

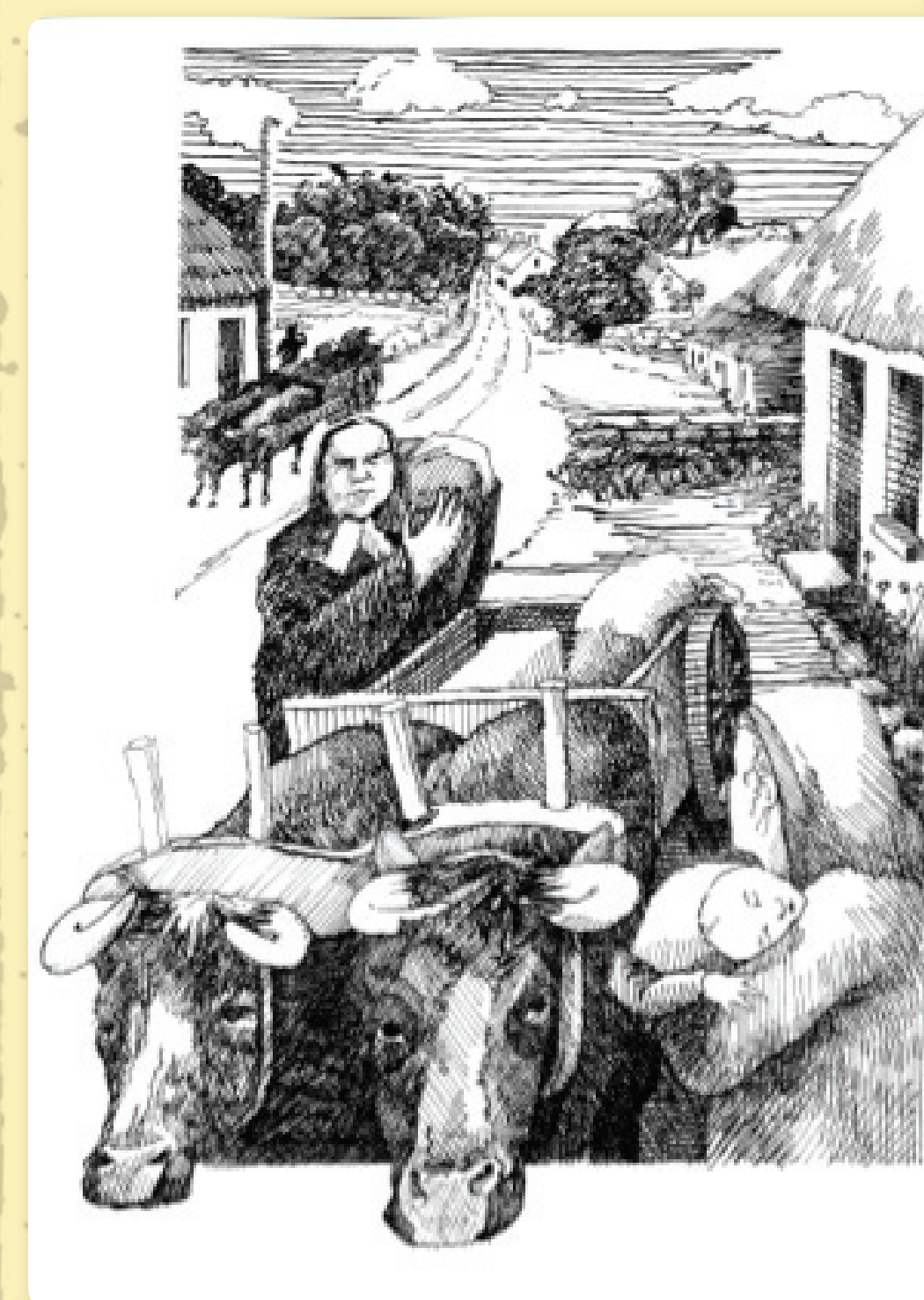
# Rev James Mc Gregor and Family

It has been claimed that Rev James Mc Gregor of Aghadowey, when a boy, discharged from the tower of the cathedral in Derry the large gun which announced the approach of the vessels that brought relief. We are fortunate in having the Aghadowey Session book and the early minutes of the Route Presbytery from 1701 to 1706 and we know that Rev Thomas Boyd was succeeded as minister in Aghadowey by Rev James Mc Gregor. He was the first minister in Aghadowey to be born in Ireland, being the son of a captain Mc Gregor of Magilligan. As a youth he was in Derry during the siege. Educated at Glasgow, he was ordained in Aghadowey in the summer of 1701 and married Marion Cargill, daughter of David Cargill, a ruling elder in Aghadowey, in October 1706.

