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<th>Robert Furlong</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Biography</td>
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<td><strong>Name of Student:</strong></td>
<td>Mark Furlong</td>
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<td>(5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Class)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Roll Number:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Address:</strong></td>
<td>Dunboyne Senior Primary School, Station Road, Dunboyne, Co. Meath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher’s Name:</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Rafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Phone Number:</strong></td>
<td>(01) 8252803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact email address:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:dunboyneseniorprimaryschool@eircom.net">dunboyneseniorprimaryschool@eircom.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robert Furlong

1894 - 1968
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Introduction

My Great-Grandfather's name was Robert James Furlong. He was born in Mountmellick, Co. Laois (then Queen’s County) on December 6th 1894. His parents’ names were James and Henrietta Furlong (nee Knaggs) and they had nine children. His family were tenant farmers on the estate of Robinsons of Summergrove, Mountmellick. This was not unusual for the time as the country was under English rule - land and wealth belonged to a small number of English landowners. The family were members of the Church of Ireland. After school, he worked as a yard boy at Summergrove House taking care of horses. During this time he met Mary Loughman from Rathdowney, who worked as a cook in Summergrove House. She was an only daughter of a Catholic family. Mary was later to become his wife.
Life was very difficult in Ireland at that time. Most people were poor and worked on the land. Coming from a large family there was no way out of poverty except to emigrate and search for new beginnings. Thousands took this journey to America.

It was a time of great unrest in Ireland. People were unhappy after the Great Famine and they blamed England. We will celebrate the centenary of the 1916 Rising in 2016.

My great-grandfather Robert emigrated from Queenstown (now Cobh) Co. Cork on the 31st of July 1914 on a ship named Cedric - he was 20
years old. He arrived at Ellis Island, New York on the 11th of August 1914. His brother James and sisters Isabella and Emily also emigrated from Queenstown around that time. Robert enlisted in the US Army on the 4th June 1917 in New York as did his brother. Mary Loughman arrived in New York in 1916 - she was just 21 years old. They married after the war.

I became interested in learning about my great-grandfather when I saw a photo of him dressed in a US army uniform (cover photo). I had also visited an exhibition on World War 1 in Mountmellick, and as 2014 was the 100th Anniversary of World War 1, I decided to do this biography on my great-grandfather, Robert.

Registration of my great-grandfather’s birth. People who could not write at the time signed their name with an ‘x’.
Passport

The passport provided me with the following information about Robert. He returned to Ireland in 1921 to visit his wife and parents. (His wife Mary had returned to Ireland ahead of him as it was said the climate in America did not suit her health.) The passport gave information such as his height, colour of hair, eyes, complexion and his occupation as a labourer. He had a broken finger on his left hand.
Censuses of Ireland 1901 and 1911

The 1901 and 1911 censuses are the only surviving full censuses of Ireland open to the public. In Ireland our original returns survive. These are forms filled in by the head of each household on census night. I researched census returns for the Furlong and Loughman households. I discovered a lot of information about my great-grandparents. I thought it was interesting that one of the headings was whether family members were 'deaf, dumb, blind, idiot, imbecile or lunatic'.

I noticed that family circumstances had changed from the 1901 to the 1911 census in both families. This was due to births, deaths and emigration.

The documents show that Ireland was under British rule at the time.
This sentence shows that Ireland was under British rule.
The Loughman Family

### Loughman Family Census 1901

**CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.**

**FORM A.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Loughman Family Census 1911

**CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.**

**FORM A.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Mary
Mountmellick

My project covers three areas of Robert’s life - growing up in Ireland as a young boy, emigration to the USA and his involvement in World War 1.

Robert’s home in Mountmellick was an old stone house with a thatched roof. The house had a main living area/kitchen, one bedroom and a loft. The main living area was where the open fire was located. This was the main source of heat and all the cooking was carried out on it.

Robert’s hometown of Mountmellick was a settlement in the 15th century. It is situated on a narrow river called the Oweness (river of the falls). The Society of Friends (The Quakers) came in 1657 led by William Edmundson and built this settlement. It developed and the town was to grow in population to 8,000 people. With twenty seven industries which included: Breweries, Distillery, Woollen mills, Cotton, Tanneries and Glass, it was a boom town in the
late 18th and early 19th century. It was known as the Manchester of Ireland. In 1851 the first Sugar Beet factory in Ireland opened in Mountmellick, 75 years before Carlow. Today the factories are gone, emigration has increased and is taking its youth. The population now stands at 3,547.
Furlong Household

Robert and Mary Furlong Wedding Photograph

Robert Furlong outside his thatched cottage
My great-grandfather attended St Paul’s Church of Ireland National School in Mountmellick. Life in Irish schools was very different then. There were no computers or interactive whiteboards. Many schools were small; often they had only one room, no running water and the heat came from a fireplace. Children brought a sod of turf for the fire. Going to the toilet meant crossing the school yard to an outside toilet. Children sat at long desks with inkwells in them. They wrote with pens that had spare nibs that they dipped into the ink wells. The children wrote in special copybooks called Vere Foster copies. The top line was printed out and the children had to copy it. In some schools, you were not allowed to write with your left hand! Most of the work was done with chalk on a slate, as books and copies were expensive. Discipline in some national schools was very strict. Teachers used
a cane on children who misbehaved or did not learn their lessons and some teachers had a “Dunce corner”. At lunchtime, the children played schoolyard games like football, tag and skipping.

