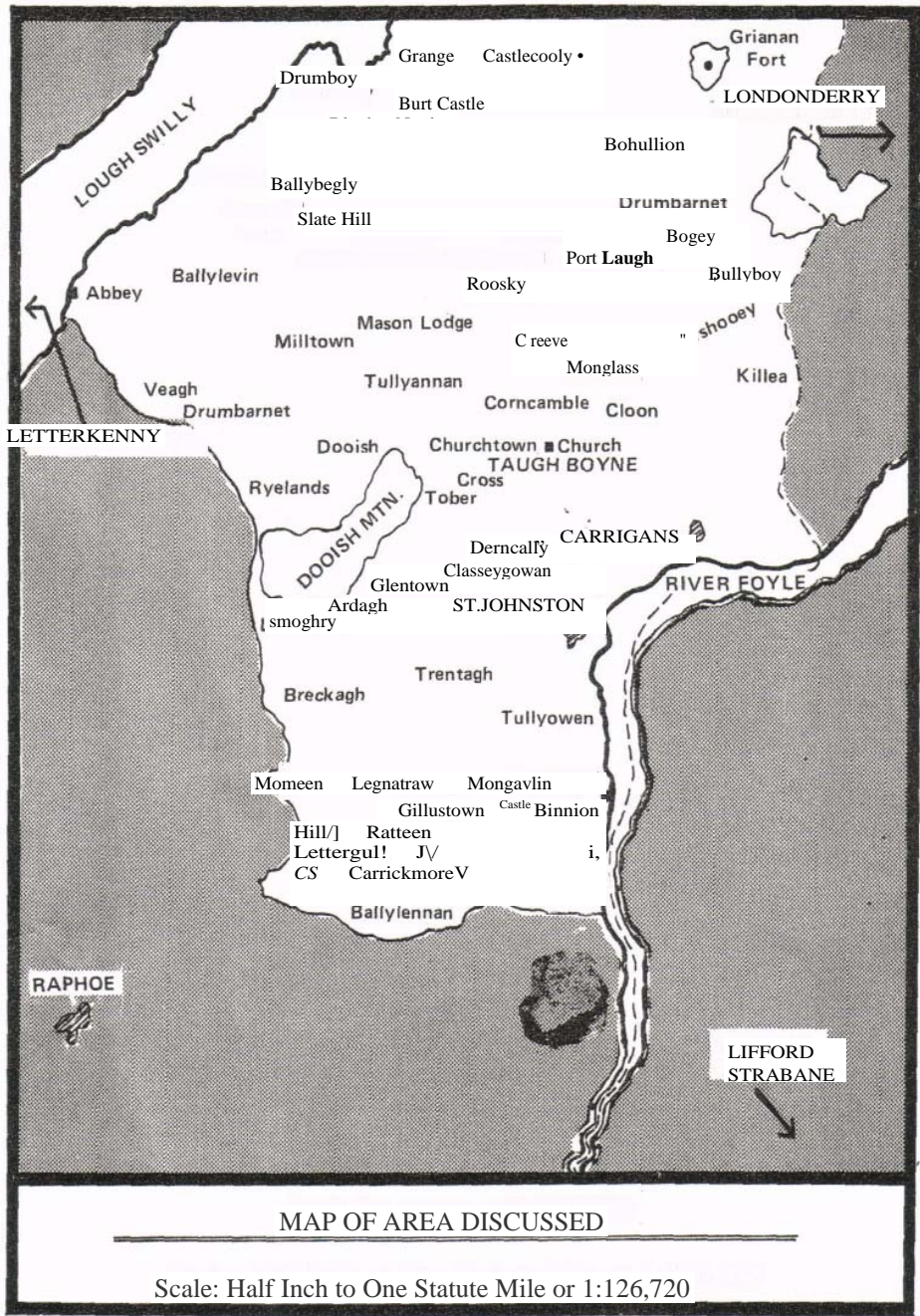


*THE LAGGAN*  
*AND*  
*ITS PEOPLE*

By S. M. Campbell



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111. 7(a)

Grianan of Aileach

## EARLY HISTORY

### CHAPTER ONE : EARLY HISTORY

The Laggan Valley is a level tract of rich agricultural land between the River Foyle and the Upper Reaches of Lough Swilly. The word "Laggan" is derived from the Celtic root "lag" or "lug" meaning a flat place. In prehistoric times it was a large lake dotted with islands, the highest of which were the hill of Aileach, and the hill of Oaks on which Derry City is situated. Aileach borders the area to the north, to the west is Lough Swilly, to the East Lough Foyle, and the southern boundary stretches from Convoy to Lifford. I am going to trace the history of St. Johnston, Carrigans and Newtowncunningham, the most of which area lies in the parish of Taughboyne.

In the year 550, St. Baithen, a contemporary and cousin of St. Columbkille, formed a monastery which was known as Teach Baithen (House of Baithen) which came to be called Taughboyne. (*See Buildings of Interest*). St. Baithen who was much loved by the people of the district got the nickname of St. John, disciple of Jesus. Thus the clachan or village near the monastery came to be called St. Johnston. Taughboyne and indeed most of the Laggan, was, almost a thousand years ago called Tir Eanna, so called it is supposed, because it was the territory of Eanna, brother of Eoghan (both sons of Niall, High King of Ulster, whose palace was Grianan of Aileach. (*See Buildings of Interest and III. No. 7*). It has been suggested also that it might have meant Country of the Marshes (Tir Eannac). In 1010 the chieftains of Tir Eanna were the O'Lapain, their castle being at Loch O Lapain, which is now called Portlough. The little lake of Portlough, so insignificant looking now (*See III. No. 2*) features largely in the history of the area and is often referred to in ancient annals, thus giving some substance to the legend of a castle being buried beneath its waters. (*See Folklore*).

In the Parish of Taughboyne were enacted in miniature the conflicts of Irish and sometimes even of British and European history. King James II, during the siege of Derry went to the top of Binion Hill near St. Johnston, and on looking at the fine view of rich arable land said "A land well worth a fight my Lords," and there has been much fighting for this land over the centuries. First the Danes, then the Normans, who ruled here until 1333, the English, and the clans of O'Donnell, O'Neill and O'Doherty, all fought for the possession of this district. It is recorded that Art O'Neill invaded Tir Conaill in 1511 and plundered Tir Eanna and defeated O'Doherty. The next year O'Donnell raided the O'Neill territory of Tyrone. "In 1557 Calva O'Donnell encamped on summit of Binion Hill in Parish of Taughboyne, and Calva when he viewed O'Neill (Shane) in vicinity he ordered his gallow-glasses to arm directly and make a nocturnal attack on Shane's camp and the Tyronians were completely routed."

So it went on, but the race who was to dominate this area finally and have most effect on its more recent history was the Scots. For many generations there had been raids by bands of Scottish marauders on foraging expeditions. The first famous Scot to come here was Edward Bruce in 1316, who was described by the annalist "the destroyer of Ireland in general and of both native and English peoples." He and his men so devastated Inishowen and this area that the people welcomed back the Norman rule. The bleak rocky coast of West Scotland offered poor support to its inhabitants and there were many foraging raids to North East Donegal in search of cattle and food. In 1586 a particularly severe raid was led by Alsander MacDonaill of the Isles. Sean Og O'Doherty of Inishowen and Black Hugh O'Donnell viewed

with dismay the inroads of the raiders, but at the same time didn't want to come into open animosity with them as Alsander was a close relative of Hugh's wife Finnoula MacDonaill, and also because the Scots could be useful allies against the English. Still there were limits to hospitality, even to a kinsman, and finally the two chieftains traveled to Strabane (six miles from St. Johnston) and informed the leader of the English garrison, that Alsander intended to attack the English. Captain Merriman immediately marched to Portlough and there at Bun an Abair engaged the Scots and slew Alsander.

As already mentioned about 1560 Aedh Dubh) Black Hugh) O'Donnell married Finnoula MacDonaill of the Isles and brought her as a bride to Mongavlin Castle (*See III. No. 1*).

The fair Ineen Dubh (Finnoula O'Donnell) it is said was a ruthless, ambitious woman, and had several of her stepsons murdered so that her own favorite child, Red Hugh O'Donnell, would be chieftain. But this ambition, which she finally realised, proved as futile as the battles which the O'Neills and O'Donnells waged for this part of Donegal, for soon neither Red Hugh nor any of the old Irish would own one rood of it.

To Mongavlin Castle, as part of her dowry, Finnoula MacDonnaill brought with her 100 Scottish mercenaries, 80 of them reputedly "the tallest men in Scotland and all called Crawford." Crawfords live around there to this day.

In 1591 Finnoula's hour of victory came when her son Red Hugh (aged 20) escaped from Dublin Castle, where he had been imprisoned by the English. His father retired and Hugh Roe was elected to the lordship of Tirconnail in Kilmacrenan, the last O'Donnell to receive the honour. Notable for his absence from the inauguration was Scan Og O'Doherty of Inishowen, who had not paid his tributes to his overlords the O'Donnells, so Red Hugh and his mother planned to punish the absentee. In 1593, Red Hugh and twelve of his followers surprised Sean Og on the southern border of Inishowen (around Portlough). Sean Og in trying to escape them galloped his horse in the direction of Raphoe but was finally captured and held ransom for two years.

In 1599 O'Neill and O'Donnell forgot for a short while their differences and mobilised forces at Strabane in case of English landing. About that time Dowcra, Commander of the British army of occupation, erected six small forts to protect his forces against O'Donnell raids, from Culmatrine Castle to Carrigans Castle. The former has been demolished and the site of the latter (another home of Finnoula O'Donnell) is supposed to be beneath the present flax-mill. Cloon House now stands on the site of one of these forts and another is supposed to have been at Grieve.

In May, 1601, Red Hugh mustered his forces to lay siege to Inishowen. English troops were immediately rushed to Carrigans for but Red Hugh bypassed them and by cutting trees at Portlough and Newtowncunningham made a temporary bridge over the water to the west and got through to engage the English at Ballyliffin. This, however, was not one of his most successful campaigns although he won many battles elsewhere. In 1602 he died an exile in Spain at the age of only 31.

When Sean Og O'Doherty died, his son Cahil allied himself to the English, and for five years ruled under the patronage of Dowcra with whom he got on very well.

<sup>1</sup> "Cahir fought for his allies, was knighted and in 1607 was foreman of the jury that pronounced the fugitive earls to be traitors and their property forfeit....but Dowcra was succeeded by Sir George Paulet, who mistrusted Cahir and after many quarrels was rash enough to strike him."

Cahir then rose in rebellion and advanced on Derry which he sacked and burnt,

killing Paulet, but the superior forces of the English finally prevailed.

<sup>2</sup> "In 1608 Marshall Wingfield advanced towards Hurt Castle (*See III. No. 6*), the chief residence of O'Doherty, near Lough Swilly. MacGeoghegan says the castle was guarded by a monk, who, not having a sufficient force to defend it, and not wishing to subject to the dangers of a siege, O'Doherty's lady, who was Mary Preston, daughter of Lord Gormanstown, surrendered the castle on condition that the garrison would be spared, but Wingfield put most of them to the sword, and sent O'Doherty's wife to her brother....O'Doherty had various encounters with the English forces, and maintained his ground for about three months in Donegal; the Lord Deputy Chichester offered a reward of 500 marks for his head; and Sir Cahir being encamped at the Rock of Doune, near Kilmacrenan. was shot dead with a musket ball."

With the flight of the Earls from Lough Swilly in 1607 and now the defeat and death of the last big Irish chieftain in North Donegal, the stage was set for complete take-over by the English and the Plantation of this area.

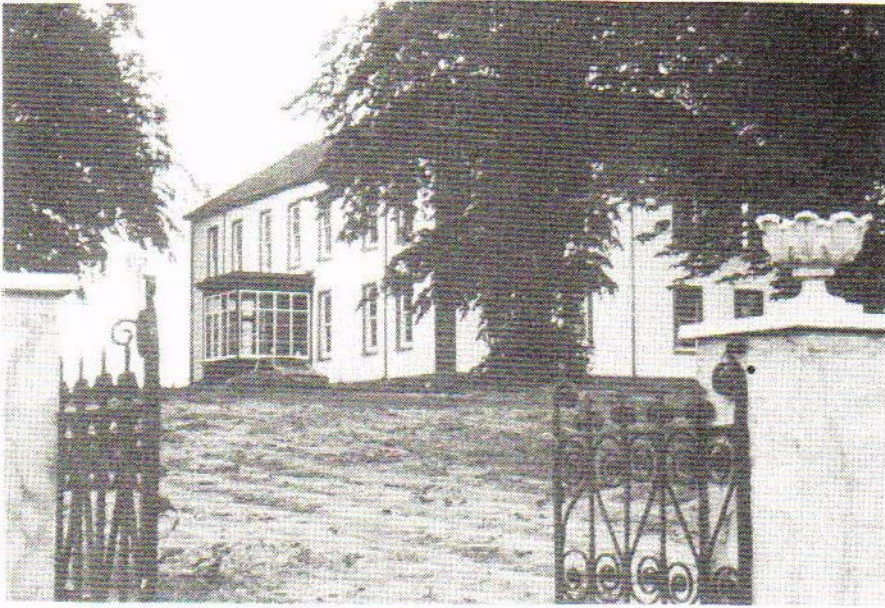
As pointed out before, there were already Scots in the Lagan, brought over by Finnoula O'Donnell and also many Scottish mercenaries had from time to time settled here. Now the Scottish take-over was to be completed, for in 1609 and 1610, the whole lands were confiscated and planted with Scottish undertakers, with the exception of the Precinct of Liffier (Lifford) which was settled with the English.

<sup>3</sup> In order to clear the way for these newcomers a proclamation was published at Lifford in the King's name in the month of September, 1611, ordering all the native Irish to prepare themselves to clearly avoid (i.e. cease to occupy) their several possessions within the said precincts of Liffier and Portlough, and betake themselves to their proportions and allotments in the Barony of Kilmacrenan.

The plantation of St. Johnston. Carrigans and Newtowncunningham was arranged as follows: —

<sup>4</sup> Precinct of Portlough, Duke of Lennox chief undertaker of 2,000. Sir Aulant Aula Knight, his agent, resident with some British families; no preparation for building, save some timber trees felled and squared....Grant to the Duke of Lennox (145). The small proportion of Magavelan or Magevelin containing the lands undermentioned viz., Maymun, one quarter, Moymore, one quarter; Reteyn, one quarter; Credough, one quarter; Magavelen, one quarter and 2/8 of the quarter of Altacaskyn adjoining Maymore; in all 1,000 acres. Also the small proportion of Lyttergull, containing Dromore, one quarter; Cooleghemore, one quarter; Tullyrapp, one quarter; Foyglasse. one quarter; Littergull, one quarter; Ballyblanan, one quarter; and 2/8 quarter of Carrickneshinagh; in all 1,000 acres. And also the small proportion of Cashell, including the lands of Kinikilly, one quarter; Cashell, one quarter; Glashogan. one quarter; Moyneasse, one quarter; Cloghfin, one quarter; Tawnagh, one quarter; and 2/8 quarter of Altacaskyn, adjoining the quarter of Cloghfin; in all 1,000 acres. Total rent for the three proportions 161. English....The premises are created the manor Magevelin, Lettergull, and Cashel, with 900 acres in demesne, and a court baron....

Sir John Stewart, Knight, hath 3,000 acres called Cashell, Ketin and Littergull. Upon this proportion there is built at Magevelin, a very strong Castle of Lime and Stone, with flanker at each corner, but as yet there is no bawne nor



III. 3

**Castle Cunningham**



freeholders made; and for want of them he (Sir John) saith the Duke of Lenox shall answer the King....

Grant to John Cunningham of Crafield of Crawfield. The small proportion of Donboy.... Upon this there is a Bawne of lime and stone. 70 feet square, 14 feet high, with two Flankers, which be three stories high; and in them good lodging, and a good house in the Bawne, in which himself with his wife dwelleth. (*See Hi No. 3*).

Near adjoining to the Bawne he hath built a town consisting of 26 houses, and a good water mill, all which is inhabited with British tenants. (The name of this residence was Castle-Cunningham. which name was subsequently used to designate the whole estate or manor) consisting of, Don boy, containing the lands of Donboy, one quarter; Monegragan, one quarter; Andry. one quarter; Moyle, one quarter; Moyfada, one quarter; Plaister, one quarter; and five-sixteenth parts of the quarter of Roughan next Monegragan quarter; in all 1,000 acres, with free fishing in Lough Swilly.

Grant to Cuthbert Cunningham (152). The small proportion of Coolem'Itrien, containing Ballyaskyn. Dromay, Rousky. Drornoylan. Gortrie, one quarter each; two  $\frac{2}{8}$  parts of the quarter of Tullyannon, next to Dromay; in all 1,000 acres with free fishing in Loughswilly. The premises are created the manor of Coolemitrien, with 300 acres in demesne, and a court baron. Rent 51 .6. Sd. English.

Grant to James Cunningham (153) Esq. The small proportion of Moyagh... contain Moiagh; Dryan, Magherybegg, Magherymore, Tryan-Carrickmore; all of one quarter.... in all 1, 000 acres. Upon this there is a Bawne

Phelim O'Neill of Antrim. To combat this a deputation was sent to the two Stewart brothers (Scottish undertakers of the Plantation and ancestors of Lord Londonderry) of Manorcunningham, Sir William and Sir Robert Stewart (veteran of the Thirty Years War on the continent) were requested:

<sup>6</sup> "To raise two regiments, consisting of officers who were worthy and gallant gentlemen, and two troops of horse. These small forces in the Laggan bordering on multitudes of the rebels on all hands, were successful against them to admiration in many encounters they had, and constantly routed and overcame them, taking great preys from them, and what castles and strongholds they had surprised....When at length in the following summer Sir Phelim O'Neill being reinforced by the MacDonnells of Antrim, plucked up courage to invade the Laggan, "he gathered up his levies and marched to Raphoe in Donegal, expecting to encounter his most formidable enemy Sir William Stewart. The latter was better prepared than O'Neill had expected and at Glenmaquin in the Parish of Raphoe on June, 1642, the Laganeers under his leadership inflicted a severe defeat on the Irish Chief."

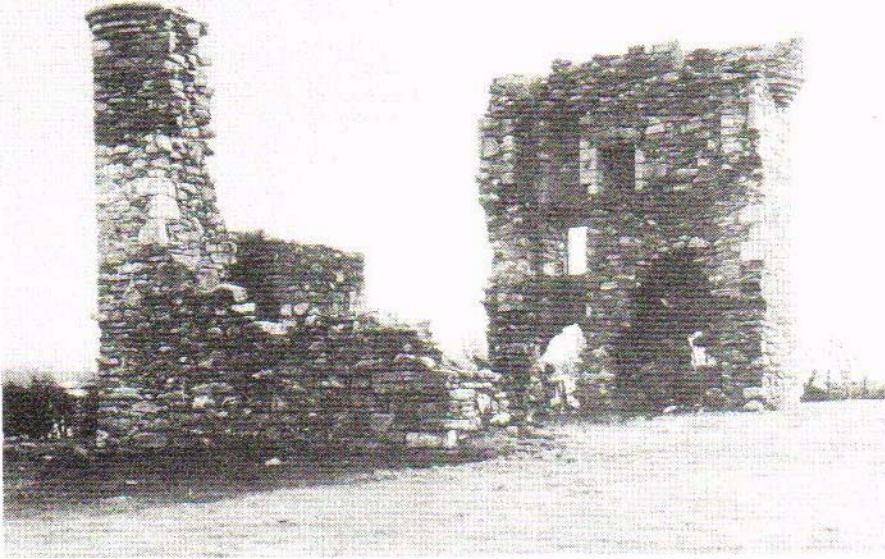
In other parts of the North many of the Scottish settlers at this time fled in fear of their lives back to Scotland, from where a force was eventually sent to help them against the insurgents. This was under the leadership of Captain Munro who landed at Carrickfergus in April 1642. To help the insurgents come Owen Roe O'Neill with forces from Spain, and he landed in the Swilly in July 1642. In our district the Laganeers were victorious, and after Kilmacrenan there were no more disturbances 'til the Siege of Derry.

