

The Sproule History - 1005 – 1900

This document was in the papers of the late Dr Brian J Sproule (Coldstream) and was copied by Adrian Fletcher in 2009.

I have no idea where the information came from originally, though it seems unlikely that it was authored by Brian himself and the title and content indicate that it was compiled in the earlier 1900s. It certainly has an authentic ring about it. It also seems to have originally had sections (now missing) on other family branches. Web searches for Mathewsons of Ardstraw (wrongly spelt “Ardstran” in the document), Harpur and Sproule will possibly uncover some descendant document if one had a few hours to spare! This may also locate the sections missing from the paper we have.

The final page of the document relates directly to the family tree work I have been doing on the Sproule family from “Denamona”, Fintona in Co Tyrone, N Ireland. Its contents have been loaded into my “Roots Magic” data base without further checks yet. To date I have not spent any time unravelling the earlier part of the document.

Joseph Sproule and family emigrated to N Monaghan, Peterborough, Ontario in May 1860. We think that Joseph’s brother Robert emigrated to Canada in 1871 (still to be verified). His son Alexander Harpur Robinson (AHR) Sproule married Robert’s daughter Matilda in Peterborough in February 1874 (original record downloaded). In November 1880 AHR’s uncle (mother’s brother), Dr John Robinson MD JP, died childless, and left his large house (“Denamona” in Fintona, Co Tyrone) and attached 209 acre estate to AHR’s children, with AHR to be trustee on their behalf. AHR returned to Ireland with his wife and four kids just after the Canadian Census of 1881. AHR drank and ran the estate into the ground, and most of the children never saw a brass razoo of their inheritance.

I have downloaded images of the original Canadian census returns for the Joseph Sproule family for all the years 1861 – 71 – 81 – 91 and 1901, and the AHR family for 1881, and the death record for Joseph in November 1902 using the Canadian site of “Ancestry” (subscription needed). In the 1871 Canadian Census 24 year old A H R Sproule is listed as a photographer, similar at his 1874 marriage, but by post-inheritance 1881 he has become a gentleman! All of this (and more) will be loaded onto ciaofamiglia before too long.

Census data about the A H R Sproule family back in Ireland (Fintona, Co Tyrone) can be discovered in the Irish Censuses for 1901 and 1911, where the originals and transcripts can be downloaded free of charge from www.census.nationalarchives.ie and include property assessments for eg “Denamona”, the huge Sproule Palazzo which itself must have had an interesting history. I have also located Jimmy Sproule as a medical student in Dublin in 1911.

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" THE SPROULE HISTORY "

Spreull is said to be one of the Scotch Surnames taken from Norman times. Tradition says that the first of the name to have a coat of arms was a purse bearer to Malcolm II, King of Scots (1005 - 1035). He was so faithful that the King presented him with three purses of Gold, and allowed him to use the King's hand as a crest, with the motto "Sepmer Fidelis" (Always faithful)

Walter Spreull is witness to a grant of land by Malcolm III, Earl of Lennox, who succeeded his father, 1224, and died 1270. Walter Spreull witnessed to deeds by Malcolm 4th, Earl of Lennox, who was one of the Magnates Scotiae, and died 1292 - Walter Spreull was Senescallus de Dumbarton to Malcolm 5th Earl, and was threatened with excommunication on his account 1294.

Between 1292 and 1297 nearly all the principal families in Scotland swore fealty to King Edward and in the list of those who did so, in the document called Ragmens Roll, we find the name of Walter Spreull " Senescalli Comis de Lennox."

In 1306 Walter Spreull obtained a charter of lands of Dalquibieus and Dalmure from Malcolm, Earl of Lennox and is described therein as Caldoun, " Caldoun of Cowden Hall, is in the Parish of Neilston, Renfrewshire".

Proceeding down hill in a S.W. direction to the Paisley and Irvine Road, a few minutes takes us to the ruins of Caldoun or Cowden Hall, situated on the

summit of a steep hill, beneath which by the side of the highway, the Cowden burn rushes murmuring onto its junction with the Severn. Cowden Hall was long ago possessed by the distinguished family of Spreull.

