

Opinion and Research

Research by Denise Sugrue

Lets talk about the many spellings that there are of Sugrue or Siochrú

Historical background by: John Sugrue: In order for present day members of **Clann Ó Siochrú** to understand why there are so many different spelling of the Gaelic name **ÓSiochrú or ÓSiochfhradha**, it is necessary to know what life was like to live in Ireland in the 17th, 18th, 19th Centuries. I believe that after you read this condensed analysis you will have a better idea as to why there are so many variant anglicized spellings of the Gaelic words, **ÓSiochfhradha or ÓSiochrú**.

By today's standards, conditions under which the people of Ireland lived during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries can charitably be described as - - "not good at all, at all." Invasions, wars and battles were nothing new to Irish history for the centuries prior to the year 1600. In hindsight, it can be said that following the **Battle of Kinsale in 1601**, the probability of England's annexation of Ireland gradually became more and more of a certainty. The "**Flight of the Earls**" in **1607**, left Ireland denuded of leadership. The Earls were the large landowners, chieftains and heads of (political) dynasties of the **Old Gaelic Order**. Those families had ruled the country for hundreds of years. With their titles, authority and money facing great diminishment, they fled to Spain, France, and Italy with many friends and family, in tow. Meanwhile, England responded with planting more new settlers into Ireland from England, Scotland and Wales.

The **Irish Rebellion of 1641** offered Ireland a brief opportunity at regaining independence and the creation of a de-facto confederate government came about in **1642**. The lack of strong leadership fractured the effort, which resulted in the confederacy never developing into a strong central government. Following **Pride's Purge**, (*arguably the only coup d'état, ever, in English history*), the new **Rump Parliament** in England ordered, **Lieutenant General, Oliver Cromwell** to crush the Irish Rebellion. (**Cromwell's Conquest of Ireland**).

Fresh from the "**Battle of Preston**," in Wales, Cromwell's brutal military campaign of shock and awe started in 1649 and changed the history of Ireland for hundreds of years to come. The carnage was massive and swift. Lands were confiscated, homes destroyed, families were uprooted with raw military might. People found refuge in the mountains and bog-lands. More **new settlers** were planted in the confiscated lands. The land the Irish once tilled as farmers or tenant farmers was now entirely owned by foreign occupiers.

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This was later followed by the **Battle of the Boyne, (1690)** and the **Siege of Limerick, (1691)**. **Patrick Sarsfield, 1st Earl of Lucan**, signed the **Treaty of Limerick** with **William of Orange** thus, ending the **Williamite War** in Ireland. England's occupation of Ireland was strengthened for some time to come. **Sarsfield**, along with a 20,000 man army, (accompanied by many women and children) evacuated to France. Sarsfield formed the Irish Brigade in the French Army. It is estimated that as many as 500,000 Irishmen died in service to France from the mid 1600s to the early 1800s. The majority of those recruits came from the counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare and Galway. The **Great Irish Diaspora**, as John McCavitt called it, of the 1600s and 1700s saw hundreds of thousands of Irishmen serving the armies of France, Spain, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Russia and various German Kingdoms. They were known as the **Wild Geese**. Were there any **ÓSiochrús** amongst them? (Possibly-- something to be researched in the future.)

Meanwhile, draconian laws, called the **Penal Laws**, were imposed in Ireland (1695) and the Irish were strictly forbidden by law;

- **To freely exercise religion.**
- **To send a child to school.** (*Other than state sponsored schools intended to proselytize and Anglicize the Irish.*)
- **To own land.**
- **To vote.**
- **To hold public office.**
- **To engage in trade or commerce.**
- **To bear arms,**
- **To lease land,**
- **To enter a profession.**
- **To own a horse of no greater value than £5 (pounds sterling.)**
- **To reap from the land any profit exceeding a third of their rent (tax)**
- **To live in a corporate town or within five miles of one.**
- **And inter religious marriages were banned.**

Anyone found teaching school was fined £20 (Sterling) and sentenced to three months in jail. (*That was a mint of money --- by year 1695 standards, when the wages of workers and tenant farmers were just pennies a day.*) The lust for conquest and absolute power left the education system of Ireland decimated. The books vanished, inkwells ran dry, quills and nibs were laid down, the blotters departed and the scholars disappeared. Some said "It was not all religious persecution, but rather an attempt to degrade and demoralize an entire nation."

