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# **Irish Clan History**

## **Lord of Car bury**

### **Setting the Scene**

In ancient Irish times, if you wished to survive interclan strife and usurping raiders, it was sensible to live inland – away from navigational rivers... To live up in the hills on barren land, was also opportune. If you preferred to be quiet, frugal - conserve what you had, it was best to keep away from neighbours – their: borders, boundaries and frontiers, especially those of the king. In addition, even if you did all that, it was still not quite enough, for you needed to be wily and shrewd as well.

The O'Ciardha [O'Kearey] land bordered Lough Derg and the River Shannon's southern shore – its feeder river. The land included loch-side and lowland grassland and upland mineral bearing hills - all in today's northern Tipperary County. The neighbours to the west were the O'Carrolls and to the east, the O'Kennedys... all boxed in by the O'Meara - to the south. Follow a line... up the river Shannon round King's County then across to Dublin, you separate Ireland roughly in half – lands of the southern and northern O'Neill's.

The Gælic-Irish suzerainty employed a form of guarantee based on pledges made during times of strife and war – if you help me out, I will do the same for you. It was not possible in that society to run a clan - group of families with a common ancestor, without seeking help to drive off a Viking raider or cattle rustling neighbour - given that you lived within striking distance of a good beaching area of sea or river, and you held a herd of cattle. Therefore, as a clan lord you always had a close association with your neighbours and local king – you probably

owed more tribute than they did. If your allegiance called on to fight - somebody you also owed surety to, you had to make the right choice - after all, not anyone living would forget and feuds common.

For ten years 'Ireland was a trembling sod' - endless warring campaigns 1156 - 1166, when the stricken Dermot offer his fealty - for the return of his kingdom, to Henry II. In eighty years three-quarters of Ireland, included in this area was O'Ciardha lands, was overrun by the Normans. This was the end to many Gælic-Irish clans, what was left of them, made allegiances outside their ancient supporters. However, some did continue with their old traditions, gathering what they could salvage.

This situation continued until Henry VII tired of the continual threat of invasion by Yorkist pretenders, backed by the earls Desmond and Kildare. Further Tudor battles saw Ireland completely conquered by 1603. The southern king O'Neill surrendered along with many lords and followers after the battle of Kinsale, including what was left of the larger part of the clan O'Ciardha. The final break up of the family came when Limerick fell in 1691, and when clan lands were not returned in William's reign. The landlords and monied classes saw no reason to help, educated or succour the needy - they thought it was in their interests to keep the disaffected down. In this new society, if you were Gæic and wished to survive and perhaps become a landowner it was important to assume Englishness, particularly in name... Kearey [with an 'ey'] adopted. Immigration to England and its Empire saw more Irish men in London than in Dublin they were all running away from oppression, hunger and lack of opportunity to work.

Thomas Kearey was one such... In his early twenties, he struck out, travelled across the Irish Sea. This was the year of 1812, which was a momentous time for Napoleon Bonaparte, who was escaping... his future looked bleak. Thomas on the other hand, was looking ahead - to make 'a new start'...

London was Thomas's' goal - Westminster, where there was an Irish quarter. It did not take him long to put his past training as a metal refiner to good use. Eventually, Thomas married and settled down in Brompton. The Keareys' became Londoners for more than a hundred

years living north of the river in and around Bayswater close to Kensington Gardens.

The first part of this book describes where the family had its roots and why most of the family moved away. As the Normans pushed across England they forced the incumbent Celts back... it was never going to be easy to maintain power... time proved it so...!

The second part deals mainly with London in the nineteenth century – very much the world of Dickens, and the coming of the railways – the industrial revolution and the start of the new aristocracy – the factory barons.

*'This is a story about 'hope – putting trust in the Lord, all will be well...  
In addition, about 'honour– a person's word - given as a pledge'.*

*'Hope is found in all breasts and is free.  
Honour - transient, may need payment.'*

## CHAPTER I

Prehistory - Celtic conquests – Tuatha Kingdoms – Advance into England - Capital Dublin – The Bards – The Druids – Gaelic language – Ciarraige Tribe – Roman pressure – The Vikings - River Shannon - Lough Derg - Niall – Irish Clan Lands – Southern and Northern Uí Néill - Behons – Cashels – Pole houses.