McGregor was one of several ministers who could speak Gaelic and he played an important part in the early settlement not only as a minister, but also as a leader in the legal and secular affairs of the township. A tall man of commanding appearance, he was well qualified to be a leader on the frontier. During the first autumn after the settlement, a party of men arrived to mow and carry off the grass of the fine natural meadows as had been their custom. A deputation of settlers was sent out to inform them that they had been given rights of settlement and that the meadows were now their rights. The leader of the Haverhill men walked up to McGregor, shook his fist in his face, and said that only his black coat had saved him. Mr Mc Geogor threw off his coat and retorted, "Well it shan't save you sir." He was about to follow words with action when the Haverhill men and their leader beat a retreat. It was the custom of able-bodied men to go to church armed, in case of Indian attacks, and Mc Gregor always marched to the pulpit with his gun loaded and primed.

Mc Gregor possessed a robust constitution, and enjoyed uninterrupted health in the years during which his exertions had helped to establish the settlement. Then suddenly, at the age of 52, contracted his first and last illness, an attack of fever. He survived only a few days, died on Wednesday 5th March 1729 and was buried the following Saturday in the burying ground at Londonderry, N.H. Five of the men who had been his comrades at the Siege of Derry carried his body from his church to nearby Forest Hill Cemetery. He would have been comforted to know that in time his wife would marry the Rev Matthew Clark, his replacement pastor in Derry. Mr Clark was also a veteran of the siege and his temple proudly bore a battle wound that never healed. He left a widow and seven surviving children. Even though Mc Gregor died in 1729 his family continued to play an important part in the history of the settlement and further afield. His son, the Rev David Mc Gregor, was the first minister of the West parish when this second congregation was formed. Rev David's son, Colonel Robert McGregor, joined the revolutionary forces in the War of Independence and was A.D.C. to General John Stark, a native of Londonderry N.H. and described as the most distinguished Scots Irishman in New England. Practically everyone in Londonderry N.H. took the American side in the War of Independence against Britain. In turn Colonel Robert McGregor's daughter Mary Ann, married the Rev John R Adams, who was ordained in the West parish in 1831 carrying on the tradition.

No doubt there are thousands of Mc Gregor's descendents in America today. James Mc Gregor's great-great-great-great-great-grandson is Senator John Kerry who ran for president in 2004 and is now Secretary of State.



Sketch of Rev. James McGregor leaving Northern Ireland to come to the New World. Artist Rosalind Hartley, 2009



Home of Rev. James McGregor. The first framed house built in the town- built circa 1723



Memorial window in Derry's First Parish Church in honour of M/M Rev. James McGregor, the founder of the church and their son Rev. David McGregor.



The centre gravestone is that of Rev. James McGregor (1677-1729), the founder of the town. The stone on the left is of his son Rev. David McGregor (1709-1777), the founder of the Londonderry Presbyterian Church. This is at Forest Hill Cemetery in Derry, N.H.

## Linen / " Coleraine "

The prosperity of the settlement came not only from the lands, but also from its linen industry. The settlers and their wives were skilled in the art of spinning and weaving, and brought from Ireland hand-cards, foot wheels and looms. There is evidence that the process of bleaching had been introduced into the Aghadowey district in the early 18th century and one of the first Bann valley emigrants to land at Boston in 1718, James Gregg, is known to have been a bleacher of linen cloth from Macosquin.

The linen, the thread and other fabrics manufactured in Londonderry were of superior quality, and commanded a readier sale and a higher price in New England than those produced elsewhere. One is reminded of the high quality " Coleraines " ( a standardized breadth - 31 inches ) produced . A John Pinkerton who began trading in linen cloth and thread, accumulated a fortune of 30,000 dollars and endowed the Pinkerton Academy in Londonderry