

**THE FAMILY**  
**OF**  
**MARY O'BRIEN**  
**IN**  
**LIMERICK**

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*For:*

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# **THE SEARCH FOR**

## **MARY O'BRIEN**

According to your information, your husband's grandmother Mary O'Brien was born at Old Pallas, Pallasgrean, county Limerick<sup>1</sup> on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1903 and according to her baptismal record her parents were Patrick O'Brien and Kate Collins. Mary had a brother named Patrick O'Brien. Her mother Catherine subsequently married Martin McInerney and went on to have additional children. At the time of the 1911 Census Mary, recorded as Mary McInerney, was living with her mother, stepfather, brother Patrick, half-sibling Josie, grandmother and great grandmother at Pallasgrean village (Old Pallas). Mary immigrated to Chicago in 1927. The aim of this research was to search for the possible marriage of Patrick O'Brien and Kate Collins and the birth record of Mary O'Brien and any siblings in the hopes of learning more about Patrick O'Brien. It was also agreed to search for the marriage of Catherine Collins to Martin McInerney in Limerick.

As you had the baptismal record of Mary O'Brien, the first step in this research was to search for the corresponding birth record of your

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<sup>1</sup> Old Pallas is in reference to the old village of Pallasgrean and it is located at the junction of the townlands of Pallas, Pallashill and Sunglen. New Pallas or Pallasgrean New village is located further north in the neighbouring townlands of Garrane More and Garrane Beg and today is located on the main road from Limerick city to Tipperary town (N24). See Appendix 1 for a map of the Roman Catholic parishes of Limerick showing Pallasgrean and Templebredon parish to the north east of the county. See Appendix 2 for a map of the Roman Catholic parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon showing the townlands of Pallas, Pallashill and Sunglen and Pallasgrean village marked. See Appendix 3 for a map showing Old Pallas/Pallasgrean in 1840.

husband's grandmother. But before I discuss the search there are a couple of considerations when carrying out any research that I would like to note.

Typically when trying to locate the baptismal or birth record of an ancestor, we will broaden the search period to ten years because from experience we find that the suggested year of birth given on later records is often incorrect. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people were often unsure of their age and year of birth and when the information was given on subsequent official records such as census returns and death records, ages were often guessed at. The figure was frequently rounded up and there was also a 'creeping error' where the age became even less accurate as the individual became older. In the case of this research you had the baptismal record of Mary O'Brien which gave her date of birth. However from experience we have found that there can be discrepancies in dates recorded on birth and baptismal records so it was necessary to widen the search to at least the year of 1903.

In addition to this issue, illiteracy and human error could affect the accuracy of all information given on nineteenth and early twentieth century records and in particular the recording of the names involved. Even by 1900 only 86% of the population could read or write. It would appear that the recorder of the information (the priest for church records and the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for civil records) did not ask the family to spell the names but simply guessed as to the correct spelling because we frequently see variations in surname spellings within the records of one family. Therefore alternative and incorrect spellings of surnames and indeed Christian names need to be taken account of in any search.

The surname O'Brien could be alternatively recorded as Brien or occasionally as Bryan.<sup>2</sup> The prefix O' was arbitrarily added and dropped on records within families so we would not differentiate between those with or without in any search. In fact we have also found that O'Brien could become confused with Brown, Byrne or Breen due to phonetic similarities and the use of cursive script. In the case of this research, if Mary's parents were unmarried it is possible that she was registered civilly under her mother's name only. Spelling variations of the surname Collins would include Collin, Colins, Collens and Collons. Furthermore the surname has been linked to Cullane through the Irish (Gaelic) translation, so I also checked under this name.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above there are also variations and errors in Christian names to consider. Mary could on occasion become confused with Margaret and often on Roman Catholic parish registers the Latin form, Maria was given. As you have found Catherine could be recorded as Kate; Kathleen would be another less frequently used variation of the name.

The civil registration of births, deaths and Catholic marriages began in Ireland in 1864 and although we do not have computerised civil birth records for all of Limerick, as explained in correspondence we do have those of Pallasgreaun up to January of 1909.