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However, a new system of illegal “bootleg” schools, known as “**Hedge Schools**” sprung up in Ireland. These schools were scattered about in dykes and ditches by road-sides, in barns and in safe places known only to natives. Hedge School teacher generally were local leaders, musicians and storytellers who kept the culture and traditions alive. Instructions were in mostly in Gaelic. Though lacking in books, the quality of that education was rather good for the few who could afford to pay for real hedge school teachers. With no books, paper or pens rhyming verses, helped children to remember what they were taught. John O’ Hagen’s verse summed it up very well in this description;

*“-- I still crouching ‘neath the sheltering hedge,
Or stretched upon a mountain fern,
The teacher and his pupils met feloniously to learn.”*

To further compound the hard times of that period the religious, too, came under attack. Unless clergymen were sanctioned by the government, their activities were illegal. Bishops and priests [known as hedge priests] were banished, hunted and hanged. Just like the schools, church services were forced into the underground. Most services were conducted in secluded places upon rock structures that could be easily erected into table-like Alters and taken down after the service. These rocks were known as Mass Rocks [Carriag an Aifrinn, in Gaelic.]. [Well articulated in the song; “*The Mass Rock in the Glen.*”

In 1800 the population of Ireland was approximately 5 million. In 1826, only about 130,000 children were attending government sponsored schools. Meanwhile, 400,000 children were attending some sort of hedge schools. The remaining children had no schooling opportunities whatsoever. The result of all this was; most people could not read and/or write. The tyranny and oppression that had gone on for two centuries had resulted in systemic illiteracy.

In 1800 the Irish owned only 5 to 6% of the land of Ireland. After 150 years, in **1832**, the first elementary school system was established by Parliament. But, the damage was already done and could not be easily ignored or erased. It took many, many years to get a functioning educational system put into place. According to **Rootsweb**, by the time of the Irish Census in 1841, “the Irish were impoverished, landless, and leaderless (and) on the eve of the **Great Famine.**”

By 1845 the population of Ireland had exploded to about 8 million people. The **Great Famine** first started in 1845 and was not fully over until about 1850. The consequences were far reaching. About a quarter of the population died of hunger, typhus, tuberculosis, scurvy, bronchitis, pneumonia and cholera. The blame for the famine rested squarely on the policies of the Whig Government of

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1846 to 1852, led by **Lord John Russell**. Russell was a firm believer in free markets policies and was content to leave the supply of food for Ireland up to the private sector. For good or for bad, Paddy would never lie down.

A new **Irish Diaspora** was the result of Russell's policies. With no looking back, over a million Irish took their chances with the seas in appalling sailing ships, often referred to as "**coffin ships**." As "steerage" passengers the Irish fled to far away places like the United States, and Canada, while others in smaller numbers, migrated to countries on the European Continent, including England. Some made it to distant shores. Sadly, many others still remain at sea. When the famine was over the population of all of Ireland was only about four million. (See; "**Paddy's Lament**," by Thomas Gallagher.) The song "**My Green Valleys**," spells out the uncertainty and hopelessness of the times:

*"The seagulls are calling, the wind is in the sail,
And she's fast setting out to the sea.
On a ship bound for St John, three thousand miles away
With a cargo, my comrades and me.*

*Farewell my green valleys, God keep you the same
If in only my mind that will be.
I'm sailing dark waters to far Americ-a
Never more my green valleys to see."*

During the Penal Law days, most Irish did not cooperate much with English authorities on matters of religion, culture, traditions and language. Their tenacity prevented the government from implementing any programs, not that any were ever beneficial to the Irish. There was no trust between the parties. While the government might have sought programs to anglicize Gaelic names, the native Irish on the other hand, looked upon those programs as just another attempt at oppression. Making sure anglicized names appeared on documents, etc, was left up to individuals in government agencies, to wealthy landowners and police units and others loyal to the government. Hunger and poverty to the power of misery, were the driving forces that compelled your ancestors to migrate to several countries around the world.

