

WILLIAM EDMUNDSON

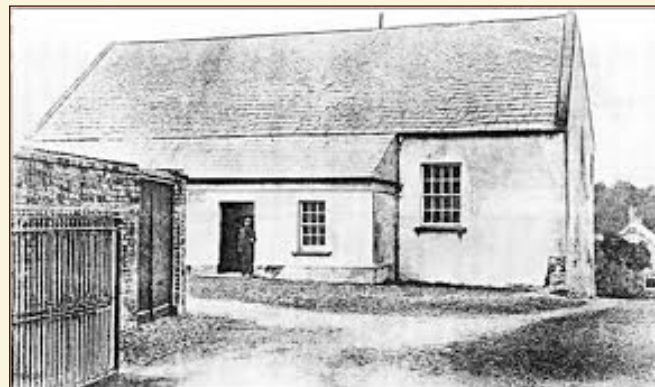
Born: 4th of October 1627 in Little Musgrove in Westmorland, Northern England

Died: 31st of August 1712 at Rosenallis, near Mountmellick

Family background: Parents were John and Grace Edmundson. The youngest of six children. Grace died when William was 4 years old, John died when William was 8 years old. He was then raised by his uncle (Grace's brother)

Professional life: Initially trained in York as a carpenter and joiner, he left this to join the Parliamentary Army (in the English Civil War) followed by a move into Scotland under Oliver Cromwell in 1650. After William moved to Ireland he began trading goods from England. Upon deciding to follow a Quaker path, he ran into difficulties with Carrickfergus Customs office due to his belief that he could not swear an oath as to the contents of his bills and parcels, as it was contrary to his faith. Because Quakerism was new to this area at the time, his stance caused much interest and confusion for those involved.

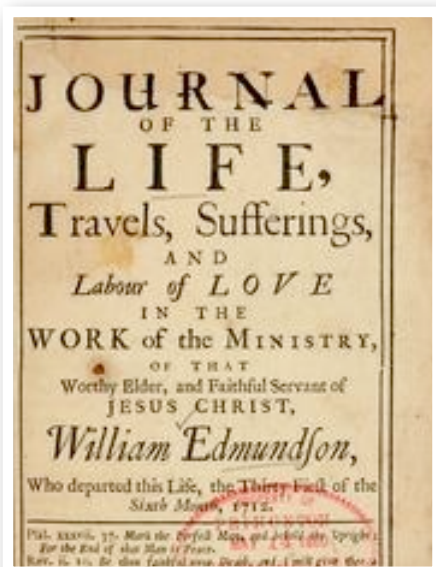
Introduction to Quakerism: In 1651 after returning from the Isle of Man his military detachment were quartered in Chesterfield. At this time, discourse about the Quakers was commonplace particularly with priests in the area. The more William heard about Quakerism, the more its principles appealed to him. Around this time he was deeply disturbed by the mistreatment of 2 Quaker women who came to minister in the town. In 1653, when visiting England from Ireland on business, he met James Naylor, a Quaker preacher.



THE BIRTH OF LURGAN QUAKER MEETING

"He gathered a few like-minded individuals to worship in his house. Five miles to the west regular meetings were first held later in the same year in the home of Margery Atkinson near the ancient church of Kilmore. Soon after a permanent meeting was formed in the townland of Ballyhagan. To travel between the two places one would have to negotiate the river Bann at the crossing place of Port an Dunain (landing-place of the ferry)."

www.lurganancestry.com



William Edmundson's Journal

What brought him to Ireland: It was his brother (a soldier in Ireland) who returned to Derbyshire and persuaded William to move to Ireland with his new wife in 1652.

Arrival in Ireland: Sailed into Dublin with the intention of settling 2 miles from Waterford, but as his brother's military detachment had been relocated to North Antrim, William took a house there instead. In the spring of 1654 he moved his family to County Armagh where his insistence on using plain speech, the keeping on of his hat and his policy of a single set price for everyone when he was carrying out his business, initially led to persecution and ridicule of him and his family. Along with his brother and wife, he and a handful of others began meeting twice a week at his home and this became the basis of the first Irish Quaker Meeting, (in Lurgan). Later he bought a farm in King's County (now Offaly) and gave a parcel of his land at Rosenallis to Friends as a burial ground. It is still in use.

Imprisonment: Because of the unorthodox doctrines which Quakers practiced William was imprisoned 7 times without charge.

Further Reading:

www.lurganancestry.com/quakers.htm

www.hallworthington.com/Emmundson/earlylife.html