### **THE SIEGE OF DERRY 1689**

King James and his forces marched through the Laggan on his way to Derry, which was held by the Protestant supporters of William of Orange.

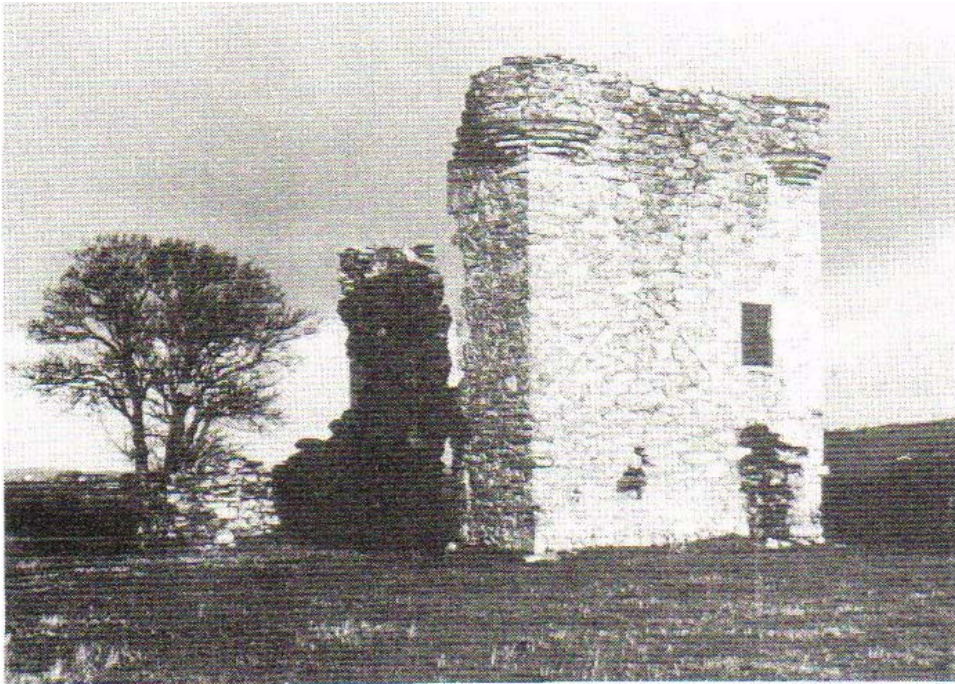
<sup>7</sup> In order to get to Derry it was necessary for troops, coming even from the direction of Coleraine or Limavady to march up the Eastern bank of the Foyle 'til they reached a place where the river could be forded. The place where the greater part of the besieging forces crossed was at Clady, about sixteen miles above Derry, and from thence they reached their destination, either by Raphoe or through Ballindrait and over the Long Causeway, a pass between the parishes of Clonleigh and Taughboyne, which was then the only place at which an extensive morass—now a fertile plain—that reached from the Foyle to near Raphoe, could be crossed. Both of these routes passed through the Laggan almost from the one end of it to the other, and Mackenzie tells us that when the Derry men knew that the Irish army was on the march against them, they burned all the oats and forage in the district to keep it from falling into the hands of the enemy....

During the early part of the siege, King James's army had its headquarters in St. Johnston....During the few days—they were eight or ten in number—that the King spent in the vicinity of the maiden city, it would appear that an elder of the congregation of Monreagh (Presbyterian church) Mr. Robert Cowan—had the honour of entertaining his majesty during at least a part of the time. At first the King was the guest of Archdeacon Hamilton in Mongavlin Castle.



111. l(a)

Mongavlin Castle



111. l(b)

"but after the garrison in Derry refused to surrender....he would seem to have removed to St. Johnston in order to be nearer the seat of operations, and taken up his abode with Mr. Cowan....No doubt, this honour would be one that Mr. Cowan would feel rather embarrassing, seeing that Mr. John Cowan, who was, in all probability, his son, was in Derry, at this time, and no doubt doing his best to frustrate the King's earnest desire. It is certain that King James had his quarters at St. Johnston for a letter that was conveyed to Derry by the Rev. Mr. Whitloe, an Episcopal minister at Raphoe, in which the King offered a safe pass to such persons as the garrison Derry might send to treat with him regarding the surrender of the city was subscribed as follows:— "Given at our quarters at St. Johnston 17th day of April, 1689. at four o'clock in the afternoon in the fifth year of our reign. By our Majesty's Command."

King James's defeat and the reign of King William of Orange had far-reaching results on the history and life of the people of this area. When Queen Anne came to the throne in 1702 the Penal Laws were enforced against Roman Catholics. There is a Mass-rock at Rateen possibly on or near the site of the old monastery which was once there, which would indicate that for a time there was some persecution.

Everyone had to pay tithes to the Established Church, and anyone who held any kind of public appointment had to take Communion in it. Even Presbyterians who held such offices were dismissed, among them Mr. John Cowan of St. Johnston (of Siege of Derry fame). John Cowan's sister married Mr. Alexander Stewart of Castlereach, Ballylawn, and was mother to the first Earl of Londonderry. Up 'til recently there were descendants of these Cowans still living in St. Johnston, Jane and her brother Robert. They both died in the 1930s.

The Laggan now settled down to a period of comparative peace, but it wasn't a fair society. The only people who had any security of either income or possessions were the landlords, such as the Abercorns, who handled the affairs of their estate through an agent.

The published letters between the Abercorns and their agents illustrate very vividly the social history and indeed some of the political history of this district.

As will be seen Mongevlin (then spelt Monagevelin, or Magavelin) Castle features largely in the correspondence, and the whole district as far down as Carrigans (excepting Newtowncunningham) was referred to as the Manor Monagevelin. "(See *Ills, la and Ib and Buildings of Interest*).

## CHAPTER THREE

1745 - 1798

**N.B.** As many of the references in this and subsequent chapters are taken from the Abercorn Papers I have taken the liberty of not numbering them individually. I have retained the original spelling.

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Events in British history affected the Laggan, and Bonny Prince Charlie's Landing in Scotland had brought about a drop in the demand for purchasing properties.

John McClintock wrote to the Earl of Abercorn in 1745:

I don't doubt but the Pretender's landing Scotland may at this juncture prevent some from proposing for them who otherwise would, and it has given damp

to all kind of trade. We are daily hearing different reports of the rebels in Scotland without any certainty, however, the country is greatly alarmed.

At this time there was a check on available firearms in the district in case of invasion, and the agent reported again.

**12.10.45.**

Fire-arms in Lismachorry in manor of Magavelin. 60 in order, 35 in bad order. Markets are quite down here, none to offer one penny for cloth, yarn or cowes. The Deputy Governors of the Co. of Donegal! have by order of the Govt. wrote to several captains of the militia to array, and as your Lordship is so good as to propose to appear at the head of your tenants, I am persuaded they won't incline to be enrolled or listed with any till your Lordship comes to the country.

Fears about a rising in sympathy with the Jacobites were unfounded. The agent writes here in reassuring terms of the loyalty of the tenants, which were mainly Protestant. Thirty years after it was a different story.

1778. The agent reported:

The country is really wild, caused much I think, by the account from America. I was never more apprehensive of a rising.

His apprehension was probably increased by the fact that there had been 4000 militia sent to the American War of Independence, leaving behind a very small force, and there was no police force. For their own protection the people formed The Volunteers (a voluntary police cum army force) in Belfast in 1778.

1779. The Abercorn agent reported:

The Volunteer business still goes on, and some thousands are to be reviewed in Derry by My Lord Charlemont.

**29th Aug. 1780.** Mr. G. Stewart in a private letter to Earl of Abercorn.

On my last visit to Ireland I thought the people feverish, but now I think they are nearly frantic. Nothing hardly is spoken of but the Volunteers.

**14th Jan. 1780.** James Hamilton reported favorably about the Volunteers:

Volunteers put an end very much to house-breaking and robbery. There is less quarrelling at fairs. And

**24th Aug. 1783.**

The petition from the Cloughfm tenants is, I believe, mostly true. The gauger, the officer that commanded the party and the soldiers all behaved very outrageously; the officer was a Mr. St. Laurans, son to Lord Howth, who is far from well behaved. In consequence of this Mr. John Carey, a Volunteer Officer with a good many other Volunteers came to this town (St. Johnston) in order to apprehend St. Laurans.

The Volunteer movement had a short life and was disbanded in 1783. Its members drifted into many secret societies, the most powerful being the United Irishmen which was formed in Belfast in October, 1791 by Wolfe Tone, a Protestant barrister from Dublin. The scene was now set for the tragic rising of 1798.

Parliamentary reform, removal of restrictions on Irish trading, and relaxation of the Penal Laws against Catholics were amongst the aims of the United Irishmen. In the Laggan with high rents, poor price for produce, and insecurity of tenure,

all contributing to widespread evictions, it isn't difficult to understand why this new revolutionary society got much support.

**12th January, 1791**, James McFarland wrote to the Marquis of Abercorn:

We turned out a great number this fortnight past....they had no possibility of clearing their arrears. The most of the farms will be taken by their neighbours.

James Hamilton Jun., recorded:

I am just alight from having accompanied the sheriff in the execution of 2 ejectments that had been served: one was settled very advantageously, but the other gave violent opposition having barricaded the house, himself, with two more armed with muskets and swords, denied admittance to sheriff or any other person.

Apparently the neighbours weren't always willing to have anything to do with these evicted farms, for it is written:

**1.2.1791.**

At the auction of Strabane not a 6d was offered though there was upwards of 100 people.

Apart from fearing physical retribution from the evicted, it was also believed that they might put a curse or "evil eye" on any new tenant. In 1797 things reached a head, and the agent wrote:

The entire of your Lordship's estates as well Tyrone as Donegal has been in so disturbed and rebellious a state that I have been obliged in many instances to enforce the rent by means of parties of the military....The ruffians style themselves United Irishmen and proclaim for their object, a reform in Parliament. They are composed of all religions.

**7th March, 1798.** Matthew Hood, land steward, wrote to the Marquis of Abercorn:

This neighbourhood has become perfectly quiet but at the residence of Rev. Dr. Wallers, rector of Ray parish, Mrs. Waller and a Mr. Hamilton from Fanad were shot dead about 8 nights ago. I lived always within about a mile of where Dr. Waller lives. (*See Sharon House in Buildings of Interest*).

This mistaken reassurance was probably deliberate for later Matthew Hood was suspected of having sympathy with the United Irishmen and dismissed by his employer. He disclosed by his reference to his home in Newtowncunningham that he was a son of John Hood inventor and brother to Henry the Abercorn surveyor.

(*See Personalities*).

It was in Newtowncunningham that a corp of 150 United Irishmen was formed by one Samuel Alexander. Born around 1760, into a Protestant farming family he became sheriff's deputy in Newtowncunningham. He was recorded in family papers as having the "pluck of a game-cock" and never went out on duty without a "brace of pistols and a sword."

On one occasion he rode after robbers as far as Ballindrait (near Lifford) and exchanging fire with them, recovered the valuables and managed to capture one of them and bring him back for trial. This swashbuckling upholder of the law, however, sympathised with the ideals of the 1798 uprising and he joined the United Irishmen and "used to drill in the Laird's Lea" (field at the Castle farm in Newtowncunningham) "with a body of 150 men to the pike, sword etc. but they were never called out." When the Rising failed he had to flee the country and sailed

to Philadelphia, "riding to Derry in daytime at a moderate pace on his own beast— not at night as was the custom of the suspects." Eighteen months after his arrival he died of yellow fever. His wife lived on in Newtowncunningham near the Castle, then the residence of Lady Hamilton, widow of Sir Henry Hamilton.

So ended the Laggan Rising of 1798 that never was. Elsewhere it was soon put down with much bloodshed, and Wolfe Tone was executed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **1800 TO PRESENT DAY**

Following the defeat of the United Irishmen came the dissolution of the Irish Parliament (there were two members returned from St. Johnston) and union with England in 1800, the country became fairly quiet though there was friction between Catholics and Protestants recorded:

**14th July, 1802.** James Hamilton to Marquis of Abercorn

I have been able to do little else than listen to quarrels and threatenings between Papishes and Orangemen. The disbanded soldiers who are Catholics are chiefly to blame. If the Orange faction got much encouragement, and no military in the country (which is now the case) there would soon be a shocking scene of confusion. Yesterday a society of them with lillies in their hats made a few poor Catholics eat them. The Orangemen of this country are for the most part the most dissolute idle fellows and who in general were active United Irishmen. The other party are of the most drunken and bigoted of the lower class of Catholics.

The Orange Order had strong support in this district as it has to this day, and there are several Orange Halls in the Laggan.

In earlier part of the 19th century there was much progress generally. In 1829 the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed; in 1822 the Irish Constabulary was constituted; and in 1832 the first National Schools were opened. But economically there was little improvement, and there was much poverty and distress in the Laggan.

**9th June, 1800.**

Still the great scarcity of food and money. Above two thirds of all the cotter houses in the country are deserted, and their families in crowds begging through the country.. ..The Dean of Raphoe, in spite of all his cant, I believe he would have as little real feeling for the poor as I would have for a mad dog, I shall act for your Lordship... .I estimate that from £100 to £150 judiciously disposed of over all the estate, will keep from 30 to 40 families from becoming common beggars..

So apparently the landlords and their agents had some compassion for the poor. They were hard times and later on in the 19th century there was worse to come.

### **THE GREAT FAMINE**

In those days the poorer people lived almost entirely on the potatoes they grew on their plots and small holdings. In 1845 and 1846 the potato crop became diseased and failed entirely. People all over Ireland died by hundreds and thousands of starvation and disease. It was estimated that one quarter of the population perished.



### III. 17

#### **Mr. John B. Moody standing beside the Famine Pot in his garden at Momeen.**

A sad aspect of this was that during the period corn was still exported to England.

Many Famine Relief Schemes were organised. One such was at the slate quarry in the Glentown (*See Industries*). Mr. John B. Moody, Momeen, told me that the tenant of the quarry, a family called Alexander fed the quarry workers and others, charging them a small amount. Indian meal porridge was boiled to a stiff consistency in a huge boiler, and cut in slices and eaten off slates. (The boiler is now in possession of the Moody family, who later bought the farm on which the quarry is situated). (*See III. 17*).

An old lady from Carrigans, Mrs. Mary Donnell says that her great-grandmother told her how one day a child came begging to her door. Having nothing else to give, she offered some cabbage leaves, which the little girl ate ravenously. Later she was found dead by the garden gate.

The farmers of the Laggan did not actually starve to death but many of them were evicted for non-payment of rent, and there was widespread emigration, mostly to America. The very poor went into the over-crowded workhouses.

This great national disaster brought up the problem of how Irish agriculture was to be improved to a point at which it could provide adequate support for the population dependent upon it. At last in 1870 the Land Act was passed which was to give security of tenure and control of rents. This went a step further and finally



led to the purchase of land from landlords by the Irish Land Commission who lent the money to the tenants to buy out their farms, the money to be repaid over a number of years. The farmers in the St. Johnston and Carrigans area bought their land from the Duke of Abercorn in 1881. Below is a copy of a letter to a local farmer from the Irish Land Commission, dated Nov. 8th 1888,

Sir, I am directed to inform that the Irish Land Commission, have, in accordance with the terms of the agreement and application signed by, advanced the sum of £3,000 to you therein applied for to enable you to purchase your holding and notice is hereby given to you that if you desire to make application in reference thereto, such application must be made to the Court by motion on notice to the Owner within one month from the date hereof, at the expiration of which period the Commissioners (if satisfied with the Owner's Title) will, without further notice to you, proceed to make the said advance and to charge your holding with the Annuity payable in respect thereof when such advance has been made a



copy of the charging order will be transmitted to you. I am etc.

**III. 4                    Ulster Volunteer Corps (Newtowncunningham)**

**Ulster Volunteer Rifle**



**III.5**

The rent per annum was paid on this particular farm to the Land Commission up 'til about 1970 when the final payment was made.

The lot of the farmer improved in the Laggan during a time of comparative peace, though there was agitation from time to time re the introduction of Home Rule. In 1886 Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, tried unsuccessfully to pass a Home Rule Bill in the British Parliament. From then the Liberal Party when in power had this aim in view.

In 1912 matters reached a head with once more the introduction of the Home Rule Bill which this time seemed almost sure of success. The Ulster Protestants under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson opposed this Bill, and on 28th September, 1912, half a million of them flocked to local centres to sign a covenant against it. Many of them used their own blood instead of ink to sign and some of the younger men joined the Ulster Volunteer Force and there was a corp in Newtowncunningham. (*See III. 4*).

In 1913 seeing that the covenant was not taken seriously by the Liberal Government the Volunteers smuggled a shipment of arms and ammunition into Larne. There is one of the rifles in a house in St. Johnston (*See III. No. 5*). These guns were never used. They were made in Germany where soon ammunition was being manufactured for a conflict which dwarfed and overshadowed the Irish question-The Great War between Great Britain and Germany 1914-1918. Many men of this district served and fell in it.

The Irish War of Independence of 1916 affected this area very slightly. The only incidents recorded were during the Civil War of 1922, when bands of "Irregulars" roamed the countryside and made raids for food on the local farmers. There was one incident at Kinnycally when the farmer and the Irregulars exchanged fire, and there are still bullet holes in the front door of the farmhouse. The farmer and his brothers were taken prisoner, but were released a day later unharmed. During the Second World War this area was now part of the Republic of Ireland, which was neutral, though there were a few casualties among those who joined the British Army.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TENANT RIGHT AND HOW IT WORKED

#### TENANT RIGHTS AND LANDLORD AND TENANT RELATIONS

John Hancock, agent of the Earl of Lurgan's estate in County Armagh in his testimony before the Devon Commission said

<sup>9</sup> Tenant-right, then, I consider to be the claim of the tenant and his heirs to continue in undisturbed possession of the farm, so long as the rent is paid; and in case of ejection, or in the event of a change of occupancy, whether at the wish of the landlord or tenant, it is the sum of money which the new occupier must pay to the old one. The state of the farm and buildings at the time of sale has considerable influence in determining the amount, but locality and the number of competitors have a still greater effect...The tenant-right would bring £12 per acre...The landlord exercises the power where there are several competitors for a farm...The usual rule is, that when a tenant wishes to part with his place, he applies to the landlord or agent for leave to sell.

