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The Cromwellian Settlement of Tipperary

by J. G. Simms

Up to the time of Cromwell, land-holding in Tipperary was very little changed from that of late medieval times. There were still strong Gaelic holdings in the north and west of the county. O'Kennedys predominated in the baronies of Upper and Lower Ormond: D. F. Gleeson called them 'the last lords of Ormond'. In Owney and Arra there were O'Briens and O'Mulrians, and there were O'Dwyers in Kilnamanagh.

The southern and eastern baronies were mostly held by Anglo-Norman stock — Butlers, Purcells, Prendergasts, and others. Almost all the landholders were Catholic, with the important exception of the Earl of Ormond. He had been taken to England as a boy and so firmly indoctrinated with Protestantism that he never changed, even though all his relations were Catholic and he was on excellent terms with them.

In the late sixteenth century the influence of Black Tom of Ormond was strong enough to keep the Munster plantation out of Tipperary. In the reign of James I there were minor plantations in other Gaelic areas such as Leitrim and Longford. However, there were none in Tipperary, even though the king had made some paper grants to important persons who were trying to get a foothold in the county. In Charles I's reign the lord deputy, Thomas Wentworth, who became Earl of Strafford, made a determined effort to have a plantation in Tipperary, and had surveys made of several baronies. But he got into trouble, and was executed before any plantation took place.

After the Ulster rising of 1641 came the confederate war, which became inextricably entangled with the English civil war between Charles I and the parliament. Tipperary supported the confederates and the king; Ormond himself was also for the king. All of them had to fear the consequences of a victory for the parliament.

During the confederate war the county suffered badly from the assaults of the parliamentary leader in Munster, Lord Inchiquin — Murrough O'Brien of the burnings — whose sack of Cashel was one of the more horrific incidents of the war. But worse was to follow, with the arrival of Cromwell and clear signs that the parliament was going to be victorious.

Tipperary put up a brave resistance, not only at Clonmel which was stoutly defended by Hugh Dubh O'Neill, but for a long time after in the countryside. There Donough and Edmund O'Dwyer and Walter Butler of Ardmayle kept up a vigorous guerrilla warfare, which laid waste much of the land and left many buildings in ruins.

From early on in the war it became clear that a victory for parliament was going to mean large-scale confiscation of land. This was no new thing in Anglo-Irish relations, but was made specific by the Adventurers Act of 1642. This envisaged great confiscation of rebels' land and promised *pro rata* grants to those who subscribed money for the suppression of the rebellion.

The adventurers, who included some powerful figures, one being Oliver Cromwell himself, formed a strong pressure group in favour of the scheme. Later on the parliament had great difficulty in finding money to pay its soldiers; this produced another pressure group. The soldiers were prepared to settle for their arrears with debentures exchangeable for Irish land.

The result was that the war was followed by what is known as the Cromwellian settlement, a



drastic upheaval which affected most of the land in Ireland outside the Ulster plantation. Catholics, who had still remained the owners of the greater part of Leinster and Munster, had their lands forcibly seized. Those of them who were selected for favourable treatment had to move to Connacht and Clare, which were reserved for 'the Irish nation'.

The lands in Leinster and Munster of which they were dispossessed were given to Cromwell's soldiers and to the adventurers, the investors who had subscribed money to the parliamentary cause. The standard account of this gigantic scheme of land transfer, 'The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland', was written over 100 years ago by J. P. Prendergast, who paid special attention to Tipperary matters.

Although old-fashioned, the book is valuable since it is based on long research into the State papers that were lost in the destruction of the Four Courts in 1922. Prendergast was fascinated by these documents, which he called 'the record of a nation's woes'. He spent many hours copying them.

By August 1652 resistance to the parliamentary forces was almost at an end, and parliament was able to announce its plans in 'An act for the settling of Ireland'. With a fine air of moderation the Act declared that it was not intended to extirpate the whole Irish nation – rather to divide them into categories of greater or lesser guilt.

