

# Elverstown Little Forge and Family History

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*Richard Nolan, Shane Capse*



# Elverstown Little Forge

- Located in Ballymore Eustace, County Kildare
- Built circa 1850 by John Nolan
- Prominent landmark in the locality
  - Horse shoe shaped entrance includes cut-granite surround with 'nail holes'
  - Surround includes a "Crows Foot"
    - Used by Ordnance Survey in map preparation
  - Granite believed to be from Ballyknockan Quarry, West Wicklow

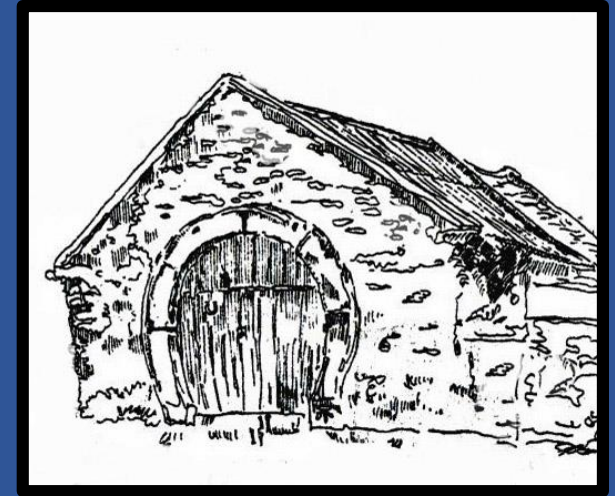


2019 view of Elverstown Little Forge

[Link to Irish map of horseshoe forges \(Ref. Ken Bourke Blog\)](#)

# The Forge

- **Forge:** Workplace of a blacksmith, farrier or wheelwright
- **Blacksmith:** Person who works with iron and steel to make tools
- **Farrier:** Person who works with iron or other materials to make horseshoes and take care of horse hooves
- **Wheelwright:** Craftsman who builds or repairs wooden wheels
- **Forging:** Shape metal into tools, horseshoes or other useful objects
- A basic forge has:
  - **Hearth:** Heats metal to a temperature that makes it flexible
  - **Bellows:** Aids combustion process by delivering air to the base of the fire
  - **Slack tub:** Water trough to rapidly cool and harden forged metal
  - **Anvil:** Used to lay metal pieces on while hammering



Bellows & hearth

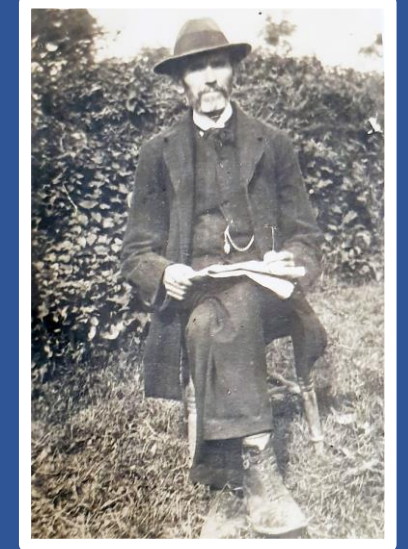


Anvil

[See a Blacksmith in action at the Ulster American Folk Park](#)

# Family History of Elverstown Forge

- Built by John Nolan in the 1850s
- John setup a business as blacksmith, farrier and wheelwright
  - Testament to county's small-scale industry in a time when the local community relied on horse power for transport and farming activities
- John handed down the family trade to his son James Nolan
- James continued the blacksmith tradition until the 1920s
- A listed building, one of a small number of horseshoe forges in Ireland



James Nolan  
(circa 1900)



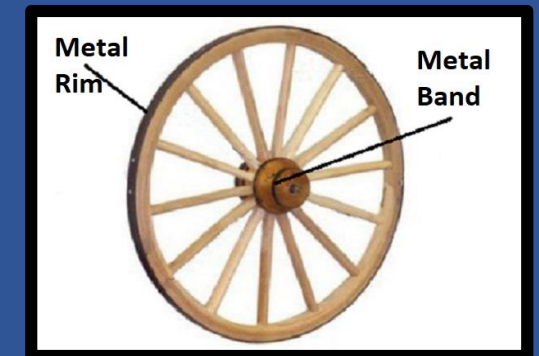
Nolan family outside of  
Elverstown Forge (circa 1950)



Nolan family outside of Elverstown Forge (circa 1920)

# How did the forge serve the community?

- Horse power was used for transport and farming activities
- Hunting & horse racing were popular past times in the locality
- The forge served the local community by:
  - Shoeing horses
  - Fixing ploughs & other farming equipment
  - Making/repairing the banding for the wheels of the carts



# Who did the forge serve in the community ?

- Local farmers and stud owners
- Punchestown race course
  - Opened 1<sup>st</sup> April 1850 and was just 3 miles away
- Barretstown Castle and Stud farm
  - Stud farm opened in 1918 by Sir George & Lady Murray
  - Also owned by Elizabeth Arden and Weston family (Brown Thomas owners)
  - Now a Gang Camp, setup by Paul Newman in 1994



Painting of the riders in the 1854 Corinthian Cup, Punchestown, by Michael Angelo Hayes



Barretstown Castle, Ballymore Eustace , Co. Kildare (Photo: Ger McCarthy)