

# SURVEY OF THE McINERNEY SEPT OF THOMOND

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This survey gives an historical account of the McInerney sept of *Clann Chuiléin*, the eastern division of County Clare. The survey investigates the genealogical origins of the McInerneys in twelfth century Thomond as an offshoot of the ruling McNamaras. The origins of the McInerneys as an *airchinneach* family of east Clare is explored and the survey looks at the history of the sept up to the confiscation of the sept's lands in the mid-seventeenth century and their scattering into Limerick and Tipperary during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The survey attempts to give an overview of the McInerney family of Thomond and to redress the silence in many histories of County Clare about the family and its origins. It is a curious tenet of history that the McInerneys were almost totally dispossessed of their ancient lands, so it is not surprising that they escaped the historian's pen. I intend for this survey to shed light on their history both before and after the collapse of the Gaelic order.

Research indicates that the McInerneys – *Clann an Oirchinnigh* – of Thomond have been associated with their powerful overlords, the McNamaras (*Mac Con Mara*), since the twelfth century. It was from the main dynastic branch of the McNamaras that the progenitor of the McInerney sept, Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, originated. As a junior sept – or *sliocht* – the McInerneys retained an important position at the local level within the McNamara polity of *Clann Chuiléin* and their role as minor gentry found them scribed alongside the powerful Dromoland O'Briens in land and rental documents beyond the collapse of the Gaelic order into the eighteenth century.

## **EARLY ERENAGH ORIGINS: 1100-1200**

### THOMOND & CHURCH REFORM

The twelfth century was a critical period in Irish ecclesiastical history as church reform gained momentum, culminating in several high-profile church synods. In east Clare, the mid-twelfth century saw establishment of an *airchinneach* (erenagh) line directly related to the McNamara *deirbhfhine*. The *deirbhfhine* was composed of the ruling inner-kin of a *clann* who claimed up to fourth generation descent from a chief and who customarily elected and inaugurated new chiefs. It was from the McNamara *deirbhfhine* of the twelfth century that *clann* McInerney (*Clann an Oirchinnigh*) sprung. This *airchinneach* line was an offshoot of the inner-kin of the ruling McNamaras and a forerunner to *clann* McInerney. The position of *airchinneach* would have been

an important office not least because of its access to ecclesiastical property and revenue collection.

It is likely that the progenitor of the McNamara *airchinneach* line, Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, was initially granted mensal lands in the McNamara patrimony of Uí Caisin (baronies of Upper Bunratty and Tulla), thereby reflecting his status as a close member of the McNamara *deirbhfhine*. This would have become inheritable territory to continue his *airchinneach* line. It is possible that the sixteenth century McInerney demesne at Ballykilty in the parish of Quin formed part of the original mensal lands of the family. This section will outline the relationship of church reform in the twelfth century and the importance of the office of *airchinneach* as both an ecclesiastical and lay position.

The three church reform synods of Cashel in 1101, Ráith Bressail in 1111 and Kells in 1152 laid down decrees aimed at addressing the secularisation of the Irish Church. The first synod was held at Cashel under the auspices of Muirchertach Ó Bhriain, High King of Ireland, and under his stewardship agreed to limit the custom of lay local families holding church offices by hereditary means. The problem of the monopolisation of church lands by a lay *airchinneach* family for generations, often embroiled in dynastic politics and clerical succession issues, was a characteristic of the Irish church.<sup>1</sup> Even after the reforms of the twelfth century the *airchinneach* or *comarba* (coarb) still maintained much of their hereditary influence and lands right down to the early seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> As might be expected the implementation of the reforms was haphazard and certain aspects of the *airchinneach* office continued largely unchanged. Decrees on the celibacy of clergy and clerical discipline were also covered but implementation was even more fraught.<sup>3</sup>

The office of *airchinneach* signified a lay guardian of a church or monastic community who was nominated by the bishop as a ‘headman’ of a family of hereditary tenants that occupied

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<sup>1</sup> John Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1972, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> The English Attorney General Ireland, Sir John Davies, in his travels through Ulster at the beginning of the seventeenth century, wrote of the *erenaghs* as influential persons. See James F. Kenny, *The Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical*, Octagon Books, New York, 1966, pp.32-34 & p.749. Also see the Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher’s 1609 account of ‘corbes’, ‘erenachs’ and ‘termon Lands’ in which he variously states: “The Archdeacon and the Erenach are, in Irish, the same, viz. *Eireinneach* or *Oirchindeach*....The Erenach and termon lands were free from the charges of temporal lords...The Erenachs farmed the termon lands...Out of the profits from the land they provided hospitality, maintained churches and yielded a yearly rent to the bishops. A certain portion of free land remained onto the Erenachs and was not subject to any rent...The tenants of the Erenach and termon lands were tributary, or *servi ecclesiastici* and the temporal lands belonging to the church were occupied by lay men, who husbanded them, both for their own benefit and for the benefit of the church” [spelling and text modernised]. James Ussher, “Of the Original and First Institution of Corbes, Erenachs, and Termon Land”, C. Vallancey (ed), *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicus*, Vol.1, 1770, pp.179-207.

<sup>3</sup> John Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, p.9.

ecclesiastical land and who was obliged to provide from his revenue the maintenance of religious services and other obligations due to the bishop.<sup>4</sup> The status of *airchinneach* was basically that of a territorial lord with all of the attended functions of a local lord such as the maintenance of his own demesne lands, as well as maintenance of the termon lands, by his under-tenants. The key difficulty, though, was that he often transmitted the hereditary office to succeeding generations, despite the prohibition of marriage set down at the synod of Cashel.<sup>5</sup>

By the twelfth century the powerful provincial kings of Thomond – the O'Briens – had consolidated their hold over much of present-day Clare, Limerick and Tipperary and controlled their territories through a client-patron network that included the submission of 'vassal clients' or *urriagh*. These *urriagh* were subservient to the *Rí Ruirech* (provincial king) and provided him with rents, tribute and fighting men or land to billet mercenaries upon.<sup>6</sup> In the land of the Dál Cais<sup>7</sup>, the growing power and prolific nature of landholding branches of the O'Briens led to the increasing importance of a few great families at the expense of their lesser vassals.<sup>8</sup> This situation resulted in downward social mobility and the displacement of lesser sept as the dominant families, either through annexation or negotiation, obtained lands and brought them under direct cultivation or levied a tribute upon them. This situation was observed by the Irish genealogist Duaid McFirbis who noted, "it is a usual thing in the case of great princes, when their children and their families multiply, that their clients and followers are squeezed out, wither away, and are wasted".<sup>9</sup> Ruling dynasties consolidated their power by displacing local families and replaced them with their own subsidiaries, many of which were offshoots of the ruling dynasty's extended family.

In such an environment few vassals of the O'Brien's achieved the prominence that the McNamaras did by the fourteenth century. The McNamaras – known collectively as the *Síol*

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<sup>4</sup> Canice Mooney, *The Church in Gaelic Ireland: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1969, pp.12-14. Also John Barry, "The Duties of Coarbs and Erenaghs", *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, No.94, 1960, pp.211-218, p.218.

<sup>5</sup> On the obligations of the *airchinneach* see Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*, Gill & MacMillan, Dublin, 1972, p.111-113 and James F. Kenney, *The Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical*, p.12, p.33, pp.747-749. On the status of the *airchinneach* see John Barry "The Status of Coarbs and Erenaghs", *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, No. 94, 1960, pp.147-153.

<sup>6</sup> *Urriagh* (Irish *uirríthe*) were the sub-kings of *tuatha* territories who elected and inaugurated the overlord chief and were also his vassal clients whom he could extract tribute from. On a definition of *urriagh* see G.A Hayes-McCoy, "Gaelic Society in Ireland in the Late Sixteenth Century", *History and Society*, No.4, 1963, pp.45-61, p.47.

<sup>7</sup> On the rise of the Dál Cais and the eclipse of their Eoganachta rivals see John Ryan, (Rev) "The Dalcassians", *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Vol.3 No.4, 1943, pp.189-202.

<sup>8</sup> Donncha Ó Corráin, "The Structure of Society and of the Economy", *Ireland Before the Normans*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1992, p.45.

<sup>9</sup> Duaid McFirbis cited in G.A Hayes-McCoy, *Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland, 1565-1603*, Edmund Burke Publishing, Dublin, 1996, p.52

*Aodh* – were active in founding the Clare septs of McClancy, O’Mulqueeny and McInerney whose origins were closely related to the ruling McNamara household. The following section will present evidence from Irish genealogical sources that the progenitor of the Thomond McInerneys was Donnchadha, the brother of Cú Mara Beg Mac Con Mara, the Lord of Uí Caisin.

#### DONNCHADHA MAC CONMARA

According to two eighteenth century McNamara pedigrees it was Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, the brother of Cú Mara Beg the Lord of Uí Caisin, that *Clann an Oirchinnigh* sprung. While little is known about Cú Mara Beg, what can be gleaned from the annals is that he was slain at the battle of Moinmore in 1151 against rivals from Connacht and Leinster and was referred to in the annals as the ‘Lord of Uí Caisin’.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, we can speculate that Donnchadha flourished sometime in the 1140s to 1160s and that he was probably a younger brother to Cú Mara Beg. His junior status may have been why he missed out on the McNamara kingship.

Following the church reforms of Muirchertach Ó Bhriain in the early 1100s, Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain King of Munster<sup>11</sup> embarked on an ambitious church building project during the 1160s to 1180s. Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain’s patronage of ecclesiastical centers<sup>12</sup> included the founding of nine monastic houses and three cathedrals at Cashel (1169) Limerick (1172) and Killaloe (1180).<sup>13</sup> Such an ambitious construction effort would have placed a large fiscal burden on the pastoral economy of Thomond as Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain had to rely on the expropriation of livestock, food and labour from the base population to provide the surplus to undertake large-scale building projects.<sup>14</sup> The difficulty of raising revenue from subject *clanns* and managing the relationship (both financial and political) with the ecclesiastical centers of Killaloe, Cashel and Limerick probably resulted in the employment of the office of *airchinneach*. The demand to raise the revenue needed to support Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain’s church building projects and to control

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<sup>10</sup> James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Mercier Press, Dublin, 1973, p.206 and Charles MacNamara, *The Story of an Irish Sept : Their Character & Struggle to Maintain their Lands in Clare*, J.M Dent & Co, London, 1896, p.90. The celebrated nineteenth poet Michael Hogan in his poem *Cathol Mac Caragh* mentions that nine McInerney chiefs were slain at Moinmore in 1151. However this assertion is likely to be false as the McInerneys were not mentioned in the Irish annals as amongst the slain and given the mid-twelfth century origins of the McInerneys it is unlikely that they formed a distinct and numerous sept at this early time. Michael Hogan, *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, (reprint) Treaty Press, Limerick, 1999, p.114.

<sup>11</sup> Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain’s kingship spanned the period 1168-1194.

<sup>12</sup> On the relationship between the leading dynastic household of the Dál Cais – the *Uí Thairdelbaig* from whom the O’Briens were descended – and the Dalcassian monopoly of supplying churchmen to Killaloe see Donncha Ó Corráin, “Dál Cais: Church and Dynasty”, *Ériu* 24, 1973, pp.53-63.

<sup>13</sup> Edwin Rae, “Architecture and Sculpture, 1169-1603”, in Art Cosgrove (ed) *A New History of Ireland*, Vol.II, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, pp.737-777, p.743.

<sup>14</sup> D. Blair Gibson, “Chiefdoms, Confederacies, and Statehood in Early Ireland”, *Celtic Chiefdom, Celtic State: The Evolution of Complex Social Systems in Prehistoric Europe*, Bettina Arnoldt (ed), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp.116-128, p.126.

subordinate *clanns* possibly prompted the employment of a noble from the leading household of the McNamaras during the mid-twelfth century to act as an *airchinneach*. This *airchinneach* from the ruling McNamara *deirbhfhine* established an independent sept whose descendants were known as the ‘Mac an Oirchinnigh’, or son of the *airchinneach*.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the name McInerney reflects its origin as an adopted patronymic of the office of the family’s original progenitor. In later times, the McInerneys were allied with the McNamaras in the thirteenth century wars of Thomond and maintained longstanding links with the O’Briens of Dromoland.