Walter Spreull is a witness to a charter by King Robert Bruce, dated 28th September, 1308. He was succeeded by his son. Walter, Thomas Spreull witnessed a charter in 1466 recorded in the Register of the great Seal.

Caldoun was held by the family until 1622 when it was sold by James Spreull to Alexander Blair. The armorial bearings of the Spreulls of Caldoun = fesse cheque azure and argent between three purses (or palmer's scripts) gules.

There are various spellings of the name - John Spreull 1481. Robert Sprul Burgess of Paisley 1515. John Sprule, Rector of Cambuslang, 1555. Thomas Spreull in 1559 a new grant of Dalmure. James Sprull, last of Caldoun 1622. Tradition says James came to Tyrone and settled at Tullymean 1622 and is ancestor of all the Irish Sproules.

John Sproule settled in Roscommon in 1669 when he bought Loughfield Castle and put a new roof on it. He was born in 1626. There was a carved stone with the Sproule crest over the Hall door. (The above notes were taken from a book written by a Scotchman named Sproule in 1915 and were supplied by Mrs.Charlton Provincial Bank House, Coleraine a descendant of the Roscommon Sproules).

Another account compiled by the late Thomas Sproule of Altamullen. - A Robert Sproule with four or five sons came over to this country from Renfrewshire in the reign of Charles 2nd. He settled at Spamount, Co. Tyrone and owned the townlands of Spamount, Drumnabay, Coland, Upperrhice, Kilrail, Drumnabay, Carrick, Crawfordstown, Edenasshaugh, Drungallen, Bridgehill, Cavanbun, Crigan, etc. One of his sons settled at Grannan, one at Altamullen and another near Ballybefet, Co. Donegal, Brockagh.

A nephew, or grandson of the man who went to Grannan afterwards started a bleachgreen at Coland and soon after transferred the bleaching concern to Spamount.

Joseph Sproule (called " Neblaugh") was also a Grannan man and uncle to the bleacher, he came to live in Clare (near Bridgehill) and supplied buttermilk to his nephew at Spamount for bleaching purposes and charged him the highest price for it, to the astonishment of his neighbours who gave buttermilk gratis, so they nicknamed " Buttermilk Sproule". He is the ancestor of the Burrels Folly and Kirlish Sproules, when he left Clare and settled at Curraghamulkin.

There is a tombstone in Castleberg Church-yard with the inscription:-

" Here lies the body of Robert Spreull who departed this life, September, 1689, also Jean Deniston wife of the said Robert Spreull died 1712, aged 81".

The names of their sons are not known, but probably were Andrew, Charles, Oliver, (probably called Charles Stuart and Oliver Cromwell) Samuel, John, as these names occur frequently in the different branches.

From the Spamount family Bible, the following is copied:-

Andrew Sproul, born April 26th, 1741.

The Issue of Andrew and Rebecca Sproul -

Oliver Sproul, born June 16th 1764, died in Baltimore, America, on 2nd August 1790.

Anne Sproul, born December 1765.

(Mrs. Sproule of Crigan - Great Grandmother to Mrs. Clements).

William Sproul - born July 1767.

Jane Sproule, born March, 1769.

(Mrs. Sproule of the " Helm". Grandmother to Mrs. Myles).

Andrew Sproul - born March 1771.

Rebecca Sproul - born June 1771.

Robert Sproul, born October, 1774.

Rebecca Sproule - died September 6th 1776.

Andrew and Isabella Sproul married 7th January, 1781.

Their Issue:-

Edward Sproul, born December 15th 1781.

Elizabeth Sproul, born February 24th, 1783.

Arthur Sproul, born March 28th 1784

James Sproul, born March 20th, 1785.

Isabella Sproul, born July 2nd, 1787.

Andrew Sproul died 21st February 1798 and was interred in the burying ground of the late James Lecky, St. Mary's Churchyard in the city of Dublin.