Celtic conquests from Gaul - over Neolithic, Iron and Bronze Age people, took place during the second half of the millennium BC. They built up and established many small kingdoms called 'tuatha'. This race of people – from the kingdom of Galatia, originating from the Upper Danube, Italy and Spain - formed the northern branch, which they ruled from their capital, Dublin. Their land extended over all Ireland, Wales, western and southwestern Britain, up England's western coast, over the border, into Scotland.

The Celtic race relied upon the bards – the High king's soothsayers, who foretold the tribe's destiny through story – they were the purveyors of myth and legend, who passed on aspects of community, which drew the people together. They were members of the aristocracy and did not sit with the musicians, entertainers and mercenaries - who were placed near the door, but alongside the raised dais – close to the lords table. These bardic singers and

storytellers extolled tales of heroes and gallant deeds; they were honoured and feted. It was a form of entertainment, which included the broadcast of news, everyday events and tales of the past. As an important side issue, which may not have been intended, the bards educated listeners in the facility and use of language that brought people together - instilling common cause and continuity; it gave the people a sense of belonging that lasted for generations.

The religion – a cult built upon nature and ruled by druids, priests and prophets, were later called ‘brehons’; they maintained influence by occultism, and a knowledge seasonal changes - of things affected by the calendar - sun, wind and rain. Any matters the brehons could not explain were wrapped in mysticism - as matters concerning ‘the other world’.

The bulk of the inhabitants were farmers and stockholders working small rectangular fields, operating a cross ploughing technique. They built dry-stone boundary walls and drainage ditches, lived in timber roundhouses or pole-houses, and stored surplus grain in pits.

Ireland’s people lived in a land of mountain and forest, bog and grassland... never far away from well-stocked lake and grazed pasture. The people calculated their wealth by the size of their herd and the amount of land under cultivation. Their gods reflected this concern and love of the land.

The Romans never invaded Ireland although they did stop the encroachment of Celtic people in Britain... gradually the Roman influence inflicted a pressure that forced them back - a socio-political and economic force rather than a physical one. The Romans, assessing rightly that the Celts offered no real threat - continued their march northwards... leaving their expansion into metal bearing, western areas, until later.

The army that made up the Roman force was Germanic... an altogether stronger, fitter and more advanced people than the Celtic farmers and stockbreeders. They were a tried and tested body of people from a number of tribes, hardened by their transient life - fighting, building roads and bridges, organizing logistics... the Celts were no match for them.

Ptolemy listed, in the second century AD, the names of Irish people in the P Celtic form, which was the language of Britain and Gaul. The group of people we are interested in were recorded in his writings. They are the Cruithni who were linked to the Ciarraige tribe of Conbnacht and north Kerry... we continue, still in the land of the Munu - Munster.

This book relates to central south-western Ireland: the northern half of Counties Limerick, Tipperary and Offaly. These three counties are bordered to their north by the river Shannon that bears a two Loughs, Derg and Ree. Inland, south of the river, the gentle rising land sweep up to a range of mountains: Mullaghareirk, Galtee, Slieveardagh Hills, and Slieve Bloom.

The early Christian church had as one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland Saint Ciaran Saighir [the Elder]. He was the first bishop of Ossary - one of the four who preceded Saint Patrick. He founded Seir-Kieran, County Offaly. Ciaran is an Irish personal name meaning 'Little Dark One'. He is thought to be related to Ciar who was son of Fergus, King of Ulster. The name is associated to Ciardha, being one of Ciar's People.

The Atlantic sweeps into the mouth of the Shannon until it reaches Limerick, under two bridges past the Salmon Weir onwards to the entrance of Lough Derg at Killaloe. South of the estuary of the River Shannon, river and loch, populated by a tribe recorded as the Medon Mairtine. Over time, they became weakened by war – by the encroaching raiders and warring neighbours, their lands appropriated by the thrusting

Eoghanachta... a southern tribe expanding northwards. These people flourished, and as all tribal grouping, made up of extended families, some closely related others not so but all contributing to the main group...

