

MOUNTAINY KENNEDYS MAILING LIST 32 SEPTEMBER 2014

Welcome to this issue of the Mountainy Kennedys mailing list. We cover many aspects of the history of the Kennedys of North Tipperary and particularly the Kennedys who went into the mountain areas following the Cromwellian dispossessions of the 1650s.

With the recent inauguration of the first Irish Kennedy chief for hundreds of years we now have Chief Rody Kennedy of Rearcross, Tipperary, for Kennedys and their relatives to rally around.



Chief Rody Kennedy

Many people are now becoming aware of the proud history of the Kennedys and of their fortitude and perseverance which serve as an inspiration for us all.

We have had quite a number of new mailing list members. We bid you all welcome. If this message is passed on to you by a member and you would like your own copy to be sent to you directly please contact me at: mountainykennedys@gmail.com

THE FOILYCLERA / SYDNEY STAIRCASE

The usual means of access to the lofts of Irish cottages in days gone by was by ladder. When I first went to my ancestor's derelict cottage at Foilycleara in 1993, I was surprised to find the remains of an ornately carved staircase which seemed to be out of keeping with tradition.

I was talking with Mrs. Shanahan, a quite elderly lady who had grown up at Foilycleara. I asked her to tell me about the staircase. "One of the boys from Sydney made that. He carved it with a penknife" she said.

"From Sydney – Australia?" I asked incredulously. She laughed. "No, the young bachelors used to live down the hill by the river. It was made by one of them. To get down to where they lived you had to walk down along the ditch (hedge). It was so hard to get to we used to call it Sydney."

The staircase is now long-gone but I do have a piece of the wood from it here in Australia. Close examination reveals the loving detail carved into it by the young man from Sydney.



The staircase in the Foilycleara Cottage

TOOMYVARA BAPTISM REGISTER – MALE KENNEDY NAMES

A summary of the male Kennedy names bestowed in baptisms in the Toomyvara registers between 1832 and 1911 (except for 1856-61 which were unrecorded) has been added to the Kilcommon, Kilmore, Newport and Templeberry registers. Of the 1,102 male baptisms recorded in five parish registers in the period 1794-1911 the 12 major first names (78% of total) are:

Name	Kilcommon	Kilmore	Newport	Templeberry	Toomyvara	Total	% of 1,102
John	33	19	49	41	31	173	16
Patrick	32	22	29	34	30	147	13
Michael	18	19	32	35	26	130	12
James	17	10	24	29	17	97	9
Thomas	19	14	16	18	12	81	7
William	5	13	17	14	29	78	7
Denis	8	3	13	8	5	37	3
Matthew	6	7	9	6	4	32	3
Daniel	7	3	8	5	8	31	3
Philip	7	4	2	9	1	23	2
Brian	12	2	2	-	1	17	2
Rody	1	1	4	10	1	17	2
Total	165	117	205	209	167	863	78%

Other names in the Toomyvara register were Andrew (2), Batt (1), Cornelius (9), Darby (1), Edward (5), Francis (2), Hugh (2), Jeremiah (5), Joseph (1), Lanty (1), Martin (8), Stephen (1), and Timothy (6).

Thanks to Phyll Kennedy of Garnafarna, Toomyvara, for her valuable assistance with these records. Female baptisms will be provided in the next mailing list.

THE NEXT KENNEDY BOOK

In our last mailing list we signalled the question - “*Do the Kennedys of more recent times have any unextinguished claims to Tipperary soil?*” The next Kennedy book, “The Upper Ormond Kennedys – Their rights to Tipperary Soil?” will examine this question, firstly to establish who the original Kennedy landowners were and where they were. Secondly, we will attempt to determine if there is any evidence, preliminary or otherwise, that more recent Kennedys may have claims *to Tipperary soil*. The question of whether there is any process that may be used to further those claims will also be examined.

The several perspectives on the Cromwellian dispossessions which follow reveal a sometimes not so subtle approach to telling the name descendants of the dispossessed to “Get over it!”

However, whether historical wrongs may or may not be beyond correction, they are certainly not beyond illumination.

Voices of the Dispossessed

Brian Earls

Dublin Review of Books. Issue 60, October 2014

(Brian Earls is a diplomat. He has served in the Embassy of Ireland in Athens, Moscow, Warsaw and Ankara. His published work focuses on the relationship between oral tradition and printed literature, principally in the nineteenth century).

- See more at: <http://www.drb.ie/essays/voices-of-the-dispossessed#sthash.n0TBsCvc.dpuf>

The anxiety of the old men whom John O'Donovan encountered in the 1830s to communicate their lore suggests something of the immense value they attached to it. Oblique confirmation of its importance, particularly in its historical dimension, is provided by the overwhelmingly negative English response which it elicited. From the late seventeenth century the Irish sense of history, and its impact on the consciousness of those who entertained it, was contested, either by way mockery or dismissal, as evidently absurd and self-deceiving. Where

genealogy was concerned this tradition of hostile ethnic commentary, which had both its elite and popular dimensions, finds reflection in Bishop Berkeley's anecdote of the servant girl who refused to carry out the ashes on the grounds that she was descended from the ancient kings of Ireland. In *The Comical Pilgrim* of the early eighteenth century the Irish propensity to "speak largely of their antiquity, boasting as if they were a people before the creation" was cited in support of the proposition that "An Irishman and fool are correlatives; or at least synonymous terms: and catch him without a blunder, which makes him love bulls, 'tis to be feared the world is near its dissolution." The function of bulls, which were a central device in English representations of the Irish over several centuries, was strategic. By inserting an illogicality at the heart of Irish speech, **including the property-related claims that were the corollary of genealogical recital, the effect was to render it absurd.** It was in this spirit that, in a joke book of the early nineteenth century, a down-at-heel Irish lawyer assured Lord Camden: "I have some very great estates in Ireland, but they were taken away from my ancestors by that rogue Oliver Cromwell."