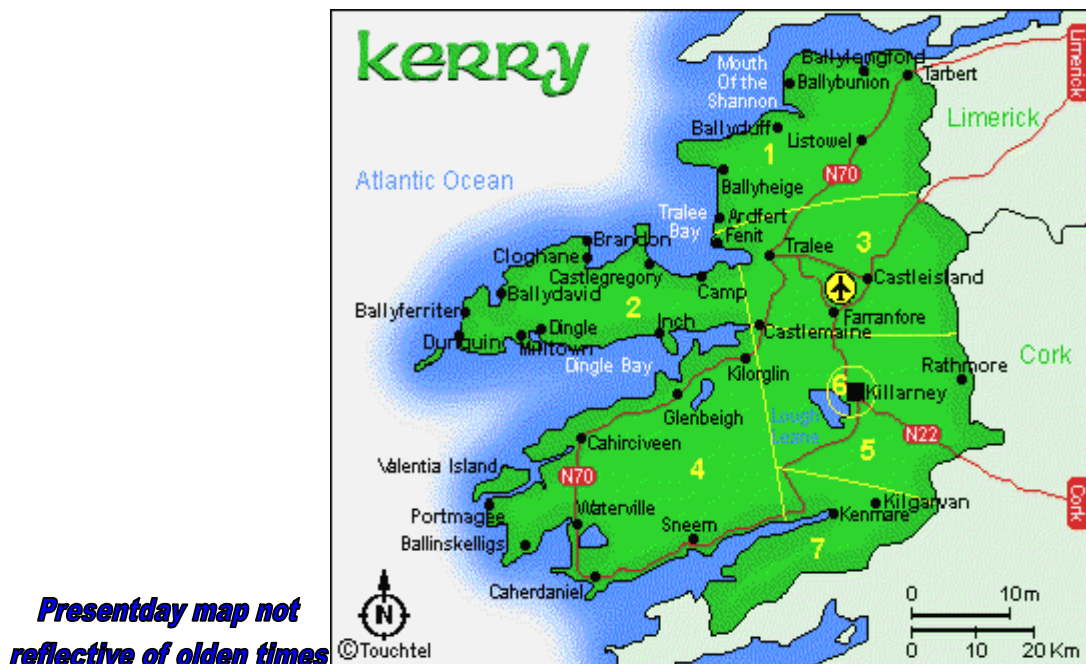
All that I have briefly outlined here is designed to condense about three hundred years of Irish history into a few paragraphs. Hopefully, Clann members can better understand that a large percentage of the population of Ireland in the 1700s and 1800s, were not proficient in either the Gaelic or English languages. While all communicated in Gaelic and/or English a large segment of the population did not have the necessary reading and writing skills. Were there any **ÓSiochrús** among that segment of the population? The answer is; Yes, too many to mention.

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Now the Research of Denise Sugrue; written by John Sugrue

Great research work done by **Denise Sugrue** during the 1990s produced a large collection of information on the **O'Siochrus** of Kerry. The name was and **still is** pronounced; "Siochru" (-- or -- "Shuck-eru," in English). There must be a little "rocky gurgle" in your throat when you say that fast. Ó Siochfhradha and Ó Siochrú and are the two spellings of the same Gaelic surname. **Denise's** research included information gathered from Griffiths Land Valuations of Ireland, from Tithe Applotment Books, from parish records of baptisms, marriages and deaths, from passenger lists of shipping companies, U.S. census reports and much more. [Read the **History** portion of the www.clamosiochru.com website for earlier history of the ÓSiochrú Clann.]

We found **Ó Siochrús** in eight out of the nine Baronies of Kerry. A Barony is historically the territory of old Gaelic families and not used much anymore. Here is a sketch of how the anglicized spellings happened to emerge in the nine baronies of County Kerry. Into each barony we have inserted the names of some towns and villages to give you an approximate idea of those districts. [As we go district by district, you will see we are adding in the **new** names spellings where found. That does not mean that the new name represented just one (1) family.] The map (below) is a modern map of Kerry that shows some of the towns and villages that made up the Baronies.



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1) In north Kerry from the town of Tarbert, west to Beal East on the Shannon River, south to Ballybunnion, Listowel, east to Knockanure and north to Newtown Sandes, Ballylongford is the Barony of **Iraghticonnor (Iraght-I-Connor)**. Between 1820 and 1864 we found no **Ó Siochrú** records of any kind. (We find it hard to believe that there were no **Ó Siochrús** in those areas. Perhaps those who may have been living there were not landowners and therefore, not listed.) See map in next page.