The ruling suzerain – High king, held this land called Munster, it was sometimes referred to as Cashel [cashel: the term used to describe a stepped walled settlement] relying on a hierarchical system based on obligations owed – obligations to pay for protection, farm the land, take part in social gatherings, contribute to clan activities and share benefits. These obligations once accepted were never withdrawn - in life or death, but continued through the succeeding generations... The leader, Muiredach 325-355, maintained his position by strength of arms proved in battle. His position was no sinecure – because extended families were large, particularly the chief's, there was always those envying his position perhaps disputing his leadership, so he had to be always on guard!

Muiredach's son Eochaid 356-365, married Mongfind of Munster. From this union future kings of Connacht reigned. His second wife Cairrenn was daughter of a Saxon king and an ancestor of the Uí Néill, prince of the Connachta. She was also mother to Niall NoínGiallach of the Nine Hostages 379-405, so called because of the nine tributary tribes that owed him homage. He was High king of Erin, Ard Ri, the Gaelic form of High king, referred to as, 'king of Tara'. Niall, who eventually becoming one of the supreme rulers of all Ireland, founded this ruling body.

The marriage of Eochaid and Cairrenn brought together an alliance between the Saxons, Irish, and Picts... a royal line called Uí Néill [descendants of Niall]. This continued for almost a thousand years... only being broken by Brian Boru, king of Cashel, who, although reigning king, and afterwards by others, never ousted the name and fact of Uí Néill - as representing true

national identity. When Niall died, Connacht and the kingship of Ireland passed to his nephew. His sons, Eoghan, Conall and Enda, took over smaller parts of the kingdom in northern and central-southern Ireland. It was Eoghan of Aileach, who now ruled as High king of Munster and from his eldest son was born Fiacha. It was in this fashion that the Eoghanacht line was born.

Ailill the king is vanished  
Vanished Croghan's fort:  
Kings to Clonmacnoise now  
Come to play their court

Aileach ruled from a great stone castle built on a 600-foot hill... at one time the stronghold of Bronze Age kings. A treaty was drawn up between all the clans, which divided Ireland into two parts – the dividing line passed between Dublin and Galway, partway, following the river Shannon. The king of the southern part was recognised as the High king of Cashel.

Cashel, Tipperary, is situated in a fertile plain sitting on a rock holding a stone fort. It was built in the 400s as the seat of the King of Munster. St Patrick 432-459, preached there converting Aengus, the King. In 1101 it passed into the hands of the church that bestowed it upon Murtough O'Brien

Osraighe or Ossory covered the present county of Kilkenny and the southern portion of Leix - populated by the Ciarraige tribe [*Ciar refers to a nondescript colour it could be black, grey, brown, or tan. This could describe the people's clothes, hair, or skin. It is also a family name... they becoming part of Ciar's People*]. They became vassal people [*owed them allegiance*] of the Eoganachta who were the successors of the holy Carthach tribal lands, including all those affiliated clans with similar names and family connections. The clan was under royal protection of Ui Neill, descended from the Connachta when Ciar Culdub was slain...



The hierarchy of kings was adapted to the older structure of provinces - Ulster, Munster, Connacht, and Leinster, within these there were two kings vying for supremacy. They were competing for the revenues and title... provincial kings claiming over lordship, over lesser kings, one of which was the forebears of the O'Ciardha. Often these kings had to fight to enforce their claim... both admitted the supremacy of the High King of Ireland.

It is almost impossible either to work out the dominance of a particular tribe over another or to form a linearity of leading clans, especially if you try to put a date to each. It has to be pure conjecture for there are no compatible pieces of evidence to back them up. All one can do is assessing the likelihood that one was, 'at the time of!'

Britain's fifth century history revolves around the return of the Roman Army to Italy and the disintegration of almost five-hundred years of Roman influence. The roads remained, the buildings suffered from lack of maintenance but the language and social mores remained, to be adapted. Irishmen were to some degree unaffected by the turbulence, which followed the Romans retreat back to Rome. Christianity spread from the monasteries of Gaul reaching Ireland at about the same time. It was then that there were great changes to the Irish language.

