



MEDIA RELEASE

HISTORIC MAPS OF CLARE PUBLISHED ONLINE BY CLARE COUNTY LIBRARY

- Rumsey Maps of Clare provide unique and alternative insight into history of Clare

County Clare, IRELAND, 26th March 07 – 49 historical maps dating back to the early 1700s have been made available online by Clare County Library via www.clarelibrary.ie. The David Rumsey Historical Map Collection features the first maps to make reference to the West Clare Railway while others provide information on historic landmarks and tribal settlements. The Library service said that the extensive online collection, dating from 1736 to 1922, would support personal and academic users in their learning, teaching and research of historical issues relating to Clare.

David Rumsey – a native of New York and former Real Estate Agent - began building a collection of North and South American historical maps and related cartographic materials in 1980. His collection, with more than 150,000 maps, is one of the largest private map collections in the world. In 1995, Rumsey began the task of making his collection public by building the online David Rumsey Historical Map Collection at www.davidrumsey.com. The online resource, which is free to the public and is updated monthly, currently features over 14,800 high-resolution images of maps.

“Clare County Library decided to make them available on its website so that pupils, students and the interested reader could see just how differently County Clare was represented in these atlases over time and by various publishers throughout Europe”, stated Anthony Edwards, Executive Librarian, Clare County Library.

He continued, *“All references to County Clare in his collection have been isolated and copied so as to make them more accessible to users of www.clarelibrary.ie. When the maps were added to the site, I wrote to David Rumsey giving him the links on our site and thanking him for his generosity in allowing us to use his maps.”*

David Rumsey’s reply was typical of his approach to sharing knowledge and information. In response to Clare County Library’s expression of gratitude, Mr. Rumsey

complimented the Library service for its use of his maps. He added, *“It inspires me to keep building when people like you can make such creative re-use of the materials.”*

To give a broader picture of the source for each of these county maps, another set of the David Rumsey Maps has been published on the library website using full pages from the individual atlases. Using a combination of technologies, Anthony Edwards and Jackie Dermody, Senior Library Assistant have installed image compression software enabling web users to quickly move around and zoom in on areas of the maps, and to copy and save them for future (non-commercial) use offline. A wide range of information is also provided for each map, including full title, engraver and printer, publisher notes, and original height and width measurements.

Commenting on the Rumsey collection, Maureen Comber, Executive Librarian and Editor of www.clarelibrary.ie said, *“With so much material now being published on the Internet in either un-reviewed form or on a pay-per-view basis, Clare County Library has opted to promote the study of local history by publishing these priceless resources for their historical value in one place and free of charge. The digitising of these rare maps also reduces the threat of them being damaged in the future.”*

“The maps are a significant addition to the existing maps on Clare County Library’s website, which include the 1842 Ordnance Survey maps, the Grand Jury maps of 1787, William Petty’s Down Survey Barony Maps of Clare (1658-59) and Petty’s ‘Hiberniae Dilineatio’ County Map of Clare (1685)”, she added.

Ms. Comber indicated that the new additions to the Library website presented a *‘fascinating’* insight into the featured mapmakers’ differing interpretations of the County.

In the **Gilles & Didier Robert de Vaugondy’s (1750)** map, Clonroan (Clonroad) in Ennis is marked as a separate settlement while Ennis is completely excluded from the **Jean Janvier (1780)** map.

Access routes in and around Clare are also featured in the various maps. In the **Herman Moll (1736)** map, the townland of Alyrue (now Aillroe Beg) in Kilfiddane Parish is marked. Located on the River Shannon, Alyrue was a crossing point from Co. Limerick. Only 3 roads are marked on this map: Limerick to Ennis and Ennis to Kilrush and Kilfenora.

The **Didier Robert de Vaugondy, Nicolas Sanson, and Gilles Robert de Vaugondy (1750)** map of the tribes of the county show the ‘Gangani’ living in Clare and South Galway. The ‘Gangani’ was a name given by Ptolemy, the Greek geographer of Roman Egypt. In Irish they were called Siol Gangain, and they are stated, by Camden and others, to have been descended from the Concani of Spain.

The **R.M. Martin and J.F. Tallis (1851)** map was the first to show the Limerick-Ennis and Limerick-Killaloe Railways, while the **Stieler (1875)** map shows the Limerick-Ennis line extended to Galway. The **Times Atlas (1895)** and **Rand McNally (1897)** map show the first stage of the West Clare Railway, from Ennis to Miltown Malbay. The **Fullarton (1872)** and **Rand McNally (1897)** maps mark the main estate houses, while the **Letts (1883)** map not only marks ‘*Important Lighthouses and Lights*’ but the Round Towers as well.

According to Noel Crowley, Clare County Librarian said, “*Within days of the maps appearing on our site we had an email from someone who had been assembling online maps of Clare sporadically over the last couple of years, spending a lots of time and money on CDs. He said that this new feature saved him lots of work. The Library website really now is the one-stop-shop for information on County Clare, and is a resource that the county council and the people of Care should be very proud of.*”

Clare County Library’s website www.clarelibrary.ie has recorded over 2.2 million direct hits since it first went live in 1998. Recent additions to the website include Ecclesiastical Remains - Monuments of County Clare; 1841 & 1851 Census Search Forms; A Folklore Survey of County Clare by Thomas Johnson Westropp; The United Irishmen of North West Clare, 1798; Standing Stones, Ecclesiastical Remains, Windmills & Tumuli - Clare Monuments; and Registry of Freeholders, Co. Clare, 1841.

Meanwhile, two rare historical maps of county Clare dating from the 17th and 18th centuries have recently been digitised for the first time and made available online by Clare County Library. The Grand Jury and Petty's Down Survey Maps precede the first Ordinance Survey Maps of 1842 and provide historians with some of the lost information from the destroyed parish and barony maps. Clare County Library has described the maps as ‘unique’ and said that the advent of digital mapping has helped to preserve and create a newfound interest in local history.

County Librarian Noel Crowley stated that the advent of digital technology had enabled the Library service to present historical documents to people all over the world. *“It is encouraging to see that so many people have an interest in the history of county Clare and we look forward to adding to our impressive suite of ordinance survey and related maps”*, Mr Crowley concluded.

For further information on Clare County Library contact 065-6821616, log on to www.clarelibrary.ie or email mailbox@clarelibrary.ie.