Therefore taking the above issues into consideration, I searched for the birth record of Mary O'Brien or Collins, or any possible variations of those names and to be comprehensive I searched from 1902 to 1904. During that period I found birth records for eighteen girls of the name Mary O'Brien or Byrne in Limerick however none had a mother of the name Catherine Collins, or variants thereof. One girl Mary O'Brien was born in

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<sup>2</sup> See Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland*, 1989, Dublin, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> See Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland*, 1989, Dublin, p. 51.

the Pallasgrean area and was registered in the Registrar's District of Grean.<sup>4</sup> However this birth occurred in 1902, the child's father was William and her mother was Johanna O'Brien so we can rule her out from our search. I next searched under the surname Collins and found six birth records for girls named Mary Collins; two were registered in the Registrar's District of Grean and significantly one had a mother named Catherine Collins and a father unnamed. Undoubtedly considering the names, location and date we can conclude that this is the birth record of your husband's grandmother.

I next extended the search to look for birth records of any children born to Patrick O'Brien and Catherine Collins in the Registrar's District of Grean up to January 1909. From 1890 up to 1909 I found no birth records for children registered to parents of those names, or variants thereof. Equally there were no birth records in the Registrar's District of Grean for children listed under mother Catherine Collins and father unnamed. I did however find Mary O'Brien's brother Patrick registered in 1906 under his mother Catherine Collins and her husband Martin McInerney. I can therefore confirm your information and the details in the 1911 Census that there are no additional siblings of Mary O'Brien on record in the Registrar's District of Grean up to January 1909.

I can also confirm that a search for the possible marriage of Patrick O'Brien and Catherine Collins from 1890 to 1906 proved negative in

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<sup>4</sup> Under the 1863 Act for the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Irish people were obliged to register all vitals locally in their Registrar's District, starting in January 1864. To clarify, the Registrar's District was the local area for civil registration, overseen by the Registrar who was the person responsible for recording births, deaths and marriages for the government. It was the legal obligation of the public to register the details and fines were payable for non-registration. In county Limerick, the Registrar's District was usually named after the market town or village where the Registrar was based, a central location where the public could come to provide the required information, in this case the village of Pallasgrean.

Limerick's church and civil records. I did however find the civil record of the marriage of Catherine Collins to Martin McInerney in 1906, just months before the birth of Mary's brother Patrick. This marriage record indicates that Catherine was previously unmarried. The 1911 Census also lists Josie McInerney, daughter of Martin McInerney and Catherine Collins who was stated to be two in April of that year. Unfortunately I could find no birth record for Josie up to January 1909 on our database and I can only conclude that she was born at Pallasgreaan after that date. Under the index to Irish civil registration from 1845 to 1958 at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) there is a possible birth listing for Josephine McInerney registered the period April to June 1909.

You indicated that according to family history, Mary O'Brien's father Patrick went on to marry someone else and they had a daughter. Although additional to the agreed research, I did search for the possible marriage of Patrick O'Brien and from 1906 to April 1913 there was one possible record in the Registrar's District of Greaan. This couple are on record as having one son and at least two daughters in Limerick but because we have limited civil birth records computerised to date after 1911 I cannot say if they had more children. Of course, Mary O'Brien's father Patrick could have married later than 1913 or he could have married elsewhere in Limerick or indeed outside of Limerick so unfortunately I cannot confirm the relevance of the marriage on record when we have no confirmation of the names involved.

The following report outlines the details from the birth record of your husband's grandmother Mary O'Brien, that of her brother Patrick and the marriage of her mother Catherine Collins to Martin McInerney.

# **REPORT ON**

## **THE FAMILY OF MARY O'BRIEN**

### **The Children of Catherine Collins**

As stated I have found the birth record of Mary O'Brien and that of her brother Patrick in the Registrar's District of Grean.

The birth record gives the name and gender of the child and the date and place of birth. It also typically states the full names of both parents and the occupation of the father. We are told when the birth was registered and by whom. This person, the informant, could be either parent but if they were not able to, it could be done by an occupier of the house or tenement in which the family are living, the nurse or midwife who attended the birth or in fact any other person present at the birth.

Mary Collins, as registered, was born at Old Pallas on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 1903. Mary's mother was named as Kate Collins and she was stated to be a domestic servant however her father was unnamed. The birth was registered in the Registrar's District of Grean by Hanora Ryan also of Old Pallas on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1903. From the 1911 Census we can surmise that Hanora Ryan was Kate Collins' grandmother.