This system which operated on the Abercorn estate might seem a fair enough arrangement, but it had its disadvantages as we will see from the actual working of it. The tenant farmer had to pay a high price plus a high rent with absolutely no security of tenure. Come a period of recession when he couldn't pay the rent, he was evicted. True he got the selling price of his tenant-right, but the arrears of rent would be deducted from it, and the promise of compensation for improvements was not always honoured. Following are some snippets from the Abercorn papers which illustrate the working of the system, and the role of the agent generally. Letters from the agent to the Earl of Abercorn:

**5th Jan. 1752.**

Numbers in the estate of Magavelin further behind than November 50. Widow McKay of St. Johnston owes nearly £60, and the woman in appearance has not £10 worth of moveables in the world. I made her with great difficulty pay half a year's rent. McLairn the miller of St. Johnston also owes a large arrear. All these owe to Mrs. McClintock, apparently she sublet to these people. John Galbraith of St. Johnston tells me that there is 7 or 8 feet of your Lordship's ground taken into meeting house of St. Johnston, built upon a freehold of Mr. Alex. McClintock's. Moriss McConall, Upper Momeen, who was herd in the Glebe, declared that Aaron Chambers took up the Glebe cattle from off the disputed ground for trespass. I went to Clashygowan re the right of way dispute and found the road made use of by Alex. Cochrane and his bleachers unnecessary and detrimental of Mr. Bond. Cochrane is a very odd man.

**4th Feb. 1752.**

I think Mr. Bond a reasonable man. (Presbyterian minister of St. Johnston).

**13th March, 1752.**

The large park in Dundee is held by McLairn the miller of St. Johnston, the piece of ground near the bridge of St. Johnston (about an acre) is at present in the occupancy of no particular person—the people of the town say it was given for a bleach green.

**24th April, 1752.**

Asks for direction about an acre of ground next the bridge of St. Johnston that has been taken into the gardens of the tenants.

**17th May, 1753.**

I have drove the inhabitants of Carrigans out of the main turf bog of Tonagh. I have spent the best part of 3 days already in laying out the bog in proper drain for your Lordship's tenants. Mr. Hamilton (the rector) who manages for his brother Harry Hamilton begged I might allow Carrigans people to cut turf in that part of Tonagh. I told him your Lordship's turf bog had suffered greatly by the rabble of Carrigans.

The agents were very much against the purchase of land by farmers acting as "middlemen" and sub-letting it out in small holdings. This system was more common in Southern Ireland, where there were no tenant rights in operation.

**17th May, 1753.**

Alex. Cochrane has purchased from J. Barclay John Harvey's land of Lower

Castletown; he pretends this is for his son. He said he would not put cottiers on it though I am pretty sure it will be the case. Upper and Lower Castletown will be too large for any man in the country.

**22nd Sept. 1771.**

Our crops this year were very promising, but the season for saving them has proved very indifferent....a great deal of barley, some oats and some hay carried away on a bad flood in the Foyle. Water as high as haycocks in the island at Lifford.

**20th Feb. 1776.**

....Nor is provisions at near the usual price, oatmeal 8/- a hundred, 2/- lower than farmer ought to have for it, and potatoes....are sold at 2d a stone which is very low.

**13th March, 1776.**

Dispute between Hugh Rankin who wants road through John Carey's farm in Tonagh. Rankin wants road to go to Derry on business. (They keep 8 looms at work and also sell milk and butter there.)

**19th May, 1776.**

Solomon Chambers of Brockagh a very good tenant, and who I believe to be in good circumstances, also appeared for the farm and still desires to have it. He intends to settle two of his sons in it.

On the 8th of month Mrs. J. Colhoun widow sold her farm in Momeen. Nat. Rodgers of Woodlands was the purchaser. Rodgers hopes to join with £11 of land willed to him by William Chambers, Momeen, father-in-law to Rodgers.

**28th June, 1776.**

I spoke to Samuel Moodie re dispute re road through Rodgers farm.

**21st Oct. 1776.**

Re Mill-dam dispute with Mr. McClintock, Carrigans. Carey's farm flooded by dam made by McClintock's workmen. Also Colhoun's farm.

Mr. McClintock's situation will afford a seat for 20 mills, more if he chooses to build them; the 1st intention of the mill at Carrigans was to work the grain for the tenants of the estate, but there is now a flax mill and a "flower" mill which will take a considerable quantity of water, more than the other two.

**28th Feb. 1776.** Robrt. McClintock to Earl of Abercorn.

I cannot express the greatness of my grief and concern to think that your Lordship should grant leave to drain away the water that supplies my mill.

**27th March, 1778.**

Cloughfinn people wanted lime in Mr. Carey's farm where they always had it. McCorkill said there was lime on his farm but it lay deep.

**10th April, 1778.**

Wm. Chambers, a very old man has agreed to sell his farm to John Vance, son to Matthew at £4. Chambers pays £3.11.8. Solomon Chambers of the same town is dead. John, son to Robert Gamble has courted the widow.

**19th July, 1778**

Mr. Carey is determined to remove to Inishowen. He proposes selling houses at Prospect.

I had Thomas Patton and some others to value the growth of Sooley except the oak.

**5th Jan. 1779.**

Farm in Tonagh held by the late David Rankin.... The new David now lives on it.

**2nd April, 1780.**

I had proposal of £24 a year for Drumgaty mill from one Bryan Kearney. McCrea holds mill for £20.

**19th Nov. 1780**

I did not receive nearly as much rent as I had reason to expect. Barley risen from 5d to 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d stone.

**19th Nov. 1780.**

Your Lordship desired me to make some abatement to Wm. Doyle of Magavelin on account of the loss he had by the breaking in of the water and overflowing his land. (Occupant of Mongavelin Castle).

**29th Dec. 1780.**

I send a petition from Matthew Orr of Moness re dispute with Colhoun over ownership of farm.

John McGhee who purchased Mamore still holds the place he had in Woodlands.

**11th May, 1783.**

Wm. McCorkhill of Cloughfinn sold his farm to Pinkerton (distiller). Old Wm. Lapsley lives with his son, an English teacher, in Lifford.

**21st July, 1783.**

I hope we will get the bridge between Clashygowan and St. Johnston mill built for £15. Mr. George Carey has given up the farm his farmer had in Tonagh to Mr. Wm. Colhoun. Colhoun has sold his farm to James Motherwell.

**24th Aug. 1783.**

Your Lordship let Matthew Graham of Momeen's farm at £14 to his sons.

**2nd Jan. 1784.**

We think that the separation of the post offices (England from Ireland) cannot take from your Lordship your privilege in either Kingdom, that as peer of both realms your letters from England and hence to England must be free.

**9th May, 1784.**

It is computed that there will go 15,000 to America from Newry, Belfast and Deny.... A great number of young men are going to America. John Gilfillan, Woodland, says that when the wood was formerly cut down, sheep and cows were not suffered to be on it for 7 years, but horses were.

**18th Feb. 1781.**

Wm. Colhoun cannot dispose of his land in Castledooey till his dispute with Matthew Orr is settled. Wm. Tease who made an agreement for it was with me last week, he seems not to be very deserving of getting it. Orr was with me on Friday.

Mr. John Gary has sold his farm to Hugh Cowan.  
Farm of Tullyowen hath been held by Andrew Hamilton who hath refused  
and hindered landing of nets.

**19th Feb. 1786.**

Appeal for assistance. Alex. Cochrane, Clashygowan. Train of misfortune and burning  
a house and machinery at the Bleach Green and repair it. (Security farm and bleachgreen).

**4th Sept. 1786.**

Mr. Owens Colhoun is determined to sell his freehold in St. Johnston.

**19th Sept. 1786.**

Great flood across the road from Strabane to Lifford. Damage to island that Lyons hold.

**29th Nov. 1786.**

John and Alex. Cochrane of Castletown and Clashygowan are falling much back in their  
rents. John sold his part of the bleach green in Kinically to Alex. John to relieve himself is  
wanting to bring an execution against his brother for the purchase.

By 1794 both these brothers had probably been evicted for their farms were under  
new names.

**18th April, 1787.**

Letter asking for £450 for Mr. Owen Colhoun's freehold at St. Johnston. 12 acres 3  
roods and 34 perches small measure; the land next the town with the houses I set to Mr.  
McClintock of Trentagh 20 years ago....There is the mansion house, with room for a  
smaller one facing the great street. There is also 4 small houses, with room for 4 or 5  
more, facing the Church lane; this part of the freehold is out of the lease by the death of  
Mr. McClintock; the more distant part of the freehold I set to Alex. Cochrane of  
Clashygowan 7 years ago.

**1st April, 1788.** Supplication of tenants to Earl of Abercorn.

That your petitioners are extremely apprehensive that it will be utterly out of their  
power to discharge same. Great poverty pleading. John Cochrane and Alexander  
Cochrane have a great dispute about a water course. John who lives in Castletown built a  
flax mill there and was allowed what they call the "overplus" water to supply the flax  
mill.

This is the same mill described to me by Jamey Gibson.

**16th Jan. 1789.**

There are several particularly in St. Johnston who laid out all they could scramble in  
building tenements, some not finished, others they have let run into ruin, the roofs  
supported by props. John Galbraith a blacksmith is one of these. He owes a great arrear  
and has nothing.

Put John Galbraith into gaol; he was very poor, took a fever and had nothing to pay.

Widow Davis, St. Johnston, held by her tenement till most of the roof fell in. My father let it  
by Bryan Hannigan who is to rebuild it. He refers to Adam McKays tenement in St. Johnston  
having fallen down. James Smyth will rebuild it if he get a lease of lives of it.

29th Nov. 1786.

Edward O'Donnell of St. Johnston held No. 16 Dundee till Nov. 1782. rent £6. He went into arrears of £30.15. I took up his crop. I cannot get him out with I mark a writ, a writ cannot be bought for less than £10.

18th April, 1787.

Your Lordship has lost £38.89 of O'Donnell's arrears...Campbell who was O'Donnell's friend is I believe an honest industrious man. I have always found him punctual.

16th Jan. 1788.

There are many cottiers who pay from 10/- to 15/- in very much more distress than those who pay double to a tenant who keeps the cottier's house thatched, brings home his turf, puts out his manure, and serves them with meal or potatoes in their distress.

The landlord was responsible for the reclamation and draining etc. of marshy land, and was in control of forestry.

12th Feb. 1779.

The day was almost spent before they had done at Bullock Park, else Mr. Hood would have gone through Carrickmore bog. which he said he thought ought to be drained.

29th Dec. 1780. Sooley Canal.

Bishop of Raphoe said it would go about 7 Irish miles, cost £700.

25th Feb. 1781.

I will write to Mr. Hood to desire him to come as soon as he can to point out what is to be done in draining at Sooley. The part of Sooley that is "grubed" looks mighty well, the ground well levelled....Some of the old oaks are to be headed.

1751.

Magavelin: I found fir trees a cutting there. Wm. Doyle bought 126 for £9.00. Some cut for use of Castle.

3 large ash trees cut in Rateen by Thomas Lowry.

Some small oaks stripped on the foot of Ballylennon Glen and some on Ballylennon Rock.

Weeding may be of service, though it is a great outlet for stealing. I viewed Carrickmore or Sooley wood, mostly all birch well preserved, the land it grown on very good for meadow.

I tell all tenants before they show a spirit for cutting down timber they should first shew a spirit for planting.

4th Feb. 1752.

Jon. Alien of Upper Craigadoos cut an ash tree in his garden the other day and made use of it (worth 5/-). He confessed and submits to what your Lordship will please to punish him.

20th Oct. 178—

I take this opportunity of assuring your Lordship I was quite ignorant of the cutting of the trees on the garden at St. Johnston by Latta and Pinkerton.

25th Feb. 1781.

I went to view Donegal woods. I took Alex. McCausland with me. who is a sensible man, that I might have his opinion about Woodland; there is a

great deal of ash in it, the rest birch and ash and a few oaks, in the glen between it and Lettergull. It was sold about 4 years ago to Gorey O'Cahan. Daniel McDermitt of Drumatollan cut ash worth 2/4, Wm. Thompson of Lettergull ash worth 1/4....in Wm. Porterfield's garden an alder stick worth about 4d., Wm. Barnet a wheelwright from Momeen ash valued at 1/2. About 6 weeks ago there was ash found in Andrew McConnell's of Lettergull garden value 2/-.

Though we must respect the landlord's ecological sense in not allowing widespread deforestation, yet this petty interference on the part of the agent illustrates how little freedom the tenants were allowed, and how little power they really had.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INDUSTRIES ANDECONOMY

The growing of flax (the local word is lint), and the scutching of it, was one of the main industries of the Laggan up 'til about 1946/47, and as far back as the early 18th century, when it was also woven locally into cloth.

The Earl of Abercorn wrote to Jon. McClintock, Lifford,

#### **11th Jan. 1746.**

Our apprehensions (re Bonnie Prince Charles's landing in Scotland) here are much abated, and I think the North of Ireland is no sort of danger, and I trust the linen trade will revive again soon, now the rebels are gone from Lancashire which takes off great quantities of yarn.

#### **20th April, 1758,** agent to Earl of Abercorn.

We had the 17th at St. Johnston a very fine market for the first £11 worth of green linen was bought. I would allow neither cockfight, nor horse-race, though the people of the town were for it, as all towns indeed are, but I satisfied them by saying that an inch gained by honest industry was worth a yard otherwise, and that we did not want to gather idle people at all.

#### **23rd May, 1758.**

Cloth and yarn bear a good price, but flax very scarce, which is a great loss.

#### **2nd July, 1758.**

St. Johnston market goes on well. Flax very scarce in the country. I make no doubt but winter next will produce a very good market at St. Johnston.

#### **20th Feb. 1776.**

The £60 which your Lordship has been pleased to order to be distributed, should not be given out till the season for buying flaxseed, as it is likely to will be very dear....The fall of the price of cloth is attributed to the trouble in America.

In 1834 an English traveler Henry D. Inglis reported in his "Journey Through Ireland"

Leaving Lifford I passed through a country abounding in grain and flax. This latter produce had now begun to dispute with corn the possession of the land.



The late Jamey Gibson, a scutcher, who lived in Castletown, St. Johnston told me of the primitive conditions in the small local mills, which I daresay had changed little in 200 years. There was no heating and because of the danger of fire the oil lamp or candle (protected by a wooden shutter) was kept outside the small window. Despite the precautions the mills often caught fire because the machinery got overheated and ignited the highly inflammable flax, and also because the rule against smoking was often ignored. There was also great danger of getting caught in the machinery in the small dark mills and many people sustained fatal injuries. One woman in this district got her hair caught and was scalped. As well it was very unhealthy work and many of the scutchers died young with chest complaints caused by the constant inhaling of dust and fluff.

The scutching involved four classes of workmen:— rollers, strikers, buffers and cleaners. The millers who rented the mill got the "targe" (broken flax). This was cleaned again, and they sold the resultant tow, and kept or sold the waste (shows) for fuel.

The finished product was taken to Carrigans or other markets where it was graded and sold to linen mills. There was no local weaving in recent times. With the advent of man-made fibres after the Second World War the industry collapsed, though there is talk of a revival. It would now be machine-pulled, of course, instead of by hand.

### SALMON FISHING

This industry has survived to the present day and many fishermen who have to be licenced, fish the Foyle in the summer season, and sell their catch to Lawrence McDaid, St. Johnston and other dealers. There is mention of the industry over two hundred years ago.

**9th March, 1759:** Nath. Nisbitt, the agent wrote to Earl of Abercorn.

I am informed by the most skilful fishers on the river that putting a stop to the lower fishing on Sundays will signify nothing for nothing will bring up the fish but flood.

**31st August, 1761,** he wrote:

Notwithstanding the late act made against fishing after 12th Aug. Harry Hamilton, who was material in getting it made suffers Lough Foyle to fish as usual.

**9th May, 1784** James Hamilton wrote:

I am concerned to find that the fishery declines every year. I attribute the general failure to the want of a proper attention to the preservation of the mother fish and fry.

The Abercorns had hopes of establishing coal mines on their Mongavelin estate (this was the time of the great industrial revolution in England).

**On 10.7.1736** John McClintock, Dunmore (Carrigans) wrote:

Andrew Gillbreath still continues at work with some laborers near Cragadoes—for coles he has found some small coles among the stones which look very well at the quarry near Strabane.

**7.8.1736.**

It is believed the coles he took out of the pits were put in it by some of the men employed in the work. Mr. Ryan still continues at work at the lead

mine in Creatland... the vein which goes out of the square which he is sinking is the thickest he has met with.

These mines are mentioned several times in the letters though nothing obviously ever came of the project.

**23.3.1758.** Earl of Abercorn wrote to a Mr. Bennett on 23.2.1758.

I have an estate in Ireland which has been imagined to have coals in it. I am desired to make trial without intending to be disappointed in the Manor Magavelin at Rateen.

In September of that same year he received the report: Neither the collier nor I could find any vein in the manor of Magavelin.

Brickmaking was also engaged in, and in **4th February**, 1757, Nath. Nisbitt, Lifford, wrote to Earl of Abercorn:

I will put a stop to the making of brick where it may occasion loss of ground. I know none at present concerned in that way but John Cox of Cloughfin (near St. Johnston).

Apparently the landlords disapproved of brickmaking as it must have damaged the land.

**18.2.1755** Nath. Nisbitt complains of this man Cox again (*See Place Names*).

In my opinion Cox has done hurt already by making brick nor has he taken any pains to repair it.

There were bricks made at Carrickmore and recently during a demolition of a bomb site in Londonderry bricks were found with Carrickmore stamped on them. It seems they were taken by boat up the Foyle to Londonderry.

### SLATE QUARRIES

The quarrying of slates is mentioned by James Hamilton, agent to the Earl of Abercorn as early as 1786.

**21st Oct. 1786.** He refers to a dispute between James Gamble and Samuel Latta concerning the letting of slate quarries:

I will as your Lordship orders let a slate quarry in Ardagh to Samuel Latta. I think it would be well that who ever takes a quarry should be confined nearly to the place opened, not make holes in several places. James Gamble is the rental for a slate quarry at Baliboedooish. The people of Glendooish complain of his quarrying there. I wished to have confined him to Baliboes, but Moses Armor says your Lordship let him (Gamble) all the slate quarries in Donegal except Trentagh....Slating has grown much in fashion.

Nothing more is known of these quarries till they came into the news at the time of the Famine (*See Great Famine*) when the large quarry at Glentown was operated as a Famine Relief project. About 1850 it was closed and not re-opened 'til 1931/32 at another time of economic recession. I well remember the workers coming from work in the evening—a huge fleet of bicycles racing down the steep braes from Glentown. About 1940 it was closed for good. Huge piles of broken slate round a deep quarry hole, which resembles a lake, still dominate the landscape at Glentown and Trentagh. A tunnel 300 yards long connects the quarry with a waste-tip at Trentagh.

Mixed farming was and is, of course, the chief industry of the Laggan.



III. 12

Harvest field of 1940s: John McGlinchey, John Peoples, Alec Peoples, Charlie Wilson, Paddy Peoples, Hughie Dillon.



III. 13

Farmyard of 1940s: Jamey Bovaird, Charlie Wilson, Paddy Peoples.



### III. 19

#### Old Threshing Mill.

5th Nov. 1757 the Abercorn agent wrote:

I was yesterday at fair of St. Johnston. There was a great many cattle in and sold well.

Nearly thirty years after it was much the same.

18th April, 1783.