There are two genealogical pedigrees that set down the relationship between Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, the progenitor of the McInerneys, and the ruling branch of the McNamaras. According to a 1763 manuscript authored by Michael mac Peadair Uí Longain<sup>16</sup>, Cú Mara Beg had two brothers. One of his brothers was Donnchadha who was the progenitor of *clann an Oirchinnigh* (McInerney)<sup>17</sup>, the other was Maoilseachluinn, the progenitor of *clann Uí Maoilchaoine* (O’Mulqueeny)<sup>18</sup>. A similar pedigree written c1700-1710 by Seaghan Stac confirms the genealogical connection to the main McNamara lineage (see genealogy appendix 1).<sup>19</sup> It would appear likely that during the mid-twelfth century Donnchadha Mac Con Mara assumed the office of *airchinneach* in east Clare. It is possible that Donnchadha was chosen by the O’Briens because of his relationship to the dominant McNamara branch. Whatever the reason, it is no coincidence that his role of *airchinneach* broadly coincided with Domnall Mór Ó Bhriain’s church building efforts.

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<sup>15</sup> The Irish word *airchinneach* is composed of the words *air* [noble] and *ceann* [head] and thereby signifies noble-head or ‘over-superior’. According to Rev. Patrick Woulfe, the surname *Mac an Airchinnigh*, denotes a ‘steward of church lands’ and arose independently throughout Ireland. The popular form of the name, *Mac an Oirchinnigh* and *Mac an Oirchinn* have sometimes been rendered as McNertney and even Kinnerk. The Roscommon Nernenys are a *Mac an Airchinnigh* sept who were hereditary erenaghs of St Patrick’s church at Elphin. The name McInerney should not be confused with the Limerick McEnirys whose name in Irish is *Mac Innerighe* and were centered at Castletown MacEniry in the barony of Upper Connelloe in Limerick. The surname McAneany, while phonetically similar to McInerney and sometimes rendered as that, is also a distinct and unrelated family found in the midlands and Ulster. Rev. Patrick Woulfe, *Sloinnnte Gaedheal is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames*, Dublin, H. Gill & Son, 1923, pp.308-309, p.336-37, p.384.

<sup>16</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, N.12. Also see Seán Ó hÓgáin, *Conntae an Cláir: A Triocha Agus A Tuatha*, Oifig an tSoláitair, Baile Átha Cliath, 1938, pp.40 & p.132.

<sup>17</sup> According to this pedigree it states that: *Cúmara — dár dearghráithir Donnchadh sinnsir Chloinne an Oirchinnigh* [Cúmara — from his brother Donnchadh came the ancestry of the *clann an Oirchinnigh*]. Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, N.12.

<sup>18</sup> The O’Mulqueenys’ ancient patrimony was in Uí Caisin territory where their namesake Ballymulqueeny in Templemaley parish, preserves their ancient residence. Ballymulqueeny was occupied by the family until the 1640s when their lands were confiscated under the Cromwellian settlement. James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.435.

<sup>19</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, L.37.

An interesting nineteenth century ‘scribal note’ has come down to us by Conchubhar Mac In Oirchinne of Ballybaun in County Clare. In this note, now held at the Royal Irish Academy, the origins of the McInerney family are plainly set down:

...[McInerneys were of the] people who were the bravest and of great deeds that were ever done in Dál gCais, who seeded from the noble people of Síol Aodh in which Donnchadh Mac Con Mara was trained the erenagh of Killaloe and from them came the seed of the *Clann an Oirchinne*.

[*An cinne ba crodha et dob oirbheartidh dá raibh air Dháil gCais do shíolraigh on ceinne úasal Síol Aodh ionnar hoiliog Donnchadh Mac Con Mara an óirchinneach Chill Dá Luadh, is uaig do shíolraigh Clann an Óirchinne*].<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, in the absence of any forthcoming source material, this claim cannot be corroborated.<sup>21</sup> Edward MacLysaght’s claim that the early *airchinneach* origin of the McInerneys was “obscure”<sup>22</sup> may not be entirely correct as the foregoing discussion shows that the genealogical pedigrees agree Donnchadha Mac Con Mara was the progenitor of *clann an Oirchinnigh*. It is likely that the Donnchadha was an *airchinneach* under the patronage of the O’Brien kings and came from the leading McNamara household located within the *triocha cét* of Uí Caisin. This would be consistent with the status of the McNamaras as important vassals of the O’Briens.

## LAND & LORDSHIP OF CLANN CHUILÉIN: 1200-1550

### GENEALOGY OF CLANN McINERNEY

The McInerney demesne at Ballykilty in the parish of Quin may have formed part of the original patrimony of the *clann* as it was occupied exclusively by the *ceannfine* – or sept-head – of the McInerneys in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ballykilty was located on the southern boundary of the original Uí Caisin lands and was near Danganbrack, the residence of the McNamara *Fionn* chiefs of west *Clann Chuiléin*. Collateral McInerney land in the parishes of Kilnasoolagh and Clonloghan may have come into the family after 1318 because before this date they were the patrimony of the Uí Blóid *clanns*.

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<sup>20</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 24, M.40 96i.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Cronnelly, in his treatment of Dál Cais families in his Irish family history, confirms that the McInerneys derived their descent from: “Donogh son of Donal, great-great-grand son of Hugh Aidhar...and from the office of Airchinneach, Erenach, or archdeacon of the church of St Flannan of Killaloe, held by the said Donal Fitz [ie. son of] Donal”. It is not known, however, what source material Cronnelly used to obtain this information. Richard Cronnelly, *Irish Family History: Being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gaedhals from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Goodwin & Son, Dublin, 1864, p.347.

<sup>22</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families: Their Names, Arms and Origins*, Irish Academic Press, Blackrock Co. Dublin, 1985, p.108.

This section will review the extant historical evidence on the McInerney *clann* and their involvement in the wars of Thomond. The section argues that the McInerneys gained status because of their alliance with the McNamaras during the wars of Thomond (1276-1318) and because of their position as McNamara *urriagh*. These reasons made possible their expansion into the Newmarket-on-Fergus area (ancient Tradaree) and the building of tower-houses to consolidate control over their estates.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw much change in east Clare as the McNamaras expanded into neighbouring Uí Bloid *tuatha* and sidelined their *Uí Gráda* (O’Grady) rivals. By allying with *clann* Taidhg Uí Bhriain during the wars of Thomond the McNamaras defeated the Norman colonisation of Tradaree.<sup>23</sup> The climate was right for Donnchadha Mac Con Mara’s *airchinneach* line to flourish. During this time the McInerneys are first mentioned as a distinct *clann*, suggesting that they had grown in influence and were prominent enough to be mentioned as a McNamara sept in their own right. The importance of the McInerneys is shown by the several pedigrees that were later drawn up to support the claims of the leading branch of the McInerneys to the ownership of Ballysallagh, Ballykilty and Carrigoran. This also showed that the McInerneys held some importance (at the local level) in the Gaelic social system to warrant several pedigrees outlining patrilineal descent of the *clann* from its twelfth century origins.

According to a pedigree dated c1588 and entitled *Mac an Oirchinnigh Chloinne Cuilein*, Donnchadha Mac Con Mara was the progenitor of the McInerney *clann* (*Donnchadha .i. an Hoirchinneach agus Clann an Oirchinnigh*)<sup>24</sup> and had a son named Connchobhair.<sup>25</sup> This pedigree probably supported the land claims of the dominant faction of the McInerney sept in 1560s-1570s, a point that we will turn to later.<sup>26</sup> The three seventeenth century pedigrees of the family such as the O’Clery Book of Genealogies<sup>27</sup>, an anonymous genealogical manuscript lodged at the Royal Irish Academy<sup>28</sup> and a genealogical tract compiled by the O’Duigenan family<sup>29</sup> refer to the McInerneys as the *Mac an Oirchindig* and *Mac an Oirchindh* and attribute their origins to Donnchadha Mac Con Mara. All McInerney pedigrees broadly agree on the line of genealogical

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<sup>23</sup> Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, “King and Vassals in Later Medieval Ireland: The Uí Bhriain and the MicComara in the Fourteenth Century”, *Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland: Essays Presented to J.F Lydon*, Terry Barry, Robin Frame & Katherine Simms (eds), Hambledon Press, London, 1995, pp.201-216, pp.202-203.

<sup>24</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, H.22 p.11, (nineteenth century copy).

<sup>25</sup> British Library, MS Add 39266 Folio 72 and *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18th Century*, pp.269 & p.280.

<sup>27</sup> Séamus Pender, (ed) “The O’Clery Book of Genealogies”, *Analecta Hibernica*, Dublin, Stationary Office, 1951, p.153.

<sup>28</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS E. iv. 4, f.28r.

<sup>29</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS D i3, f.74v.

descent of the dominant McInerney lineage and the connection to the ruling McNamaras<sup>30</sup> (see genealogy appendix 2).

Given the accuracy of the genealogies in detailing the descendents of Donnchadha Mac Con Mara it would appear likely that some of the genealogies were copied from an initial source. The fact that the pedigree compiled by Seán Ó Cathain in the eighteenth century divides the *Mac in Oirchinn Cloine Culein* genealogy into two branches to reflect the splintering of the sept into a senior and junior branch suggests that it was copied from the c1588 pedigree which used the same tact.<sup>31</sup> The division of the family into two genealogical branches was probably done to support the land claims of the dominant family branch who were vying for control over the *clann* lands of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran during the 1560s and 1570s.

#### McINERNEYS & THE WARS OF THOMOND

The status of the McInerneys, like that of the McNamaras after they defeated their Uí Bloid rivals, grew during the thirteenth century. Along with the increase in their status the McInerneys were possibly granted additional lands from the short-lived Norman settlement in Tradaree. The Norman settlement in Thomond began in the 1248 when Robert de Musegros was granted the fertile district of Tradaree lying between Latoon and the Owennagarney river at Sixmilebridge.<sup>32</sup> Tradaree formed the mensal lands of the O'Brien kings who, as the Earls of Thomond, made their residence at Bunratty until 1642<sup>33</sup> and was an area that was closely associated with the McInerneys, McClancys and O'Mulconerys<sup>34</sup>. In 1276 the Anglo-Norman, Thomas de Clare, reached an agreement with Robert de Musegros and King Edward I that saw the title of Tradaree transfer to himself. The growing power of the Norman manor at Bunratty saw Welsh and English tenants occupying fiefs on the lands that the McInerneys were later to hold from their McNamara overlords. In the thirteenth century Ballysallagh was held by Nic. De Interby<sup>35</sup> and Henry White,

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that two pedigrees are exceptions here. The reference to Donnchadha Mac Con Mara's father in two of the pedigrees put him as "Mailsechlainn" rather than as "Domnail". I would suggest, however, that this is a confusion with "Maoilseachluinn" the *brother* Donnchadha and also of Cú Mara Beg, the Lord of Uí Caisin. This Maoilseachluinn was the progenitor of the O'Mulqueenys. See RIA, MS 23, N. 12, p.187 for the connection to the O'Mulqueenys. For the pedigrees that cite Mailsechlainn as the father of Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, see RIA, Di3, f74v and Séamus Pender (ed), "The O'Cleary Book of Genealogies", p.153.

<sup>31</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, G4, p.400-401.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas J. Westropp, "Types of the Ring-forts and Similar Structures Remaining in Eastern Clare", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. XXVII, 1908, pp.217-234, p.218 and Thomas J. Westropp, *Annals of the Kingdom of Thomond or County Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Accession of the Reigning Dynasty*, Trinity College Dublin, MS 976, p.64.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> See James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.182.

<sup>35</sup> Sometimes written as "de Interburg".

while Clonloghan and Ballynacragga were held by Henry Fuke and Carrigoran was held by Patrick de Layndperun.<sup>36</sup>

The Norman colony of Tradaree posed a challenge to the Uí Caisin lands to the north and de Clare was granted further estates at Quin by Brian Ruadh Ó Bhriain. This resulted in the McNamaras supporting a faction of the O'Briens known as *clann Taidhg Uí Bhriain* and opposing Brian Ruadh Ó Bhriain.<sup>37</sup> The intervening period between 1276-1318 saw turmoil in Thomond as rival factions of O'Briens courted Norman support to assert local authority, while the McNamaras and their Uí Caisin allies were on the political ascent with de Clare's death in 1287 and the defeat of the Uí Bloid *clanns* in 1318.