The greatest guilt was imputed to 105 leaders, who were declared ineligible for pardon, either for their lives or their property. They included the Protestant Ormond; but most of the names were of Catholics. Among the Tipperary names were John O'Kennedy of Dunalley, Theobald Purcell of Loughmoe, and Philip and O'wney O'Dwyer of Kilnamanagh.

Most of the 105 escaped to the continent or pleaded the benefit of special terms of surrender. However, there were a number of hangings in Tipperary and elsewhere of those who were alleged to have committed or connived at acts of violence during the war.

Others who had opposed, or failed to co-operate with, the parliamentary forces were divided into different categories, from death down to forfeiture of part of their property. The remaining part was given them wherever parliament should appoint. That meant Connacht or Clare – transplantation across the Shannon.

A propertied Catholic could escape transplantation only by proving that he had shown constant good affection towards the parliament. Pardon was offered to those who had no land and whose personal possessions were worth less than £10, provided they surrendered their arms and had not been sentenced to death or banishment.

A deadline – 1 May 1654 – was set for crossing the Shannon. This precipitated a flood of petitions for postponement, and an argument whether the whole Catholic population was to move, or only those with property who were to get a proportionate allotment in Connacht or Clare. Eventually it was decided that landholders and their households should move, and that people of no property should stay behind, to work for their new masters.

The Ormond manuscripts have a list of those transplanted, containing 165 entries relating to Tipperary transplanted families. The allotments made to the transplanted families have been set out in a study by Dr R. C. Simington, based on documents in the Public Record Office of Ireland that record the townlands and areas allotted to individuals. Most of the Tipperary families were assigned to Clare and East Galway, but the scheme was not hard-and-fast, and Tipperary names also appear in other parts of Connacht.

Transplantation was a harrowing and protracted business. The transplanted families had to get certificates from the authorities in their own districts, describing them, their families and retainers, and the goods they brought with them. Prendergast gives a number of specimens of those certificates. Each transplanter had to go to and fro between commissioners at Loughrea



and Athlone to have his degree of guilt determined, the quantity of land to be allotted to him, and the particular place where the allotment was to be made.

Most got quite small allotments, but some got substantial areas, such as the 5,000 acres given to Lord Ikerrin or the 1,000 to Thomas Tobin. Clare was unpopular; there were many complaints from those transplanted there. A complaint made about the Burren was that it had not wood enough to hang a man, water enough to drown him or earth enough to bury him.

In some cases the Cromwellian authorities seem to have been reasonably considerate about granting postponements. Orders were given to give dispensations to the sick, the aged and the lame. The mayor and inhabitants of Cashel were given a year's postponement because of a promise made to them by Cromwell.

A notable case of clemency was the treatment of Fethard. Cromwell had arrived before the walls of Fethard on a wet and stormy night, to be met by gunfire and strong resistance. Anxious to get his men out of the bad weather, he promised the inhabitants their liberty and property if they would let his army in. They did; he kept his word. Because the inhabitants of Fethard were 'a people to be differenced from the rest of the whole nation', they were exempted from transplantation.

The disposal of the confiscated land was regulated in 1658 by the 'Act for the speedy and effectual satisfaction of the adventurers . . . and of the arrears due to soldiers . . . and for the encouragement of Protestants to plant and inhabit Ireland'. To begin with, ten counties were set aside for equal division between adventurers and soldiers. One of them was Tipperary.

Lots were drawn to decide which baronies should go to adventurers and which to soldiers. In Tipperary the adventurers got the better of the division. Their baronies were Ikerrin, Eliogarty, Aleagh, Clanwilliam, Middlethird, Iffa and Offa — most of the Suir valley. The soldiers' lands were mainly in the northern and western baronies; but they also had Slieveardagh and Compsey in the south-east.

Before the lands could be allotted to individuals, much information had to be collected about boundaries, land values and so on. The authorities had the advantage of the Strafford maps, which were destroyed by fire in 1711. These did not, however, give all the information required, and did not include the southern baronies.