2) To the south of Iraghticonnor is **Clanmaurice** (Clanmorice) taking in Ballyduff, Kerry Head, Ballyheige, Ardfert, Rattoo, Abbeydorney, Duagh, Finuge and Kilflyn. In 1827 we found **Shughru** (Kilmoyly) and **Shugru** (Kilmoyly) and a lot of **Sugrue**.

3) Further west on the Dingle Peninsula is the Barony of **Corkaguiny**. That takes in the area from the Blasket Islands to Dingle to Anascaul, Ballyferriter, Emlagh, Castlegregory, Camp, Inch, Aughils. Found along with **Ó Siochrú** were, **Shugra** (Cloghane), **Shughrue** (Lissardbolla), **Shugrue**, and **Sugrue**.

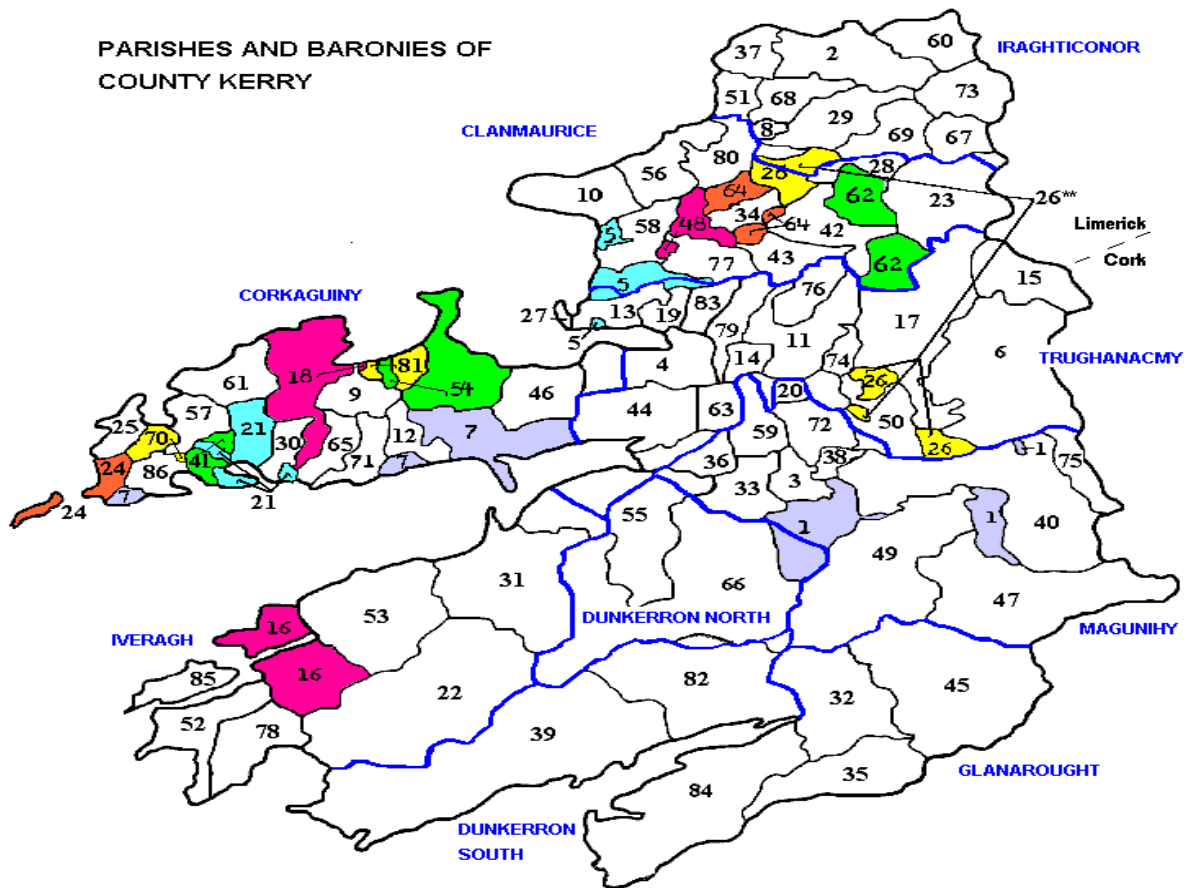
4) From the City of Tralee east to the borders of County Cork and County Limerick is the Barony of **Trughanacmy**. Therein is placed, Tralee, Ballysheedy, Castlemaine, Chapletown, Castleisland, Brosna, Scartaglin and Knocknagashel. In **Annagh Parish** the births of Timothy **Shughurue** (Caherleaheen) and Honora **Shougrue** (Clahane,) were both recorded about **1740**. In that barony we found another new spelling of **Shugrew** (1827), as well as a number of **Shugrue** and **Sugrue**.