The McInerneys gained greater status during this period and it is possible that with the defeat of de Clare's son Richard at Dysert O'Dea in 1318 the McInerneys came to occupy the lands of the Norman manor at Bunratty in Tradaree.<sup>38</sup> By the seventeenth century slightly more than half of the McInerney estate was in Tradaree with much of the estate concentrated in the parish of Kilnasoolagh.<sup>39</sup> The McInerneys featured several times in the near contemporary account of the Thomond wars, the *Caithreim Thoirdhealbhaigh*.<sup>40</sup> This text, which covered the battles and events of 1276-1318, demonstrates that the McInerneys were considered important enough to be singled out several times as an independent *clann* and a McNamara ally, a fact shown by the text's citing of the McInerneys before other important McNamara *urriagh* such as the O'Hallorans and O'Moloneys. The *Caithreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* is the earliest text in which the McInerneys are mentioned as an independent *clann*. The text mentions the McInerneys as one of the *urriagh* of the McNamaras who joined them in routing the Uí Bloid *clanns* at Kilgorey in 1309.

The battle of Kilgorey is the first time that the McInerneys are mentioned as a sept in their own right, a fact made clear by the reference to them as part of the McNamara *urriagh* who answered

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas J. Westropp, "Types of the Ring-forts and Similar Structures Remaining in Eastern Clare", p.233.

<sup>37</sup> Lorna Moloney, "Conquered Lands: The Manifestation of MacNamaras' Clare c1250-c1500", *University of Limerick Historical Society*, Vol.5, 2004, p.105.

<sup>38</sup> According to the *Topographical Poems* written by Sean Ó Dubhagain and Giolla Na Naomh Ó Huidhrin in the fourteenth century, the territory of Tradaree was occupied by the Uí Neill and their patrimony was called *Clann Dealbhaoith*. John O'Donovan, in the notes to the poems, suggests that the Tradaree was given to the McNamaras from the O'Briens after the defeat of De Clare and that it was the richest in all Thomond. John O'Donovan, (ed), *The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla Na Naomh O'Huidhrin*, Irish Archaeological & Celtic Society, Dublin, 1862, note 762.

<sup>39</sup> See *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, [County of Clare], Irish Manuscripts Commission, Stationary Office, Dublin, 1949, pp.155-160.

<sup>40</sup> Sean Mac Ruaidhri Mac Craíth, *Caithreim Thoirdhealbhaigh: The Triumphs of Turlough*, Standish Hayes O'Grady (ed), Irish Texts Society, Stationer's Hall, London, 1929.

the ‘hosting-call’ to battle.<sup>41</sup> When Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, the leader of the *Clann Chuiléin* at Kilgorey enumerated his allies he said of the McInerneys, “a clan of definite pronouncement, strong in families: warlike clan-inerheny”.<sup>42</sup> The McInerneys were mentioned ahead of the O’Hallorans and O’Moloneys and directly after the various Mac Con Mara factions were addressed. Later, when describing the outcome of the battle the McInerneys are again mentioned, roughly in the same order as before, with the Mac Con Maras first followed by the McInerneys and the O’Moloneys. Here the reference to the McInerneys formed part of the action of battle: “clan-Anerhiny slew them in becoming style”.<sup>43</sup> The only other reference to the family is in 1317 at the battle of Corcomroe where the McInerneys are referred to as “claninerheny watching their princely chief” and are again mentioned before the other septs of the *Clann Chuiléin* such as the O’Moloneys, O’Hallorans and O’Slatteys.<sup>44</sup> It is clear that the reference to the McInerneys in the *Caithreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* indicates their high status as an *urriagh* of the Mac Con Maras and that they must have reached a certain level of importance to be recorded in this text as it was written to legitimise the McNamara claim of suzerainty over the Uí Bloid *clanns* of east Clare.

With the defeat of the Uí Bloid *clanns* and the Normans in 1318, the McNamaras imposed a tax over the newly acquired lands of the Uí Bloid.<sup>45</sup> The McNamara ‘rental’ of c1318-1330 shows that they achieved the prominence of *tigherna* or undisputed lord. Over time the McNamaras displaced many Uí Bloid *clanns* through placing their own *urriagh* on their lands.<sup>46</sup> This period may have seen the McInerneys – as *urriagh* of the McNamaras – rewarded for their support with lands in Tradaree. In the wake of the wars of Thomond the McNamaras emerged as virtually independent in east Clare and capable of fielding military forces on par with the O’Briens.<sup>47</sup> It

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.40-41.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>45</sup> For a full account of the ‘rental’ or *Suim Tigernais Meic na Mara* [Sum of the Lorship of Mac Namara] see James Hardiman, “Ancient Irish Deeds and Writings”, *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. XV, 1828, pp.45-48.

<sup>46</sup> Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, “King and Vassals in Later Medieval Ireland: The Uí Bhriain and the MicComara in the Fourteenth Century”, pp.214-215 and Lorna Moloney, “Conquered Lands: The Manifestation of MacNamaras’ Clare c1250-c1500”, pp.110-113. After 1318 the McNamaras expanded out of their original patrimony of *triocha cé* Uí Caisin and into the lands of the Uí Bloid *clanns* such as the O’Aherns, O’Shanahans, O’Kennedys, O’Duracks and O’Connollys. After the defeat of these *clanns* in 1318 the McNamaras annexed six of the ten *tuatha* within east Clare. In this reshuffling of lands the O’Gradys relocated to Tuath Ó Ronghaile after the Uí Bloid defeat, for their previous territory was at Kilnasoolagh in Tradaree. The exit of the Uí Bloid from Kilnasoolagh may have left the territory open for later colonisation by McNamara allies such as the McInerneys of Uí Caisin. See John O’Donovan & Eugene Curry, *The Antiquities of County Clare*, CLASP Press (reprint) Ennis, 1997, p.305. On the history of the McNamara rental see Patrick Nugent, “The Dynamics of the Clan System in Fourteenth Century Clare”, pp.56-61.

<sup>47</sup> The power of the McNamaras is gleaned by a reference to the royal paymaster that shows in October 1345 McNamara strength was put at 77 hobelars and 164 foot compared to O’Brien strength as 50 hobelars and 80 foot. These figures would not show the total strength of either *clann* in a general ‘rising out’ but indicates the balance between the families, at least in terms of the formal ‘on paper’ total of their men-at-arms. Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, “King and Vassals in Later Medieval Ireland: The Uí Bhriain and the MicComara in the Fourteenth Century”, p.212. In 1374 when the McNamaras quarrelled with the O’Briens it was recorded that “Comar Mac Conmarre, captain of

came to be that the over-lordship of the Uí Bloid passed to the McNamaras after 1318, making the McNamaras the strongest family in County Clare up until the sixteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

#### McINERNEY TOWER-HOUSES: DROMOLAND & BALLYCONEELY

The latter middle ages to the 1550s was a period of relative peace and contemporary records are silent regarding the McInerneys. It would appear likely that over time their status was eroded as the McNamaras consolidated their hold over east Clare through a tight set of client-patron linkages. These linkages were strengthened by the proliferation of collateral branches of the McNamara *deirbhfhine* on lands previously held by minor septs. We can speculate that after several generations the McInerney *deirbhfhine* became distant from their McNamara kinfolk and were reduced in status to that of landholding freemen (or *óglaigh* – the ‘gentlemen’ of sixteenth century English sources<sup>49</sup>) that held their own demesne but were important only at the local parish level. Nonetheless, their status was not eroded as much as the O’Quins or McClunes as the McInerney name was ranked seventh in Upper and Lower Bunratty in 1659.<sup>50</sup>

The McNamaras managed to consolidate their position as the principal *urriagh* in east Clare through building tower-houses that served the dual purpose of defense and residence. Tower-houses would have been the social centre for the family and extended kinfolk of a local chief or *taoiseach*.<sup>51</sup> The McInerneys are recorded as having built the original tower-houses of

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his nation...raised 400 defensible men to fight O’Breen...whom at his own charge he had kept from Christmas last’. James Hardiman, “Ancient Irish Deeds and Writings”, p.20. A list drawn up in the 1540s assessed the military strength of “McNemarry, lord of Clinchollan” as 200 horse, 1 battle of galloglass (60-80 men) and 600 kern. This compares against “O’Brien lord Thoumound” who had at his disposal 200 horse 2 battles of galloglass (120-160 men) and 600 kern. L. Price, “Armed Forces of the Irish Chiefs in the Early 16<sup>th</sup> Century”, *Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, lxii, 1932, pp.202-207, p.204.

<sup>48</sup> John Ryan, (Rev) “The Dalcassians”, p.202.

<sup>49</sup> Kenneth W. Nicholls, “Land, Law and Society in Sixteenth Century Ireland”, *O’Donnell Lecture Series*, National University of Ireland, 1976, pp.3-26, p.13.

<sup>50</sup> Several names that were more numerous than McInerney such as McTeige, McShane and McDaniel may not, in fact, have been proper surnames but rather patronymics. See Séamus Pender (ed) *A Census of Ireland Circa 1659*, Stationary Office, Dublin, 1939, p.168. The *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703* show that as a sept the McInerneys held more land vis-à-vis other important septs in 1641. Most of the McInerney estates consisted of profitable acreage (1,425 Irish acres) while only 44 acres accounted for unprofitable acreage. The McInerney estates totalled 1,469 Irish acres, compared to the total acreage of the O’Quinns (1,191 Irish acres), the MacClunes (199 Irish acres), the MacConsidines (840 Irish acres) and the MacCurtins (174 Irish acres). The McInerneys also held more profitable acres than other well known septs such as the O’Davorans (781 profitable Irish acres), O’Hickeyes (1,170 profitable Irish acres) and O’Mulconreys (1,253 profitable Irish acres). However, as Ciarán O Murchadha has pointed out, assessing the true extent of profitable land by English officials in seventeenth century Ireland was fraught with difficulty with many opportunities open to conceal the true extent of a landholding. The practice of arbitrarily fixing Irish land measurements to their English equivalents and the often corrupt land stewards and officials allowed landowners to disguise the real extent of their holdings, least they pay any additional tax on it. See Ciarán O Murchadha, “The Richest Commoner in Ireland: Sir Donough O’Brien of Lemenagh and Dromoland, Baronet (1642-1717)”, *Dal gCais*, Issue 10, 1991, pp.7-13, footnote 20.

<sup>51</sup> On the role of tower-houses in Gaelic society see Mary McAuliffe, “The Tower House and Warfare in Ireland in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”, *The Irish Sword*, Vol.XVIII, No.73, summer 1992, pp.297-302 and Terry Barry, “The Last Frontier: Defence and Settlement in Late Medieval Ireland”, *Colony and Frontier in Medieval*

Dromoland and Ballyconeely. William O’Lionain, who compiled a list of the castle builders of County Clare in the eighteenth century, noted that “Thomas mac Seain Mac an Airchinigh” erected “Druim Olainn and Baile ui Conghaile”.<sup>52</sup> Both of these tower-houses appear in the fifteenth century map of *Clann Chuiléin*.<sup>53</sup> Richard Cronnelly gives the dates 1316 and 1342 for the erection of Dromoland and Ballyconeely and also credits their erection to John McInerney and his son Thomas. While this agrees with O’Lionain it cannot be corroborated against the main McInerney pedigree or any known erection dates and remains speculative.<sup>54</sup> “Shane MacInerheny” is credited with having built a fortified place at Treanahow and “Fineen MacInerheny” is said to have erected the “*cumar* [channel] of Ballynagowan”.<sup>55</sup> It is doubtful that these two references are correct, however, as there does not seem to have been any substantial fortified dwelling in Treanahow, and Ballynagowan (Smithstown) was probably erected by “Shane mac Sioda” McNamara<sup>56</sup>. We do know for sure, however, that the McInerneys occupied the tower-house of Ballynacragga in 1574<sup>57</sup> and quite possibly the fortified house at Ballysallagh West during the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>58</sup>

## THE END OF GAELIC THOMOND: 1550-1640

### THE COMPOSITION OF CONNACHT

From the records of the Elizabethan and Stuart administrators we can obtain details about the lands held by the leading McInerneys in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This section will look at the land dispute between two branches of the family as well as what information we have on the lands and tower-houses that leading McInerney kinsmen held. What is known is that the

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*Ireland: Essays Presented to J.F Lydon*, Terry Barry, Robin Frame & Katherine Simms (eds), Hambledon Press, London, 1995, pp.217-228. Terry Barry points to the tower-house of Dangan Iviggin as an example of an early tower-house built by an Irish chieftain. Dangan Iviggin is thought to have been built by Donnchadha Mac Conmeadha in 1305-7. *Ibid.*, p.226. It would appear that most of the tower-houses in County Clare were built during the period 1450-1550 and that by 1574 they totalled around 220, of which 70 were recorded for east Clare. R.W Twigge, “Edward White’s Description of Thomond in 1574”, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Vol.1 No.2, 1911, pp.75-85. Also see T.J Westropp, “Notes on the Lesser Castles or ‘Peel Towers’ of the County of Clare”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol.V third series, 1898-1900, pp.348-365.