Many cattle sold in fair held in St. Johnston in the Almanac 25th Nov. He suggested another fair on Easter Tuesday,

Over a 100 years later dairy farming had progressed so much that Co-operative creameries were opened in the Laggan, two at Tullyrapp and Sallybrook in the 1890s, and in 1910 Taughboyne Creamery. At first it was subsidiary of a Co-op, in Tyrone. Later it was incorporated into the Irish Agricultural Society. At first dairy maids were employed and butter was produced, but this was discontinued about 1930 and now the milk is taken in tankers to Letterkenny for processing into various dairy products. The creamery building is an agricultural goods store belonging to Donegal Co-operative Creameries Ltd.

The selling of seed potatoes abroad replaced the flax industry in the Laggan, and barley has almost entirely taken the place of oats.

Farming methods remained more or less static for several hundred years until about 1930/40 with the introduction of the tractor instead of the horse. (See Ills. 12 & 13).

Before this grain was cut by a horse-drawn reaper or binder (*See poem "Corn Cutting"*) and brought in and built into attacks. It was threshed by a small barn mill operated by a shaft pulled by a horse going round a mill course beside the barn.

Then came large threshing mills driven by steam engines which contracted through the country. The steam engine (*See III. 19*) was replaced by the tractor which was used to pull all farm implements. Now although the tractor has survived for other purposes, it has been replaced for harvesting by the combine harvester which cuts and threshes in one operation.

All this acceleration of farming methods, although it has brought more prosperity to farmers has caused much unemployment. Farm labourers, except on very large farms, are no longer necessary, and the whole structure of the Laggan economy and indeed that of the whole of rural Ireland has altered.

Gone are the old Hiring Fairs (called Rabbles locally) of the Laggan. Twice yearly in Derry and Letterkenny boys and girls from the poorer Western part of Donegal (often referred to as the Back Country) were employed by the Laggan farmers on a six monthly basis. They lived in the farmhouses, and very often married locally. Many Laggan people today have West Donegal grandparents. These hired servants were poorly paid and sometimes not too kindly treated by their masters, but times were hard and they were glad of the few shillings earned (£6 a half year was average wage for a maid servant and a few pounds more for a boy). Indeed all farm workers were poorly paid, and there was no unemployment money.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **LIFE IN THE DISTANT AND NOT-SO-DISTANT PAST**

Life in early days on the Laggan farms was very primitive. The Rev. Lecky wrote:

<sup>10</sup> All the farm houses of a townland were built together in a rude sort of village....This arrangement continued in most places down to the early years of the past (19th) century, and at the beginning the farmer usually had an internal door of communication between his dwelling-house and his office houses, in order to protect his cattle from robbers, and enable him to have access to them during the winter nights, as it was deemed dangerous to be out of doors after nightfall....

The houses at first put up by the farmers, and also what were called the "Castles," erected by undertakers, were very comfortless and incommensurable structures; thus we find that in the year 1665 when a tax of two shillings was levied for every hearth or fireplace in a house, there were only four houses in the Parish of Taughboyne, which then included the Parishes of Killea and All-Saints, that had more than one fireplace. They were the house of William Coningham Esq. of Newton, which had three fireplaces, and the houses of Mathew Halley of Culmatrairie, Dr. Thomas Bruce of Taughboyne, Rector of the Parish, and Mathew Lindsay of Maymore—the latter was likely Mongavlin Castle—which had two each. In all this large extent of country there were only 162 houses that enjoyed the luxury of having a fireplace at all. No doubt every inhabited house had a fire in it, but the native Irish in general, at this time, and for long after, kept to the old Celtic custom of having the fire in the middle of the floor with a hole in the roof out of which, conjointly with the door, the smoke made its escape as best it could.

The houses were sparsely furnished and up to as late as the beginning of the 19th century china and delph for every-day domestic use were almost unknown, and wooden vessels such as piggins and noggins were used. The houses were lit by home-made tallow candles, and the diet was mainly of oaten bread, porridge and potatoes, with the occasional addition of home-cured bacon or salted beef.

Mr. Arnold Young who made a tour of the Laggan in 1797/8 reported that the farms varied from 5 to 40 acres, most of them from 7 to 10, the rents being 15/0 the Cunningham acre, and up to 40/- near towns.

" Their tillage is exceeding bad, the land not half-ploughed, and they like to have much grass among the corn for improving the fodder. Scarce such a thing in the country as wheeled carts, they are all sliding ones.

This was, of course, the report of what we might call a tourist today. According to the possibly more factual accounts in the Abercorn Papers and with reference to old maps there were quite large farms also, of exactly the same acreage as today, and their yield was quite high considering the inadequacies of the implements available, and the crippling conditions as tenant fanners.

Mr. Young's account of the sliding carts or "slipes" as they were called,->was quite accurate. Traveling was mostly on horseback or on foot, and it was only the landlords and the well-to-do who had side-cars and wheeled carts.

The roads were a subject of complaint and the Abercorn agent reports:

**19th Feb. 1786:** Our roads in general are in a most ruinous condition. The road near Lifford is sadly torn up, there are holes, I suppose, 10' deep.

The River Foyle was widely used for transport of heavy goods, and there was a quay at St. Johnston.

Mr. James Hamilton reporting to the Earl of Abercorn, a complaint from Wm. Willson about the carting of goods from and to the quay through his land.

He complains that road to quay is not made and that they damage his fields greatly. I have written to the people who draw there, that as your Lordship built a quay for them, and gave ground for a quay that they should make it.

There were ferries in the district one of the most widely used being the one from Ramelton to Ballybegley in Newtowncunningham across the Swilly (*See Sharon Rectory*) which was in operation up 'til the early years of the 20th century. The ferryman lived on the Ramelton shore and passengers from Ballybegley had to hoist a pole topped with a white flag. When a railway line was opened to Letterkenny it connected with the ferry service which then had a printed time-table.

The advent of the railways in the middle of the 19th century made a big change in transport and travel. The Londonderry and Enniskillen Railway (later to become G.N.R.) opened in 1847. It passed through St. Johnston and the fares were: St. Johnston to Derry 4d 3rd class, 7d 2nd class and 8d 1st class.

The Londonderry and Lough Swilly railway first opened in 1863, and in 1883 extended a branch line to Letterkenny which served Newtowncunningham. After the Second World War road transport replaced both companies and the G.N.R. closed in 1965 and the Londonderry and Lough Swilly company in 1953.

There was much lawlessness and crime towards the end of the 18th century and highwaymen on the roads were commonplace.

**22nd March 1778.** James Hamilton to Earl of Abercorn,

A man (a weaver) was traveling home on horseback with his wife behind him. He had money for two weeks cloth on him....He was robbed and his throat cut. His wife escaped.

27th Feb. 1778.

We hear of several house breakings. Some men broke in with 'crapes' on their faces.... A man forcing a window alarmed a woman who slept in the room. The fellow struck at her with a cutlass, but she struck him in the throat with a hay-fork and killed him.

All this despite the severe penalties—mostly the death penalty.

**2nd April, 1780.**

There were 13 condemned at Lifford, two for burglary, and 7 more are to be hanged.

In those days, of course, there were no policemen, just the militia. The Irish Constabulary did not come into being 'til 1832, though a few constables were appointed in Dublin in 1786 to aid the city watchmen.

James Hamilton in his letters to the Earl of Abercorn reported many instances of illegal distilling and drunkenness.

**7.11.1784.** Bountiful harvest must make for great enabling, if the people don't return to whiskey drinking. If it was possible to put an end to private distilling, but the farmers who have barley think they would be undone if distilling was checked... .If we had brewers in common through the country and good ale to be got. I do think by degrees the people would be wained from drinking spirits to such excess. It would be a great reform, we should have had few quarrels and though a person exceeded in that liquor he would be able to mind his work next day which few can do who debauch in whiskey. The little whiskey houses that are all over the country ruin the people.

1783. James Pinkerton, a very substantial tenant who lives in St. Johnston where he carried on a distilling business.

27.2.1783. Two companies of soldiers have been sent here to suppress distilling.

**29.6.1783.** If breweries could be established soon it would be a great help, for the people would soon be brought to like it (beer) and in time to give up whiskey.

**12.3.1784.** Re distilling—the Govt. pays the gauger (an Excise Customs official), 1 believe a guinea, the sargent of the party 1/2 guinea and each soldier a crown for every still they bring in. But no sooner is the still seized than the people will have 2 or 3 stills again at work.

<sup>12</sup> In the beginning of the 19th century habits were much the same. The Rev. Lecky wrote in 1905:

I heard from persons who were eye-witnesses of it that at Second Ray it was customary on the Thursday before the Communion for two of the village publicans to bring their sign-boards, and putting them up, the one on a barn and the other on a kiln close to the church, to ply their trade there 'til the following Monday evening. It was only in a very rare case that a flitting of this kind was necessary on the publican's part, for every place of Worship, no matter what denomination it belonged, had a public-house close to its gates, and our forefathers made their attendance at the sanctuary on the Sabbath day a time of refreshing in a sense that we would look upon as highly objectionable.

In the interval of half-an-hour or so that was then given between the two services that were held, it was a customary thing with many to adjourn to the public house for a dram. I was told by a very respectable old man, who lived to be almost one hundred years old, that he remembered when he was a young man stopping at home sometimes on the Sabbath day because he had no pocket money, as it was his day to stand treat to some of his neighbours. The Laggan people of the present day must, in general, be much more temperate than past generations were. There are people still living who remember to have seen seven public-houses along the old road from St. Johnston to Raphoe, a distance of less than six Irish miles. Now (1905) there is not one. At this time there was a licensed house in almost every townland, and frequently a shebeen-house or two besides. Fifty years ago the family that would have buried a relative without treating to drink everyone who attended the funeral would have been regarded as very mean and stingy.

With the Puritanism of Victorian times came changes and in 1833 Father Mathews and the Quakers formed a Temperance Society in Cork. He preached all over Ireland and in the Derry Journal 17th August, 1847 there is an account of his visit to Derry when he said "It is impossible for a nation of drunkards to be a nation of good or great men."

In St. Johnston a Temperance Society was formed and a small hall built in Church Lane in the 1870s. The founders of this Society later formed the Congregational Church of St. Johnston, where unfermented wine was used for communion. The church is still attended though the Temperance Hall is now closed.

Societies and associations come and go. Macra na Feirme has a large membership in the Laggan and a Social Services Committee looks after the interests of the aged. In 1955 Taughboyne Guild of the Irish Countrywomen's Association was formed, and has a strong cultural and social influence on the area. It encourages the promotion of traditional crafts and skills and above all binds together the Laggan women of all denominations in a common interest.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FOLKLORE, BALLADS ETC.

#### THE LEGEND OF PORT LOUGH

*(See III. 2)*

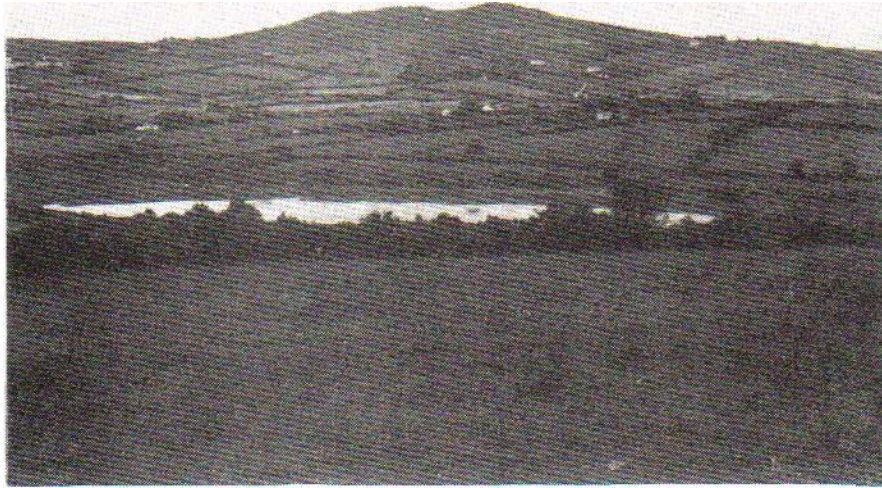
To the North East of Donegal, under the shadow of the broad green hill of Bogay, lies a lovely stretch of water. Port Lough is deep and silent. Ancient gnarled trees and stunted shrubs surround it. No fisherman's boat sails over the smooth surface to disturb the peace of those sleeping far below.

Long ago, in this valley, there was a great castle, with many turrets rising proudly to the sky. Surrounded by an old oak forest, it stood alone in stately splendour.

In the castle courtyard, there was a fountain covered with a metal lid, well bolted down. Many years before, an old witch had foretold, that this fountain would bring disaster to the proud castle.

Here in quiet seclusion, lived Kathleen, the chieftain's only daughter. With shining curls and laughing eyes she was the most beautiful maiden in all the land.





111.2

Portlough

Now to the East of the valley, high on a hill, stands the gaunt and rugged Burt Castle, Here the young chieftain Cathal dwelt. When Kathleen was seventeen and full of joy, she met the brave Cathal. and they fell deeply in love. Daily, they walked in the woods and vowed their love for each other. The old chieftain smiled on his daughter and did nothing to discourage her.

Then one faithful day the aged Ard Righ came riding through the forest and chanced to see the lovely Kathleen. He immediately wanted to make her his bride. The old chieftain, proud that so great a monarch should seek his daughter's hand in marriage, promptly gave his consent. He ignored the tears and entreaties of his beautiful daughter, bade her forget Cathal and prepare to wed the Ard Righ in a few short weeks.

Kathleen was heart-broken. She tried to do as her father commanded, but scarcely a day passed that the lovers did not meet to comfort each other.

A magnificent banquet was held to celebrate the forthcoming marriage. The many mullioned windows were ablaze with lights. The great hall was thronged with guests and throughout the castle could be heard the sound of music and dancing. The red wine flowed free.

When the revelry was at its height. Kathleen stole out into the courtyard to breathe the midnight summer air. She flung back the fountain lid to bathe her aching brow with the crystal clear water. A shadow fell across the well. Startled, she turned to find her lover beside her. Kathleen gasped in fear. If the Ard Righ's men should see him, they would surely kill him. Taking Cathal's arm, she led him swiftly to her secret bower. There, wrapped in each other's arms, the minutes passed unnoticed.

Suddenly, Kathleen remembered that she had forgotten to close the lid of the fountain. With a cry of horror she ran from the bower, but she was too late, the water was surging round the castle walls. In vain she tried to warn the revelers. The cold water was now swirling round their knees, becoming deeper every moment.

Silently, relentlessly, the fountain was pouring its crystal clear water out over the valley. Clasped in Cathal's arms, with her head against her faithful lover's heart, Kathleen closed her eyes forever.

And still, it is said, when the setting sun is red on the waters of the lake, the turrets of the great castle can be seen, deep down, in lovely, lonely Port Lough.

Myrtle Glenn.

### LEGENDS OF GRIANAN OF AILEACH

One story as to how Aileach got its name, is that when Corgenn of Cruach killed the son of the Dagda out of jealousy, the Dagda spared his life, but sentenced him to carry the corpse of the murdered man until he should find a pillar of stone of his own height, to carry instead. The stone was found, and Corgenn heaved it on his back with a groan. "Alas (Ach) the stone (Ail) I shall die of it," and the weight killed him. The Dagda said "Aileach" (stone alas) shall be the name of this place.

Another legend is that the High King of Alba (Scotland) had a daughter named Aileach who ran away to Ulster with a young Irishman named  
(An old song sung

1  
The more I am no poet  
I hope you all do know it  
It's here I mean to show it  
These few lines to compose.

2.  
Concerning a fair flower  
Growing in yon shady bower  
I mean to show my power  
Before these lines I close.

3.  
She swore she ne'er would marry  
Nor with no other tarry  
But in hopeful to get married  
To the lad she did adore.

4.  
As for Alexander  
He raged in wrath and anger  
He swore he would demand her  
From her own true lover's side.

5.  
Being early the next evening  
They brought her to Mongavlin  
In hopes to get sailing  
To some far foreign shore.

6.  
When Willie her own true lover  
Came sailing down the river  
With fifty heroes clever  
The Castle they did surround.

7.  
Willie the bold commander  
Spoke on to Alexander  
Come hand me out my charmer  
Or death will be your doom.

8  
I'll burn your barns and byres Your  
castle I'll set on fire  
I'll burn to all desire  
Desolation I'll bring on.

9.  
The doors were opened quickly She  
was handed out respectfully And  
homeward bound directly To their  
home in fair Dromore.

10.  
The joybells they were ringing The  
lads and lasses singing.  
The hugs and glasses ringing  
To welcome home the pair.

## THE LEGEND OF STUMPY'S BRAE

(Between St. Johnston and Strabane) 1844

1.

*Heard ye no tell o' Stumpy's Brae,  
Sit doom, sit down, young friend, I'll  
make your flesh to creep this night  
And your hair to stand on end.*

2.

*Young man, it's hard to strive wi' sin  
And the hardest strife o' a' Is  
when the greed o' gain comes in  
And drives God's grace awa'.*

3.

*O, it's quick to do, but it's long to rue  
When the punishment comes at last  
And we 'd gi' the whole world to undo  
the deed  
That deed that's gone and past.*

4.

*Over yon strip of meadow land  
And over the birnie bright  
Dinna ye mark a fir-tree stand  
Beside yon gable white.*

5.

*O, I mind it weel, in my younger days  
When the story yet was rife  
There dwelt within that lovely place  
A farmer man and his wife.*

6.

*They sat together all alone  
That blessed autumn night  
When the trees without and hedge and stone  
Were white in the sweet moonlight.*

7.

*The Boys and Girls had all gone down  
A wee tae the blacksmith's wake  
When passed my on by the window  
small  
And gi'ed the door a shake.*

8.

*The man he up and opened the door,  
And when he had spoken a bit,  
A peddler man stepped in to the floor  
Down tumbled the pack he bore-right  
heavy pack was it.*

9

*"God save us a', " says the wife  
wi' a smile  
"But yours is a thriving trade"  
"Ay, ay, I've wandered many a  
mile,  
And plenty I have made. "*

10.

*The man sat on by the dull fire  
flame  
When the pedlar went to his rest  
Close to his ear the Devil came,  
And slipped into his breast.*

11.

*He looked at his wife by the dim  
fire-light  
And she was as bad as he. "Could  
we no' murder yon man tonight?"  
"Aye, could we no'?" ready quo'  
she.*

12.

*He took the pick-axe without a  
word  
Where it stood behind the door.  
As he passed it into the sleeper he  
stirred  
And never wakened more.*

13.

*He's dead, says the auld wan  
coming back, "What o' the corpse,  
my dear?" "We 'II bury him snug  
in his ain bit pack, Never ye mind  
the loss o' the sack,  
I've taken out a' the gear. "*

14.

*"The Packs ower short by two guid  
span,  
And what'II we do?" quo' he.  
"And you're a doited thoughtful  
man,  
We'll soon cut him off at the knee. "*

15.

*They shortened the corpse, and  
they packed him tight  
Wi' his legs in a pickle o' hay.  
Over the bum in the sweet  
moonlight,  
They carried him to this brae.*

16.

*They shovelled a hole right speedily  
And they laid him on his back 'A  
right pair are ye" quo' the peddler,  
He sitting bolt upright in his pack*

17.

"Ye thought ye'd lay me snugly  
here  
Where none should know my  
station But I'll haunt ye far, and I'll  
haunt ye near  
Father and son, with terror and fear,  
to the nineteenth generation. "

18.

The two were sitting the very next  
night  
When the wee bit dog began to  
cower And they knew by the pale blue  
fire-light  
That the evil one had power.

19.