Isabella Sproul died 27th July 1812.

Isabella Sproul the younger died June 1814.

Elizabeth Sproul died 12th June, 1845.

Edward Sproul died 18th December 1851.

James Sproul died 28th April 1852.

I do not know what became of William and Robert (born 1767 and 1774). Andrew was the father of Mrs Charles Love and several other daughters and two sons. Oliver Q.C. who died unmarried and James who died at Skeeg about 1882 leaving no family.

Arthur Sproul married Susan Bennett of Cork, a relative of the late Professor Edward Dowden and Prevest Salmon of T.C.D. She died when her only child was born and he was reared by his father's sister Betty at Spameunt, he died when he was 23 and his father died at Nice aged 44.

Edward and James died unmarried so the Spameunt Sproules are extinct. Andrew Sproul of Crigan married his cousin Ann Sproul, born 1765 and they had several children - Oliver who built Coel and was Mrs. Clements grandfather also grandfather of Dr. Sproule of Culmore, Derry, Jane who married her cousin Robert Sproule and lived at Aughee. Rebecca who married a man named Mayne and lived at Ballygawley, her daughter married Andy Love, She had been keeping house in Crigan for her uncle Andy Sproule and that is how that family of the Loves lived in Crigan. Another of the Maynes married a Belfast man named Elliott and had several daughters one of whom married John Love. Two of the daughters, Marion and Bella are still living in Belfast.

Mary married Henderson of Scarvaghem two of her sons Charles and Sam married Lizzie and Jennie Dill of the Manse, Dromore, Co. Tyrone.

Jane Sproul of Spameunt, born 1769 married her cousin Charles Sproule of the Helm known as " Black Charlie", to distinguish him from his cousin Charles of Far Granman who was called " White Charlie" (although he was the darker complexioned of the two). Their family consisted of James, Charles, Andrew, Rebecca, and Nancy.

James married his cousin Rebecca Scott of Ballyshannon, Mrs Crockett, Mrs. Blue, Mrs. Smith (Australia) Joe, Jim, Charles, and Edward the sons died unmarried.

Charles lived at Daisy Hill near Dromore, and had three sons, Charlie, William and Nat who died unmarried.

Andrew was a barrister and built Fairy Hill, Dromore. He married Miss Lane of Limavoy. She had a daughter, Jane, who married Arthur Carey of Castle Carey, Co. Donegal - she lived with her mother's people after her mother died, her father married secondly his cousin Sarah Scott of Ballyare - they had a son, Oliver who went to Australia - he left a son, Andrew, who was in the Australian contingent in the South African ~~army~~, 1900 ~~and afterwards~~ settled in South Africa and who lived for a short time (or his wife did) at Croghan House, near Lifford during the Great War. He is the only Sproule of the Helm branch now living.

Rebecca married Andrew Thomas Love of the Crew and had seven sons and two daughters. Nancy married Thomas Grahm of Drumwall Lisnarick, Irvingstown and had seven daughters and one son. My mother was her 6th daughter. Rebecca Sproul of Spameunt born 1773 married James Scott of Ballyare Ramelton, and had several daughters and one son, Joseph. He assisted his Uncles Edward and James Sproul at the bleachgreen at Spameunt. He married Miss Reid, daughter of the Presbyterian Minister at Ramelton, sister of Sir Edward Reid of Derry and Forrest Reid, Solicitor. They had no children

One of the daughters Rebecca Scott married James Sproule of the Helm, Sarah married (1) André Sproule, brother of James and (2) Rev. James Reid Dill of Dromore.

Another branch of the Sproules lived at Bridgehill between Castlederg and Drumquin, and Rebecca Sproule of that branch married Rev. John Cockett, Presbyterian Minister of 1st Castlederg (Caveragh). Their Eldest son, John, afterwards married Mag Sproule of the Helm and their youngest son, Andrew, married Rebecca Jane Love of the Crew.