Vere Foster Copies. Books like these are still used today.
Sunday School

Robert also attended Sunday School. This is the roll book from 1902 when Robert was in Miss Pim’s infant class.

Robert’s name in the roll.
School Days early 1900’s

St. Paul’s National School, Mountmellick
Pastimes

My great-grandfather's pastimes involved:

- Swimming and fishing with a home-made fishing rod in the local river;
- Snaring and shooting rabbits, hares and pheasants - food for the family table;
- Playing football, hurling and handball.
- Making kites from willow sticks and brown paper;
- Telling and listening to stories and visiting neighbours houses;
- Working on the farm, in the summer - cutting turf and saving the hay;
- Selling and buying animals at the local fair.

My great-grandfather told my grandfather that he was often up at 3am to walk cattle to the fair, which usually began at 6am. The cattle were to be minded and walked home again if not sold. Once they brought the cattle home, they went to school.
Fair day in Mountmellick
Farming

The turf was cut with a turf spade or slean (slane). The slean consisted of an iron head and a long wooden shaft. Turf was cut in fine dry weather, so it would dry quickly. They were arranged in piles before being gathered into the cart and pulled home by the donkey or horse. My aunt recalls her Granddad speaking about “saving” the turf, which was a phase used to describe bringing it home.

Also during the summer months, the grass in the fields was let grow up high and then cut down using a “sickle”, which was a large curved blade attached to a long wooden handle. After cutting down the grass, it was allowed to dry out before being gathered into hay stacks commonly referred to as “bales”. The hay was then stored in the sheds and used as food for the cattle during the winter. Sometimes, if the
weather was very good they would be able to get a second cut.

The family had to gather the harvested crops into bags. These crops were a very important source of income as they were sold in the fair and the money used to pay bills owed in local shops, as well as having some for their own use.

Harvesting hay using a thrashing machine
Electricity

There was no electricity in the early 1900’s when my great-grandfather was growing up. Electricity actually didn’t reach Mountmellick until 1930’s. Heat was obtained from an open fire located in the main room of the house. It was also used to cook and prepare meals. A kettle and pots were hung over the open fire to heat water and for cooking. Cut turf from the peat bog and wood collected from the countryside was mainly used to fuel the open fires. They also baked their own bread using a black baking pot upon which coals from the open fire were placed above and below the pot to bake the bread. Oil lamps were used for light. Also they would have lived according to daylight hours - they went to bed early and were up early.
Household utensils from that time
Money

The money used in Ireland during my great-grandfather’s life was different to the money we use today. It was made up of pounds, shillings and pence. There were twelve pence in one shilling and twenty shillings in one pound.

People did not have a lot of money at the time. Most of the food came from the farm and clothes were made at home.
Robert Furlong emigrated from Queenstown on 31st of July 1914 and arrived at Ellis Island and the port of New York on the 11th of August 1914.

Passenger ship information and certificate of authenticity
Cedric was the name of the ship. It was built in 1902 in Belfast.

**Cedric**

**SHIP INFORMATION**
Built by Harlan & Wolff Limited, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1902. 21,035 gross tons; 700 (hp) feet long; 75 feet wide. Steam quadruple expansion engines, twin screw. Service speed 16 knots. 2,872 passengers (385 first class, 160 second class, 2,350 third class).

**SHIP HISTORY**
Built for White Star and Dominion Lines, in 1902 and named Cedric. Liverpool-New York service. Used as an auxiliary cruiser and then as a troopship during World War I. Scrapped in 1932.

**PHOTO CREDIT**
Andreas Hernandez Collection

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**Ship Manifest Departure 31^{st} of July 1914**

Robert
The journey took 12 days and not every passenger survived the journey.
U.S. Passport

Issued September 26th 1921
World War 1

World War 1 was known as the Great War. It was fought between two sides, the Allied Forces and the Central Powers. All countries expected the war to last for a short time but it lasted for four years and took more lives than any other up to that time. Young men on both sides were encouraged by their governments to join their armies. Although it was called a World War, most of the fighting took place in France, Belgium and Russia.
According to his Enlistment Record (see page 35) Robert Furlong enlisted in the United States Army on June 4th 1917 at New York. In April 1917 the USA declared war on Germany and prepared to send troops to Europe. Britain and France depended on the USA for arms and food. The arrival of American troops in France meant that the Allies could launch fresh attacks on the Western Front. In November 1918, Germany signed the Armistice (surrender).