It had just struck nine, just nine o' the  
clock,  
That hour when the man lay  
dead, When there came to the  
outer door a knock,  
And a heavy, heavy tread.

20.

The auld man's head swam round and  
round  
The woman's head gang freeze, 'Twos  
not like a natural sound, but like  
someone stumping over the ground  
On the bones o' his raw bare knees.

21.

In through the door like a sough of air,  
And stump! stump!! stump!!! around  
the twa  
Wi' his bloody head, and his knee  
bones bare  
They had maist tae die awa'.

22.

The wife's black locks ere the morn  
grew white,  
They say, as the mountain snows,  
The man was as straight as a staff that  
night  
But he stooped as the morning arose.

23.

Still day by day as the clock struck  
nine,  
In the house where they did the  
sin, The wee bit dog began to  
whine  
And the ghost came clatterin' in.

24.

Ai' night, there was a fearful flood,  
Three days and nights the skies had  
poured And white wi' foam and black  
wi' wind  
The burn in fury roared.

25.

Quo' she, "Quid man ye needna turn  
sae pale  
In the dim fire light The  
stumpy canna cross the bum  
He'll no' be here the nicht. "

26.

"For it up the linn and it' ower the  
bank  
And it's up to the meadow  
ridge" But the stumpy he came  
harplin' in,  
gave the wife a slap on the chin  
' 'Sure came round by the bridge."

27.

And stump, stump, stump to his  
ploys again  
Over the stools and chairs, Ye  
'd surely hae thought ten men and  
women  
Were dancing there in pairs.

28.

They sold the gear and across the  
sea,  
To a foreign land they  
went But sure what can flee  
from  
His appointed punishment,

29.

The ship swam over the water  
clear Wi' the help o' an Eastern  
breeze But the very first sound  
on the wide, smooth deck,  
That fell on their ears, was the tappin' o'  
them bare knees,

30.

Out in the woods of wild  
America  
Their weary feet they set, But  
stumpy was there first they say,  
and haunted them to their dying  
day. And he follows their children  
yet.

31.

This is the story o' Stumpy's  
Brae  
And the murderer's fearful fate.  
Young friend, your face is turned  
that way,  
You 'II be ganging the night that gate.

32.

Ye 'II ken it well, through the few fir  
trees  
The house where they were wont to  
dwell If ye meet ane there as daylight  
flees,  
stumping about on the banes o'  
his knees, It'll just be Stumpy  
himsel'.

C.F.A. Dec. 1844

## CUTTING THE CORN

In olden days the farmer took  
A sharp-ning-stone and big bill hook;  
To slash four sheaves and make a stook  
Of autumn's oaten harvest. He first would twist a criss-cross strap  
The sheaf when cut on this he'd clap; This steady inward—lap by  
lap  
Alone a one-foot margin.

Then later on he planned a scythe  
That failed for limbs both strong and lithe:  
While women lifting lilted blithe,  
And piled the two-foot paring. As time moved on life claimed more  
speed: The reaper came to fill that need: A four-foot swathe of oat and  
weed  
This two-horse yoke laid squarely.

To-day around each Laggan field  
A reaper-binder bares its yield  
Now tractor-drawn and rubber-wheel'd,  
It grinds along all gaily. A hook might lay two roods ere eve: A  
scythe an acre more might leave: This binder, petrol-power'd, will  
cleave  
Eleven acres daily.

Tom Campbell comes from Castletown And reaps the ripen'd acres  
down: A million stocks for miles around  
Bear witness to the slaughter. In all this land is nowhere found  
Such plent as doth here abound: A thousand tons wait to be  
ground—  
To feed each son and daughter.

Since Abel cleft the clay of old And Jacob's twin his birthright sold,  
The golden grain a hundred-fold  
Increased 'neath God's keeping. It matters not by whom it's  
sown, By winds of heaven softly blown, By sickle, scythe, or  
binder mown:  
God guarantees the reaping.

(See Personalities Past & Present) Dominic O'Kelly

**WINDING SWILLY BURN**

*(Spelt Sooley in Abercorn Papers) (On the bridge at Carrickmore, 1920)*

When Autumn tints of green and gold, The groves had decked so gay,  
Evening sun low in the west Alone I chanced to stray. By Binion Hill  
and wandering on Through vales with many a turn, I saw the Broom  
and Fern Banks On winding Swilly Bum.

Happy in that grand old vale, I sat me down to rest, And there a  
maiden came to me My dearest love and best. Young love aflame  
with our heart, All life one summer mom, Among the Furze and  
Bramble On winding Swilly Burn.

Wandering forth my love and I Within that crystal bower,  
Fleeting moments linger sweet How flew the raptured hour,  
Many a tale of love was told Among the flowers and fern,  
Fond memory only lingers now On winding Swilly Bum.

The charm of her beauty rare, Had my lone heart betrayed, Joy to  
think I loved so dear That fair and gentle maid. Warbling birds  
who charm the air To greet the early morn Shall ever sing the night  
we met On Winding Swilly Bum.

**WINDING SWILLY BURN**

*(From Through the Lens)\**

I love to hear the Corn-crake call, In springtime of the year, The  
linnet and the skylark, All chime their notes so clear, I love to hear  
a ploughman sing As with his team return And comfort every  
lonely heart, On Winding Swilly Burn.

We now embrace my love and I Time beckoned move away, Golden  
hours of that sweet night

Were gliding on till day,  
The moon was full, tide was high,  
A parting oft we mourn  
When last we kissed, said good-bye  
On Winding Swilly Burn.

When I am gone far far away,  
Some pleasure still I find,  
None can compare with golden days  
That I have left behind.  
When dreams revive a weary mind  
In memory I return  
And meet again the maid I love,  
On Winding Swilly Burn.

*Alexander Doherty* (See Personalities  
Past & Present)

### ***GLENTOWN HILL***

Could you live on Glentown Hill where the hare and pheasant bide  
Where the hawthorn and the bracken decorate its sloping side  
Where the whins refuse to vanish in spite of human strain  
Where the big milk thistles bow their heads, to shed the driving rain  
Where the bushes grow in bunches thick and put good grass to waste  
Where the 'benweed' gives its poison to the beast that cares to taste  
Where the hazel rods grow high and long and in their straightness pride  
Where the 'jaggie' briars 'round them creep their ugly heads they hide.

Could you live on Glentown Hill without rheumatic pains  
Where the water mixed up with iron and the 'spa' stops up the drains  
Where the road is but a narrow lane with two awkward elbow turns  
Where the water has no outlet and down the centre runs  
Where the nettles on its ledges would a roadman put to shame  
In every perch a pothole and most pedestrians lame  
Where you couldn't hope to mend it 'for the Council's got no cash'  
Where the sycamore and the elm grow and an odd out sickly ash.

Could you live on Glentown Hill and all your senses keep  
Where the Palm trees find it hard to grow their bark ate off by sheep  
Where the heather on the mountain top can very rarely bloom  
Where the catailgs grow like daisies just where they find the room  
Where the fairy thimbles grow in plenty and can somehow flourish grand  
Where the redshank and the 'dockin' disgrace the fertile land  
Where the snow it comes in Autumn and 'til Spring it gathers more  
Where the North winds steady whistling through the keyhole in the door

Could you live on Glentown Hill when vegetation 's new  
Where the sun it shines so brightly when the summer skies are blue  
Where the sheep protect their little lambs from the magpie and grey crow  
Where the buttercup and daisy bluebell and primrose grow-Where its beauty can  
compare with each beauty that's been sung  
Where the swallows have returned once more to rear their young  
Where the skylark and the robin, blackbird and thrushes mate  
Where the cuckoo sits and calls cuckoo on the big tree by the gate.

James McLaughlin.

*BALLAD LAMENT FOR THE O'DOHERTYS, ON VISITING BURT  
CASTLE*

The Castle walls with empty  
eyes Look down on Swilly's  
shore, Now all is sad decay  
and ruin Where splendor was  
of yore.

Silence is within the Castle of the  
O'Dohertys, Deserted is its hall,  
Where once young Cahir slept and  
dined Now only the rook doth call.

He was the last of the Irish earls  
To defend-his native land, The  
year before the Great O 'Neill Had  
sailed from Rathmullan 's strand.

Silence is within the walls of the  
O'Dohertys, No more they 'll hear the call  
Of hunter's horn across yellow gorse, The  
voice of warriors tall.

For sake of peace Sir Cahir  
vowed Allegiance to the foe, But  
when Sir Paulet struck his face  
To war he had to go.

No longer could this valiant youth  
Endure to lick the hand Of  
England's base and cruel leader,  
Who had o 'er run his land.

In sixteen eight with mighty  
force From 'Crana he did ride,  
Re-capturing all his stolen  
land As far as Foyle 's tide.

In Derry city his revenge he  
took And proud Paulet did  
slay, For insulting the noble  
Cahir The base Sassanach did  
pay.

Alas! his victory was short lived,  
He suffered a defeat,  
And outnumbered by a strong British force  
At last he did retreat.

Silence is within the towers of the O'Dohertys,  
No more on Swilly 's strand  
Will the tall fair chieftain, Cahir  
Lead his trusty band.



*And by the windows of Burt Castle,  
Lady Mary watched in vain  
For the return of her young husband,  
Eyes strained across the plain.*

*Then one day the waving plumes  
Of soldiers she did spy, But alas it was the English troops,  
And dreadful was her cry.*

*Then what a scene of carnage  
For all were massacred,  
Save at the pleading of an ancient monk  
Lady Mary she was spared.*

*The English put them to the sword  
Their royal blood did pour,  
And where the Lords of Inishowen ruled  
They will be heard no more.*

*Silent are the walls of the O'Dohertys,  
No bards do sing, No happy lilting  
Gaelic voices There ever more will ring.*

---

*Young Sir Cahir was now a fugitive A  
ransom on his head,*

*Still valiantly he harassed the English  
Although he 'd soon be dead.*

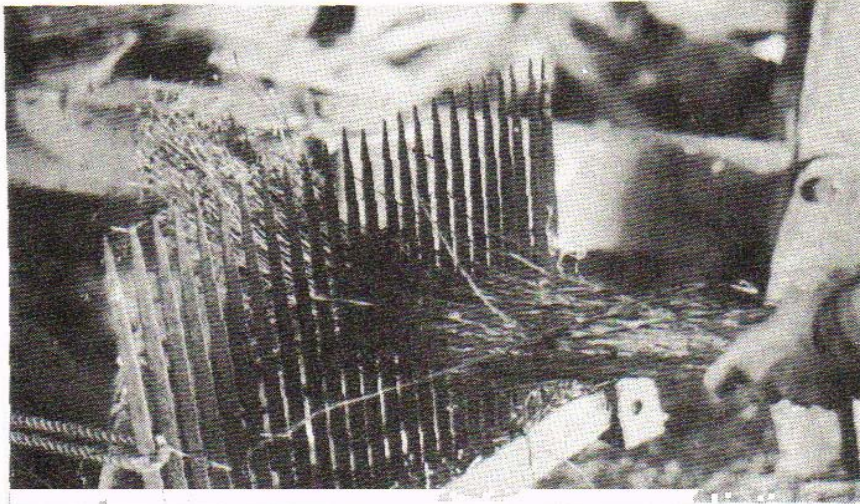
*One sad day at Kilmacrenan,  
By musket ball was struck  
This noble patriot of but twenty-one,  
Ill-starred was his luck.*

*Silence is within the Castle of the  
O'Dohertys,  
Only a lone bird's cry  
Echoes within the high stronghold  
Where chiefs did live and die.*

*Their clarion voices forever stilled,  
Those brave chiefs of old, No more  
they'll hunt the deer at morn, Their  
story's long been told.*

*Silent is the clan of the O'Dohertys,  
They now slumber all  
Beside the shores of gentle Swilly, Until  
the Judgment call.*

SMC



111. 14 The Ripple. Slapping the flax. (See Folklore, Ballads etc.)

*Published Irish Press 28 Aug., 1972*

### *Pearl Fishing*

I own a Donegal pearl, a small perfect pink one presented to me by a neighbouring farmer who goes pearl-fishing each summer. The pearls are found in fresh-water mussels in local rivers. These mussels, unlike the sea-water variety are inedible.

A well-known Scottish pearl-fisherman, who is also a buyer, comes over to Ireland every year to buy the pearl. In a television documentary, I saw him fishing from a small boat which he pushed out into the river. He looked down into the water through a long metal funnel with a glass bottom and speared the mussels with a bamboo cane with a split end.

Willie Hamilton uses similar equipment though he usually fishes in shallow water into which he wades, and bends down to look through the viewer. When he sees a likely shell, he spears it and puts it in his shoulder bag. With practice, it is possible to know by the look of the shell whether it will contain a pearl or not. "A Hump and Flat (a shell with a groove on one side and a curve on the other) nearly always contains two white pearls," said Willie. He said that the real expert can tell by the very weeds and colour of the bottom of the river whether the shells will contain perfect pearls.

They must be flawless in shape and colour, for unlike other gems they cannot be altered in shape or lustre. Many of them are disappointingly brown and misshapen.

"I have been fishing for pearls for about 55 years," his Uncle James told me. "When I started first a buyer in Omagh gave great prices for them. I remember

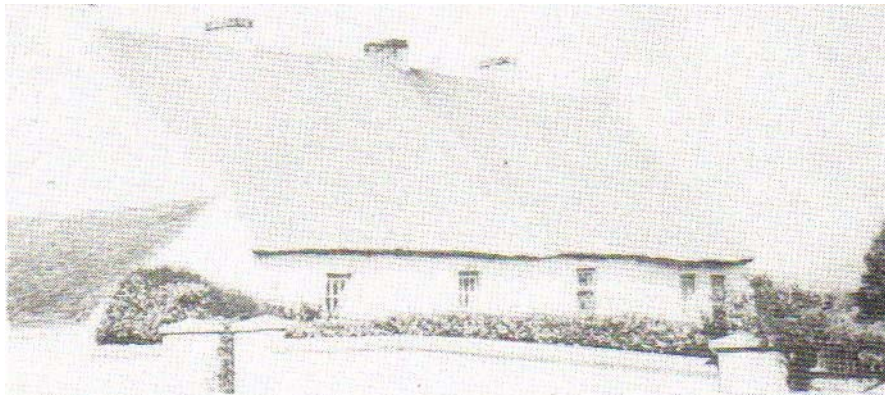


III. 15

**Robert Doherty, thatcher, at work. (Brother of Jamey mentioned in article on**

**Thatching).**

getting as much as £25 for one, which was good money in those days. Then about 40 years ago the Japanese began to produce pearls artificially—by introducing a small particle of metal into the shell. These cultured pearls swamped the market and river pearls were almost valueless. For years I just gave them away for presents to my



### **III. 18**

#### **Thatched house as described in my article on thatching in Chapter 8**

sisters and friends. Then with the rise in cost of labour and equipment, the Japanese cultured pearls gradually increased in price till now once more there is a reasonably good market for the river pearl."

My two friends and their team usually travel west to a little river Cladagh which flows from the lough at Dunlewy into the sea at Bunbeg. On a fine day, they pack a picnic and make a day of it. I can imagine the view they get of Mt. Errigal rising starkly from the round shadowy foothills.

They waded into the brown bog water and fill their bags, and then there is the excitement of opening the shells and exploring the skin-covered lumps which only

too often contain nothing but brown or misshapen rejects. Sometimes there are huge mounds of shells before someone strikes lucky. Luck for the fisherman is, of course, disease for the shell-fish for the pearl is actually a tumour on its flesh, caused by the irritation of a grain of sand—a little hard malignant lump which yet can be so beautiful.

I look at my pearl once more, and find it difficult to believe that anything so perfect can yet be an imperfection of nature.

S.M.

C. Published Irish Press 23-12-'? 1

*The Art of the Thatcher*

I hear the dull comforting tap of his wooden mallet on the roof. No more coffee coloured streaks down the wallpaper, no more basins placed under leaks in the roof. The matcher has come at last.

It was no mean achievement getting him up there. Aged about 70, he and his brother are the last matchers in this district. He knows his worth and you have to book him months in advance. It is as difficult to gain an audience with him as with a cabinet minister, and negotiations have to be entered into discreetly with his relations beforehand. Finally one Sunday morning I saw him by appointment at his cottage door. Yes, he was at last free and would come the next morning.

I had all ready. I had grown an acre of flax specially for the job. On previous occasions I had bought it, but this time it was unobtainable. Wheat, barley or rye straw can be used also, but flax makes the best roof, and lasts almost 20 years. As it is now a rare crop in Ireland I had to order seed specially from abroad. The Agricultural Adviser came and told me to put a bag of potash and two bags of super fertiliser to it. The rest I left to an old flax-scutter who laboured the ground and sowed the seed with a fiddle sower. Up came a fine sturdy crop about the beginning of May. A white blossom appeared about July, and at the end of August I employed a man to pull it and stock it.

I didn't rett it in water as used to be done when it was scutched for linen weaving, so that meant that the seed (called "bows" locally) were still on. Fortunately in an old shed on the farm we found the ancient hand implement for "slapping" of the seed. "The Rippler" is like a huge iron fine-comb, through which the flax is lashed to remove the seed and at the same time straighten the strands.

In some other parts of Ireland the thatch is plastered down with clay and mud, as in the round primitive bee-hive houses or clochans. On the west coast it is mostly secured with hand-twisted straw ropes criss-crossed in lattice fashion over the roof. This is decorative, but not durable and has to be renewed every year. My thatcher used scollops or "scobes" as they are called locally—pliable rods of hazel, briar or willow. These are bent, staple-fashion, and driven down like hairpins, securing the thatch to the "scraws" (sod foundation). Every successive layer of thatch covers these scollops, except for a row at eaves and ridge. Rod-thatching is also prevalent in England and possibly came from there with the Celts.

I had to provide these "scollops" which were gathered for me at so much for a bundle of a hundred.

He had arrived, but that didn't mean he would jump on the roof, and immediately start to thatch. Oh no! Synge wrote: "Thatching is regarded as a sort of festival on the Aran Islands. A thatching party is arranged and before dawn some morning they come down to the house, and the work is taken in hand with such energy that it is usually ended with the day." What a jolly communal scene those words conjure up, but alas today things are somewhat different. It is so long after dawn as to be almost noon before my thatcher puts in an appearance, and then there are the preliminaries of pointing scollops, arranging ladders, etc. With great luck, and providing the wind is blowing from just the right direction, and there is no rain he might get started on the second morning. And speed is not a characteristic of scollop thatching. Synge was describing thatching done by the rope method. No! It is a deliberate process requiring great concentration and patience—the careful placing of each handful of flax, and the selection of the right thickness of scollop, which has to be driven in at just the right angle, or it will let in damp.

Nor was your man in a particularly festive mood either that Monday morning. Our wonderful flax he dismissed as "far tee lang and coorse. Yez put far tee much manure (fertiliser) tay it on that guid ground. Shoart fine lint (flax) is far better for thatching." By then a fine drizzle had come on, and the whole operation was postponed till the morrow.

But at last on the afternoon of the next day, armed with his mallet and straw-filled sack to kneel on, his cap well pulled down against the weather, he ascended majestically to his task. No doubt this is strenuous and exacting work for a man of his years. Exacting but satisfying, and he is his own master and never idle for there are still many thatched houses in this district.

Why do some young men not apprentice themselves to the trade before it dies out completely, and I and others have to replace our beautiful thatch with ugly tiles or asbestos.