Rev. John Cockett's nephew William Gamble became owner of Bridgehill and married Rebecca, daughter of Andy Love of Crigan.

Their son, James, lives at Bridgehill, their younger daughter Mina married John Cockett son of John Cockett and Mag. Sproule.

"Black Charlie" had three brothers, George, Andrew and one who was a doctor. George married one of the Carrickamulking Sproules and their son was Robert Sproule of Aughee. Andrew lived at Ballinhaty.

(The above note is from Elders genealogical book).

Andrew Sproule had three sons and two daughters. Wilson died young, Oliver, a doctor, Andrew lived at Brooke Hill, married Mrs Donald McDonald and had two sons. Oliver died young. Andrew's daughter, Mary, married Dr. William Sproule Love - a grandson of "Black Charlie" of the Helm.

SARAH HARPUR

(Second daughter of John Harpur, of Aghadulla, Co. Tyrone, by his wife, Matila Mathewson, daughter of James Mathewson, son of Ardstraw, by his wife, Martha Sproule), was born at Corovneigh on 20th August, 1791, and died at Fintona on 29th April 1817. She was married on 7th July 1812, at Aghadulla (by Rev.....) to John Robinson, of Fintona, Co. Tyrone (son of Hugh Robinson of Fintona by his wife, Ann Rea, born at Fintona on 30th July, 1775, died at Fintona on 5th November 1825¹. They had issue three children, viz:-

ROBINSON

1. Alex. HARPUR, of Fintona; M.D., J.P., (18...; in R.C.F.S., London); Born at Fintona on 17th December, 1814; died at Fintona 1st November 1880. He married, January 15th 1838 at Fintona (By Rev. Jos. McCorkamk) to Eliza Jane Hamilton (daughter of Capt.....Hamilton, of Eccles green, Fintona, by his wife, Ann Jane (Ramsey), born aton18.....No issue.

2. Matilda Ann, born at Fintona on 15th July, 1816, Married 1841 at Aghadulla (by Rev. Jas. Reid Hill) to second cousin of her mother's Joseph Sproule, of Carrickmulkin, Co. Tyrone, afterwards of Peterborough Ont. (son of Thomas Sproule of Carrickmulkin ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ by his wife(Blake), born at Carrickmulkin on 9th April, 1818. They emigrated, - May 1860, by ship " Manhattan" from Liverpool to New York, and settled near Peterboro', Canada.

They had issue:-

SPROULE

1. Sarah Ann, born at Carrickmulkin on 2nd Sept 1842, Married Oct. 1872 at Peterboro' (by Rev. G.W.R. Beck) to John Haggart of Peterboro' Ont (son of John Haggart of Peterboro' by his wife, -----(McIntosh), born at Peterboro' on18.....

2. John Thomas, b. at Carrickmulkin on18....., died at Carrickmulkin, 1845.

3. Alex. Harpur Robinson J.P. of Denamena House, Fintona, born at Carrickmulkin on 3rd April, 1846, emigrated to Canada with his parents. Returned to Ireland in 1880 on succeeding to the property of his maternal uncle, Dr. Robinson. Married 24th February, 1874, at Peterboro' (by Rev. G.W.R. Beck) to his first cousin, Matilda Sproule (daughter of Robert Sproule, of Carrickmulkin by his wife, Margaret Jane (Davis), b. at Carrickmulkin on 16th May 1849.

They have issue:-

1. Matilda, otherwise Maud Ann Robinson, born at Tweed (Ont) on 5th Feb 1875.
2. Alex. Harpur Robinson; born at Peterboro' on 6th Oct, 1876
3. Jennie,born at Peterboro' on 1st August 1878
4. John Robert; born at Peterboro' on 25th October 1880
5. Joseph George. Born at Fintona, on 12th January 1884
6. Helen Margrate; born at Fintona on 30th November, 1885
- X7. James Chambers; born at Fintona on 28th August, 1887 *x My father*
8. Annie Elizabeth, born at Fintona on 3rd September 1889..