It was decided to make fresh maps for the whole county, and as a preliminary to make a descriptive survey with the help of knowledgeable local persons who would act as jurors or assessors. This was the Civil Survey, the original of which was destroyed in the Four Courts in 1922.

Luckily there was a copy available for some counties, and from it 'The Civil Survey of Tipperary' has been edited for the Irish Manuscripts Commission by Dr. Simington. A most valuable source for pre-Cromwellian Tipperary, this has been used as a basis for a study of the rural economy of the county in the seventeenth century by a German scholar, Dr. Ingeborg Leister.

Parliamentary commissioners held inquiries at Nenagh, Thurles, Cashel and Clonmel, with the help of jurors from each barony. The jurors' names have survived; there are Gaelic as well as Anglo-Norman ones. Thus, for the barony of Eliogarty there were Daniel O'Fogarty of Lissine, Edmund Delany of Thurles, George Comerford of Holyross, and Richard Purcell of Loughmoe.

The Civil Survey gives a detailed description of barony, parish and townland boundaries, with the proportions of arable and pasture land, estimated areas and valuations, notes of mills, castles and houses, observations about the destruction of buildings and the post-war condition of agricultural land. The indexes distinguish between English Protestants, whose lands were not



to be seized, and Irish papists. The latter account for almost all the land, as they include Ormond himself in spite of his Protestant allegiance.

The Civil Survey shows a marked difference between the eastern and southern baronies on the one hand, and the northern and western boundaries on the other hand. The former were mostly owned by those of Anglo-Norman stock on the manorial system, with a large proportion of arable land and a comparatively high valuation. In the northern and western baronies most of the owners were Gaelic. There much pasture was held in common, while the arable land was held in complicated fractions by several members of a family.

The Civil Survey for the county in general was complete by February 1655. The interesting survey of the town of Clonmel was made in August 1655. The Civil Survey cleared the ground for the next stage, the famous Down Survey, made by Dr. William Petty, who contracted to map the whole area required, first by the soldiers, and then by the adventurers.

The Down Survey began with parish maps, some of which were destroyed by the 1711 fire and the rest in the Four Courts destruction of 1922. Luckily many of the maps that survived in 1711 were copied in the eighteenth century. These, now in the National Library of Ireland, include a number of Tipperary parishes.

There are also barony maps, which were captured by the French and are now in Paris. Copies of these have been published by the British Ordnance Survey. Petty wrote a history of the Down Survey, largely to rebut criticisms of his work. His contract with the army was to map all their lands in 13 months at the rate of £3 for 1,000 acres.

He had to train soldiers to act as surveyors; to them he supplied chains and staffs, squared paper, and primitive theodolites which he called circumferenters. Work had to go on in midwinter, with the chainmen up to their thighs in mud and bog. Petty said there was special difficulty in Tipperary. No one was left to point out the boundaries, so he had to send for experts from across the Shannon. However, he was able to adapt the Strafford maps with the help of one collaborator, Dr Patrick Raggett of Holycross.

The arrears of pay due to each soldier were recorded on a debenture, of which Prendergast gives a facsimile example. These debentures were to be exchanged for lands at a particular valuation for each county. The Cromwellian government hoped to turn this scheme for payment in land into a large-scale settlement of soldiers.

However, small plots of land in a devastated Ireland had few attractions for the lower ranks; most of them sold their debentures to officers and to speculators like Petty himself. The number of individuals who got lands in exchange for army debentures was thus comparatively small.

The documents showing the distribution of lands to the soldiers were destroyed in the 1711 fire, but the Books of Survey and Distribution, which record what was confirmed after the restoration of the monarchy, may be used to show where different regiments got their land. In Ormond we find Colonel Thomas Sadleir and Colonel Henry Prittie, the latter of whose descendants became Lords Dunalley.