Robert Furlong fought in St. Mihiel offensive - September 12th - 16th 1918 (8 battles) and in Meuse-Agonne offensive in September 26th to November 11th in 1918. Robert was highly commended by his superiors, who stated that he was ‘very courageous in action’. His service was ‘honest and faithful’ and he had ‘very good horsemanship skills’. He was approved for a Victory Medal with St. Mihiel Meuse Argonne Defensive Sector on 3rd March 1921.
The Meuse-Argonne Defensive was one of the final campaigns of World War 1 and ended with the conclusion of the war on November 11th 1918. I have visited the south of France on my holidays. I would like to visit the areas mentioned in the history records and visit the museum and places connected to World War 1.
“And now I’m drinking wine in France,
The helpless child of circumstance.
To-morrow will be loud with war,
How will I be accounted for?”

"Soliloquy" by Co. Meath poet Francis Ledwidge,
who fought and died during World War 1

I wonder did my great-grandfather feel like this, the night before battles.
Robert Furlong (June 1917) in the US Army
Registration Cards for World War 1

June 5th 1917

This sentence shows that Ireland was under British rule.
Robert’s enlistment record states that he was of excellent character and the remarks were ‘No awol, service honest and faithful’ and he had very good horsemanship skills. As a boy, Robert had worked with horses in Summergrove House.
National Guard of the United States Certificate

August 5th 1917
When Robert was honourably discharged he received a poncho, overcoat, underwear, socks, gloves, a bag and he was paid in full.
Robert Furlong returned to Ireland in 1921. The purpose of his visit according to his passport was to visit his wife and family. His wife had returned to Ireland earlier due to ill health. They never returned to America. They went back to Robert’s home town of Mountmellick
and settled there. They had four children—Marjorie, James, Angela and Sarah. James was my grandfather. Robert worked as a part-time farmer and he also worked in Messers James Pim and Sons Ltd. Tragedy struck the family when his daughter Angela died of meningitis on the 9th of March 1948 and Mary his wife died 8 days later on the 17th March 1948 due to heart failure. This was a terrible time for the family. He lived until 1968 and passed away on 24th August 1968 aged 73 years.
MR. R. FURLONG

Mr. Robert Furlong who died at his residence, Garoon, Mountmellick, Saturday, was a retired employee of Messrs. James Pim & Sons Ltd. He served with the American Army in the first World War and lived in New York for some years. He was predeceased by his wife. Remains were removed to St. Joseph’s Church, Mountmellick on Sunday and his funeral took place to the New Cemetery on Monday. Rev. T. O’Shea, C.C. officiated. He is mourned by his son James, daughters Mrs. Dempsey and Miss Margaret Furlong, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and sisters-in-law, grandchildren and relatives.

FURLONG (Mountmellick)—Aug. 24, 1968, at his residence, Garoon, Robert, husband of the late Mary Furlong; deeply regretted by his sorrowing son, daughters, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sisters-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends. R.I.P. Remains will be removed to St. Joseph’s Church this (Sunday) evening, leaving house at 6.20 o’c. Requiem Mass to-morrow (Monday) at 10 o’c. Funeral same day at 2 o’c. to New Cemetery.

Notification of Robert Furlong’s death
The Irish Press August 1968
Robert’s life story is very interesting—from his birth in 1894, life in a large family and emigration to America, Enlistment in the US Army, his marriage to Mary Loughman who was from a Roman Catholic family his participation in World War 1 in France and his eventual return to Ireland. All of these life events probably impacted on his life’s path in a way that he might not have imagined in his youth. It is interesting to imagine what life would have been like for his children if he not left the USA.

I really enjoyed finding out about my Great-Grandfather, Robert Furlong.
The Furlongs