Patrick McNery was also born at Old Pallas, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 1906. His parents were recorded as Martin McNery, a smith and Kate Collins. The birth was not registered until Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 1907 which was

unusual as it was obligatory to register the full details of a birth within three months and a fine of up to forty shillings would have been payable for this late registration.<sup>5</sup>

## *The Marriage of* *Martin McInerney and Catherine Collins*

The marriage of Martin McInerney and Catherine Collins was celebrated in the Roman Catholic parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 1906. On the civil record of the marriage, the groom Martin McInerney was stated to be a bachelor and tradesman from the townland of Derk.<sup>6</sup> Martin was stated to be of full age meaning that he was twenty one or older and his father was Patrick McInerney, also a tradesman. Catherine Collins was a spinster also of full age and working as a dressmaker. She was living at Old Pallas at the time of the marriage. Catherine's father was named as Michael Collins, a labourer. The witnesses to the marriage were named as Denis Cahill and Teresa Ryan. It was noted that the marriage took place at St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church at Templebredon.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> If you wish, you can obtain a copy of the birth record of Mary Collins and her brother from the General Register Office. A photocopy of the original entry can be obtained at a cost of €4.00 per record or a full form birth certificate for official purposes at a cost of €20.00. An application form can be printed off from the website and faxed or posted to the offices. Contact details are as follows;

**The General Register Office**, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon.  
Tel.: + 353 90 6632900. Fax: +353 90 6632999. Website: [www.groireland.ie](http://www.groireland.ie).

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 2 for map of the Roman Catholic parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon showing the townland of Derk to the south of Old Pallas.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 2 for map of the Roman Catholic parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon with St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Templebredon marked within the townland of Ballyneety North to the south of Derk townland.