5) Next we go to the Barony of **Dunkerron North** (which is located in the Iveragh Peninsula.) That takes in Killorglin, Shanacashel, Glencar, Boheeshil, , Kilgobnet Maghanlawaun, Beaufort. There, the more widespread names, **Shugrue**, **Sughrue** and **Sugrue** were seen in the district. Interestingly, **Killorglin** produced more new names: **Shagrue**, **Shegrew** and **Shugrow**.

6) Then there is the Barony of **Iveragh**, itself. Starting around Glenbeigh it takes in the coastline to Valentia Island, Cahersiveen, Portmagee, Teeraneargh, Kilpeacan, Killenleagh, Ballinschelligs and back toward Glenbeigh. It seems there was a family named **Shgrue***, [sic] (Oghermong) and another named **Shugre** (Garryglass) and 84 families by the name of **Sugrue**. [***Shgrue** was probably a typo error in script.]

Translations were done haphazardly in Kerry, however, that did not matter because the “Siochrus” were still “Siochrus”. You are beginning to see that many of the variant name spellings originated in Ireland.

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Parishes.

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|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Aghadoe | 23. Duagh | 45. Kilgarvan | 66. Knocknane* |
| 2. Aghavallen | 24. Dunquin | 46. Kilgobban | 67. Knockanure |
| 3. AGLISH | 25. Dunurlin | 47. Killaha | 68. Lisselton |
| 4. Annagh | 26. Dysert** | 48. Killahan | 69. Listowel |
| 5. Ardfert | 27. Fenit | 49. Killarney | 70. Marhin |
| 6. Ballincuslane | 28. Finuge | 50. Killeentierna | 71. Minard |
| 7. Ballinvoher | 29. Gale | 51. Killehenry | 72. Molahiffe |
| 8. Ballyconry | 30. Garfinny | 52. Killemlagh | 73. Murher |
| 9. Ballyduff | 31. Glanbehy* | 53. Killinane | 74. Nohaval |
| 10. Ballyheige* | 32. Kenmare | 54. Killiney | 75. Nohavaldaly |
| 11. Ballymacelligott | 33. Kilbonane | 55. Killorglin | 76. O'Brennan |
| 12. Ballynacourty | 34. Kilcaragh | 56. Killury | 77. O'Dorney |
| 13. Ballynahaglish | 35. Kilcaskan* | 57. Kilmalkedar* | 78. Prior |
| 14. Ballyseedy | 36. Kilcolman | 58. Kilmoyly | 79. Ratass |
| 15. Brosna | 37. Kilconly | 59. Kilnanare | 80. Rattoo |
| 16. Caher* | 38. Kilcredane | 60. Kilnaughtin | 81. Stradbally |
| 17. Castleisland* | 39. Kilcrohane | 61. Kilquane | 82. Templenoe |
| 18. Cloghane | 40. Kilcummin | 62. Kilshenane | 83. Tralee |
| 19. Clogherbrien | 41. Kildrum | 63. Kiltallagh | 84. Tuosist |
| 20. Currans | 42. Kilfeighny | 64. Kiltomy | 85. Valencia* |
| 21. Dingle | 43. Kilflyn | 65. Kinard | 86. Ventry |
| 22. Dromod | 44. Kilgarrylander | | |

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7) Then we have **Dunkerron South** taking in everything from Waterville east to Ballybrack, Caherdaniel, Derrynane, Lamb's Head, Graiques, Westcove, Castlecove, and all along the north shore of the Kenmare River to Garnish Island, Sneem, Talliha, Reen, Templenoe, Lerrerfinish, Tullakeel and Moll's Gap. There, the more widespread names of **Shugrue, Sughrue and Sugrue** were the only names that appeared.

8) The area around Killarney was known as the Barony of **Magunihy** which covers Killarney, Mucross, Barraduff, Aghadoe, Gneevguilla, Knochnaboul Cross, Tooreencahill, Currow. Again we had **Shugrue, Sughrue and Sugrue**. The name **Segrue**, showed up for the first time in Ireland (in **Gortagullane**), around Killarney in 1857. [See; reference to Wales further on.]