<sup>52</sup> John O’Donovan & Eugene Curry, *The Antiquities of County Clare*, p.261 and R.W Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clan Cullen*, Add MS 20717, County Clare Library Local Studies, [microfilm record], p.219, & p.225.

<sup>53</sup> R.W Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clan Cullen*, Add MS 39270, QQ County Clare Library Local Studies, [microfilm record], “Draft of map of Clan Chuiléin in the 15th century with Indication of Monasteries, Parish Churches, Other Church Sites, Forts and Castles”.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Cronnelly, *Irish Family History: Being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gaedhals from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, p.347.

<sup>55</sup> R.W. Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clan Cullen*, Add MS 20717, County Clare Library Local Studies, [microfilm record], p.219 & p.221 and Standish Hayes O’Grady, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. 1, London 1926, p.69 and p.72.

<sup>56</sup> John O’Donovan & Eugene Curry, *The Antiquities of County Clare*, p.261 and *Ibid.*, p.219.

<sup>57</sup> R.W Twigge, “Edward White’s Description of Thomond in 1574”, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Vol.1 No.2, 1911, pp.75-85, p.80 also see *State Papers of Ireland, Elizabeth*, Vol. XLV., No.35/1.

<sup>58</sup> Martin Breen & Ristéard Ua Cróinín, “Some Recently Located Towerhouse Sites”, *The Other Clare*, Vol. 2, 2000, pp.7-9.

replacement of Gaelic political institutions with English-style administration resulted in upheaval and the down-grading in status for most land-holding McInerneys.

We know that the rich pastoral land of Ballykilty probably served as the demesne of the McInerney *ceannfine* as it was sometimes pledged as collateral in land deeds<sup>59</sup>, had two-water mills<sup>60</sup>, and possibly a fortified house that was built in the seventeenth century or earlier on the site of the current Ballykilty house.<sup>61</sup> Ballykilty was also the principal residence of the leading faction of the McInerney *deirbhfhine* who emerged successful after a challenge from a junior branch of the family over the inheritance of the bulk of the McInerney lands. It would seem likely, therefore, that Ballykilty served as the sept's demesne and their most important landholding. This is supported by the fact that it was exclusively a McInerney possession until the 1650s.<sup>62</sup>

The land dispute between senior and junior branches of the McInerney *clann* was connected to the changes in land inheritance in sixteenth century Thomond. The growing influence of the office of President of Connacht was backed by the Crown's desire to assert sovereignty over taxation and law in the lordships of Clanricard and Thomond.<sup>63</sup> The 1585 'Composition of Connacht' sought to replace charges and military exactions that Irish lords and English garrisons imposed on the provinces by converting them into a normalised rent-charge levied on land.<sup>64</sup> This process was part of a wider push of spreading English law and authority that sought to erode the Gaelic magnates' authority and encourage local sept-heads to pursue freeholder status and break the patron-client dependence that they had with their overlords.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18th. Century*, p.329

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.280 & p.329.

<sup>61</sup> In the current Ballykilty House there is a large fireplace in the old kitchen that reads: "1614 John MacNamara and Onora Clanchi bilded theis cheimneis in the year of our lord". This indicates that a substantial residence was extant at Ballykilty at the beginning of the seventeenth century and it is possible that a residence was there before this date.

<sup>62</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, p.148. Interestingly, neither Ballykilty nor Ballysallagh were given by letters patent to the Earl of Thomond on 19 January 1622 or subsequently claimed by John McNamara *Fionn* of "Dangan-i-vigin" during this period. It would seem, therefore, that these lands were held as freehold by the McInerneys and not subject to property rights or interference by the McInerney's overlords, the McNamaras or the Earl of Thomond. These lands made up the core of the McInerneys' ancestral estate and served as the residence of the leading branch of the McInerney sept. James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18th. Century*, pp.294-297.

<sup>63</sup> Bernadette Cunningham, "The Composition Book of Connacht in the Lordships of Clanricard and Thomond 1577-1641", *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol.XXIV, No.93, May, 1984, pp.1-14, p.1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Also see A. Martin Freeman, (ed) *The Compossicion Booke of Conought*, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Stationary Office, Dublin, 1936.

<sup>65</sup> Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest*, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1994, p.241.

Although many of the Thomond septs and leading families signed the final ‘Composition Agreement’ in 1585, the leading chief of west *Clann Chuiléin* – John McNamara *Fionn* – refused to sign<sup>66</sup>. Nonetheless, his name was recorded among the chief families of the “Macks and Oes who surrendered their Irish names and customs of inheritance and received their castles and lands by patent, to them and their heirs, in English succession”.<sup>67</sup> McNamara *Fionn* was scribed above the minor septs of “McGilly Reoghe”, (*anglice* McGillereagh, Gallery) “McGlaneghee” (*anglice* McClancy) and “McEnerhin”. McEnerhin could be a contracted form of ‘McEnergeryheny’, the popular spelling of McInerney in Elizabethan times.<sup>68</sup> If this was the case the McInerney sept was important enough to be independently represented among the chief land-holding septs of Thomond. The 1585 Composition paved the way for English-style land ownership and the repudiation of Brehon law. As these changes were being felt and the English *Inquisitions Post Mortem* system was established to settle inheritance disputes, Irish landholders were making the transition from their Gaelic positions of *taoisigh* and *tánaistí* to gentleman and yeoman. It would appear that these changes in land ownership were behind the land dispute that saw the senior and junior branches of the McInerneys claim control of the *clann* lands. Ultimately it was the senior branch of the McInerneys that prevailed, ousting the junior faction from the lands of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran.

#### McINERNEY LAND DISPUTE: 1565-1632

The McInerney land dispute began with the death of John (Seain) McInerney at Dromoland in November 1565. His death appears to have sparked a long-running dispute between two factions of the McInerney *deirbhfhine* who shared a common grandfather, Tomais, who probably lived in the mid-fifteenth century. It is possible that Tomais was the “Thomas mac Seain” who erected the tower-houses of Dromoland and Ballyconeely if we allow a margin of error in William O’Lionain’s castle builders list, because the genealogies record him not as the son of Seain but the son of Mathgamain (see genealogy appendix 2)<sup>69</sup>. It would appear that on the death of John McInerney in 1565 he, as the *ceannfhine* or sept-head, held the key McInerney lands of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran. Perhaps instead of the prevailing custom of dividing the estate among the eligible *deirbhfhine* who would have occupied parts of the estate as freemen, John sought that his son Mathgamain would continue his office, even without the support of the *deirbhfhine*.

<sup>66</sup> Patrick White, (Rev) *History of Clare and the Dalcassian Clans of Tipperary, Limerick, and Galway*, M.H. Gill & Son, Dublin, 1893, p.202.

<sup>67</sup> J.S Bewer & W. Bullen (eds), *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth*, 1867-1873, MS 614, f.25.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> John O’Donovan & Eugene Curry, *The Antiquities of County Clare* and Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, H.22 p.11.

In Irish inheritance custom, the division of *deirbhfhine* land (excepting the demesne of the sept-head which was attached to his office) could lead to a number of partible sharings among the *deirbhfhine* and collateral family branches.<sup>70</sup> This land sharing often became permanent and led to disagreements between the incumbent lineage and claimants who hoped to benefit from redistribution.<sup>71</sup> In Thomond in the sixteenth century, redistribution seemed to favour senior family members over junior ones, a method that was provided for in early Irish law: *rannaid ósar, do goa sinnser* ('the junior divides, the senior chooses').<sup>72</sup> It is likely that on the death of John McInerney some of the *deirbhfhine* supported, under Brehon law, a successor candidate over John's seventeen year old son Mathgamain.

Land which the sept held in common—and which was liable to periodic redistribution—was meant to support kinsmen descended from a common four generation male ancestor. When the junior branch of the McInerneys (as represented by Mathgamain mac Lochlainn d.1572) claimed the lands after the death of John McInerney in 1565 they may have done so because otherwise they were facing downward social pressure. The junior branch may have had problems maintaining their status as *deirbhfhine* on *clann* land that was liable for periodic redistribution and was not attached to any demesne lands. Therefore, whether Mathgamain mac Lochlainn was entrusted with the lands before the death of John or not, it would seem that his grab of the lands may have been preemptive as his claim to the lands (and to the leadership of the sept) was increasingly fraught under the four generation requirement.<sup>73</sup> The real cause of the land dispute, however, is difficult to know for certain and we can only speculate from inferences in the historical record and what hints we may distill from our limited knowledge of Gaelic land tenure.<sup>74</sup>

It is probable that because of the relatively junior age of Mathgamain, and the possibility that John may have assigned some of his lands to his kinsmen to hold in trust for Mathgamain, that the

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<sup>70</sup> G.A Hayes-McCoy, "Gaelic Society in Ireland in the Late Sixteenth Century", p.53-54.

<sup>71</sup> Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest*, p.48.

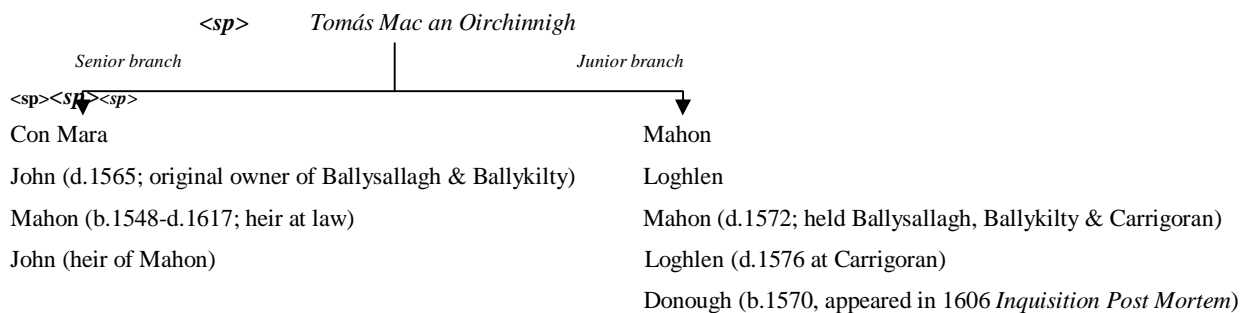
<sup>72</sup> Gearóid Mac Niocaill, "Seven Irish Documents in the Inchiquin Archives", *Analecta Hibernica*, No.26, 1970, pp.47-69, p.49. A contemporary example of the importance of seniority in land redistribution can be seen in a 1576 deed between members of the Mac Mathghamhna family: "Toirdhealbhadh son of Brian Óg by virtue of the seniority of my father...had the first choice of that prosperity...and Murchadh Ruadh, as junior had the third choice". This clearly shows that in sixteenth century Thomond seniority did count when it came to land re-distribution and was practiced by at least some of the principal Thomond families. *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000, pp.196-197.

<sup>74</sup> It is suggested that the land-partition in the sixteenth century probably did not differ much from previous centuries or that there were large differences in local custom. Therefore, the continuous and irregular branching of families from the main line and the displacement of lineages, at the expense of smaller ones, often led people of noble birth to prejudice their close kin or descendants to the detriment of distant relatives in capturing the benefits from any land re-distribution and control over the demesne lands. *Ibid.*

*deirbhfhine* on the death of John supported another candidate and seized the lands held in trust. This successor candidate, Mathgamain mac Lochlainn and his heirs may have initially controlled the lands (though possibly not the demesne of Ballykilty as Mathgamain mac Sean occupied it in 1577) from 1566 to 1579, but it seems likely that Mathgamain mac Sean managed to oust Donough the grandson of Mathgamain mac Lochlainn in 1576 when Donough's father (also Lochlainn) died. At the age of six Donough mac Lochlainn's claim to the lands that his grandfather seized in 1565 would have been untenable and it was possible that during this period Donough and other freeman of the junior McInerney *deirbhfhine* were permanently ousted from Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran. It would appear that at least some of them took up possession of Cahirteige in Clonloghan parish, including Donough and his heirs. In 1610 Donough was recorded as re-edifying Mohane Castle nearby Dromoland.<sup>75</sup> Mathgamain mac Sean, the main representative of the senior McInerney lineage, held on to Ballykilty until his death in 1617.

