

THE PALATINES OF COUNTY LIMERICK

Baker, Barkman, Bovenizer, Delmege, Lowe, Miller, Ruttle, Shire, Smyth, Sparling, Teskey. To the Rathkeale and Adare communities of County Limerick these are the familiar sounding surnames of family, friends and neighbours. Yet to the majority of Irish people the names I have mentioned will sound strange and unfamiliar. As far back as I can remember I have known of my Palatine/German ancestry, but it has only been in recent years that I have dedicated more time to becoming aware of the greater details.

In 1709 our ancestors, a hard working industrious and religious people, left Germany with a promise of land in the new world after having survived two invasions and a winter of extreme and exceptional cold, resulting in the loss of most of their possessions. The majority of these people had been husbandmen or vinedressers and the cold weather meant the loss of their livelihood.

Queen Anne was on the throne of England at that point in time and when she became aware of the plight of these people, developed a personal interest in their well being. A number of British American colonists had been in Europe for a number of years prior to this looking for settlers for their lands in America. William Penn, one such colonist made the greater impression on the suffering people of the Palatinate and the offer of a new life in America seemed the answer to their prayers.

Thus through the personal interest of Queen Anne and the broader interest of the English in finding settlers for their colonies in America, over 13,000 of the Palatine people left their homes in the areas of Assenheim, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Spire and Worms of the Lower Palatinate in West Germany and travelled down the Rhine on whatever craft was available to the seaside port of Rotterdam, from where they were brought across to London in British Naval or Trade ships returning to England after dropping off soldiers or supplies.

From London the greater number of these families continued their journey to America, a few were successful in obtaining work in England while the rest remained in London while British Government funds ran out. These people became a problem for the British Parliament as they spoke little English and jobs were scarce and when the Irish Parliament wrote, offering to settle 500 of the families, it was seen as somewhat of an overall solution and consequently 821 families arrived in Dublin. The Irish Parliament was unprepared for the larger than expected numbers and this led to overcrowding and a shortage of rations for the families resulting in a number of them returning to England.

Those that remained were settled on various estates throughout the country, their landlords being handsomely subsidized to make various concessions to them. But landlord's promises were broken and settling on many of the estates did not happen easily. The majority of the Palatines were unhappy and disillusioned which developed into a number of confrontations and the desertion of settlements. Many returned to Dublin or left Ireland to return to England in the hope of travelling to America. After a number of tries to resettle the remaining discontented families over a period of ten years, the picture that emerged in 1720 shows that only Sir Thomas Southwell of Rathkeale, County Limerick and Abel Ram of Gorey and Old Ross, County Wexford now managed to satisfy and retain their German tenants. Of these settlements that of Sir Thomas Southwell's was by far the largest. Numerous families had come to join his original ten over the period 1710-1720 and were settled at Courtmatrix, Killeheen and Ballingrane circling the town of Rathkeale. He had been careful to pick only experienced farmers and skilled craftsmen with large families to further the prosperity of his lands.

The families were treated favourably by these two landlords and this, combined with the fact that they were superb farmers and worked hard meant that they at last prospered and were able to develop their holdings. They introduced many new techniques to Irish farming and generally improved the economies of the areas they lived in. Retaining their German life style they very quickly set up their own communities and appointed burgomasters to settle any disputes.

Other landlords on seeing the prosperity of these tenants were eager to settle Palatines on their own lands. From the parent colonies of Ballingrane, Courtmatrix and Killeheen many secondary colonies were developed from the families of the original settlers. These were at Adare, Pallaskenry, Ballyriggin, Ballyorgan and Glenosheen in County Limerick. Kilcooly in County Tipperary and Kilnaughtin and Ballymacelligott in County Kerry. Close ties remained between all of the settlements and over the years many marriages were made between partners of various settlements, cementing the bond between colonies.

As I mentioned earlier they were a religious people mostly of the Lutheran or Calvinist faith. Over the early years however, due to the lack of pastors and the custom of burying bibles with their dead, their faith dwindled and they became known for drunkenness and cursing. At the same point in time in England, John Wesley the son of an Anglican minister, had started to preach the gospel with a fresh and vibrant approach and was gathering and converting people to Christianity. The group of Christians were later to be known as Methodists.

In 1749 the first Methodist preachers came to Limerick and the Palatines on hearing their message were attracted to the simple method of worship which they found reminiscent of their former homeland religious practices, and were converted. Wesley was full of admiration for these people and their enthusiastic approach to the practicing of their worship and made numerous trips to visit them, the first being in 1756.

Over this same period the lands which the Palatines tenanted had fallen to the heirs of original landlords, who did not look as favourably on their tenants, demanding higher rents. The result was that many Palatines followed the example of earlier settlers and emigrated to America. In 1760 Philip Embury having become one of Wesley's preachers, and his cousin Barbara (nee Ruttle) Heck were two of those who left Ballingrane. In America Barbara Heck became aware for a need of pastoral guidance and urged Phillip to take on that role. In 1766 Phillip preached the first Methodist sermon in America, in his own house in New York. This was the beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the USA.

Today, 224 years further on the Methodist Church has over 14 million members in the USA. The County Limerick townlands of Ballingrane, Courtmatrix, Killeheen including Adare and Pallaskenry are still homeland to the largest Irish Palatine group. Their descendants still retain a discernable life style to their forebears portrayed through honesty, tenacity, thriftiness and dedication to work maintained for the best part by a strong faith in God.