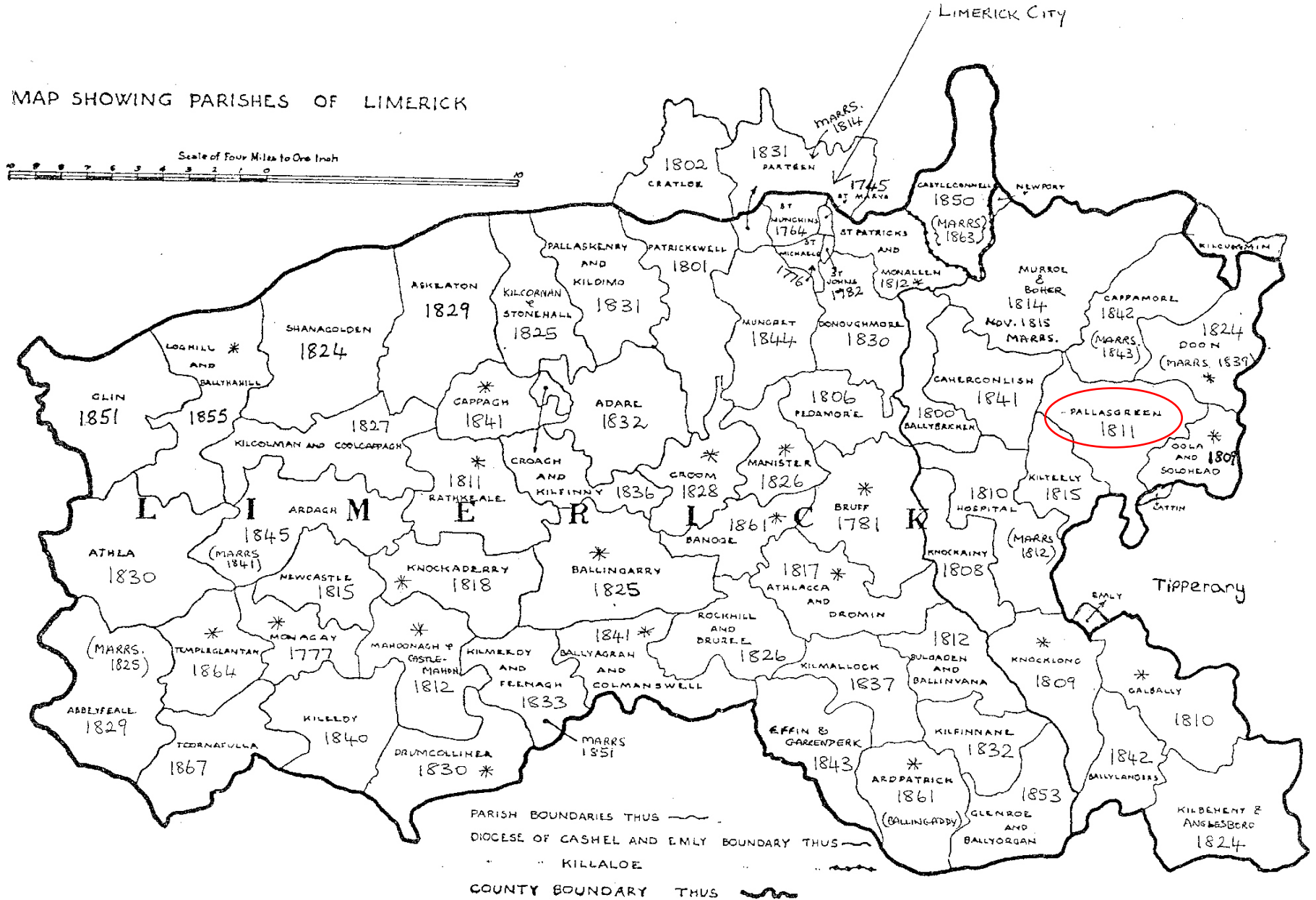


# *Appendices*

1. Map of the Roman Catholic parishes of Limerick.
2. Map of the Roman Catholic parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon.
3. Map showing Pallasgrean village/Old Pallas in 1840.