S.M

## .C. CHAPTER NINE

### **BUILDINGS OF INTEREST**

#### **MONGAVLIN CASTLE**

(Situated on the banks of the River Foyle about 1 mile sth. of St. Johnston)

' The roof of the castle of Magavelan is greatly out of repair and John Crawford who is tenant refuses to repair it. I don't think he is in a condition to repair the castle or keep it in repair, and if your Lordship pleased to order the timber of the roof and floor to be disposed of there may something be got for them which will be lost if they are exposed to the storms of another winter." Thus wrote Jon McClintock (agent) to the landlord Earl of Abercorn on 28th August, 1745.

The Earl, however, was apparently reluctant to let the old castle go into ruin and replied: "I shall be very unwilling to pull down Magavelin Castle, but would rather have you got Andrew Kinneir or some other workmen to view it, and if the expense is not great, I would repair it a little." A month later he wrote "As you think Magavelin Castle cannot be repaired at this season, I believe it will be best to leave the roof on and let it take its change till I come into the country". In 1751 the castle was still habitable for the Earl wrote to Jon McClintock (Trintagh) "My

answer is I do not intend to let the fishers have Magavelin Castle under £40 a year." The last known inhabitant was a Mr. Cairns Alexander.

The great-grandmother of the Earl had purchased the castle and estate from the Stewarts. There was once a stone on the castle walls which bore the inscription "The Hon. Elizabeth Hamilton, daughter of John Lord Culpeper, and widow of Colonel James Hamilton (who lost his life at sea in Spain, in the service of his king and country) purchased this manor, and annexed it to the opposite estate of the family, which paternal estate itself has improved by her prudent management to nearly the yearly income of the dower she received throughout. She has also settled her younger son William Hamilton, Esq., in an estate acquired in England, of nearly equal value in the purchase of this, and given every one of her numerous offspring, descended from both branches, some considerable mark of her parental care. Her eldest son, James, Earl of Abercorn, and Viscount Strabane, hath caused this inscription to be placed here for the information of her posterity, Anno. 1704.

It seemed to be destined to be the home of remarkable women for as already mentioned it had been the residence of "Ineen Dubh", mother of Red Hugh O'Donnell. State papers record her possession as follows: "Three miles above the Cargan stands a fort called McGevyvelin upon the river of Lough Foyle — O'Donnell's mother's chief house."

Other sources maintain the Abercorns had got the property by a marriage alliance with the Stewarts.

#### GRIANAN OF AILEACH

(See 111. No. 7)

Grianan of Ail each is a huge circular stone fort situated on the Hill of Aileach. It was at one time palace of the Hy Niall dynasty, Kings of Ulster and High Kings of all Ireland, and dates back three thousand years to the days of the Dagda and Tuatha-Danaan chieftains.

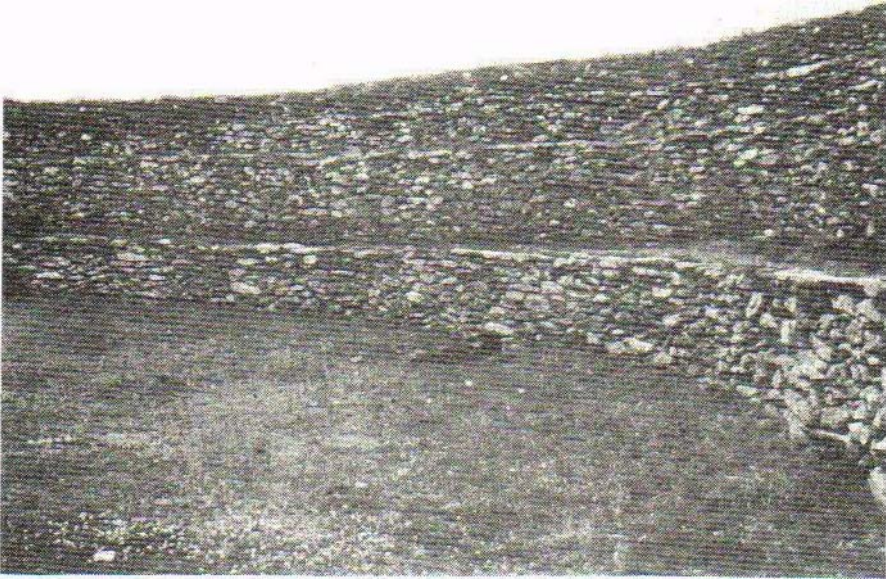
Built of dry stone the fort is reckoned to be one of the most important antiquities in the North of Ireland. The walls rise about 18 feet and are roughly 13 feet thick. Inside the wall, which encloses an area of grass are terraced steps which lead to the top.

According to tradition the great Cathair was originally built by the Dagda, the celebrated King of Danaan (*See Folklore Ballads etc.*) who defeated the Fomorians many centuries before the Christian era. It is thought the stone circle was once a temple for the worship of the sun, perhaps by the Druids, as the only entrance, an iron gate, faces towards the East. One of the most valued treasures of the National Museum in Dublin is the bell of Aileach, which is mentioned in the "Annals of Ulster" as early as 552 A.D. Grianan of Aileach which is marked on the map issued by the geographer Ptolemy around 100 A.D. and is also mentioned in the "Annals of the Four Masters".

St. Patrick was said to have prophesied that Kingship and prominence should be over Erin and Aileach "When you lift your foot to approach the flag, the men of Erin shall tremble before you". The flagstone is now at the garden of Belmont, near Derry.

Aileach was plundered many times but survived until 1101 A.D. when there was a prolonged struggle between North and South for the dignity of Ard-Righ. Eventually the Grianan was demolished by Muicheartach O'Brien, who made his men carry off a stone in each of their provision sacks.

For a long period the castle lay in ruins, until in 1874 it was restored by an enthusiastic local antiquarian, Dr. Walter Bernard.

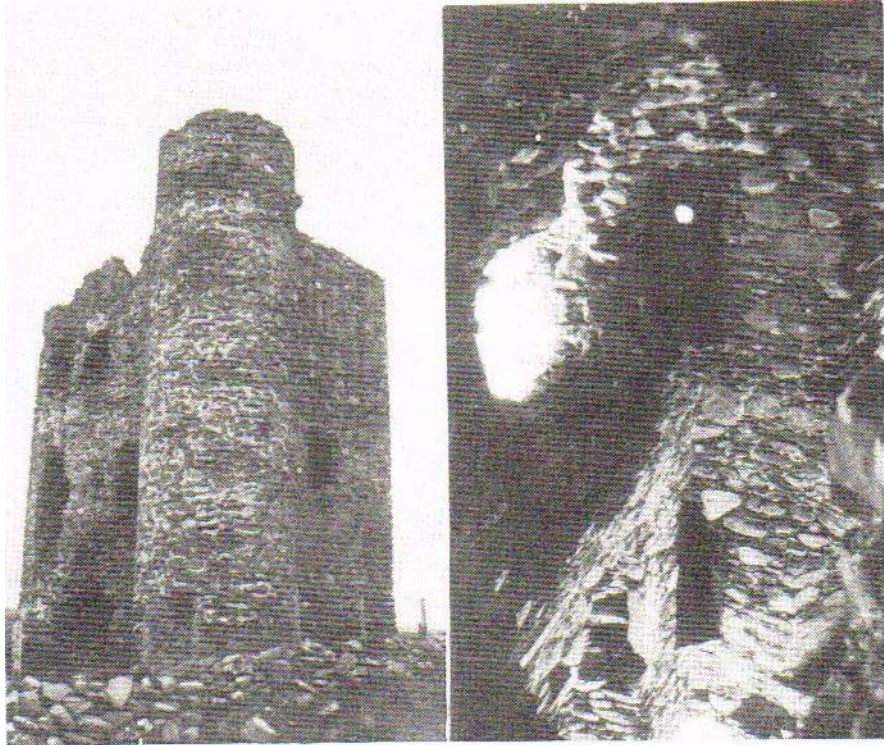


III. 7(b)

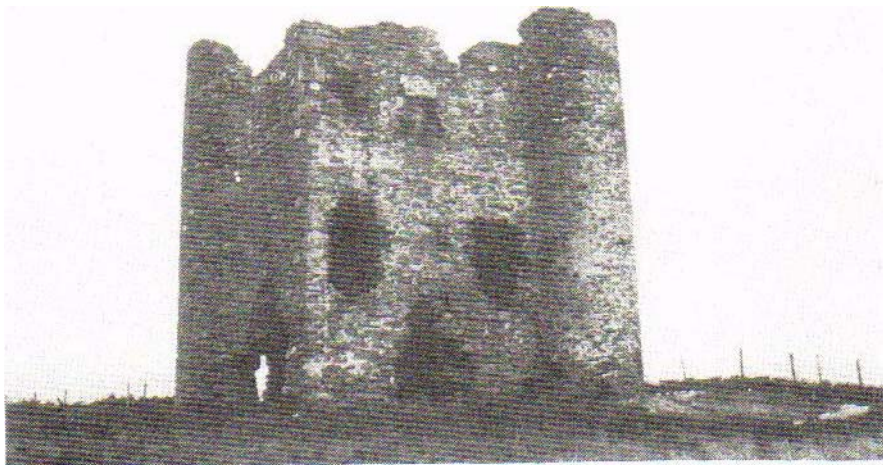


III. 7(c)





III. 6(a)(b)



III. 6(c)

**Burt Castle**

## SHARON RECTORY

Just over a mile from Newtowncunningham 49 on the Letterkenny road, is Sharon Rectory, the scene of the Sharon tragedy which took place near the end of the 18th century, at the time the United Irishmen were preparing for the uprising which broke out in 1798.

At that time the rector of Clondevaddock was the Rev. William Hamilton. He, like most other rectors of that time was a magistrate as well, and in his exertions to nip the insurrection in the bud, he had incurred the wrath of the whole countryside. At the time he met his death, Dr. Hamilton was returning from Derry, where it was suspected he had gone to give information to the authorities, regarding the state of the country. He spent the night of the 1st of March with the Bishop in the castle at Raphoe. The following day he set out for home at Clondevaddock.

It is said that some persons, who had reason to dread the information which Dr. Hamilton was supposed to have given, followed him. At any rate when he reached Fort Stewart ferry, where had to cross a stretch of Lough Swilly, the boatman refused to cross on account, they said, of the storminess of the evening. It is supposed, however, that Dr. Hamilton's enemies had ordered them to refuse to row him across the lough. Dr. Hamilton decided to return to Sharon Rectory, the residence of his friend, the Rev. Dr. Waller, Rector of Raymochey.

The Rev. Hamilton was made welcome at Sharon. Late that evening before the family had retired to bed the house was surrounded by an armed band who demanded that Dr. Hamilton should be handed over to them. When this demand was not complied with, they fired through the dining-room window, killing Mrs. Waller, wife of the rector. The servants in the house then seized their master's guest. In his despair the magistrate caught hold of the banister of the stairs and clung to it till the application of a red-poker compelled him to let go his hold.

It is said that Dr. Hamilton pulled a piece out of the banister, at any rate, a repaired piece can still be seen in the banister at Sharon.

When the door was opened, the rector was thrown out on the door step, where he was murdered.

The tradition current in the district is that the servants in the house were in sympathy with the attacking party, and that they, contrary to the wishes of the family, put Dr. Hamilton out. Another account says Dr. Waller and his daughters were so terrified they ordered their servants to do this deed, and that the Misses Waller were put on trial for this offence at the Lifford Assizes, but were acquitted.

The Rev. Francis Dill, who was the minister of Ray Presbyterian Church was accused of being concerned in the attack on Sharon Rectory, and was arrested. He was about to be sentenced to death when a member of his congregation testified that the Rev. Dill was in his house visiting a member of his family, who was dying, at the time of the murder.

The perpetrators of this attack were never discovered.

## BURT CASTLE

*(See III. No. 6)*

Burt Castle, one of the residences of the O'Dohertys was built under Henry VIII in the earlier part of the 16th century, and was described in Irish State papers as "a place of great strength by nature and by art better fortified than the custom of this country". It is built on a hill, which was at the time "almost compassed with the sea, save on one side, and there is a bogg".

On the ground floor of the castle was the guard room and cooking places, the floor above was the living apartments, and the third floor contained the sleeping rooms. The wall round the top edge was battlemented and crenellated for purposes of defence and look out. The light was admitted through small narrow slits and loop holes. The south-west contains a spiral stairway, whose steps have now fallen away in places.

After it was captured in 1608 and the occupants massacred it was used as an important garrison-point. After the plantation, it was rented to Chichester and was still inhabited in 1654, but must have been dismantled soon after as in Scnex Map (1712) it was not even marked. By 1833 it was unroofed and since then much of it has been destroyed by storms and stones removed from it for other buildings.

### TAUGHBOYNE CHURCH

In 560 St. Baithin, who was born in the Laggan, established a monastery, which was known as Teach Baithen (House of Baiihen). He was a contemporary and friend of St. Columba and succeeded him as Abbot of Iona.

The descendents of Braesail, son of Enna were chieftains of the district at that time and donated the site for the abbey and also three glebes to support it. The O'Roddy were the local branch of the Braesail claim in Tir Eanan. and O'Roddy was up to the 15th century the hereditary "Herenach" or agent of the Bishop. (*See Place Names*). This "herenach" farmed the parochial land or gorts and paid the tithes to the Bishop. Some times he also was rector as can be seen below:

<sup>13</sup>In 1450 Thomas O'Raidtiighi, priest informed the Pope that Andrew O'Buigi, rector of Taughboyne publicly kept a concubine, neglected his duties etc. and he was disposed and ..... the informer Thomas was prov. to the rector in his stead Nov 10.



In 1674 a James Hamilton pres. by Duke of Lennox became archdeacon of Taughboyne. In 1690 Andrew Hamilton succeeded. In 1754 John Hamilton succeeded. In 1757 Frederick Hamilton succeeded

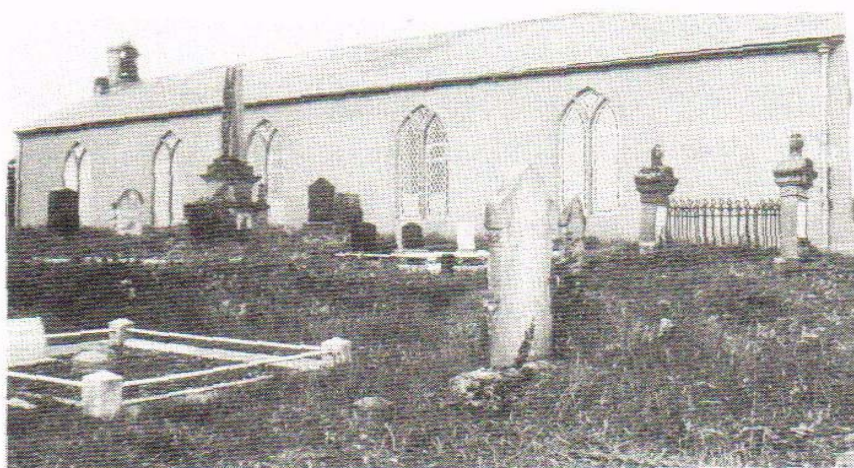
These Hamiltons were all relations of the Earl of Abercorn. The first was the same as gave hospitality to King James in 1689 during the Siege (if Derry, and the last three were presented with the living by the Abercorns. who about that time purchased the Manor of Mongavelin which included the parish of Taughboyne. With the Reformation the church became Protestant, although there was a Roman Catholic Bishop in Raphoe as late as 1620. The present church (*See III. No10*) was built in 1626 though it must have been extensively repaired and renovated since March 1754 when the Rev. John Hamilton wrote:

Having the morning and evening services 10 read in my church, and that being in so wretched a condition that I know not a place one might not stand in with more safety, it threw in such a cold into my limbs and sent me back in such rearing pain. (This was on the occasion of his establishment as Archdeacon of Raphoe).

#### ST. JOHNSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

There is a record of the meeting of the Laggan Presbytery in St. Johnston on 10th August. 1672. Then in 1690 after the Revolution and Siege of Derry, the Presbytery met at "its old meeting-place of St. Johnston". But it was not till 1723 (the 250th anniversary is being celebrated this year) that Rev, Gray preached in an old lime kiln to the first St. Johnston congregation.

This Rev. William Gray, who had returned to the Laggan against the wishes of the Synod was rather unconventional in his habits he was accused of marrying secretly and:



III. 9  
52

Taughboyne Church

"Notorious scandalous practices, which he with great assurance and violence offered to prove against him." One of these grave offence was "that the said Gray conversed much with those of a different persuasion."

The first house of worship was erected in the village street, and was in use up to the year 1849, when during the ministry of the Rev. Joseph McConaghey, the present church was built on a commanding site, overlooking the Foyle (*See III. No. 9*).

#### ST. BAITHEN'S CHURCH

At the end of the unhappy times of the Penal Laws, the Earl of Abrcorn donated a site for the Roman Catholic Church at Warp Mill (near St. Johnston). This church served the local congregation until 1810 when the present church, a fine building of cut stone was erected, and dedicated to St. Baithen (*See III. No. 11*), Its foundation was laid by William Forward of Castleforward, and it is said locally that the special stones for it were brought by horse drawn cans from Omagh in County Tyrone. (William Forward lived in a residence called Castleforward on the site of the old castle of Culmatrine.

#### BALLEIGHAN ABBEY

(*See III. No. 8*)

Near Newtowncunningham stand the ruins of a beautiful old abbey described in Maguire's "History of the Diocese of Raphoe" as follows:



III. 11

St. Baithen's, St. Johnston (Roman Catholic)

"Baile-aighidh-chaoin" says O'Donovan. "that is, Villa-faciei-amoenae". is now anglicised Balleeghan. and lies on the margin of Lough Swilly about 1 1/4 mile north-east of Manorcunninghan. ITS Irish name would be produced Bal-eye-cheen (eye in Irish is face, and Caoin is delightful or pleasant). At present, it contains the ruins of a very large and beautiful church in the Gothic style.....

The general belief is that the Balleighan Abbey was founded by Hugh Dubh O'Donnell in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and that, like Killodonnell. it was a daughter of Kilmacrenan Franciscan Friary. There is overwhelming evidence to show that the Presbyterians annexed this beautiful Catholic church, and evidently with the consent of their accommodating friend. Bishop Knox, acquired prescriptive ownership of the building and premises.

This Protestant take over was at the time of the Plantations in [1611]. The building was preserved till about 1780 and in it a tomb of the Stewarts.

### MONREAGH CHURCH

Monreagh has the distinction of being the oldest Presbyterian church in Ireland, and had a minister as far back as 1645.

**On 26th January** 1778, John Hood, Moyle (See Personalities) wrote to the **Earl** of Abercorn:

The fair ground which your paternal care has preserved for us is threatened to be nipped by a worm, a worm that you can repel with a touch of a father .... The fact is Hugh Rankin gave out that though that we had got the Green, he had got the grass. We intend to erect a clock in our meetinghouse inscribed to your Lordship.

22nd March, 1778 the agent to the Earl of Abercorn

Hugh Rankin was the person who always paid the rent of Monreagh Meeting House which I understand he collected from the people. He requested the grass of the meeting house green for his trouble.



III. 8(a)

Balleighan Abbey



III, 8(b)

The promise of the clock must have influenced the settling of the dispute for Hugh Rankin of Tonagh was refused his grass.

The present church is built near but not on the original site. The old church served a wide area as will be seen from the above letter from John Hood of Newtowncunningham, which did not get a church of its own till 1830. The above correspondence probably took place directly after the erection of the present building.