Colonel Randall Clayton, Colonel Robert Maude (who got the O'Dwyer castle of Dunderum), Colonel Richard Le Hunte and Captain Arthur Purefoy appear in the Kilmananagh record. In Owey and Arra there are Colonel Simon Finch and Colonel Daniel Abbott. Humphrey Minchin and Matthew Pennefather are among the names in Slieveardagh. The different regiments drew lots for their land.

Meanwhile, the adventurers also drew lots for the lands in the baronies assigned to them. As these lands had not yet been mapped, they divided the area into squares. Prendergast gives a



map of Tipperary with the adventurers' baronies, each divided into four quarters and each quarter again divided into four.

However, this was useless without maps, so the adventurers had to wait until Petty had finished mapping the soldiers' lands and then turned to mapping the lands of the adventurers. Prendergast prints the list of Tipperary adventurers — about 150 — with the lands assigned to them. Most of them are missing from the Book of Survey and Distribution; it seems that they sold their rights to soldiers or other purchasers.

Tipperary must have seemed a long way off to London speculators, and the Cromwellian officers were already on the spot and eager to take over more land. One adventurer who settled in Tipperary was Richard Hutchinson, a London ironmonger, who subscribed £760 and was awarded 1,466 acres, 2 roods and 25 perches in the west middle section of Iffa and Offa. His name is shown in the Book of Survey and Distribution for a number of townlands, including Knocklofty.

Another adventurer who obtained substantial lands in Tipperary was Erasmus Smith, a merchant and alderman of London. He was allotted 666 acres in the south-west quarter of Clanwilliam for his investment of £300. He added to this by purchasing land in other parts of Tipperary and elsewhere, and used some of the proceeds to found a series of grammar schools which lasted until modern times.

The result of the Cromwellian settlement was that by 1660 at the end of the Commonwealth regime virtually all Tipperary was in the possession of Protestants, who were either supporters of the regime or in good standing with it. But the greater part of the population of the county was still composed of Irish Catholics. A poll tax return compiled early in 1660 records the respective numbers of Irish Catholics and English Protestants aged fifteen and upwards.

The figures for the county are 1,924 Protestants and 24,760 Catholics. These should be doubled to give the total population; but they show that the Irish element in the county at the close of the Commonwealth period was more than ten times the English element. Transplantation to Connacht had been for the few; the great bulk of the population had stayed behind.

With the restoration of Charles II great changes took place, although they were not nearly so great as Catholics hoped for. They claimed to have supported the king against Cromwellian rebels, and expected that the rebels would be driven out and the old owners restored.

But it was the Cromwellian army that had restored the king, and they demanded their price. The king was in a dilemma and made promises to both sides. Cromwellians should keep what they had; Catholics should get back what they had lost!

An the end there was a compromise, heavily weighted in favour of the Cromwellians. Ormond got back all he had lost, and a good deal more; but then he was the lord lieutenant! Some Catholics were specially selected for restoration; many of them were Butlers or related to Butlers, few having Gaelic names.

The Book of Survey and Distribution records, townland by townland and parish by parish, the owners of 1641 and the owners of Charles II's time. It shows that Irish Catholics, who had nearly 80 per cent of the county in 1641, had less than 20 per cent by the end of Charles II's reign. Some of that was held by outsiders such as the earl of Carlingford, head of the Taaffe family, who was a favourite at court.

George Mathew of Thurles, who was Ormond's brother-in-law, acquired extensive lands from Cromwellian grantees. About 60 Tipperary Catholics were restored at least in part to their ancestral estates. However, the great majority of them were of Anglo-Norman stock, and Gaelic proprietors were few and far between.



Not a single O'Dwyer or O'Kennedy is shown in the Book of Survey and Distribution as restored to any land, although other evidence suggests that several of them became leaseholders on the ancestral property, or even purchasers. Preference for recovery of land was given to those who were declared innocent, and few Gaelic names appear in the list of innocents. One exception was Thady O'Meara of Lissinisky, a minor whose father had been 'out of his mind' during the war.