9) Lastly, we have the Barony of **Glanarought**, covering the south side of the Kenmare River to the Cork boarder. (Kenmare, Kilgarvin, Kilabunane, Lauragh, Bunaw, Ardea, Coornagillagh.) There, we found only **Sugrue**.

Surprisingly, 1870 birth records in **County Tipperary** show the names **Sugrue, Shugrue, Shugrew, Shuckroo and Shuckrod**. County Tipperary death records, 1860s to 1880s, show the demise of people named; **Shuckroo, Shoughrew, Sughrue, Shaughroe, and Sugrue**. [The County Tipperary connection is well known, because those who had a passion to emigrate to other countries went to Tipperary, Limerick and North Cork to work as farm hands, so that, they could earn passage for the longer voyage.]

In the census of **England and Wales 1881**, the names **Segrue, Segroue, Shoughough, Shugrue, Shughrue, Sughrue Sugrow, Sugaro, and Sugrue**, all appear. **Wales** produced **Segrue** (1845), **Sughrue** (1846), **Shoughroo** (1881). [The **Segrue** spelling may have originated in Wales and returned to Ireland.] Later, we see only **Shugrue, Sugrue** in **Scotland**.

In **Pender's Irish Census of Ireland 1659**, the names that appear on record in Kerry are **Shagroe** (Cahir Parish) and **Sugherne** Farrennagat, Knockane Parish. We already made mentioned in the "History Pages" of this website of the **Sugrues** of Dunloe and Fermoy in the 1500s. We continued to see **Sugrue** births, however, in 1660, 1690 and 1701, 1760, 1780, 1785, 1790, 1795, but nothing of the names Shugrue, Sughrue Shugru, et al. The reason one could not see those names in the records, is probably because so few Ó Siochrús were landowners. They may have been tenant farmers and labo(u)rers, thus, the landowners of record were the only ones recorded in census data of those days. However, survival saga of the ÓSiochrús continued.

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On February 25, 1848, Daniel and Mary **Sugru** embarked at Cork for a voyage to New York aboard the SS Effingham. On 4/13/1849, Biddy **Sugru** boarded the SS Huron in Belfast for New York. On May 5, 1849 John **Sugra** boarded the Heather Bell at Tralee, County Kerry headed for NY. Mary **Shugree** boarded the Hibernia in Liverpool on October 7, 1851. On October 14, 1851 Denis, Patrick, Mary and Con (12 yr old son) **Suguire** boarded the Intrinsic at Tralee, bound for NY. On March 3, 1853, Ellen **Sughine** boarded the American Union in Liverpool bound for NY. Tim and Pat **Shughine** boarded for Boston. Daniel **Sugrua** sailed for America on the Emerald Isle, on October 7, 1855. We have other varied spellings, such as, **Sugh**, **Sugren**, **Shugren**, **Sugrae**, **Sugue**, **Shugral** who boarded vessels Limerick, Tralee, Liverpool and London headed for the US. Along with all of the above were volumes of people by the names of **Shughrue**, **Shugrue**, **Sughrue** and **Sugrue**.

In the **United States** by 1850, the following names were found; **Shuckoo** (New York), **Shuckroe** (Kentucky and Tennessee, Illinois and Indiana), **Shuckroth** (Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania), **Shuckrow** in Kentucky, Tennessee), **Shugraw** (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Georgia), **Sugren** (Ohio) **Shugrew** (District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina), **Shugro** (Ohio), **Shugrough** (Indiana and Ohio), **Shugrow** Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, **Shugru** (Ohio), **Shugrua**, **Shugra** (Vermont) **Shugereau** (Maine) **Sughroe**, (Illinois), The list ended there but we later found (Thomas) **Shugrow** (Montana), **Shughrue** (Arizona, California), **Shugrue**, **Sughrue** and **Sugrue** in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and several other states. Yes, **Sughroue** shows up in Nebraska a bit later.