*Pedigree showing members of the McInerney deirbhfhine mentioned in the 1579, 1606 & 1632 Inquisitions Post Mortem on ownership of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh & Carrigoran*<sup>76</sup>



This did not prevent the disgruntled junior branch of the family and those supported under Brehon law to pursue legal redress. This drama was played out through a series of *Inquisitions Post Mortems* in 1579, 1606 and 1632. According to the *Inquisitions Post Mortem* record of 1579:

Inquisitions post mortem, taken at Ennis, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 21<sup>st</sup> year of Elizabeth, before John Crofton, finds that John MacInerney, late of Ballykilty, died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 1565, seized in fee of Ballysallagh and Ballykilty; that Mahone MacInerney, aged 17, at his father's death, is the son and heir of

<sup>75</sup> Thomas J. Westropp, *Annals of the Kingdom of Thomond or County Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Accession of the Reigning Dynasty*, Trinity College Dublin, MS 976, p.143. Westropp's reference appears not to be verified by any contemporary accounts and therefore should be treated with caution.

<sup>76</sup> All names have been anglicised and are sourced from the 1579, 1606 and 1632 *Inquisitions Post Mortems* in James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.269 & p.280.

said John; finds that Mahone, son of Loghlen, and Mahone's son, Loghlen the younger, both relations of John, had laid claim to his lands and appropriated them to their own use for thirteen years past.<sup>77</sup>

The *Inquisitions Post Mortems* of 1606 and 1632, in the reign of James I, record:

Inquisitions post mortem, taken at the Windmill, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 1606, by Humphrey Wynch, finds that Mahone, son of Loghlen MacInerney, died at Ballysallagh, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, 1572, being then owner in fee of Ballysallagh, Ballykilty with its water-mill, and of Carrigoran, and leaving his son Loghlen his heir-at-law. This son died at Carrigoran on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1576, leaving his son Donogh, then aged six years, but now of full age, as his heir; finds that Mahone, son of John MacInerney, disputes the right of his cousin to the ownership of these lands, alleging that his father John, who was the true owner, had died at Dromoland, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, leaving him, the said Mahone, his son and heir.<sup>78</sup>

A subsequent Inquisition post mortem, taken in 1632, finds that Mahone had been in possession, and that he died about the year 1617, leaving a son John to succeed him, a man then of full age.<sup>79</sup>

The policies that were adopted in Thomond such as the 'Surrender and Regrant' and 'Composition' meant the exclusion of the *deirbhfhine* – especially the younger cadet family branches – in favor of primogenitor<sup>80</sup>. Also, the pattern of land ownership changed. As can be seen by the McInerneys the redistribution of freehold '*clann* lands' of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran on the death of the sept-head was no longer in place. Instead, John McInerney's line claimed the lands under the principle of primogeniture while the other *deirbhfhine* members exercised their prerogative under Brehon Law. The resulting outcome was often conflict between different family branches. The *deirbhfhine* freemen who elected a new sept-head on the death of the incumbent, held lands that were taxed and liable to periodic redistribution.<sup>81</sup>

After the introduction of English common law the *deirbhfhine* freemen – who in English eyes were tenants-at-will – were often sidelined in favour of primogeniture inheritance. The shiring of County Clare in 1570 and the introduction of administrative machinery such as the *Inquisitions Post Mortem*, enforced new land ownership arrangements that favoured large freeholders and senior branches of families at the expense of their dependents and lesser clansmen. As can be imagined, the *Inquisitions Post Mortem* were a powerful means of extending political patronage

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p.280.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Lorna Moloney, "A New Frightfulness? Gaelic Thomond in the Late Sixteenth-century", *The Other Clare*, Vol.29, 2005, pp. 31-34, p.33.

<sup>81</sup> Only the sept-head's demesne was free from taxation. A fixed amount of its produce directly supported the household of the sept-head and was often located nearby a tower-house or residence of the chief of the sept. Kenneth W. Nicholls, "Land, Law and Society in Sixteenth Century Ireland", pp.18-19 and G.A Hayes-McCoy, "Gaelic Society in Ireland in the Late Sixteenth Century", p.53.

and re-granting lands in accordance with the principle of primogeniture. The outcome of this process for the McInerney family was that the senior line of the family, headed by Mathgamain mac Sean, was successful in holding onto the *clann* lands and, in particular, the demesne at Ballykilty.

The extent and nature of the land eligible for redistribution was divided amongst individuals according to their status within the *deirbhfhine*.<sup>82</sup> It would appear that the losing McInerney faction were displaced from Ballysallagh and Carrigoran and ended up occupying smaller holdings in Caherteige in the parish of Clonloghan by 1641.<sup>83</sup> The dispute seemed to have been negated by the lodgment of a pedigree in Dublin that confirmed the succession of Mathgamain mac Sean's lineage. It read: "Mahowne MacEnerhyny of Balikiltie in Co Clare, died 1617", his heir "John McEnerhynne."<sup>84</sup>

#### McINERNEYS IN REBELLION

McInerneys are variously recorded in the *Elizabethan Fiants* as receiving pardons for rebellion during turbulent period of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It can be surmised that much of the 'rebellious activity' was driven by the change in land ownership and the Crown's encroachment on the feudal rents that were paid by the lesser landowners to their traditional overlords. The *Fiants* record a "Mahowne McShane McInErrihine of Ballykilly [sic Ballykilty] Co Clare, gent", as obtaining a pardon in 1577 for rebellious activities.<sup>85</sup> This was Mathgamain mac Sean who must have been living at the Ballykilty demesne at this time and was probably in the process of displacing Donough, the six year old son of Lochlainn, from the rest of the McInerney lands after Lochlainn's death at Carrigoran in 1576. Mathgamain mac Sean must have regained Ballysallagh from the junior branch of the family by 1589 because in that year he was

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* G.A Hayes-McCoy mentions that periodic redistribution appears to have taken place within the *deirbhfhine* and not within the sept as a whole. This did not mean that ownership was ill-defined as in populated areas all lands were accounted for in terms of owners and each owner knew what duties and obligations he was bound to. *Ibid.*, p.54.

<sup>83</sup> In 1641 Caherteige was occupied by Daniel and Murtagh, the sons of Donough. Donough was probably the Donough who was mentioned in the 1606 *Inquisitions Post Mortem* as 'of full age' and having being born in 1570. *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, p.171. A reference to Caherteige as a McInerney possession was made by Conchubhar Mac In Oirchinne in his early nineteenth century 'scribal note'. He states that his own McInerney lineage hailed from Dermot "loyal chief of Clonloghan, Tullyvarraga, Caherteige, Dromgeely" and who appears to have flourished in the seventeenth century. The only reference to a Dermot McInerney amongst the seventeenth century records is in 1661 when a Dermot McInerney occupied Killian in Templemaley parish. It is not known whether this Dermot was connected to the Caherteige McInerneys. See Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 M.40 96i and James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.435.

<sup>84</sup> Genealogical Office Dublin, MS 220-222, Milesian II, p.40.

<sup>85</sup> *The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns: During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Phillip & Mary, and Elizabeth I*, Éamonn de Búrca Publisher, Dublin, 1994, Vol.2., Fiant 3152 p.430. This Mahon seems to have received the same pardon a second time in the same year (possibly an error in publishing the name twice) when it records, for 1577, "Mahown McEnerren of Ballisallagh". What these *Fiants* do show is that Mahon is clearly occupying the core McInerney lands that his father John held until his death in 1565. *Ibid.*, Fiant 3040, p.406.

recorded as “Maghowne McInerinn of Ballesolloghe, gent” and received a pardon for rebellion.<sup>86</sup> In 1602 a “Mahowne ne Teige McInyrrymy of Ballsallagh”,<sup>87</sup> and a “John Sellenger McEnergie of Ballisallagh gent”<sup>88</sup> also received pardons. It is interesting to note that these last two references appeared in the aftermath of the Nine Years War. In 1611 a pardon was granted to “Laughlin McInerheny, yeoman” in Co Clare. It is possible that he was attached to the other McInerney branch – the displaced *deirbhfhine* kinsmen of Clonloghan.<sup>89</sup>

#### McINERNEYS OF THE SIXTEENTH & SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

McInerneys can be found in few other references for the sixteenth century. The 1574 list of “gentlemen and their castles in Thomond” record a “MacEnergieheny of Ballenecraige”<sup>90</sup> possessing a tower-house that in later times was held by the Earl of Thomond and the McNamaras.<sup>91</sup> The 1570 list of castles conspicuously leaves the entry for Ballynacragga blank, but does record a “Conogher Oge MacClancy, a Brehon” as being the occupier of Ballysallagh Castle.<sup>92</sup> It is obvious from the castle list and the references in the *Fiant*s that the leading McInerneys were regarded as “gent”, indicating their social status equivalent to a leading family at the parish level who held their lands under freehold, including a tower-house that would have served as the principal residence of the leading household of the sept. The social standing of the *deirbhfhine* freemen of the family would have been, in English eyes, ‘captains’, whose real wealth was measured by the numbers of farmers and ‘churls’ they commanded to work their estates.<sup>93</sup> This was especially the case when measuring the wealth of the chief of the sept whose office included access to demesne land that were free from extractions and worked by unfree tenants, the produce of which directly supported the chief’s household.

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, Fiant 5401, p.96.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, Fiant 6617, p.549.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, Fiant 6615, p.546. The middle name ‘Sellenger’ is very unusual to find among Gaelic names of the period and in the case of John Sellenger McEnergie it is not clear what it referred to. According to the Rev. Patrick Woulfe there was a Norman family of the name ‘de St Ledger’ and ‘Sellinger’ who became totally gaelicised by the sixteenth century and their name in Irish was *Sailigheir*. See Rev. Patrick Woulfe, *Sloinnté Gaedheal is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames*, pp.275-276, pp.666-667.

<sup>89</sup> *Irish Patent Rolls of James I: 1603-1625*, Stationary Office, Dublin, 1966, Pat. 9, Part 1, Patent no. XCI-45, p.203.

<sup>90</sup> R.W. Twigge, “Edward White’s Description of Thomond in 1574”, p.80.

<sup>91</sup> See *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, p.157 and Séamus Pender, (ed) *A Census of Ireland Circa 1659*, p.166.

<sup>92</sup> Martin Breen, “A 1570 List of Castles in County Clare”, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, Vol.36, 1995, pp.130-138, p.133. Also see *State Papers of Ireland: Elizabeth*, Vol XXX no. 68/1

<sup>93</sup> On the gradations of Irish social classes see G.A Hayes-McCoy, “Gaelic Society in Ireland in the Late Sixteenth Century”, p.48 and Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2000, p.41. Jaski states that “since base clients provided a steady source of income, the number of base clients a nobleman possessed served as the primary indication of his wealth and status. In early Irish society there appeared to be two types of clients, vassal client (*céile gíallnae*) and the free client (*sóerchéile*), with the latter free to terminate their contracts and provide their service to a different lord. Often these free clients were noblemen themselves, perhaps losing their own estates because they were displaced by larger septs but still maintained some independence in terms of providing their services to the ruling dynasty. Elements of these social gradations were still operating in the early seventeenth century. *Ibid.*

At the commencement of the seventeenth century the sept was notable enough to have received a mention in the *Ortelius Improved* map of Ireland that showed the principal families in Ireland at that time.<sup>94</sup> Despite the upheavals in land ownership at the end of the sixteenth century, the McInerneys still retained their position and were sometimes cited as jurors at *Inquisitions Post Mortem* and witnesses at mortgages. The *Inchiquin Papers* allow us to gather what their relationship was like with other members of the Thomond gentry. One prominent McInerney of the early 1600s was James McInerney. It is unknown where he fits into the family pedigree but it appears that his son, James Óg, held property in and around Ballysallagh in 1641.<sup>95</sup> James must have been part of the winning faction of the *deirbhfhine* and his residence seems to have been at “Killathnasullagh” in 1611 and at “Ballycraggyne” in 1612.<sup>96</sup> Interestingly, in the 1603 will of Connor mac Donogh O’Brien of Leanmaneh (grandson of Murrough the *Tánaiste*) there is a reference to “£13 of which £3 was of ‘the newe standard’ to John McEnerhyny ‘prist’ and James his son, for which they have a quarter of Dromolin [Dromoland] in mortgage”.<sup>97</sup> According to the 1612 *Inquisitions Post Mortem* into the property of Connor mac Donogh O’Brien, the McInerneys were still based at Dromoland and “James McEnerhine” was granted 4 acres in “Rathmaolane” sometime before 1603.<sup>98</sup> Whatever James’ position within the family it must have been important as he was recorded in other land transactions for the years 1601<sup>99</sup>, 1611<sup>100</sup>, 1626<sup>101</sup> and also in 1635 when he acted as an arbitrator on behalf of the Earl of Thomond in the case of unlawful mortgage of lands by Loughlin McCloon of Ballymacloon.<sup>102</sup> The core McInerney lands of Ballykilty, Ballysallagh and Carrigoran were not listed in the 1626 rental of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Thomond Henry O’Brien, indicating that they did not form part of his estate, but rather were held under freehold. It would seem likely that at this time the leading McInerneys were independent freeholders not subject to the possibility of consolidation within the Thomond estate and having secured access to the *clann* lands through the *Inquisitions Post Mortems*, were in a position to

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<sup>94</sup> See *Ordnance Survey Letters: Clare*, “Trace Map from “Ortelius Improved”, RIA 14B 24/20 and John O’Hart, *The Irish and Anglo-Irish Landed Gentry*, (reprint) Irish University Press, 1969, p.19.