Many of the remaining families though fewer in numbers still live on their original extended holdings and indeed in some cases in the same homes, which of course have been modified and improved many times over. If one looks carefully at these settlements, signs of industrious forbears are still evident in the care of design and construction of buildings and the old apple orchards. The Palatine community of County Limerick have always retained an awareness and pride in their identity and this combined with the constantly increasing numbers of descendants returning to Ireland seeking to know more of their forebears, has sparked off a number of developments one of which is the formation of an association *"The Irish Palatine Association"*.

of the homes of the Limerick Palatine settlements are rich in artifacts, photographs and documents which span the period 1709 to the present day and one of the Association's endeavours has been to mount and maintain an exhibition, housed in the Rathkeale Community Centre, which is open daily 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm for the months of June, August and September. This exhibition will be extended and improved over time and will eventually become part of a purpose built centre to present the story of the Palatines in a form not only of interest to those of international Palatine descent but to the public at large. The centre will also include a database containing records to assist descendants research their ancestry.

A further significant development is the publishing of a book by Dr. Patrick O'Connor titled *People Make Places, The Story of the Irish Palatines*. Dr. O'Connor has spent two years researching and writing this book which seeks for the first time to distil in detail all aspects of the Irish Palatine Story reaching back into their German past to the present day. The book was launched in Rathkeale in October 1989 by the Irish President, Dr. Patrick Hillery.

In conclusion I would like to say that in a time when it is very easy to be complacent, it is no bad thing to look back, admire and learn from a people who gave all to the caring of their families, homes and work through a strong faith in God. Austen Bovenizer.

The Irish Palatine Association may be reached at: The Irish Palatine Information Office, Rathkeale, County Limerick, Ireland.

AND A COUPLE OF FAT HENS

The death took place in Melbourne on 6 November 1990 of Dr. Egbert Armytage Cunninghame Farran. He was the son of Charles Walter Cunninghame and Helen Beatrice (nee Hopkins) Farran. C. W. C. Farran was the son of Charles Frederick Todd Farran (1831-1919) who married in 1867 Isabel, daughter of Boyd Alexander Cunninghame RN of Cunninghame of Craighends, Renfrewshire, Scotland who was descended from Alexander Cunningham created Lord of Kilmaurs 1450 who was killed at the second Battle of Bannockburn 1488. The first of the Farrans, a Huguenot family, to arrive in Ireland was Nicholas Farran who was granted a lease of tenements and a garden at Kilmainham, Dublin 12 December 1667 from Edward Tayllour at a yearly rent of fourteen pounds and a couple of fat hens at Christmas.

IRISH FAMILY REUNIONS:

(Published free-of-charge)

McKAY/MACKAY: A reunion of the descendants of James and Mary Ann (nee Barr) Mackay from County Antrim who settled near Yass NSW in 1841 is planned for October 1991 at Yass. Descendants of their children: James, Mrs Mary Ann Wheeler, Adam, Henry and Archibald are invited. Information from Paul Fredrickson, 28 Billarga Road, Westleigh NSW, 2120

In generations of Labor premiers in NSW it was not until the advent of Neville Wran that there had been anyone at the helm who was not of Irish background. Most Federal Labor leaders had been Irish until the advent of Gough Whitlam. Al Grassby 1983.

No Catholic marriages were allowed to take place in the colony of NSW until 1825. - from "Ancestor" June 1978.

HUGUENOT & WALLOON GAZETTE

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THE HUGUENOT & WALLOON GAZETTE is a non-profit-making publication to enable genealogical researchers to exchange information, facts and pedigrees about their presumed Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish ancestors. It is primarily intended for those who

- a) are not sure if they are of Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish descent;
- b) have been told they are of Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish descent but lack proof;
- c) have proof that they are of Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish origin but cannot jump the gap between the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries;
- d) have come across a foreign-looking name in their English pedigree and wonder if it might prove to be Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish.

However, this GAZETTE could be of use to those of proved Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish descent who would like to enlarge their knowledge of the family, or those who are 'stuck' at some point, and those whose names have suffered violent changes in spelling. Indeed, the GAZETTE is open to anyone interested in Huguenot, Walloon or Flemish genealogy.

It is hoped to have two mailings of the GAZETTE a year, in April and October. The GAZETTE will include the following: an editorial which will discuss research problems and points of interest that arise from subscribers' letters (the Hon. Editor cannot answer letters individually except in the most exceptional circumstances). An article about a specific problem of research or methods of research concerning Huguenot, Walloon and Flemish genealogy. It is taken for granted that subscribers are already members of a local family history society or a One-Name society, or the Society of Genealogists, if not subscribers are advised to join such an institution as general advice on English genealogical methods will not be given. There are dozens of excellent handbooks for this available. There will be a list of subscribers' interests as well as a section on 'Queries' - this latter will probably become the main feature of the GAZETTE. Later it is hoped to include interesting and useful new information from subscribers' own records as well as three generation pedigrees provided proof is given for each entry on it.

£1 for enrolment for all members.

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Family/ies you are interested in:
Please give DATES, PLACES & REFERENCES:

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