive Toomey at their wedding in Queensland in 1949 and gave me permission to publish it in the reunion newsletter.

The quality of photograph is very clear and was one I didn't have of my uncle and aunty. However what really amazed me was there, sitting either side of the groom and bride, were my parents Wally and Doris Toomey, in a photograph I had never seen before. I was simply blown away! Thank you Pat, for your generosity in sharing this treasured family memento.

The Origin of the Toomey Family Name

The first major book which mentions the origin of the Toomey surname is *Irish Families - Their Names, Arms and Origins*, by Edward MacLysaght. Under O'Twomey, Mr MacLysaght states Twomey, usually without the 'O', is and has always been associated with County Cork and when found elsewhere is often spelt Toomey. In the census of 1659, he states O'Toomey appears as the second most numerous surname in the Barony of Barretts, Co. Cork, Murphy (obviously!!) being the commonest. Our most distinguished forebear was Sean O'Tuama (1706-1775) who lived in Croom, Co. Limerick, where he and his wife kept a public house which was the meeting place of the Maigue Gaelic Poets, Sean being called "O'Twomey the Gay". (Are there any poetic inclinations in your family?)

Like all great nations whose long past has faded into the pre-recorded turmoil of fact and fiction, Ireland has a genealogical tradition which has been well preserved by its many bards. One book which has recorded this history is *A Genealogical History of the Milesian Families of Ireland* by De Courcy. In it, the Toomey's are shown as members of the Dal Cais tribe, descendants of Cormac Cas who was son of Olliol Ollum, King of Munster A.D. 177, and Sabia. The meaning of the name Toomey is shown as 'fierce'.

In another book, *Irish Family Names*, by Captain Kelly, Toomey it also shown as originating from a Dalcassian family of hereditary bards, with the chronicles and traditions of Munster attesting to their importance in their particular field. However, Captain Kelly states Toomey is derived from Thuam - meaning a sound!! Rev. P. Woulfe in his *Irish Names and Surnames*, lists O'Twomey, O'Toomey, Twomey, Toomey, Twoomey, Tuomy, Towmey as descendants of Tuaim, the name of a Dalcassian family still common in Munster, and especially Co. Cork.

Perhaps the final word should be taken from *A Memoir on the O'Toomey Sept (A.D.1100 to 1600)* by Thomas Noxon Toomey, from his The *O'Toomey's of Croom and their Descendants* (printed for private distribution, St Louis, Missouri, 1920). In that publication, Mr Toomey states in old Irish, the sept or family was called Ui Tuaima: in modern Irish the name is written O'Tuama. The name is from the Celtic word that means a dyke, a dune or an earthen fence. The sept name was very probably derived from such formations, which were noteworthy in the locality where the name originated.

The above information was compiled back in 1982 for *O'Tuama*, a quarterly journal I was publishing at the time for people with the family name or connection of Toomey.

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