<sup>95</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, pp.158-159 & p.160.

<sup>96</sup> See John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, Stationary Office, Dublin, 1961, No.982, p.311. Also see deed No.980 where he is recorded as of “Killanthnassullagh” [Kilnasoolagh] in 1611 and deed No.1036 where James was a witness in a land transaction in 1626. James was also involved in translating ancient Irish deeds into English in 1611 at Limerick. See James Hardiman, “Ancient Irish Deeds and Writings”, p.51.

<sup>97</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1481, p.504.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, No.983, pp.312-313.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, No.955, p.300.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, No.980, p.308.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, No.1036, p.334.

<sup>102</sup> *Pentworth House Archives*, Vol. 1, Sussex, 1968, MS. 3911.

sub-lease land to the English and Dutch settlers that were being ‘planted’ on the Earl of Thomond’s estate.<sup>103</sup>

By the 1630s leading members of the sept had business dealings with the English and Dutch settlers of the Earl of Thomond’s estates. In 1637 James McInerney had dealings with Peter Ware, an English settler at Ing in Kilmaleery parish. The Court of Chancery Bill Books record James’ involvement with Peter Ware and also his dealing with Teige McNamara in the same year. James is recorded in a dealing with Simon and John Fanning in 1635 and Loughlin McInerney, who was to play a part in the 1641 rebellion, was first recorded in the Bill Books in 1637 in a dealing with Richard Tan[?].<sup>104</sup> These dealings show the growing usage of legal redress among landed McInerney freeholders during this period.

It would appear that even the *clann* land of Ballysallagh East was mortgaged for £600 to one of these ‘new English’ – Giles Bowdens – in April 1635. Giles Bowdens conveyed his interest in the lands to Dutchman James Martin in May 1637.<sup>105</sup> It appears that James Martin lent Mahone and John McInerney (probably both sons of Mathgamain mac Sean) £330 and that their mensal land of Ballykilty and its two mills were put up as collateral.<sup>106</sup> As Mahon and John are referred to as of ‘Ballykilty’ this would suggest that their principal abode was there and that they had interests in East and West Ballysallagh and also held ploughlands further afield in the Islands barony. In these transactions the McInerneys are referred to as ‘gents’ and as having ‘feoffees’<sup>107</sup> Previous land dealings are in evidence between Edmond McInerney and James Martin, between Dermot O’Brien and Mahone McInerney, and between John McInerney and the ‘yeoman’ Mahone MacShane ne Corkie in 1624.<sup>108</sup> Due to the 1641 rebellion the McInerneys, O’Briens, McNamaras and Clancys held onto the mortgaged lands on behalf of James Martin and presumably their financial deals were put on hold. Financial troubles and the threat of displacement may have been the reason why Dermot O’Brien, Murtagh Clancy, Donogh McNamara and Mahon McInerney were in rebellion in 1641-1642<sup>109</sup>. Also in rebellion was

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<sup>103</sup> Petworth House Archive, “An abstract of such rents and renewals as doe belonge to the right Hon.<sup>ble</sup> Henrye Earle of Thomond [1626]”, MSS no. C27/A 39. On the settlement of new English and Dutch Protestants by the Earl of Thomond on his estates and his support for the anglicisation of County Clare see Bernadette Cunningham, “Newcomers in the Thomond Lordship”, *Dal gCais*, Issue 11, 1993, pp.103-111.

<sup>104</sup> *Court of Chancery Bill Books: 1633-1640*, Vol 1, National Archives of Ireland, p.75, pp.165-166, p.208.

<sup>105</sup> James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, pp.328-331.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p.352. Underlying financial reasons may have prompted the McInerneys initially to rebel as they had borrowed £330 from James Martin and agreed to pay a yearly sum of £44 together with an interest rate of ten per cent. The McInerneys provided two ploughlands and two mills at Ballykilty as collateral for the agreement. Notwithstanding this, other pressures such as the increased influence of English and Dutch settlers on the Earl of

“Loughlen MacInerenye”<sup>110</sup> of Templemaley parish who sent a letter to the besieged Maurice Cuffe of Ballyally Castle demanding him to deliver the castle to the rebels.<sup>111</sup> Loughlen claimed to be acting on behalf of the Earl of Thomond.

The *Book of Survey and Distribution 1641-1703* lists the McInerneys’ land as comprising 1,425 profitable and 44 unprofitable Irish acres.<sup>112</sup> This included an interest in Kilnasoolagh amounting to 514 acres, most of which was in Ballysallagh and Carrigoran. Ballysallagh was home to a leading faction of the sept, with the townland divided between Mahone, James Óg, Edmond, Cow[v]erra and Connor mac Mahone.<sup>113</sup> McInerney freeholders occupied lesser lands, including Daniel mac Mahone and Teige Down at Lisconor<sup>114</sup>, and Edmond and James Óg holding other lands in the vicinity.<sup>115</sup> Aside from the Ballysallagh McInerneys, Caherteige in Clonloghan parish came to be the refuge of the losing faction of the 1560s and 1570s land dispute. Caherteige was occupied by Donough and Murtagh, probably the son’s of Donough who appeared before the 1606 *Inquisition Post Mortem*. Ballykilty and its 358 acres was occupied by John McInerney who took possession on the death of his father in 1617 and he held it as an exclusive McInerney possession.

Another McInerney whose exploits have come down to us is Loughlin McInerney who had his abode at Derry and occupied lands in Templemaley parish at the time of the siege of Ballyally castle.<sup>116</sup> Loughlin must have been a freeholder of importance as he is mentioned in the 1642 Protestant Depositions of Latoon (near Ballykilty) as taking part in attacks on English settlers. In this reference he is described as being of Ballykilty, suggesting that he was a relation of John McInerney of Ballykilty and connected to the senior branch of the *clann*. Loughlin features in several official documents and rental agreements during the 1640s-1670s and it would appear that he had some connection to Murrough O’Brien, Earl of Inchiquin as he appeared as a witness to a bond agreement between Murrough O’Brien and Terlagh Og Mac Mahon of Clenagh in 1644.<sup>117</sup> Loughlen was also recorded as the Seneschal of Inchiquin’s Manor Court at Corofin in

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Thomond’s estates and the threat of a plantation scheme for Clare must have contributed to their decision to side with the Clare rebels. *Ibid.*, p.329.

<sup>110</sup> Maurice Cuffe, “The Siege of Ballyally Castle, in the County of Clare”, *Narratives Illustrative of the Contests in Ireland in 1641 and 1690*, Thomas Crofton Croker (ed), Camden Society, London, 1841, p.13.

<sup>111</sup> Maurice Cuffe, *The Siege of Ballyally Castle, in the County of Clare*, p.13.

<sup>112</sup> Measured in Irish plantation measure. In total, the McInerney estate was around 2,350 Statute Acres.

<sup>113</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, p.159.

<sup>114</sup> The suffix “Down” is probably *Donn* in Irish meaning “brown” or “brown-haired”.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.157-159, p.160, p.163 & p.169. Edmond held lands at ‘Clonconell’ and ‘Ardbrahan’ and shared in the division of ‘Carrongarran’ [Carrigoran] with James Óg. Aside from James’s interests in Ballysallagh and Carrigoran, he held 33 Irish acres at ‘Corkaghnaeknockan’ which appears to have been a sub-division of Carrigoran.

<sup>116</sup> Maurice Cuffe, *The Siege of Ballyally Castle, in the County of Clare*, p.13 and *Ibid.*, p.126 & p.148.

<sup>117</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1065, p.347, No.1359, p.448.

1670.<sup>118</sup> Interestingly, Loughlin, along with Edmond Dexter, petitioned the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Duke Ormond, for confirmation of their posts as “some time clerks to the Crown and Peace for the County of Clare” in February 1650.<sup>119</sup> This last reference may have been why Loughlin was allocated a large estate of 324 acres in Dysert parish in the transplantation of 1654-58.<sup>120</sup> Loughlen managed to hold onto lands in Templemaley and Ruan parishes as a Loughlen McInerheny is recorded as a tenant of the Earl of Inchiquin there in 1699, though this was probably his son. Richard Cronnelly regarded Loughlin as a principal leader of the family in the 1640s and cites a Loughlin McInerney, “chief of his name”, holding lands at Rathcathain and Cluonanahy under the Earl of Inchiquin in 1724. These references may be an accurate reflection of historical fact and seem to verify Loughlin (and possibly his son’s) position as sept leader.<sup>121</sup>

## **DISPOSSESSION, EMIGRATION AND FAMINE: 1640-1850**

### **McINERNEYS & THE 1641 REBELLION**

The 1640-1650s saw upheaval for the McInerneys as most of the *clann* lands were confiscated and land-holding McInerneys transplanted to the less fertile areas such as the Burren. This section will look at McInerney involvement in the 1641 rebellion and the subsequent Cromwellian settlement which displaced many of the leading McInerneys and reduced their position as significant landowners and people of influence in Tradaree. The upheavals prompted some McInerneys to go abroad and fight in the armies of Spain and others to move into Limerick and Tipperary in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It would appear that the McInerneys took an active part in the 1641 rebellion as a “Captain McInerhenny” is listed as having captured Dromoland Castle along with Connor O’Brien of Leamaneh<sup>122</sup>. Several McInerneys are recorded in the *Ormond Petitions* as having served either as Confederate or Royalist officers during the 1640s. Major Thomas McInerheny in August 1650 was involved in an operation against Cromwellian forces near Killaloe and was in communication

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, No.1541 pp.545-546.

<sup>119</sup> See Gifford Charles-Edwards, *Calendar of Petitions to Ormonde in 1649 and 1650*, Carte MS 155-157, Bodleian Library Oxford, p.474.

<sup>120</sup> Robert C. Simington, *The Transplantation to Connacht*, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Irish University Press, 1970, p.38.

<sup>121</sup> Richard Cronnelly, *Irish Family History: Being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gaedhals from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, pp.347-348. Cronnelly also mentions a Fiach McInerney, chief of his name and brother to Loughlin, who flourish in 1644. This reference cannot not corroborated and it is unlikely to be true given that no other McInerney of the seventeenth century is recorded as Fiach, itself an uncommon forename in Clare. *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> This was Connor O’Brien of Leamaneh who married the infamous Máire Ruadh, daughter Sir Turlogh McMahon, Lord of East Corcabaskin. Connor took a leading role in the Irish Confederate forces in Clare and was killed at the pass of Inchicronan in 1651 by Cromwellian troops. On Connor’s life see Máire Mac Neill, *Máire Rua: Lady of Leamaneh*, Ballinakella Press, Whitegate, 1990.

with Ormond, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland<sup>123</sup>. In 1676 an informant revealed that Thomas McInerheny had returned from France and Flanders and was implicated in a Catholic plot underway in that year.<sup>124</sup>

The depositions of English Protestants mention “Lochlainn MacInerney of Ballykilty” and “James MacInernia, gent” as among the principal Irish gentry accused of crimes during 1642-1654. James MacInernia was implicated in the robbing and killing of the mother-in-law and sister of English settler, William Culliver.<sup>125</sup> Interestingly, this note mentions that James MacInernia’s wife was a Protestant but since the rebellion had turned ‘papist’. Unfortunately, no other details remain of James or his wife and it is possible that they were not alive by the time of the transplantsations in 1654-1658 as they are not listed there.