#### CASTLE-CUNNINGHAM

Residence of the Cunningham family from the time of the Plantation up till about 1784. (*See III. 3*).

29th August 1794. James Hamilton wrote to the Earl of Abercorn.

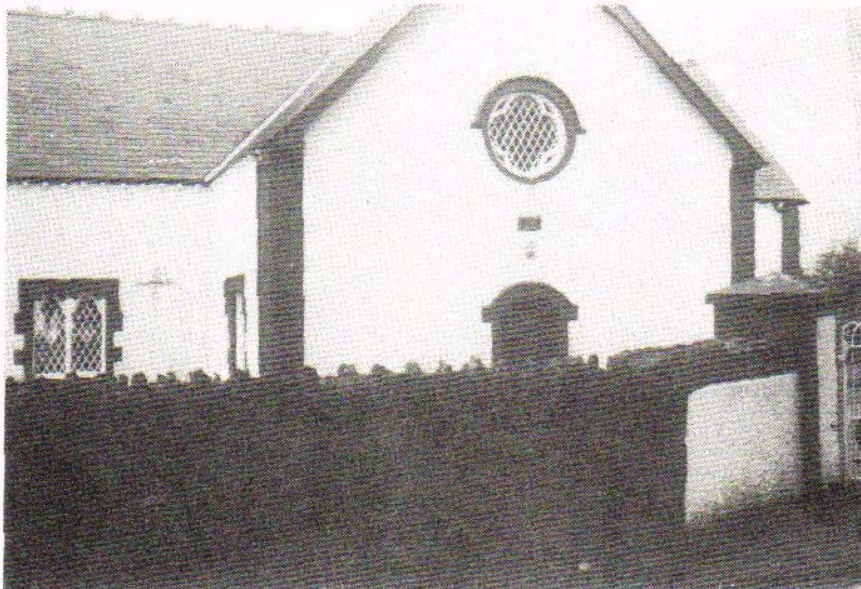
Mrs. Hamilton and some others of my family, have been for some time at the sea, near Castle Cunningham, where I sometimes work. as it joins your Lordship's estate. There is a house on it that may have cost £3,000. The estate has been set up to be sold (£23,150 offered for it).

In 1798 it was recorded as the residence of the widow of Sir Harry Hamilton. The McFarland family were the last occupants.

Even before the Land Act of 1871 was passed the farms on this estate were sold to the tenants. One farm in Plaisier was bought outright in 1858.

(We can see from the above letter that it was fashionable to go to the seaside for holidays 200 years ago.)

The present building is obviously of later date than that as described as being on the site at the time of the Plantations.



Ill. 16  
56

Morag Church



## CHAPTER TEN

### FLORA AND FAUNA

#### FLORA

The district has quite a wide flora covering of all the known wild flowers but nothing very rare. The most interesting part is Portlough which, in addition to both water lilies, white and yellow, has a number of sedges — common yellow sedge, carnation grass, flea sedge and bottle sedge. Also to be found here are *circuim dissectum* (meadow thistle) *potentilla palustris* (marsh cinque foil), *salix nepens* (creeping willow), *triglochin Palmutris* (marsh arrow grass), and some *dactyforchis* in *carmate* (early marsh orchid), *hypericum clodes* (Bog St. John's wort) bog bean and bog myrtle. Most of these are also to be found in Blanket Nook.

On Dooish Mountain is to be found the butterfly orchid as well as all the heaths and heathers, brooks, bilberries, pin quirulas, sub dews, heath rush, water forget-me-not, wavy hair grass and rat grass. The American speedwell isn't too common, except in gardens where it is a pest.

Around St. Johnston we find red campion, broad horsetail, meadow fescus and meadow sweet. Sweet Cicely (becoming rare, probably due to weed sprays on crops.

#### FAUNA *Birds seen*

*round Carrigans and St. Johnston:*

Wild geese commute between Foyle and Swilly, species: brent, grey legs and white-fronted.

Swans also commute between Foyle and Swilly and graze on the fields; hundreds of mute, and in December many whoopers and bewicks, who join up and graze with the mute.

Partridges, pheasants, corncrakes, moor hens (in old flax dams) woodcock in hard weather and collard doves are also seen.

A pair of long eared owls nested once in a barn. They were seen once some years ago and haven't come back.

Blue tits, great tits, coal tits, long-tailed tits (scarce), tree creepers, wrens, gold-crests, fire crests (scarce), mistle-thrush, song-thrush, field fares, red wing (winter visitor), chiff chaff, willow warbler, dunnock, grey wagtail, pied wagtail, green finch, gold finch, bullfinch, chaffinch, yellow hammer, house sparrow, tree sparrow, (seen at Bogay), black-birds, magpies, sparrow hawks, swallows, house martins, robins, wood pigeons, jackdaws, rooks, grey crows, starlings are all common to the district.

*Seen at Blanket Nook, Newtowncunningham and Portlough:*

Turnstones (summer) red shanks, green shanks, spotted red shanks, little shirks and Dunlin, kingfishers, shell duck, widgeon, mallard, teal, tufted duck, golden eye, shoveler, pintail, oyster catchers nesting in rocky fields round Swilly Mount, wheatears, rock pipits, meadow pipits, goose ganders, red breasted merganser, golden plover, lapwings and a few cormorants and shags. Also coots, red throated divers occasionally seen at Blanket Nook. Little grebe (seen at Portlough). A few herons still nest near Mullraney, Burt, also hen harrier. One crane seen at Blanket Nook. Humming Bird Hawk Moth seen in garden at Dernacally, Summer 1976.

## *Animals*

Otters in Cloon burn. Badgers, foxes, hares, rabbits, shrew mice, field mice water voles, rats, hedgehogs, stoats etc., are common to the area.

**K.E.M. Baird.**

### **CHAPTER ELEVEN:**

#### **PERSONALITIES PAST AND PRESENT**

##### **14. John Hood (1720-1783).**

John Hood, born in 1720 at Moyle, Newtowncunningham, was a surveyor and inventor. In 1772 was published in Dublin his "Tables of Difference of Latitude and Departure for Navigators, Land Surveyors, etc." in which he recommends that in surveying, the bearing of objects should be taken from the meridian of the place. Hoods also gives an account of the diurnal variation of the magnetic needle and its correction, and a description of a new surveying instrument. This invention is elsewhere called Hood's Compass Theodolite now used in England and America.

##### **Henry Hood (John Hood's son).**

A clever engineer, he was chief surveyor on the Abercorn estate and often referred to in the letters. His brilliance, however, seemed to have verged on madness for on **10th January, 1798**, James Hamilton wrote:

I lament to tell you that poor Henry Hood, your Lordship's surveyor, is mad and not likely to recover. Hood fancies that he will be murdered by the United Irishmen and that his own family are trying to poison him. Intense study and abstemious living have, I fancy, brought on his complaint. His first essay was in the middle of a most stormy and inclement night to leap out of a 2nd story window, with his breeches, a loose coat, and nightcap on; the pockets of his coat he filled with stones, got a long pitchfork in his hand and in this trim marched in the dead of night as far as Raphoe (8 miles); day appearing he concealed himself in a waste house and took the first opportunity of the Bishop of Raphoe's gate opening to rush in and call for protection. He was there confined till notice was sent to his friends.

##### **25th January.**

I got Hood the surveyor removed to Baron's Court with his brother. He is recovering rapidly. One night in a violent paroxysm of lust he nearly effected a rape of one of his brother's maid servants; he was in this respect affected much like the king.

##### **Matthew Hood.** (Also son of John Hood's).

He was employed by Marquis of Abercorn as a farm manager from 1796-1806.

August 1796. James Hamilton Jun. wrote to his employer. Mr. Hood's brother will now be happy to accept of Mr. Jamison's situation at Barons-Court. I know he would be an exceeding proper man for the place. He is of admirable character, sensible and clever. His appearance is very much in his

favour and without being a tyrant or a bully he would be soon as much look up to and feared as Jamison ever was.

**11th March, 1798.** By then it was a different report on Hood who was suspected of sympathising with the United Irishmen, which was probably true as he came from Newtowncunningham, where Samuel Alexander had formed a corp.

Hood, of Baron's Court, I have taken for an upright man. He is a Presbyterian and from my soul I believe there is not a tenth of the whole of that description who are not Republicans in the bottom . . . As to Hood's Republicanism I know not. About three or four months ago I did hear that some Derry gentry of suspected character had visited him at Baron's Court. He was forced to resign and like other United Irishmen in the district, emigrated.

#### **15. John Thompson**

Father-in-law of Sam Alexander, he also sympathised with the 1798 rising, for it is recorded that "during the rebellion of 1798 J. Thompson's house was twice raided by cavalry looking for arms. On the first J. Thompson was not at home, on the second, the cavalry arriving having long poles with mops of oakum dipped in tar ready to apply to the thatch, but an express messenger galloped up and stayed the proceedings.

**15. Samuel Hood.** Grandson of John Hood and son of Matthew Hood. (1800-1875). A legal writer, he emigrated to Philadelphia about 1826 and joined the bar there. He published a treatise "On the Law of Decedents" and wrote among other works "Brief Account of the Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick (1844)" for the Hibernian Society of Philadelphia. He was also a contributor to the American Quarterly Review.

#### **Sir George Ferguson Bowen**

Born Bogay, Glebe, on 2nd November, 1821. Eldest son of Rev. Ed. Bowen, rector of Taughboyne. Educated in Oxford, and appointed President of University of Corfu in 1847. Became first Governor of Queensland in 1859 and held that post till 1867, when he was appointed Governor of New Zealand. Later became Governor of Victoria, Mauritius, and finally Hong Kong in 1882.

#### **Francis McKemie**

A native of Ramelton, he was founder of the English speaking branch of the Presbyterian Church in America. He preached for a short time in Burt, and came as a student preacher to St. Johnston on 28th January, 1680.

#### **Rev. G. Lecky, B.A.**

Historian and Minister in Ballylennon Presbyterian Church from 1878-1929. He wrote "The Laggan and its Presbyterianism" and "In the Days of the Laggan Presbytery", both of which books contain valuable information about the history of the Laggan.

#### **Alexander Doherty**

He was born at Legnathraw, St. Johnston, on 3rd February, 1900. and has spent the greater part of his life in County Sligo. He was employed as watchman by the National Bank and the Bank of Ireland in Sligo City for 31 years. He resides at Rosses

Point, and is Secretary of Rosses Point Development Association and President of the Donegal Peoples' Association in Sligo. He is a contributor to the Sligo Champion and Donegal Peoples Press. His collection of poems and ballads "Through the Lens" was published in 1981.

### **Thomas Peoples**

A traditional fiddle player, he was born 20th September, 1948, in Kinnycally, St. Johnston. He plays with Kilfenora and other ceili bands. He has given a performance many times on Telefis Eireann and Radio Eireann, and has produced numerous L.P.'s. Recently he toured America and Europe. Fiddle playing is traditional in the Peoples' family and Thomas' first teacher was a cousin, Joseph Cassidy. Another cousin, George Peoples, is also a talented musician, and a young nephew, Seamus Gibson, has already won many awards for fiddle playing.

### **Vincent Crumlish**

Born in St. Johnston in 1927 and now living in Dublin. He invented an ambulance fitted with an iron lung for conveying polio patients to hospital. Before this a manual respirator was used, and in many cases the patients died on the journey.

### **Dominic O'Kelly**

Born in Doochary, Co. Donegal, about 1909. Studied in St. Eunan's College, Letterkenny, and the Irish College, Rome, before training as a National teacher. He was on the staff of Prior School, Lifford, when he wrote this poem about the Laggan. He died around the age of 70.

### **Josephine Marion Browne**

Barrister at the age of 30. Born 1955, daughter of Mary and the late John Browne, Whitehill, St. Johnston, she was called to the bar at Four Courts, Dublin. She has also the following degrees: B.Sc. in Management, Trinity College; Degree in Commerce and M. A. Business Studies, U.C.D.; Nat. Diploma in Industrial Relations, College of Ind. Relations. She is now Lecturer in Human Resources Management with Dublin Institute of Technology.

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **PLACENAMES**

Over the years place names change and to get the nearest meaning it is necessary to research as far back as possible. In many cases the names are recorded as they were spoken, not written, and we will usually find that the sound of the name corresponds with the Gaelic meaning. Through careless pronunciation and diction, many place names change, and this corruption is particularly noticeable in this part of Donegal where the Scottish dialect has added to the confusion.

I am going to arrange the place names of St. Johnston, Carrigans and Newtowncunningham under three headings as far as possible:

1, Physical Features. 2, Commemorating Artificial Structures as Churches, Monuments, etc., and 3, People - Saints, Kings, etc.

*This page was inadvertently omitted during printing*

PHYSICAL FEATURES (cont.).

Name	Analysis	Meaning
Kincally, spelt Kinnykilly in old documents,	Kin - head, Kin - wood or church .....	Wooded height
	as there are woods there yet, possibly wood. Keshends, Kesh — causeway	
	across a river .....	Causeway (end)
Imleach, Iméal — a border, edge .....		Land bordering a lake
Lettergull, (Leiter) side of a hill, (Gull) gabel, shoulder ...		Side of a steep hill
Lengnathraw .....		Place of the flagstones
Moyle, Meil, meaning bald .....		Bare hill
Money more, Mune — shrubbery .....		Big shrubbery
Moneygreggan .....		Rocky shrubbery
Murlough .....		Salt Marsh
Monfad .....		Long bog
Moness .....		Plain of the waterfall
Mongevalin, Mon — plain or bog	Plain of the little river of Mongavlin's plain	Maymore
		Big plain
Monreagh .....		Lough bog or plain
Porthall .....		Port across the river
Rateen .....		Small circular fort
Rooskey .....		Marsh
Roughan .....		Red coloured place
Raymoghey, Ruah signifies a plain or level field. Nagh much the same	Level field	Speenogue
	Place abounding in gooseberry bushes	
Tubberslane .....		Well of the healing waters
Tullyannon, Tully — small ridge .....		Ridge beside a marsh or
	eannac — marsh .....	it could be a Ridge or Eanna
Trentagh .....		Third part of a townland
Trensalla .....		Dirty third of a townland

CHURCHES, BUILDINGS etc.

Name	Analysis	Meaning
Churchtown .....	Obvious. This townland contains two churches,	
	one Church of Ireland and one Presbyterian. Castletown,	
Originally Cashel .....	Circular stone fort or castle	
Dunboy ....	Fort of the cow. (Also known as Ardree — Height of the King).	

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

Name	Analysis	Meaning
Ardagh,	Ard-height	High Place
Altaskin,	Alt-Head, Kin-Head	High Head
Ardee		Ford
Binion		Round peak of a hill
Brokagh		Badger warren
Ballylawn,	Probably Bally ahain	Town of the little ford
Baleighan,	Eye-face, Caoin-delightful, pleasant	Pleasantly faced town
Ballbegley		Small town
BaYlyhaskey,	Bally uisce	Town of the waters
<i>Bogay</i>		<i>Bog</i>
Carrickmore		Big rock
Carrigans		Little rock
Clashygowan		Trench or sand pit
Grieve,	Probably there was a large tree here under whose branches games were played or ancient rites celebrated	Branch or large tree
Colehill		Hazelwood
Carnhill		Hill with cairn of stones on top
Craigadooish		Coarse pasture
Derry		Oak wood
Dromenon,	Drum: back	Long low hill or ridge
Dooish		Sepulchral mound
Dernacally		Between the landing places
Derrymore		Great oak wood
Drumbarnet:	Gap (Barnet)	Ridge of the gap
Grianan of Aileach		Palace of Aileach (circular stone fortress)
Gortree:	Gort-church land	Field of the King
Killgort:	Kill-church or wood	Church field
Kilea		Church of Aedh (Hugh)
Molanan:	Mull (mill)	Mill

## PEOPLE, SAINTS etc.

Coxtown	People named Cox used to live here as mentioned in Abercorn Letters St. Johnston
	Named after Sr. Baithen (St. John')
Tiroddy:	Tir-country
	Country of the O'Roddys
Tullyowen	Owen's Ridge
Stirvage:	Stead (Stir)
	Once inhabited by Danes called Vage
Mongorry	Godfrey's bog
Feddyglass	At first this would seem to mean a green stream but in Pynner's Survey it is pointed out that 'F' is often affixed to old place names and that this is named after a saint, St. Aedglass of Rateen Monastery. (No trace of this building is left).
Cuttymonhill	Used to be called Cuttermore Hill according to Abercorn Letters, and might mean a group of cottages

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# OLD COUNTRY SAYINGS AND WORDS

### OLD SAYINGS

There is a strong Scottish influence in dialect in the Laggan. Got a few miles into Inishowen or beyond Convoy, and the Scottish words aren't used. Canne and didne, etc., are in common use.

That's ill althgether:

A lot o' wind about her mouth:

Dance on a peat with:

He has cut his stick:

Away and scrape peat mould  
over yourself:

Laid out like a churn adrying: Stay there  
till the crottle grows on ye: Me hand in yer  
fine hat: Bad cest to ye: Choo dog: It's a  
wee moose who wouldne tak

a big corn stack on its heed: That  
beats banagher: It wasne much wonder:  
Cast the creel:

Not a drop out of his lug:

To oxtar:

Need to take a stave out of his  
noggin:

He'd give ye the heels very handy:

Wouldne see me heels for stour:

Not a hate wrong with you:

That has put the heading sheaf on it:

Give somebody the road:

Won't do a hand's turn:

I'll not be a whip's stitch:

Not turn the word in anybody's  
mouth:

Get the heavy end of the stick:

There's never good butter on the milk  
that takes long in the churning:

I doubt:

Juke the Beetles:

Take a notion of:

A waiting on:

That's bad.

She's all talk and no action. Fight with  
(of Inishowen origin). He has gone.

Begone (of Inishowen origin).

Lying comfortably, in idleness.

Stay for ever.

Admiring a hat.

Curse on you.

Lie down and don't bite.

It's a very young girl who wouldn't  
take a lover. That beats all. It wasn't  
surprising. Fall out with somebody (of  
Inishowen origin).

Nothing wrong with him.

To lift some-one and assist them  
to walk.

Need to eat less.

He is treacherous like a flinging horse

I went off in a hurry.

Nothing wrong with you.

That has finished it.

Put them out of the house.

Won't work.

I'll not be a minute.

Not contradict them.

Treated unfairly as in carrying a  
burden on a stick with some-one  
who cheats.

Said of a marriage after a very long  
engagement.

I am of the opinion.

Lumps in mashed potatoes (poundies).

Fall in love with.

On a deathbed.