Robert

James

Robert

Mark James
**Timeline**

**1894:** My great-grandfather, Robert Furlong, is born.

**1896:** First modern Olympics are held in Greece.

**1894:** My great-grandfather, Robert Furlong, is born.

**1914:** Emigrates from Queenstown (Cobh) on 31st July and arrives on Ellis Island, New York on 11th August.

**1912:** Titanic sinks on maiden voyage.

**1914:** World War 1 breaks out.

**1917:** Enlists in US Army.

**1916:** Easter Rising.

**1918:** World War 1 ends.

**1919 - 1921:** Anglo-Irish war.

**1917:** Enlists in US Army.

**1918:** Fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Agonne offensives.

**1919:** Received the Victory Medal; returned to Ireland.

**1921:** Irish Free State declared; Michael Collins shot dead.

**1948:** Wife and daughter died.

**1937:** Irish Constitution comes into effect; Douglas Hyde is the first President of Ireland.

**1937:** Irish Constitution comes into effect; Douglas Hyde is the first President of Ireland.

**1939 - 1945:** World War 2.

**1955:** Ireland joins the UN.

**1961:** RTÉ comes into effect.

**1963:** John F. Kennedy visits Ireland four months before his assassination in Dallas.

**1912:** Titanic sinks on maiden voyage.

**1914:** World War 1 breaks out.

**1914:** World War 1 breaks out.

**1917:** Enlists in US Army.

**1918:** World War 1 ends.

**1919 - 1921:** Anglo-Irish war.

**1919 - 1921:** Anglo-Irish war.

**1917:** Enlists in US Army.

**1918:** Fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Agonne offensives.

**1921:** Received the Victory Medal; returned to Ireland.

**1922:** Irish Free State declared; Michael Collins shot dead.

**1948:** Wife and daughter died.

**1948:** Wife and daughter died.

**1961:** RTÉ comes into effect.

**1963:** John F. Kennedy visits Ireland four months before his assassination in Dallas.

**1966:** Nelson’s Pillar in Dublin is blown up in the 50th anniversary year of the 1916 Rising.
Bibliography

My aunt Marie Coakley (nee Furlong)

www.nationalarchives.ie

www.usmilitaryrecords.com

findmypast.ie

ancestry.org

familysearch.org

Representative Church Body Library, Churchtown, Co. Dublin.

General Registrar’s Office, Werburgh St, Dublin.

Church of Ireland, Mountmellick, Co.Laois.

Census of Ireland 1901

Census of Ireland 1911

Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Foundation.

Askaboutireland.com

research@timeline.ie

www.genealogylaois.com

Ages ago Series - Folens
Time traveller series - CJ Fallon
Window on the World - Edco
Unlocking History - Folens
History Quest - CJ Fallon
Maps.com
www.scoilnet.ie
http://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/
American Embassy Dublin
www.homeforheroes.com
mountmellickgroupofparishes.ie
www.fromireland.net
Mountmellick Library, Co. Laois
St. Paul's NS, Mountmellick, Co. Laois
Mountmellick Pictorial Memories by Arnold Crawford and Michael Scott
Email from Mountmellick Library

Hello,

This is Erika from Mountmellick Library and I am just getting back to you with photographs we found of St Pauls Church of Ireland. The first picture was taken from Mountmellick Pictorial Memories by Arnold Crawford and Michael Scott. The picture features the church in 1925 which was erected in 1828 at a cost of over £1500 by Rector Rev. Thomas Pigott. The second is taken from Mountmellick Pictorial Memories Book 2 and features the Church of Ireland which details that the top of the steeple was blown off in a storm on 3rd February 1903. The final pictures shows Irishtown, Mountmellick but the Church of Ireland is visible in both, the first is dated 1902 and the second 1910, these are also taken from Mountmellick Pictorial Memories.

I have also included a link to mountmellickgroupofparishes.ie which includes some history on the church and some pictures on the church as it is today. http://www.mountmellickgroupofparishes.ie/mountmellick

Pictures of the outside of the church today are also included on http://www.from-ireland.net/category/church-parish-records/laois-queens-county/page/3/.

After that the only other place I can direct you to is the museum at Mountmellick Development Association. Though the museum focuses primarily on the Quakers of Mountmellick, they may have more pictures or information for you. It may be worth getting in contact to find out. Their email is themuse@mdaltd.ie or you can call them on +353 (0)57 8624525

I hope these prove helpful and good luck with the rest of your research.

With regards,
Erika

Registration with Ellis Island Foundation

Dear Mark,

Thank you for registering on www.LibertyEllisFoundation.org. Your profile has been created!

Click on this link to activate your account:
http://libertyellisfoundation.org/activation/5daf0013feb407b6e7cd0b2ab9784567/czo3MjoiL3Bhc3Nlbmdlci1kZXRhawxzl2N6b3hNam9pTVRBd05UQTNRFl3TVReElqcz0vY3pvNU9pSndzWE56Wlc1bplYW5Ipzd09ijs=

Or use this verification code: 5daf0013feb407b6e7cd0b2ab9784567

If you need further assistance, please feel free to Contact Us.
Sincerely,
The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.
Dear Mark,

Thank you for your recent email and for providing some important and relevant information regarding your Great Grandfather. The American Embassy, Dublin does not keep records of former members of the U.S. Army. I have, however attached some information which you may find useful, together with a link to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). I sincerely hope you are successful in gathering more information on your Great Grandfather for your history project and wish you the best of luck with your research.

Kind Regards,

Diane

Diane Lynch
Defense Attache Office
U.S. Embassy, Dublin, Ireland