The processes of the Cromwellian settlement occupied only a few years, and were barely completed when the Commonwealth came to an end. But with some modification at the restoration the Cromwellian settlement set the new pattern of land-ownership in Tipperary. Most of the old owners, and in particular the Gaelic owners, were replaced.

With them went the old styles that had long been established in the county: the conservatively-managed manors of the Anglo-Norman settlements in the south and east; and the traditional Gaelic communities of the north and west, with many sharers in a subsistence economy that gave great emphasis to common pasture. In place of the old owners came new men, military officers from England determined to make profitable use of their reward for the conquest of Ireland, speculators who wanted to get a good return on their money, and many absentees, some of whom had acquired very large estates from the restoration reshuffle.

The change was in owners more than in population. A number of newcomers from England had arrived, particularly in the towns, which now had Protestant corporations in place of the former Catholic majorities of the old Anglo-Norman families. However, the great bulk of the population remained as it was, Catholics of both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman stock. It was a great change for them to work for new masters, alien in tradition and religion and importing a spirit of exploitation, turning subsistence farming into commercial enterprise, developing markets in wool and beef.

Tipperary later became a county of contentions, producing the Whiteboys of the 18th century and the agrarian violence of the 19th century. The foundations of much later strife were laid in the Cromwellian settlement.

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A Cromwellian Debenture

Upon Composition and Agreement made with Mrs. Esther Hunt, Administratrix to her late Husband, Capt. Thomas Hunt deceased, in behalf of herself, And for the Use of Henry, Thomas, Benjamin, Anne, Hester, and Sarah Hunt, Children of the said Defunct, for all the said Defunct's Arrears for Service in Ireland from the last day of December 1646, to the 5th day of June, 1649, as Capt. in a Troope of Horse in Coll. Chidley Coote's Regt. There remains due from the Commonwealth to the said Ester Hunt and children of the said Defunct, their Executors, Administrators and Assign's, the Sum of Seven Hundred and ffourteene Pounds, seaventeen shillings and six pence, which is to be satisfied to the said Esther Hunt and ye said Children of ye Defunct, their Executors, Administrators and Assign's, out of the Rebels Lands, Houses, Tenements and Hereditaments in Ireland; or other Lands, Houses, Tenements and Hereditaments there, in the dispose of the Commonwealth of England. Signed and Sealed at Dublin, the six and twentieth day of May, 1658.

Examined and entered
Thos. herbert,
Genl Register

Edw. Roberts (seal)
Robert Gorges (seal)
Robt Jeffreys (seal)

(The above Cromwellian Indenture was destroyed in the Four Courts during the Civil War, 1922-23.)



By the Commissions appointed for Settling the
Arrears of the Publick Debt of Publick Credit
Debts in Ireland /

UPON Composition and Agreement made
with M^{rs} Elizabeth Hunt Administratrix for the late
Husband Cap^t Thomas Hunt Deceased in the
Service of His Majesty for the Regt of Henry Stunns Benjamin
Hunt, Her son and Sarah Hunt Children of the
said Deceased

for the said Service in Ireland from the last Day of December
1646 to the 1st Day of June 1649 As
Capt of a Troop of Horse in Col^l the Col^l
of the Regiment

There remains due from the Common-wealth
to the said Elizabeth Hunt and said Children of the said Deceased their
Executors, Administrators, or Assigns, the Sum of
Seven hundred and fifteen pounds Seven shillings
and six pence - which is to be satis-
fied to the said Elizabeth Hunt and said Children of the said Deceased their
Executors, Administrators, or Assigns, out of the Re-
bels Lands, Houses, Tenements and Hereditaments
in Ireland; or other Lands, Houses, Tenements and
Hereditaments there, in the dispose of the Common-
wealth of ENGLAND. Signed and Sealed at DUBLIN
the 5th day of May 1658

£ 758
714. 17. 06

Examined and entered

The Herbert
son & Legator

Robt. Boyle
Robt. Boyle
Robt. Boyle

