

# Cold Harbor – 1864

*Mark Flora, Lakewood, Colorado, USA (Great-g-grandson of Patrick & Bridget Geraghty)  
With Michael & Stephen Geraghty, Doonbreedia*

Patrick Geraghty, born in Doonbreedia 1814-15, was married in St Patrick's Church Addergoole Parish in 1835. Soon after their marriage, Patrick and his wife Bridget immigrated to America.



Patrick found work in the Clyde, New York area as a stone cutter, possibly working on the 1840s – 1860s enlargement of the New York State's Erie Canal. By the early 1860s Patrick and Bridget had nine children, so when work stopped on the canal during America's Civil War, Patrick enlisted in the army on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1862. He was not a young man, and may have given an incorrect date of birth.

The American Civil War was caused by disagreement over issues of how much control Central Government should have over the States, industrialization, trade, and especially slavery. With Abraham Lincoln's election as president in 1860, eleven Southern states withdrew from the Union of States and set up their own independent government; the Confederate States of America. This led to the outbreak of the Civil War; a brutal, bloody, five-year conflict that left the South defeated and ended slavery, but at the cost of more than half a million lives. Just how many Irish, like Patrick, were among the dead is not known.



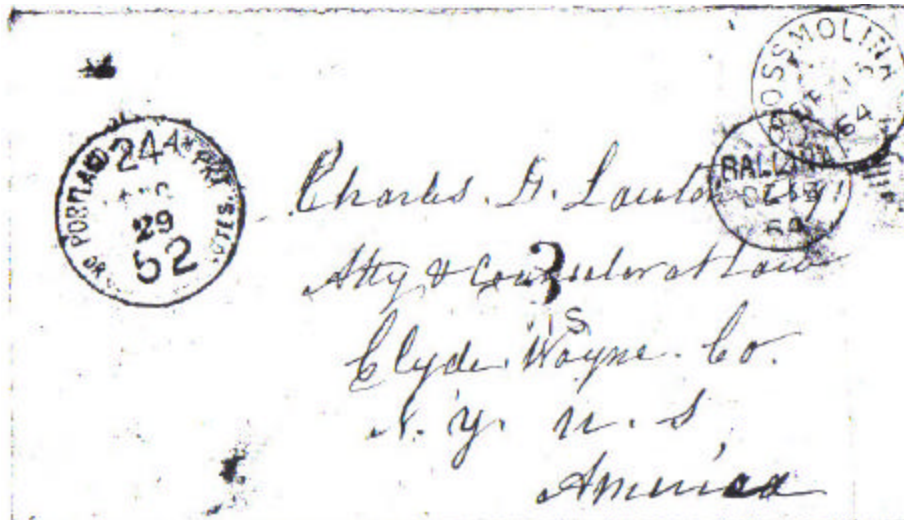
Patrick was assigned to Company K, 9<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery (NYHA) which took part in General Grant's Overland Campaign (May-June 1864) against the Confederates (The Rebels). On June 1, 1864, the 9<sup>th</sup> NYHA fought in the Battle of Cold Harbor (Virginia). At 4:30 on the morning of June 3 almost 50,000 Federal troops, of which Patrick Geraghty was a member, launched an assault. The Confederate position proved too strong. In less than an hour, thousands of Federal

soldiers lay dead and dying between the lines. Pinned down by the volume of Confederate infantry and artillery fire, General Grant's men could not move. They dug makeshift trenches with cups, plates, and bayonets. A total of 170,000 men were involved, and estimated casualties were put at 16,000 in the Campaign.

Patrick was fatally wounded in action at Cold Harbor on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1864 and died of his wounds in Lincoln US Hospital (Washington DC) on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1864. He was buried on June 16, 1864 in what is today known as Arlington National Cemetery, not far from the burial site of John F. Kennedy. Upon his death his Company Commander, Lieutenant Dennis Flynn, wrote to his wife as follows:

*“When I read the news of his death to the men of our company last night, I could not help noticing the sad effect it had on them, as each would exclaim, “Poor fellow!” “too bad!” &c whilst many a rough coat sleeve passed over a brown face, to wipe away the big tear drop that glittered in the pale moon beam, showing though rough and uncouth the soldier may appear, his heart is in the right place, and filled with tender love for their fallen comrades -- He was a brave soldier, and one of the first that leaped into the Rebel pits, on the charge on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. I well remember the look of satisfaction he gave, when we took some prisoners, as he turned to me exclaiming, “We got them! we got them.” That time he came out all right. We were all laying down inline of battle when he was shot. There was two others wounded at the same time, one of them died. Hoping, madam, that God will assist you to receive this sad intelligence with true Christian patience and fortitude, bearing in mind that he who tempers the wind for the shorn lamb, will not forget the soldiers widow.” (CLYDE (NY) TIMES JULY 2, 1864 p.2)*

Patrick’s wife was pregnant, and their tenth child, William, was born in October 1864. On 15 Dec 1864 Rev Patrick MacHale, Parish Priest in Lahardane wrote to an attorney in the USA confirming the marriage so that Bridget would receive a small widow / children’s pension. Here is the envelope.



*The Crossmolina and Ballina stamps are visible and also the date “64” ie. 1864.*