In terms of the Cromwellian occupation of Clare, an account has come down to us which reveals the fate of Jeremy Nerhinny, a Franciscan friar from Tradaree. According to Fr Anthony Broudin, author of *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Veritatis*:

Brother Jeremias de Nerihiny from Tradria in Tuomonía followed [his] parents (who were well known to me) of ancient nobility and great riches. In the year 1640...he entered the Friars Minor at the friary of Quin...however when Cromwell was dominant he was captured by the heretics, beaten with cudgels, and with a rope around his neck...the heretics...quickly hanged him. And in that way in the year 1651 he ended his life gloriously for Christ.<sup>126</sup>

Edward MacLysaght also writes of Fr Laurence McInerheny who was martyred by the Cromwellians in 1642, however this reference remains obscure.<sup>127</sup> Writing in the 1660s Fr Anthony Broudin also listed “the oldest noble families who ruled the nine baronies of Thomond

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<sup>123</sup> John T. Gilbert, *A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland from 1641-1652*, Vol.III, Dublin, 1880, p.175. This Thomas McInerheny may have been the “Thomas McIneriny” recorded in 1649 as a captain in Colonel Oliver Stephenson’s regiment. John T. Gilbert, *The Manuscript of the Marquis of Ormonde*, Vol.1, Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part VII, Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1895, p.214. A “Captain Teige McInerheny” can be found in the same regiment and this could have been the Teige McInerheny who was recorded in the Ormond Petitions on 8 July 1650 at Doonas in County Clare as having “lost most of his men in the disaster at Rathmines and who was in garrison with new recruits...plea for [the] return of men” as “the garrison received no pay”. Gifford Charles-Edwards, *Calendar of Petitions to Ormonde in 1649 and 1650*, p.217.

<sup>124</sup> William Burke (Rev), *The Irish Priests in Penal Times, 1660-1760*, Harvey & Co. Publications, Waterford, 1914, p.94.

<sup>125</sup> R.W Twigge, *Materials for a History of Clan Cullen*, “The Names of the Principal Irish Gentry Accused of Various Crimes in the Depositions of the Protestant Settlers in Co Clare: 1642-1654”, MS 39260, County Clare Library [microfilm record], Vol. II, f.314. Also see James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.370.

<sup>126</sup> Anthony Bruodin (OFM), *Propugnaculum Catholicæ Veritatis, Libris X. Constructum, in Duásque Partes Divisum*, Prague, 1669, Book 4, p.717.

<sup>127</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families: Their Names, Arms and Origins*, p.108.

up to the time of Cromwell's tyranny" and included the McInerneys under the shorthand version 'Nerinyh', thus confirming their position as landowners of some note.<sup>128</sup>

#### CROMWELLIAN CONFISCATIONS & SETTLEMENT

The 1650s resulted in the confiscation of the McInerney estates and the transplantation of the leading members of the sept. The lands in Ballysallagh and Carrigoran passed to the Cromwellian planter, Sir Henry Ingoldsby and to Lord Clare.<sup>129</sup> The transplantation lists record "Laughlin McEnerhiny" as being reallocated 324 acres in Dysert parish in 1656.<sup>130</sup> Edmond McEvereny's (or Nerhiny) widow Any (alias Mahon) and their daughters Honora, Ellinor, Mary and Catelin were allocated 14 acres in Killinaboy parish in 1656.<sup>131</sup> In 1641 Edmond had joint ownership of the *clann* lands at Ballysallagh and Carrigoran and his own freehold at Clonconnell in Kilnasoolagh parish and at Ardbraghan in Kilmaleery parish.<sup>132</sup> In the same year "John McConnor McInehery of Tullavarrin" was transplanted and allocated 5 acres<sup>133</sup>, while "Daniel McDonnogh McEnereny" was allocated 30 acres and previously held land at Caherteige.<sup>134</sup> It would also appear that several McInerneys living outside of their traditional patrimony of Clare also faced transplantation. These included "Teige McInerenogh" and "Mahone Roe McInerheny" from Limerick, though it is uncertain as to where they were transplanted.<sup>135</sup>

While it is hard to discern whether these individuals were transplanted solely because of involvement in the 1640s rebellion, the fact that they occupied some of the most fertile lands in Clare should not be discounted either. At any rate, in their own eyes they wanted redress for their excessive punishment and after King Charles II was restored they appealed for the restoration of their estates in 1664. While the outcome is not known, their conduct during the rebellion was recorded as having "early repentance" and "adhered to the peace". The 1664 appeals list "Loughlin McInereheny", "Edmond McInereheny of Killanasulagh", "Mahone McInerheny of Ballisallagh" and "Daniel McInereheny of Cahirteige" as claiming restitution for their confiscated estates. Mahone McInerney claimed the largest share of 150 acres.<sup>136</sup> This list is a useful survey

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<sup>128</sup> See Chris O'Mahony & Brian O Dalaigh, "A Seventeenth Century Description of Co. Clare", *Dal gCais*, Issue 9, 1988, pp.27-38, p.32.

<sup>129</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, pp.158-159.

<sup>130</sup> Robert C. Simington, *The Transplantation to Connacht*, p.38.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Books of Survey and Distribution, Being Abstracts of Various Surveys and Instruments of Title, 1636-1703*, [County of Clare], pp.157-159, p.163.

<sup>133</sup> John T. Gilbert, (ed) *The Manuscript of the Marquis of Ormonde*, Vol.2, Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1895, p.128.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137.

<sup>135</sup> John O'Hart, *The Irish and Anglo-Irish Landed Gentry*, Irish University Press, Shannon, 1969, p.336.

<sup>136</sup> In comparison to other former landowners recorded as seeking restitution for their confiscated estates, Mahon's claim of 150 acres was equal to that of John McNamara of Rathfolan and John McNamara of Rathaheen who both

of the leading landholding members of the sept in 1664. The absence of John McInerney of Ballykilty may have been because he was deceased by this time or that his heirs did not pursue the restoration of his estate

The 1659 ‘census’ allows us to plot the movements of the leading McInerneys following the upheavals of the transplantations. Only “Mahon McInerny gent” in Kilnasoolagh, and “John McInerhidny gent” of Killraghtish parish, having 19 and 9 tenants respectively, were recorded as ‘tituladoes’ – or landholds of some merit – in the barony of Bunratty.<sup>137</sup> This suggests that while Mahon and John managed to hold onto a fraction of their former estates, they still had the wherewithal to have tenant farmers who, in turn, had labourers under them. Between themselves, Mahon and John would have controlled upward of 140 persons, undoubtedly some of whom were kinsmen. The 1659 census also lists 29 McInerney heads-of-households that are returned in the population totals for Upper and Lower Bunratty. Further afield, “Teige McInerny, gent” occupied land in Ibrickan barony, “Covara McInerny, gent” and his 13 tenants held land in Burren barony, and “Loughlen McInerny gent” and his 13 tenants held land in Inchiquin Barony.<sup>138</sup> It would seem that Teige was transplanted from Clonloghan and Covara may have been the son of Mahon McInerney of Ballysallagh and was recorded in a land transaction there in 1655, before being transplanted to the Burren.<sup>139</sup> Covara left a will in 1677 which read: “Will of Cavera McInerheny of Knocknanard, Co. Clare, gr[anted] 1<sup>st</sup> May 1677. I owe 3/- to Constance Donovan, for my [holding?]”.<sup>140</sup> Covara’s descendents were still residing in Killeany parish in the 1820s as a Murty and John McInerheny were recorded at Ballyconnoo South at the time of the Tithe Applotment Survey.<sup>141</sup>

AFTER CROMWELL: 1650-1800

The upheavals of the 1650s saw changes in the fortunes of dispossessed young men and former soldiers of the wars of the 1640s. It is during this period that we can expect some of the

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claimed 150 acres and were formerly important landowners. It would appear that Mahon McInerney remained on or near his former estate at Ballysallagh and managed to hold onto a sizable portion of it, given that he was recorded in the 1659 census as a “tituladoe” and a “gent”. *The Irish Genealogist*, “The Dispossessed Landowners of Ireland, 1664: Part II, Munster and Ulster”, Vol.4, No.5, November 1972, pp.429-449, pp.445-446.

<sup>137</sup> In the 1659 ‘census’ Mahon McInerney is described as being of “Carrowmore” and he was one of the few original Irish owners not displaced by the Cromwellian settlement within Kilnasoolagh, a point backed up by the fact that he did not appear on the transplantation lists of 1654-56. In Kilnasoolagh only Mahon McInerney and the McNamaras of Ballynacragga are listed in the 1659 ‘census’ indicating that all of the other significant Irish owners who held lands in 1641 were either not alive or had relinquished the ownership of their estates. By 1663 Mahon was still recorded as a landowner, this time at Latoon. Séamus Pender (ed) *A Census of Ireland Circa 1659*, p.166 and James Frost, *The History and Topography of the County of Clare: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, p.416.

<sup>138</sup> See Séamus Pender (ed) *A Census of Ireland Circa 1659*, entries for baronies: Ibrickan, Burren and Inchiquin.

<sup>139</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1080, p.353.

<sup>140</sup> Morris Crossle, *Index of Irish Wills 1484-1858*, National Archives of Ireland, ref. 5/168, Will no.84

<sup>141</sup> [http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/tithe\\_applot/killeany.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/tithe_applot/killeany.htm)

dispossessed McInerneys serving abroad in the armies of France and Spain. Their experience in the continental armies may have provided the fertile stories behind Michael Hogan's poem, *Warrior Exiles: A Legend of the Clan MacInnerney*.<sup>142</sup> One such McInerney *émigré* serving abroad was Juan Francisco MacInerheny, a cadet in the service of the Spanish *Regiment de Irlanda*, who was recorded in 1776 as receiving a promotion to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.<sup>143</sup>

The period of the mid-seventeenth century saw the emergence of an intermediate type of gentleman/yeoman who directly farmed property on the estates of the Earls of Thomond and Inchiquin. These new gentlemen were often the younger sons in the lesser branches of the dominant families who, earlier in the century, would have held the position of a 'dependent freeholder' in a household that revolved around the *clann* chief. By the mid seventeenth century these men began to emerge as a landed tenant who directly managed their lands.<sup>144</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we can see numerous examples of McInerneys among the intermediate class of gentlemen/yeoman farmers in the Earl of Thomond's *Manor Courts* (1666-1686)<sup>145</sup>, *Rent Rolls* of 1656, 1685 and 1699<sup>146</sup> and in the

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<sup>142</sup> Michael Hogan, *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, pp.289-291. Other folk tales have been preserved about the family. According to the compilation of Clare folk stories by the antiquarian T.J. Westropp, the peasantry told a tale that, "in the early days, Meihan Mac Enerheny, a famous warrior, made the huge fort, or rather hill town, of Moghan as a 'fighting-ring' for himself. He would never allow his tribe to go to war until he had himself challenged and defeated all the enemy's chiefs. He reigned in great esteem from the Fergus to the Owennagarna river. In his fighting-ring he always gave his opponents the choice of the sun and wind, in spite of which he overthrew them all. There was no king, nor soldier, nor monster that he feared to fight. His admiring tribe gave him a gold-embroidered cap, and the name of 'Oircheannach' (golden head), and he died unconquered." It would seem that this tale gave rise to the erroneous translation of *oircheannach* meaning 'golden head'. The combined word *airchinneach* (*air* [noble] + *ceann* [head]) is clearly the old Irish term for erenagh. See T.J. Westropp, *A Folklore Study of County Clare and County Clare Folk-tales and Myths*, CLASP Press, Ennis, 2003, p.119. On a similar tale involving a suit of golden amour see Michael Hogan, *Lays and Legends of Thomond*, p.290.

<sup>143</sup> *The Irish Genealogist*, "Irish Officers in the Spanish Service", Vol.6, No.3, 1982.

<sup>144</sup> T.P. Power & Kevin Whelan (eds), *Endurance and Emergence: Catholics in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin, p.68.

<sup>145</sup> The Earl of Thomond's *Manor Courts* (1666-1686) list numerous McInerneys over the period. For example, the Manor at Finavarra in the Burren records "Coonara McInerney of Kocknire, gent" for the year 1678 and the Manor of Bunratty records "Loghlein McIneriny and Daniel McIneriny" in 1674. McInerneys are variously recorded in different *Manor Courts*, such as Roger, Matthew and Morogh, Daniel and Donat McInerhney in 1683 at the Manor of Ballvanavane (Upper Bunratty). S.C. O'Mahony, "The *Manor Courts* of the Earl of Thomond: 1666-1686", *Analecta Hibernica*, No.38, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 2004, pp.135-220.

