

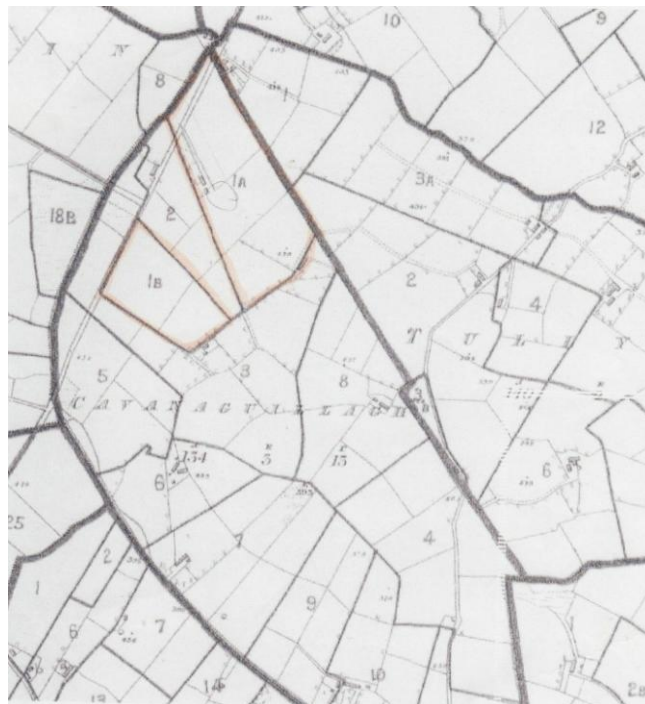
2.1 John Hamilton's Family

The headstone on John Hamilton's grave reveals that he was born in Castleblaney Co. Monaghan, Ireland on 1 November 1823 and this date has been confirmed from another source.¹

John's father's name was Young Hamilton.² This name seems strange but it was very common for the Irish to name their children after their father, especially the eldest boy. This obviously caused confusion and one can envisage how the name Young was used to distinguish between people of the same name. One can also see how continued use could see the name, Young, formalized and used on documents such as John's Marriage Certificate.

We do not know the name of John's mother. We can speculate based on the Irish practice of using parent's names and also the mother's maiden name as second names. John's son Samuel used a third name of **Morgan**. This name was also used as a third name for Samuel's eldest son, John Rainey Morgan Hamilton. We have reached a speculative conclusion that this is the maiden name of John Hamilton's mother.

John was living at Cavanaghilla when he married Sarah Rainey on 4 April 1850 and he lived there until he left for New Zealand in the early 1860's. His land was identified in Griffith Valuations of 1860 (printed 1861) with Map Reference Number 1A of 12 acres, 2 Roods and 15 Perches and 1B of 6 acres³ a total of just over eighteen and a half acres.⁴



Cavanaghilla Townland showing Numbers 1A and 1B

¹ Rainey/Burns Bible in possession of Kenneth Kirby, Ballykinler, Co. Downpatrick.

² John & Sarah's Marriage Certificate

³ 1 acre = 4 Roods. 1 acre = 160 Perches

⁴ www.askaboutireland.ie

The land was described as containing a House, Office and Land with a total value of 17 pounds 15 Shillings. The house was valued at 2 Pounds which was the highest value of the 11 landholders in the Townland. John's land was the second largest and the location was very well placed in relation to Castleblayney being only about 10 minutes walk

We do not know when John took over this land. The landlord was Lord Henry Hope and the Rental Rolls⁵ for his estate have gaps. Rolls exist from 1828 to 1849 but there is a gap to 1861/2 and a further gap from then until 1866. John took over between 1849 and 1860. The later gap does not give us any precision as to when he left. Other records⁶ show this as 1865 but we know, with certainty, he was in New Zealand in that year. There was clearly a lag in the administrative processes for recording changes to land holders.

Hamilton's leased land at Cavanaguillah at an earlier time. These included Johnston Hamilton who was recorded in a 1794 Rental Roll for Lord Blayney's Estate. Also John's father, Young Hamilton, was recorded in the Tithe Applotment Books of 1829 as having land there. Johnston Hamilton was no longer there by this time.

Also in 1829 Young Hamilton held land in the Townland of Annalittin. In both cases the parcels were small, the Cavanaguillah land being 3 acres and 27 Perches and the Annalittin land being 6 acres and 1 Rood. The gaps in the Rent Rolls also mean that we do not know when Young might have died. He was still at the Cavanaguillah property in 1849 but was not mentioned in the 1860 Griffith Valuations at either Cavanaguillah or Annalittin properties so it seems he has died within that period. There are no death records or cemetery headstones at any of the Castleblayney churches showing his death.

The location of Young's Annalittin land is of significance. Young's land adjoined that of Hans Hamilton. Hans had 31 acres and the scale seems to indicate that this was the original Hamilton family holding (albeit still leased from the Blayney/Hope Estate.) If so it would seem likely that Hans was the eldest in the family and a brother of Young and an uncle of John Hamilton.

By 1860 Young was no longer at Annalittin. The Rental Rolls indicate that Andrew Hamilton in 1861 had paid 2 years' rent in the same amount that Young was to have paid a few years before. This indicates that Andrew had taken over Young's land. By this time John Hamilton was well established at Cavanaguillah and had no need for Young's land.

In addition, Andrew Hamilton also had some 24 acres which seems to have passed to him from Hans Hamilton indicating that Hans was very likely Andrew's father. While the overall quantity of land owned by the Annalittin Hamilton's had increased there was a reduction in the amount held by Hans' widow, Anne. Andrew was born in 1811 and was therefore 12 years older than John.

On the other side of Young's Annalittin land, in 1829, was the parcel of land farmed by Walter Reaney.⁷ This was the same size as Young's land, 6 acres and 1 Rood. It is presumed that Young and his family lived on his Annalittin land and with John born in 1823 he would have known the Rainey's well. It is therefore no surprise that John married Sarah Rainey in 1850. The common Irish terminology for such relationships was "across the fields"!

⁵ Blayney/Hope Papers PRONI Belfast Northern Ireland

⁶ Annual Revision Books, Land Valuation Office, Dublin

⁷ This spelling is not unusual and there were many variations in the different records.