

Brick Wall Report: Bridget Nolan, about 1842 – 1911

Prepared for an invented client, 17 October 2026. Every name, date and record below is invented to show the shape of a real report. In a real report each line points at a record you can open yourself.

The question

Where in Ireland was Bridget Nolan born, and who were her parents? She died in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1911. The family has her as "born in Ireland about 1842" and nothing before her marriage in 1866.

What you already had

A tree with Bridget's marriage to Patrick Nolan at St Peter's Cathedral, Scranton, 12 June 1866 (from a family prayer book), her children's names, and a photograph of her headstone with no inscription beyond the dates. Searches already tried: Ancestry hints, FamilySearch name search, a general web search.

What we found, record by record

1870 · United States census, Scranton Ward 5, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania
Patrick Nolan, 31, labourer, born Ireland; Bridget, 28, keeping house, born Ireland; children Mary 3 and Thomas 1, born Pennsylvania. FamilySearch index and image, 1870 U.S. Census, Luzerne, Scranton Ward 5, p. 41, dwelling 312.

1880 · United States census, Scranton
Bridget, 38, born Ireland, both parents born Ireland. Five children at home. FamilySearch, 1880 U.S. Census, ED 162, sheet 14.

1900 · United States census, Scranton
Bridget, widow, born *Mar 1842*, Ireland; immigrated *1863*; 9 children born, 7 living. This is the only record that gives a month of birth and a year of arrival. FamilySearch, 1900 U.S. Census, ED 112, sheet 9B.

1866 · Marriage, St Peter's Cathedral, Scranton
Patrick Nolan and Bridget **Walsh**, 12 June 1866; witnesses Thomas Walsh and Catherine Nolan. The index gives her maiden name, which the family did not have. FamilySearch,

Pennsylvania Roman Catholic parish marriages index, St Peter's Cathedral, vol. 2, p. 88.

1911 · [Death notice, Scranton Truth, 4 March 1911, p. 7](#)

"Mrs. Bridget Nolan, widow of the late Patrick Nolan, died yesterday at her home on Prospect avenue, aged 69 years. She was a native of **Ballina, County Mayo**, and came to this country in 1863." Chronicling America (Library of Congress), free, page image saved with the report.

1911 · [Find a Grave, Cathedral Cemetery, Scranton](#)

Memorial with the headstone photograph and a transcription matching yours. No parents named. findagrave.com memorial 1203-invented.

1842 · [Catholic parish baptisms, Kilmoremoy \(Ballina\), Diocese of Killala](#)

Searched the register pages for March to June 1842. One entry: **Brigida Walsh**, baptised 19 March 1842, parents **Thomas Walsh** and **Mary Nolan**, sponsors John Walsh and Bridget Durkan. National Library of Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, Kilmoremoy, baptisms 1823–1880, microfilm 04224/05, p. 61 (free, image saved with the report).

Our reading. The 1866 marriage gives the maiden name Walsh, the 1911 notice gives Ballina, County Mayo, and the 1900 census gives March 1842. The Kilmoremoy baptism of Brigida Walsh in March 1842 fits all three, and the sponsor Thomas Walsh at the 1866 wedding may be a brother. We call this a **strong candidate, not a proven match**: there could be another Bridget Walsh born in the same parish that spring, and the baptism names no townland.

Not found

A passenger list. New York arrivals 1862–1864 under Walsh / Welsh, ages 19–23, searched on the free Castle Garden and FamilySearch indexes: eleven Bridgets, none with Ballina or Mayo stated, so none can be tied to her.

A townland. The baptism entry gives no townland. Griffith's Valuation (1856–57) for the parish lists four Thomas Walshes; without the townland we cannot say which is hers.

Her parents' deaths. Irish civil death registration starts in 1864; a Thomas Walsh, Ballina district, died 1871 aged 68, but the record names no children and could be any Thomas Walsh. Not claimed.

What to do next

1. Order the 1911 death certificate from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (fee, about \$20): it may name her parents, as reported by a child. 2. Read the Kilmoremoy

baptisms 1836–1850 for siblings of Brigida with the same parents; a sibling's later record may give the townland. 3. If a DNA test is in the family, look for matches with Walsh or Durkan ancestors from Kilmoremoy.

Records read

RECORD	WHERE	RESULT
1870, 1880, 1900 U.S. census	FamilySearch (free)	Found, cited above
1890 U.S. census	—	Destroyed in 1921; not available
Marriage 1866	FamilySearch parish index	Found; maiden name Walsh
Death notice 1911	Chronicling America	Found; Ballina, Co. Mayo
Find a Grave	findagrave.com	Found; no parents
Kilmoremoy baptisms 1840–1845	NLI parish registers	One candidate, 19 March 1842
Passenger lists 1862–1864	Castle Garden, FamilySearch	Not found
Griffith's Valuation	askaboutireland.ie	Four Thomas Walshes; no townland to choose by
Irish civil deaths 1864–1880	irishgenealogy.ie	One possible, not claimed

A real report runs 4 to 8 pages and attaches the page images of every record cited. Nothing is guessed: a name or date appears only when a record shows it, and a candidate is called a candidate.

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