MAP SHOWING PARISHES OF LIMERICK

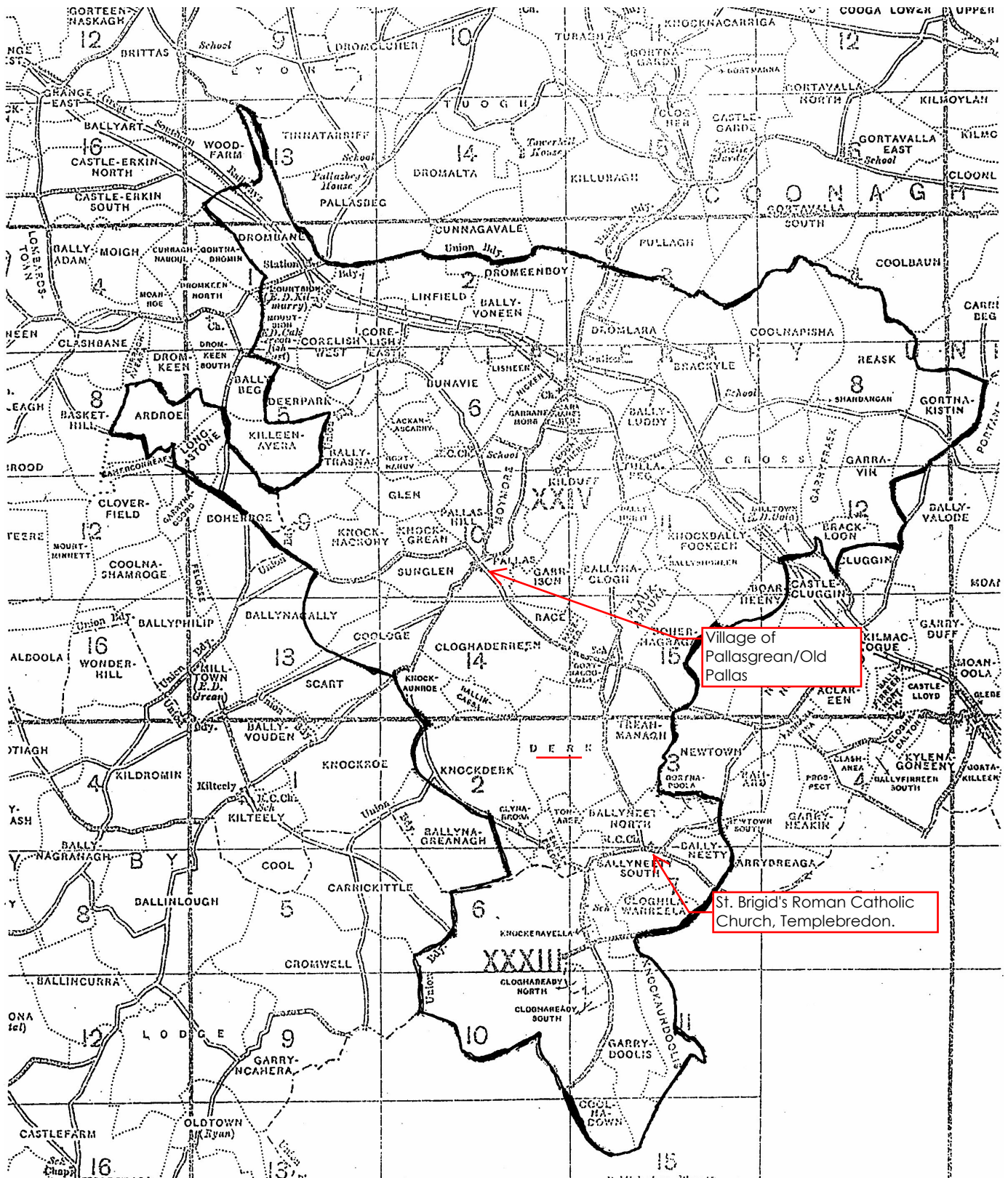


Appendix 1. Map of the Roman Catholic Parishes of Limerick.