## OLD WORDS

aatercap:	cross contrary person
ashy-pet:	some-one who sits around the fire
	always
blether:	talk foolishly
ballion:	coward
be to be:	inevitable
brig:	bridge
brattle of thunder:	thunder clap
boase:	hollow
blootered:	drunk
brochan:	porridge
brock:	kitchen refuse
clabber:	soft mud
crack:	conversation
chawkie:	awkward, stupid girl
doran:	stupid person
drawlie:	undersized specimen
dinnel:	vibration
dunt:	bump
footy:	small
footer:	unhandy person
fank:	tangle
forenst:	opposite
forbye:	as well as
gansie:	jersey
gouterel:	clumsy fellow
gulder:	shout
gulpin:	ignorant fellow
gunk:	disappointment
gallowses:	braces
gleek:	glance
hain:	save
hirpling:	limping
hoaching:	overrun with and also irritable
nubble:	predicament
hanlin:	bother, mishap
hallion:	good-for-nothing fellow
hunkers:	houghs
jundy:	jostle
lashings of:	plenty
let-on:	pretend
oorie:	sickly or unwell
mismorrow:	match wrongly
moilye:	hornless cow
maun:	must
newance:	something new
nyuck:	steal
oxter:	arm-pit
pack with:	friendly with



plouter:	splash about in mud
pegh:	grunt or pant
pooking:	pulling
reel:	a practical joke
rodden:	small path
roughness of:	plenty
ronion:	small piece
routery:	disorderly crowd
scunner:	disgust
suckie:	a calf
skeedins:	small potatoes
shanks-mare:	feet (to walk)
slap:	gap in fence
spulpeen:	naughty child
speel:	climb
sweel:	wrap around
screenge:	plunder
sconce:	malingerer
skift:	light shower
throughother:	in confusion
larger:	scolding woman
thinking long:	pinning for
thole:	endure
thran:	obstinate
turnstack:	search for, causing disruption
trifochant:	tired and out of sorts
unknowns!:	unnoticed
well-ye-coat:	sleeved waistcoat
wheest:	be silent
whillibellow:	outcry
whid:	hint
wane:	child
wee-cutty:	small girl

## 16. Appendix A

The following are the names of the persons who paid Hearth Tax in the Parish of Taughboyne in the year 1665, with the names of the townlands in which they lived. In several instances families of the same name still live in the same townlands and are no doubt the descendants of these old "residents" —

Ballibegly: Alexander Coningham, James Coningham, Robert Allison, Archibald Allexander, William Hariot Thomas Browne, John Park. Drumboy: James Allason, James Fleming, William Davidson, John Hamilton sen., John Hamilton jun. Moneygrogan: John Patterson, James Patterson, Robert Moore, Mathew Allison. Ruchan: John M'Connell sen., John M'Connell jun., Wiliam Campble, Alexander M'Connell. Ardee: John Allexander, Claud Maghan, Archibald Hunter, James Johnston, David Parke. Moyle: Robert Boyle, Dougall M'Cay, Daniell M'Cay. Newton: William Coningham Esq. (3 hearths), Robert Fleming, William Wigton, William Coningham, John Arrell, Adam Patterson, Lieut. Wm. Coningham, Wm. Patterson, John Cochran, Thos. Nicholl, John Harloe, Robert Hunter, John Ramsay, younger. Culm'atraine: Mr. Mathew Halley (2 hearths), Alexander Ewing, John

M'llwham, John Thompson, Daniell Buchanan. Rusky. Duncan Patterson, John Buchanan, Wm. Wilson, William Patterson. Drumay: John Martin, John Homes, Wm. Mitchel, Joseph Orr. Gortree: John Ewing, John Craufford, Robert Potts, James Galbraith. Drumellan: James Ramsay. Ballehesky: James M'Corckle. Portlough: Robert M'Clellan, John Denny, John Elder. Gortlush: Thomas Storret, James M'Adoe, Robert Starret. Bogey: William Davison, Widdow Fleming. Letrum: John Bryce, Thomas Wilson, William English. Monglass: James Boggs, James Boggs jun., John Boggs, William Ramsay, Robert Scott. Corncumell: Jean Coningham, James Harvy, Davig Gibson. Drumlogher: John Fisher, Ninian Barber, Robert Barber, George Barnett. Castrews: M'Kewn, . . . Marshall, James M'Kewn. Carshoe: Robert Myegah, James Curry, John Macky, Robert Harvy, James Thompson. Kildrum: William Balfoure, Andrew Scot, James Stevinson, John Grahame. Cargins: John Cock, John Harvy, Thomas Gray, Robert Macky, Robert Young, John Lieper, David Macky. Gortnileave: David Fulton, James Fulton, David Langwill. Altaghadery: James Edmiston, John M'Keun, Patrick Coningham, David Coningham, James M'Kim. Dunmore: William Hamilton, John Macky, James Alien, David Harvy, James Harvy, Gilbert Warke, John M'Kee, Edmunt O'Last, Donnell Glass, Hugh Greeve. Tanagh: John Cock, Wm. Rankein, Thomas Breadin. Cloghfin: Patrick Macky, Andrew Pedin, Widdoc Cock. Glassegowen: Alex Gooleland. John M'llmun, William Glendunein, Robert Petticrew. Kinnekilly: James Alien, John Baxter. Tyrentagh: James Woods, Alex M'Clintock, John M'Kean. Cashell: William Noble, Alex Wood, Bryan M'Gettigan. Altacaskein: Matthew Lindsay, Walter Mitchell, William Breadin, Robert Cowan, John Maffett, Widow Harvy, James M'Kean, William Noble, John Ramsay, Wiliam Gamble, John Campble. Robert M'llwain, William Macky, Finlay M'Clintock, John Marshall. Maymore: Mathew Lindsay (2 hearths), Andrew Wood, John Glendunein, John Miller, Robert Turner. Drumenan: Peter M'Robb, Patrick Porterfield, Edmund O'Twolan, Roory O'Glackan, Andrew Baxter. Mongavelen: John Rodger, Owen O'Kerran, Patrick Gamble, James Forsyth, Walter Galbraith, Thomas Gilfillan. Ratein: James Smith, Thomas Taylor, John Gilgour, John Smith, Widow M'Clintock, John Morison, Elspet Galbraith. Creghadow: Ninian Galbraith, John Stewart, Robert Alien, Patrrick O'Devany, Humphrey Ewin. Ballylennan: John M'Adam, Robert M'Adam, William Porterfield, John Alexander, James M'Crea, John Porterfield, Walter Wilson. Letterguill: Walter Wattson, Wm. Deniston, William Martin, Finlay M'Kinlay, John Glass. Carnsaannagh: Morice M'Connell, James M'Connell, John Allexander senior, John Allexander junior, John Buchanan. Drumore: John Coghane, Robert Cochrane, James Cochrane junior, James Cochrane senior, James Stephen. Tullyrap: John Buchanan, John Nearne, James Rodger, John M'Neevein, Thomas Lowry, Thomas Rodger. Taghboyne: Doctor Thomas Bryce (2 hearths), Patrrick Colhoune, Patrrick Corbay, John Lata. William Lata, Ninian Love, John Carnwath, John Caldwell, David Caldwell, John Dean, John Johnston, Robert Logan, Thomas Orr, John Scott, John Buchannan, James M'Kean junior, James Johnston, John Carruthers, James Bredin, Allexander Beatison, Allexander Houston. Momein: George Chambers, John Homes senior, John Homes junior, John M'Clintock, James M'William, Mathew Reagh, Robert Aitkin, William Hood, Patrrick Denniston, Patrrick M'Caffery, James Craig, Robert Curry, Patrrick M'Cobb, Thomas Wilson, John Chisime, Robert Gourland, Andrew Colhoune, Andrew O'Brillaghan, Walter M'Adam, Manus O'Meghan, John Homes, John Martein, Archibald Howatt, Robert Erwing, Patrrick M'Kinley, John M'Kean, Francis Booth, Owen O'Toner, Hugh O'Loughery.

The following is another list of those who paid Hearth Tax in the Parish of Taghboyne. It is undated, but is supposed to have been for the year 1663. As it

contains names of places and persons not mentioned in the 1665 list, I append it also. The names in it being much fewer than in the 1665 list, goes to show that the population of the district was rapidly increasing at this time:

Lustikeall: David Caldwell, John Caldwell. Bready: Patrick Colhoun, Patrick Corly, John Latta. Taboine: John Wilson, James Bready, Alex. Beatison. Cloughfin: Mathew Reogh, Patrick Macky, Andrew Pedy. Clashigowan: John Parmiter, John Buchanan, Widow Gillilane. Altacaskin: Wm. Bready, Rob. Cowan, Walter Mitchell, John Harvy. Kinnekilly: John Baxter, James Alien. Tryentagh: Alex M'Clintock, John M'Mayness. Ardagh: John M'Elwagg. Momein: George Chambers, John Homes. Carnshannah: Morice M'Connell, James M'Connell, Robert Triwews. Drumore: James Coghane, James Steevens, Patrick Gamble. Maymore: Mathew Lindsay, Donnell Curry, Wm. Hood. Drumenan: Peter M'Rabb, Patrick Porterfield. Moness: Mathew Lindsay junior. Donell Baxter. Castle: Wm. Noble. Tullirapp. James Rodger, John Buchanan, Archibald Howat. Feriglass: Thomas Rodgers, Walter Rodgers. Letterguill: Alex Glass, Andrew Rodgers, Finlay M'Kinlay. Ballylennon: Walter Watson. Walter Wilson, Wm. Porterfield. Creighaduff: Humphrey Ewing, Ninian Galbraith. Ratein: James Smith, Gilbert M'Clintock, John Moffet. Megavelin: Owen M'Kerran, Gorry O'Hone. Creeve: James Ramsey. Gortree: John Ewing, Robert Potts. Portlough: Robert M'Clellan, John Ramsey, Thomas Storrett. Bogay: Wm. Davidson, David Fulton. Castrwes: James Harvy, John M'Keun. Lettrim: John Bryce, Wm. English. Carshowey: James Thompson, John Macky, Robert Harvy. Culdrum: James Macky, Wm. Marshall. Monglass: James Boggs, Robert Scott. Drumbuy: James Allison, James Fleming. Moneygreggan: John Patterson, James Patterson. Ruchan: John M'Connell, Wm. Campble. Ballybegleymore: Archibald Allexander, William Harriott. Ballybegleybeg: Alex Coningham. Ardy: Claud Maghan, James Johnston. Moyle: Robert Boyle, Dougall M'Ray, William Coningham Esq. (2 hearths). Monfad: Robert Hunter, Wm. Coningham, John Arrell, Wm. Wigton. Plaister: Wm. Coningham, John Cochran. Ballyhasky: Andrew M'Corckle. Culm'atryan: Alex Ewing, Widdow Coningham, John M'Elwham. Rusky: Wm. Patterson, Dunckan Patterson. Tullyennan: Adam Scott, John Latta. Drumlogher: John Fisher, Robert Barber. Corcamon: Hugh Rankein. Cargins: John Cock, Thomas Gray, Wm. Carr, John Harvy, John Leaper, Robert Young, Thomas Gracy, Robert Macky. Drumore: James Harvy, Daniel Harvy, James Alien, John Macky, Matthew M'Clean, Gilbert Warke. Altaghaderry: James Edmiston, John M'Quone, James M'Kim, Patrick Coningham.

## Appendix B

The following are the names of the tenants on the Abercorn Donegal estate, which comprised a large part of the Laggan, in the year 1794.

Ardagh: James and John M'Clintock, Robert M'Clintock, John M'Adoo, Joseph Haslett, David M'Clintock, Wm. Tease, Hugh Campbell, Thomas Douglass, John Douglass, David and Moses Gamble, John Stevenson junior, John, son of James Stevenson, Wm. Marshall, Abraham Barr, James Stevenson senior, Alex. Smith. Ballyboe Doois: James Galbraith, Moses Speer, James Gamble, Archibald Woods, Moses Dunn, Hugh Dunn. Ballylennon: Joseph Kilgore, Saml. Kilgore, Philip Lynchahan, Andrew M'Connell, Moses Jordan, Moses Starritt, James M'Crea, Samuel Colhoun, Andrew Colhoun, Samuel Gourley, John Porterfield, Wm. Porterfield junior. Wm. Porterfield senior. Binion: James Lowry. Brockagh: Solomon Chambers, Matthew Chambers senior, Matthew Chambers junior, Bryan Coyle. Broadlee: William Maghee, Samuel Martin, John Rogers, Jeremiah Rogers. Burntha: John M'Kean, James M'Kean, Wm. Murray, Robert Orr. Carrickmore: Robert Wilson, James Smith, James Wilson, James Cuthbert, Wm. Bacon, Wm. Smith,

Archibald M'Mullan, Alexander M'Mullen. Castledoey: William Cochran, Robert Cochran, John Wason, James Wason, George Wason, Charles M'Menamin, Samuel Speer, Thomas M'Swine, Coll M'Swine, Samuel Rogers, Robert Ralston, John Mills. Castletoun: Elizabeth Scott, Rev. William Cunningham, James Magirr, Wm. Magirr, Robert Orr, Joseph Orr, Patrick Prterfield, David Gamble, Robert Alien, Samuel Blair, Wm. Hamilton. Clarshigoan: Robert Cochran, Wm. M'Morris, Robert Willock, James Pinkerton. Coolagheymore: Wm. Shaw, John Shaw, Hugh Galbraith. Craigadoos: Robert Galbraith, Andrew Thompson, George M'llmun, Edward M'Auley, Samuel Moody, Robert Alien, John Alien, Joseph Galbraith, Humphrey Galbraith, Joseph M'Kean, Andrew Hannigan, George Monteith. Creatland: Robert Alexander, Thomas M'Clintock, John Rogers. Cuttymanhill: Mary Macghee, James Macghee, Manus M'Seog, Elenor Kelly, Rev. Wm. Connor. Cavanaca: Hugh Galbraith, Andrew Alexander, Robert Galbraith, William Alexander. Drumerne: Thomas Cuthbert. Drumcrow: John Lowry. Drumatoland: William Moodie, William M'Connell, John Graham, Hugh Macswine, Daniel M'Dermott, Philip Lynchahan. Drumbeg: John Alien. Drumpfad: Sarah Lowry, John Smith, Samuel Doak. Dromore: William Alexander, Saml. Alexander, Rachael Rankin, Benjamin Rankin, James M'Connell, Joseph Steen, William Doak. Drumucklagh: Andrew Lowry, Wm. M'Connell, Wm. Martin, Robert Martin. Drumenan: Ann Park, Alex M'Clintock, James M'Kane, John Tinian, Thomas Cuthbert. Drumnabratty: Hugh Henderson, Robert Huston, Peter Clark. Feddyglass: Robert Lowry, Alex Lowry, James Orr, Hugh Devenny, Wm. Gordon, Andrew Smith. Thomas Moore, Andrew Gordon (woodranger). Forehill: Sarah and Charles Conaghan, Alex. Rogers. Galdonagh: John Greg, Samuel Greg, Hugh Barclay, William Barclay, Josias Watson. Gentle Doois: Alex Robinson, Wm. Robinson, Alex Robinson senior, W. J. Glen, Johnston Hunter, Archibald Woods, Samuel Hunter, John Woods. Gillistown: James M'Clintock, Samuel M'Clintock. Kinnycally: Matthew, James and Alexander ) M'Crab, James Mitchell, Wm. Wason, Wm. Shaw, James Alexander, Robert j Cochran, James Smyley. Largy Doois: Robert Scott, Robert Curry, Samuel Marshall, j Legnathraw: Hugh Stincean, Andrew Stincean, Samuel Boyd, Andrew Larkey, John Orr, Matthew Orr. Lismaghery: Samuel Orr, Patrick M'Laughlin, Samuel Henderson, James Henderson, James Gamble, Robert King, Alex. and Robert Wilson, John Mills, Wm. Henderson, David Rankin. Listanna: Andrew Gourley, Samuel Gourley. Lettergall: Robert Colhoun, James Watson, Walter Watson, Alex. Rogers, John M'Connell, Alex. M'Connell, Wm. Thompson, Wm. Shaw, Samuel Thompson, John Stincean, John Hasty, Nathan Porterfield, Elizabeth, widow of Matthew Porterfield, George Park, Andrew Smith. Lowhill: John Wallace, Benjamin Wallace, Nathan Rogers. Magavelin: Cairns Alexander, Josias Crawford, Ann M'Gonegal, Wm. M'Cashin, John Dougherty, Mary Dougherty, George Dougherty. Magherycloy: James Woods. Magherynagor: Bryan Gallagher, Neal M'Dead. Maymore: Patrick and James Macghee, John Crawford, Peter Quigley. Moness: James Stafford, James Steen, Wm. Steen, James Magirr, David Orr, Matthew Orr. Momeen: Wm. Houston, Samuel Houston, Robert Vance, Adam Starritt, Wm. Rogers, John Speir, Walter Shaw, John Vance, Joseph Allison, Hugh and William Graham. Rateen: Samuel Alexander, Wm. Alexander, James Smith, Josias, son of Hugh Galbraith, John Darcus Esq., Derry (limestone quarry). Reylands: Thomas M'Crea, George Henderson, James Shirland, Hugh Barnhill, Andrew Armour, Samuel Armour, David Rankin, John Dunn, Andrew Dunn, Quintain Brooks, John Brooks, Wm. Galbraith, Wm. Heasty, Wllace Wray, James Logan. Tonagh: Wm. Colhoun, Hugh Cowan, James Motherwell, John Rankin, Bavid Rankin. Trinsallagh: Margery Woods, Alexr. Hamilton. Trentamucklagh: Robert Ralston, Andrew Ralston, John Ralston, Joseph Ralston, John Ralston, Alex. Ralston, Robert Ralston, Archibald

Wason. Trentagh: Matthew Hamilton, Robert Ralston (Glentown), Alex. Ralston, Wm. Clark. Tullyrap: Wm. Clark, Andrew M'Causland. Sheskin: John Campbell, Saml. Campbell, Anthony Thompson. Whitehill: Andrew Hutchison, James Hutchison, Thomas Patton, Wm. Hazlett. Woodland: Elizabeth Maghee, James Gilfillan, Nathan Rogers, Matthew Rogers, John Gordon, John Gilfillan, William Wilkie.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **NAMES OF HOUSEHOLDERS IN ST. JOHNSTON IN THE YEAR 1794.**

John M'Clintock, Widow Wilson, John Pinkerton, Samuel M'Gill, William M'Carter, John Murdock, John Pinkerton, Owens Colhoun, James Larkey, William M'Adoo, Wm. M'Monigal, John M'Clintock, John Galbraith, Francis M'llwee, James Develin, Edward O'Donnell, Widow Edmuston, James Houston, Alex. Cochrane, Bryan Hannigan, Alex. Campbell, Edward Lea, John Shaw, Thos. Dunlop, Alex. M'llwee, John Campbell, John Latta, Robert Speirs, John Thaw, William Wilson, Robert Smyley, Hugh Rogers, Robert Lindsay, Widow Wilson, Widow Motherell, Robert M'Clintock, John Pinkerton, John Latta, Charles O'Donnell, Wm. Wilson, Wm. Lindsay, James Moore, James Smyley, Adam M'Clay, Robert Smyley, James M'Leay, James Smyley, Samuel Davison, Sampson Steele, James Hog, Wm. Moore, Wm. Scott, Widow Harison.

### **FREEHOLDERS OF ST. JOHNSTON 1754**

Wm. Harvey, Jon Caddie, J. McClintock, James Pinkerton, Robert Patterson, Dr. Hamilton, Tasker Keys, Alex. McClintock, Archibald Mitchell, Samuel Lindsay, Robt. Cowan, John Crawford, Wm. Gray, John Motherdale.

### **CORPORATION OF ST. JOHNSTON 1754**

Earl of Abercorn, Hon. George Hamilton, William Caddie, Jon Colhoun, Jon Davis, Nossan Gamble, George Ash, Rev. Wm. Hamilton, Mr. Wm. Forward, Jon. Forward, Col. M. Sampson, Alex. Skipton.

The above records were sent to the Earl of Abercorn by agent J. Colhoun on 11th January, 1754.

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