Reaching across to **Newfoundland, Canada** (NFLD) where Irish had been arriving since about 1700, we found many O'Siochus had landed there by the year 1800. There were; **Sughroue**, **Shaughrue**, **Shokura**, **Schockero**, **Shockerew**, **Sougherew**, **Shockroo**, **Shoekerew**, **Schacarew**, **Shogrue**, **Schuchrue**, **Shocrue**, **Shughrua**, **Shagerew**, **Shagerew**. **Shoerough**, **Shaugharue**, **Shaugarue** and what would the mixture be like without some **Shugrue**, **Sughrue** and **Sugrue**. All these surnames were found in Newfoundland, in the surrounding environment of St John's, Harbour Grace and Ferryland. In 1825 Denis and Mary **Shegreu** baptized daughter Joanna in Harbour Grace. The family of Michael and Elisabeth **Shoughrow**, had six children. The children were named Charles, Dorothy, John, Joseph, Raymond and Agnes. In the records, all the children were baptized with the last name of **Shockroo**, not **Shoughrow**. Most of the **Ó Siochrús** who landed in NFLD from Ireland were probably all Gaelic speakers and had just enough

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English to get by. There was a good possibility that many of those could not read and/or write.

Australia saw a number of ÓSiochrú names on the deportation list from Ireland. Sentenced to seven years transportation were **Sughrue and Sugrue** [In 1849, a Kerry Court sentenced Timothy **Sugruesen** to 7 years transportation to the land down under, allegedly, for stealing a sheep. Mr. **Sugruesen** died in Spike Island Jail in Cork before they were able to ship him out.] In olden times seven years transportation to **Van Deiman's Land (Tasmania, Australia)** was a very harsh sentence because, there was no returning ever, from there. [*Subject of the song "Black Velvet Band." And pay attention to the words of "The Fields of Athenry"*]

New Zealand received a goodly number of Ó Siochrú boys and girls. Names like **Shughrue, Shugrue, Sughrue, Sugrue, Sukroo, Sygrue**. Many of the O'Siochru name holders in New Zealand, came from Ardfert, County Kerry.

As you can see the name spellings varied from town to town in Ireland and other variations occurred in other countries, as well. There were people in all of the countries mentioned above, who were responsible for conducting census taking in the English language. Everyone involved used their good judgment to phonetically spell the names as they sounded like Siochrú. So, a clergyman in one town translated the name one way, while another clergyman translated the same name differently, just ten miles away. With names that sounded like **Siochru**, taking a little 'phonetic license' may have been the only option when it came to spelling the "**Sioch - rú**" name, in English. There were no passports, visas, driver's licenses and no such thing as picture ID back then. Many Irish, and many Ó Siochrús, did not know how to spell their names in English, nor, had they ever seen their names written in English script. They accepted their name as it was written for them by other well meaning people. [They didn't travel to all these countries for vacations or adventurous weekend trips and nobody has ever apologized for their anguish and pain.](#) Once the opportunity of freedom rang, there were no boundaries to their travels. And all that traveling across the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand was done on horseback. We know we may have missed a few names like **Shogue, Sugrey, Sughrey** and more, but, we captured a goodly number here. Now you know it all began with the efforts of strong, hardworking determined people who were not afraid to do what they had to do to escape tyranny and oppression.

Read the lines of the verses below and know that your ancestors may have been among the people referred to in those verses. Many of them saw so much pain and suffering, they never wanted to return.

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Emigrant Game

In all of the coffin ships bound for New York

You'll find people from Belfast , Newry and Cork

All of them hungrily seeking for work

And most of them never came home

Their spirits sought freedom

Love , fortune and fame

So they played up the part

In the Emigrant Game

Helped in their small way by removing their name

And most of them never came home

And all Irish families seem set to lose one

It may be a daughter , more likely a son

Who as soon as they grow

Their time comes to go

And most of them never come home

All our young eagles long to fly from the nest

For years they've been leaving in droves from the West

Exporting people is what we do best

And most of them never come home

There here you have it -- a picture of how your ancestral background all began. So, what's done is done, what's gone is gone and gone forever. We can't un-ring the bells of the clocks of yesteryears. It is best that we all accept the things we cannot change. We must move on to the bigger and better things and times to come. The good thing about taking a somber look at past history is: **you** are less likely to repeat it. But, let's not forget what we **all have in common**. That commonality is our genealogical roots that are based in the **Kingdom County of Kerry, Ireland**. [I suppose there is also some DNA drift scattered about as well.] And how far flung we have flown, from there. With all of that said and done, isn't it **great** to know the **ÓSiochrús** are **still** the most perfect people in the **whole wide world**? **Just ask any one of us**. Now **you know**? The best days are yet to come. [Sláin agaibh go léir](#).