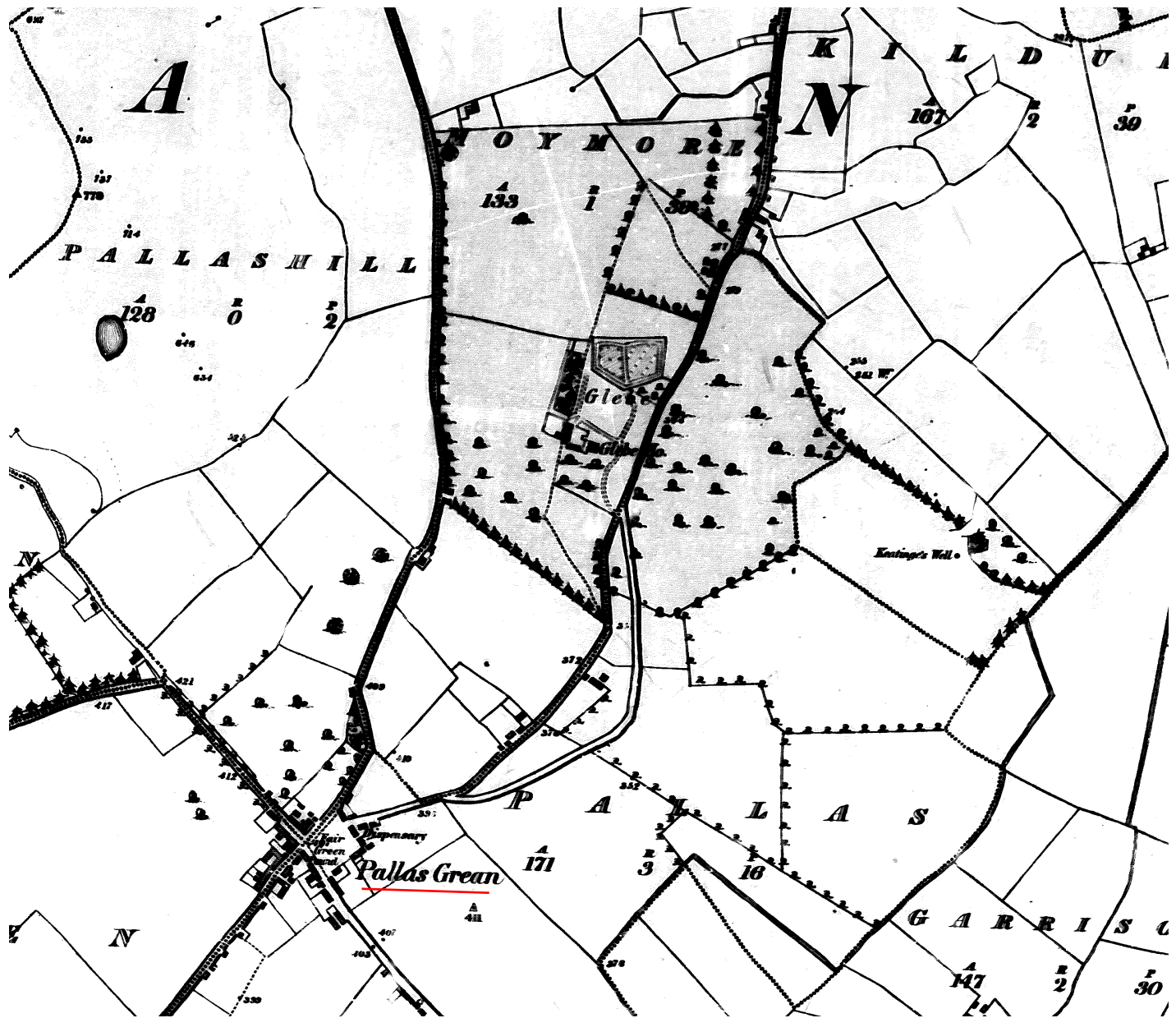
### Notes on Parishes/Gaps in Records

<b>Ardpatrick</b>	Prior to 1861: Included with Kilfinnane.
<b>Ballinarry</b>	1828-'49: Gap in baptisms. 1836-'49: Gap in marriages.
<b>Ballyagran &amp; Colmanswell</b>	1844-'46 & 1847-'50: Gaps in records. Prior to 1841: Ballyagran included with Feenagh and Colmanswell included with Rockhill.
<b>Ballylanders</b>	Feb 1848: Start of marriages.
<b>Banogue</b>	Prior to 1861: Included with Croom.
<b>Bruff</b>	1793 to 1804: Gap in baptisms.
<b>Caherconlish</b>	1842-'46: Gap in marriages.
<b>Cappagh</b>	Prior to 1841: Included with Kilcornan.
<b>Croagh</b>	January 1844: Start of marriages.
<b>Croom</b>	May 1806: Start of marriages (plus some in 1788).
<b>Donaghmore</b>	July 1827: Start of marriages. 1846-'49: Gap in marriages.
<b>Dromcolliher</b>	1850-'52: Limited records.
<b>Dromin &amp; Athlacca</b>	1837-'49: Gap in records.
<b>Fedamore</b>	1813 & 1822-'27: Gaps in baptisms. 1827-'54: Included with Manister.
<b>Feenagh &amp; Kilmeedy</b>	1851-'52: Gap in marriages.
<b>Galbally</b>	1820-'21: Gap in records.
<b>Hospital</b>	1813-'15: Gap in marriages.
<b>Kilteely</b>	1825-'29: Limited baptisms. 1829-'32: Gap in records.
<b>Knockaderry</b>	1820-'38 & 1840-'41: Gap in baptisms. 1820-'38: Gap in marriages.
<b>Knocklong</b>	1818-'23: Limited baptisms. 1819-23, 1830-'31 & 1856-'59: Gaps in marriages.

<b>Loughill &amp; Ballyhahill</b>	Prior to 1855: Loughill included with Glin and Ballyhahill included with Shanagolden.
<b>Mahoonagh/ Castlemahon</b>	1830-'32 & 1838-'39: Gaps in baptisms. 1839-'40: Gap in marriages.
<b>Manister</b>	Prior to 1826: Included with Fedamore. 1826-'27: Gap in baptisms.
<b>Monagay</b>	1792-1812, 1813-'29, 1831-'33: Gaps in baptisms. 1784-'87, 1794-'96, 1813-'29: Gaps in marriages.
<b>Oola &amp; Solohead</b>	1828-'37: Gaps in baptisms. 1828-'32: Limited marriages.
<b>Rathkeale</b>	1812-'21 & 1823-'31: Gaps in baptisms. 1811-'14: Limited marriages.
<b>Rockhill &amp; Buree</b>	1834-'40: Gap in baptisms.
<b>St. John's</b>	1798-1824: Gap in baptisms. July 1821: Start of marriages.
<b>St. Michael's</b>	Feb 1772: Start of marriages. 1805-'07, 1808-'10 & 1819-'21: Gaps in marriages.
<b>St. Munchin's</b>	1792-'98: Gap in baptisms. 1792-'98 & 1835-'38: Gaps in marriages.
<b>St. Patrick's</b>	1821-'23, 1828-'32 & Jan-Apr 1835: Gaps in baptisms. Some baptisms and marriages from 1804.
<b>Templeglantine</b>	Prior to 1864: Included with Monagea.
<b>Tournafulla</b>	Partially included with Monagea c. 1790.



Appendix 2: Map of the Roman Catholic Parish of Pallasgrean and Templebredon.



Appendix 3: Map showing Pallasgreen village (Old Pallas) in 1840.