<sup>146</sup> In the Earl of Thomond's *Rent Roll* of 1656 Teige McInerhiny is recorded as holding the two plowlands of "Fentrartbegg and "Fentratmore" in Kilfarboy parish in the barony of Ibrickan with several other tenants who are recorded there in 1659. It would seem that the "Mortagh" and "John Clanchy" who jointly held these lands with Teige McInerney were transplanted from Urlan Castle in Kilmaleery parish. Teige was probably transplanted from nearby at Lisconor. Mortagh Clancy was recorded in 1642 at the siege of Ballyally Castle as being of "Castlekeale" (ie Ballysallagh west) and he was recorded, along with the McInerneys, in a land transaction with James Martin of Castlekeale in 1641. In the Earl of Thomond's 1685 *rent roll* a "Thomas McInereny" is recorded for the parish of Kilfarboy in the barony of Ibrickan. It is likely that Thomas was the son of Teige McInerney transplanted there in the 1650s. In the *rent roll* of the Earl of Inchiquin for 1699 Loughlin McInerney is mentioned as occupying "Ballycarull" in Templemaley parish (Bunratty Upper) and in Killkea in Ruan parish, (Inchiquin barony). John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1538, p.535, No.1539, p.543, No. 1541, p.545.

*Corporation Book of Ennis*<sup>147</sup>. McInerney connections to the native nobility of Thomond can still be found at this time. Máire Rua, bequeathed 3 cows “to [her] nephew Mahon McInerhenyes daughter” in 1686<sup>148</sup> and left £5 pounds to Fr Morish McInerhiny her parish priest and £1.10 to Fr James McInerheny in that same year<sup>149</sup>. Similarly, there are sporadic references to the family in the *Inchiquin Manuscripts* right up until 1785 when Thomas McInerhiny procured a lease from Sir Lucius O’Brien of a holding at Sixmilebridge.<sup>150</sup> Thomas McInerhiny appears in several leases in the 1780s and it is likely that he was the “Thomas McInerheny of Dromoland, yeoman” who conformed to the Church of Ireland in 1782.<sup>151</sup> A notable reference exists in relation to “Jos. MccInerheny” who was one of three witnesses to the will of Sir Edward O’Brien of Dromoland, Bart., in 1765.<sup>152</sup> In Limerick several McInerneys achieved prominence in the eighteenth century, including Michael McInerheny, a merchant of Limerick, who left a will in 1732 and Nicholas McInerheny, Esq., formerly of Coonagh, who died on 22 March, 1791.<sup>153</sup>

By the early 1800s the McInerneys had spread from Clare into Limerick, Galway and Tipperary. Most of the Tipperary McInerney settled nearby the Shannon in the western part of the county. A cluster of the Tipperary McInerneys settled in the uplands and slate quarries of Castletownarra parish where the author’s forebears originated.<sup>154</sup> Nonetheless, McInerneys were still represented in their traditional lands of Kilnasoolagh, with George McEnerny growing flax there in 1796<sup>155</sup>. Andrew and Patrick McInerney held lands in Ballynacragga, Ballconeelly and Ballygirreen in 1850<sup>156</sup>, and Patrick McInerney owned 99 acres at Clenagh in 1876.<sup>157</sup> By 1855 there were over 400 McInerney heads-of-household in Ireland, 300 of these in Clare, around 80 in Limerick and about 3 in Tipperary. Needless to say, this figure would have been much reduced from 1845 due

<sup>147</sup> Brian Ó Dalaigh, (ed), *The Corporation Book of Ennis*, IAP, Dublin, 1990, pp.84, p.185, p.209, p.351, p.374.

<sup>148</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1845, p.625.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, No.1493, p.514. Fr Morish McInerheny was subsequently listed in the 1704 register of Catholic Priests of Sixmilebridge and that he received his orders at Garryrickan, Co. Kilkenny, in 1675. His sureties were Col. John McNamara of Crevagh and Florence McNamara of Moghane. In 1704 Fr Morgan McInerhiny was registered for the parishes of Quin and Cluony and was still listed there in 1715 and in that year officiated over the parishes of Kilfinaghten and Kilmurry in place of Fr Maurice [Morish] McInerhiny who was deceased by that date. The registers note that Fr Morgan McInerhiny had not taken the Oath of Abjuration by 1715. Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe in the Eighteenth Century*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1991, pp.275, p.272, p.297, p.298.

<sup>150</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1741, p.599.

<sup>151</sup> Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe in the Eighteenth Century*, p.165.

<sup>152</sup> John Ainsworth, (ed), *The Inchiquin Manuscripts*, No.1511, p.525.

<sup>153</sup> See Arthur Vickers (Sir), *Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland*, 1911, p.305 and *The Irish Genealogist*, Vol.5, No.6, 1979, pp.750-751.

<sup>154</sup> In the churchyard of Castletown, Co. Tipperary, there is a grave that reads: “Erected by Thady McInerney in memory of his father Patrick McInerney who departed this life 1820 aged 62 years”. It seems likely that the Castletownarra McInerneys share a common ancestor who migrated there from Clare sometime in the eighteenth century. Given that the Westropp family held estates in Clare and were landlords in Castletownarra, it is possible that the McInerneys were moved into Tipperary by the Westropps at some unknown date.

<sup>155</sup> *Flax Growers of Ireland, 1796: County of Clare: <http://www.failteromhat.com/flax/clare.htm>.*

<sup>156</sup> *The Griffith Valuation of Ireland, 1855: <http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/griffiths/griffith.htm>.*

<sup>157</sup> *Return of Owners of Land of One Acres and Upwards in the Several Counties, Counties of Cities, and Counties of Towns in Ireland, 1876*, Genealogical Publishing, Baltimore, 1988, p.111.

to famine and emigration<sup>158</sup>. Edward MacLysaght, writing in the 1950s, ranked the McInerney name as seventh in frequency in Clare with some 690 holders of the name enrolled to vote.<sup>159</sup> This ranking would have been broadly consistent with the ranking of the name in pre-famine Ireland.

Richard Cronnelly, writing in 1864, suggested that two senior branches of the family were then extant; the Tulla branch represented by M. McInerney, Esq., of Newhall near Ennis and a poor blacksmith living at Torloghnafranka near Ardrahan in Galway who was the representative of “Mac an Airchinnidh of Echtge”.<sup>160</sup> Neither of these notable reference can be verified though it is certain that there were numerous McInerneys living in the Newhall/Killone parish in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with Morgan McInerney recorded at Ballyea in Killone in 1855.<sup>161</sup> Needless to say, whoever was then acknowledged as the ‘chief’ of the McInerneys has now been forgotten and further research is unlikely to yield fruitful information.

Several members of the family achieved a measure of prominence in the nineteenth century such as Rev. Thomas McInerney, Parish Priest at Feakle and supporter of Daniel O’Connell in the 1828 Clare election and whom the Marquis of Amgleysey presented a silver chalice to in appreciation of his efforts at quelling a rioting crowd at Feakle in 1831.<sup>162</sup> Another was Rev. Patrick McInerney who, according to tradition, drilled volunteers near Doonbeg after the landing of a French force in support of the 1798 rebellion in County Mayo.<sup>163</sup> Other prominent McInerneys were Thomas McInerhiny of Feakle, gent.,<sup>164</sup> who married Susana Bourke in 1831, Michael McInerney, gent., of Castleconnell<sup>165</sup> in Limerick in 1846 and William McInerheny of Middlesex, London, whose will

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<sup>158</sup> *The Griffith Valuation of Ireland, 1855*: <http://www.failteromhat.com/griffiths.htm>

<sup>159</sup> Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families: Their Names, Arms and Origins*, p.26.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Cronnelly, *Irish Family History: Being an Historical and Genealogical Account of the Gaedhals from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, pp.347-348.

<sup>161</sup> [http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/griffiths\\_parish/killone.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/griffiths_parish/killone.htm). The parish of Killone was home to numerous McInerneys in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century including Joan McInerney who was buried at Killone church in 1753 and Francis McInerney buried at the same church in 1786. Matthew McInerheny of Tiremeclane, Newhall, left a will in 1787. In the 1820s, Darby McInerheny along with John, Michael and Thomas occupied lands in the parish. See Joseph Power, *A History of Clare Abbey and Killone*, 1986, p.40; W.P.W. Phillimore, *Irish Wills: Killaloe and Kilfenora Wills*, Vol.3 London, 1913 and [http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/tithe\\_applot/killeany.htm](http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/tithe_applot/killeany.htm)

<sup>162</sup> Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe: 1800-1850*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1992, p.95 Other McInerney priests who were registered in 1819 were: James McInerney, P.P. Clareabbey, Patritius McInerheny, P.P. Killard and Kilfeira and Thomas McInerheny (brother to Patritius) Curate at Killard and Kilfeira. There also appeared to have been a Michael McInerney who was the Catholic Curate at Broadford in the 1840s. *Ibid.*, pp.398-39, p.428.

<sup>163</sup> Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe in the Eighteenth Century*, p.240.

<sup>164</sup> *The Irish Genealogist*, Vol.5, Vol.6, 1979, p.716.

<sup>165</sup> Isaac Slater, *Slater’s National Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1846*, Manchester, 1846, p.169.

is dated August 1825 and who acted as a Royal Navy Agent and had a residence at Adelphi Terrace, Hanover Square.<sup>166</sup>

This survey intended to shed some light on the McInerney family of Thomond. While little has been written about the McInerneys in the histories of County Clare, recent research indicates that the McInerneys were an ancient family who held significant estates in the old Tradaree district of Newmarket-on-Fergus. The original progenitor of the McInerneys was Donnchadha Mac Con Mara, reputed to have been an *airchinneach* at Killaloe and brother to Cú Mara Beg, the twelfth century Lord of Uí Caisin. Indeed it is from the Irish word *airchinneach* that the surname McInerney is derived. The McInerneys held an important position among the offshoot septs of the McNamaras, holding sway in the Tradaree lands down to the confiscations of the 1650s. This survey set out to place the McInerneys in their historical context and to give insight into the dynamics of land tenure at the local level in Thomond. In this endeavour I hope that this survey has enriched our understanding of County Clare's Gaelic history and, in particular, highlighted the history of the popular Clare surname 'McInerney'.

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<sup>166</sup> *The National Archives of the United Kingdom*, Ref.11/1876, p.356.

## **Genealogy of the McNamaras & McInerneys<sup>167</sup>**

Caisin mac Cais

*...11 generations*

Aodh Odhair (fl.977)

Meanma (d.1014, King of Uí Caisin)

Domnaill

CúMara (*a quo* Mac Con Mara)

Domnaill *Echtghe*

Cú Mara Beg (d.1151 at Moinmore); **Donnchadha** (*clann* Mac an Oirchinnigh); Maolseachluinn (*clann* Uí Maoilchaoine)

Niall

**Connchobhair**

CúMara mór (d.1306)

**Murchadha**

**Lorcain**

**Lochlainn**

**Domnaill**

**Mathgamna**

**Tomais**

**Con Mara**

**Seain**

**Mathgamain**

**John**

**Mathgamna**

**Lochlainn**

**Mathgamna**

**Lochlainn**

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<sup>167</sup> Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, N.12. Also see Seán Ó hÓgáin, *Conntae an Cláir: A Triocha Agus A Tuatha*, Oifig an tSoláitair, Baile Átha Cliath, 1938, p.132 and Royal Irish Academy, MS 23. H.22 p.11 (nineteenth century copy). Please note that the dates have been inserted by the author of this article.

## Genealogy of *clann an Oirchinnigh*<sup>168</sup>

**Donnchadha Mac Con Mara**, *airchinneach* and *a quo clann an Oirchinnigh* (fl. 1140s-1160s)

Connchobhair

Murchadha

Lorcain

Lochlainn

Domnaill

Mathgamna

Tomais

Con Mara

Seain (d.1565)

Mathgamain (1548-1617)

John (fl.1659)

Mathgamna

Lochlainn

Mathgamna (d.1572)

Lochlainn (d.1576)

Donough (b.1570, fl.1606)

Donogh & Murtagh (fl.1650s)

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<sup>168</sup> British Library, MS Add 39266 Folio 72, Royal Irish Academy, MS E. iv. 4, f.28r and Royal Irish Academy, MS 23, G4, p.400-401. Please note that the dates have been inserted by the author of this article.

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