In a sense the joke book had a point; not everyone could be the heir to confiscated lands and many of those who made such claims must have been engaged in a form of amiable self-deception.

Brian Earls draws our attention to an overwhelmingly negative English response of poking fun at Irish concerns about having been dispossessed.

Canny, Nicholas. Early Modern Ireland c.1500-1700. Chapter 3 in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland*. R.F.Foster Editor. Oxford University Press. 1989.

(Nicholas Kenny was Professor of Modern History at University College, Galway).

Thus they received constant reminders that they were the descendants of glorious ancestors who had been wrongfully dispossessed of their rights and property during the century of confiscations—making way for Protestant intruders who had no legitimate claim to the estates which sustained them in wealth and luxury.

The prevalence of such beliefs within a peasant community was not, of course, confined to Ireland; the notion of the world being turned upside down achieved almost universal popularity in this era. However, there was probably no other society in Europe where the propagation of the message was so institutionalized as it was in Ireland, nor any other where the belief was so generally fixed in the minds of the peasantry that they were the dispossessed who would one day recover that of which they had been so unjustly deprived.

If the peasants had but known, they had not technically been deprived of anything: land under the old dispensation had belonged to ruling kinship systems rather than to communities of peasants, and most of the ruling families who had not conformed to English ways had either been killed in battle or had abandoned the country at the conclusion of one of the several political tumults of the previous era. Of the survivors from the old order, it was the previously privileged groups such as priests and poets who had lost status; and it is significant that it was these who fostered the myth of a lost golden age which might again be recovered. That it was possible for them to do so, and to have myth accepted as reality, is explained in large part by the comprehensive nature of the change that had taken place; by the brutality with which change had been affected and resisted; and by the resulting sharp discontinuity with the past. It is the scale of this discontinuity which sets apart the Irish historical experience from other European societies.

Some points from the foregoing opinions of Professor Canny may be summarised as follows:

1. There is a (so-called) myth among Irish people, whom he describes as peasants, of a lost golden age which might again be recovered.
2. Irish land had not technically been confiscated from communities of peasants but from ruling kinship groups.

3. Most of the ruling families or kinship groups lost their land because they had not conformed to English ways or had been killed in battle resisting the dispossessions, or had left Ireland.
4. Surviving priests and poets had fostered the myth of a lost golden age that might be recovered.

William Ernest Montgomery

The History of Land Tenure in Ireland:

Being the Yorke Prize Essay of the University of Cambridge for the Year 1888.
Law – First published 1889.

It has been seen that the undoubted rights in the soil possessed by the free tribesman were recognised by Sir John Davies, but these rights had been completely swept away by the various revolutionary settlements and re-settlements of the land. That in a certain sense the English were justified after the time of Cromwell in looking upon Ireland as conquered territory, in which the possessory rights of the natives had been forfeited completely by their repeated uprisings against the English power, is undoubtedly true.

Even the most ardent partisans of the cause of historical tenant-right admit the force of the legal objections to its existence; but they take another ground and say that the storm of war raged over the heads of an unmoved peasantry, who, when the storm has rolled by are found still in their place unmindful of the change of ruler, and riveted to the land.

There appears to be no reason whatever to believe this view to be correct. Those who know the Celtic character can understand how, in the war of race against race, the lowest earth-tiller would have felt stirred to rise against the national enemy.

Montgomery makes the curious point that the Irish forfeited their lands because of their repeated uprisings in trying to retain possession of their lands.

Not to be outdone in twisted logic we also have a tongue-in-cheek Irish perspective:

Tenant Right in Tipperary

Tague O'Flannagan

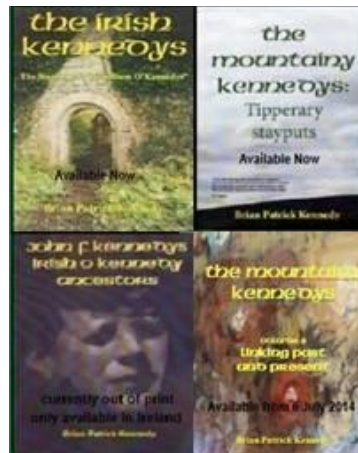
W.Holmes & Co. Glasgow. Entered at Stationers Hall. 1903.

Ballinamuck, County Tipperary. Extract from letter dated 1st January 187-.

The conversation then turned to the most important subject of the day, the Land Question; and although there was forty or fifty farmers present, not two of us could agree on what fixity of tenure meant. Billy Lynch declared that it was thirty years' lease and pay no rent, and the landlord to pay for all improvements during the lease. While Pat Quin as stoutly maintained that it could be nothing of the sort as there was not a decent farmhouse in all Tipperary; that no bill could be acceptable to the men of Tipperary unless it provided for new houses on every farm at the expense of the landlord, the tenant to be empowered to fix the rent himself; no lease to be shorter than ninety-nine years, and all improvements during the lease to be paid for by the landlord in advance. But Peter Brogan disputed the correctness of both. He said he had it from the highest authority, from one of the clergy, and the clergy had it from John Bright, that Mr. Gladstone intended to buy up every acre of land in Ireland and give it in a present to the farmers. All agreed this was something like fair play for Ireland.

If any of our readers have appropriate information that may be useful in this research it is, of course, very welcome.

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Your contributions to the Mountainy Kennedys mailing list are most welcome. Please keep them coming.

Brian