By about 540AD, the time of Finnian, the monks had begun to take over some of the power of the Brehons. Finnian died in the plague about ten years after the foundation of Clonard. By then both Ciaran and Columba of Terryglass were in their twenties. Saint Ciaran of Clonmacnoise from Connaught was the founder of the Abbey near Lough Ree and Columba, the greatest of the later generation monks, founded Iona. St Ciaran was another of The Twelve Apostles of Ireland. He died on the

9<sup>th</sup> September 546 at the age of 32 - buried in his little church attached to the Abbey.

The rural society of this time was not one based upon towns or villages but ring-forts, lake dwellings and later, monastery-settlements. The people populated smaller communities of much cruder construction with little or no stonework but simple pole houses... often with an open roof, built on an earthen mound with ring ditches and offset entrances.

**Origins of the O'Ciardha Clan of Munster,  
part, of a northern Celtic Race.**

**Southwestern, Tribal people,  
made up of minor tribal groups.**

Mumu

Múscraighe [Musciarraige]

Cenel Ciarpri

Niall 450AD

Ciar's People

Southern Uí Néill

Uí Raibne, owned the site of Kilkeary.

King Duibhrea, St Ciardha's father.

St Ciardha, 620-680, [Cill Cheire] Church of Keary.

*It may be naïve to attempt to make a genealogical list especially when there is little evidence to go on. However, it maybe helpful - give a feel of time and place... Therefore, I make no apology.'*

## CHAPTER II

Entry from Gaul - Enda – Saint Patrick – Written Latin – Irish Monks - Cashel – Clonmacnoise – Clonard - Rule of Columba – Saint Ciaran – Lough Ree – Cianan of Saigir – Irish scholars – Lough Derg – Province or Ormond - Saint Columba - Abbess – Religious House of Kilkeary – Saint Ciardha.

Ireland's early history is about the claim to High kingship, which led to an unstable society. Precedents propped up the whole system. Therefore, there was never a central power, which controlled the uniform development of the country. In seventh century Ireland the provincial kings accorded to the High King a sovereignty - gave them not just the title but stature something learnt from the Roman government of Britain. These high ideal of kingship were overtaken by practical reality. The last High King was Brian Boru round about the turn of the first millennium.

This continuous warring between Irish clans upset the society. The people disliked the dynastic violence, which often dislodged whole clans driving the remnants away from their territory. When Christianity began to have an affect upon the social order, the people were well disposed towards the religion.

The coming of Christianity brought about a greater stability - the Catholic Church's governing body set the rules from afar, which brought about conformity not only in Christian Ireland but also within the continent of Europe.

In Ireland, the monasteries carried on their powerful influence for many centuries whilst in other countries including England their power rose and fell. Christianity came initially from

England at the time of Patrick, the earliest Irish abbot being Enda.

The Irish greeted the monks as saviours from violence..., which quickly made their influence grow. Finnian set out as a missionary travelling through Leinster and Connacht staying for seven years - making his home in Clonard... an area roughly thirty miles square taking in part of the four provincial kingdoms Meath, Leinster, Connacht and Munster.

It appears that Cashel [name for stone fort] was a Christian centre and that a number of local kings were bishops or abbots. In Murtough O'Brien, gifted the place to the church... at the same time the Bishop raised to the dignity of Archbishop. At Clonard, there was an important Church College where St Columba and St Ciarán were students. The first Bishop being St Finnian.

Ireland changed dramatically when Mac Erca died. Up to the twelfth century, the monastic churches were all under the Rule of Columba 544. St Ciaran, one of a number of Benedictine monks, was one of the first saint-founders. Between Mac Erca's death and the arrival of Patrick Christianity became established - an established power governed by Bishops. It was during Mac Erca's time that there were mass conversions that covered all Irish society. Several of those Bishops stood up to the power of the lords and probably the greatest of these was St Ciaran.

St Ciarán, the 'smith's [carriage-wright] son' from Enda's Aran, founded Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, in 545. He was one of the principals of the synods of Meg Léne at the time of 'Diarmait the Good', one of the great kings of Ireland. Columba commented wryly at the time of Ciarán's death:

'Blessed is God who called Ciaran from this world in his youth.  
If he had lived to an old age, he would have aroused many men's hostility'.

Clonmacnoise is famous for its monastery completed by Queen Devorgilla... founded in 547, built on land gifted by Diatmid Mac Cerbhaill. At St Ciarán's Church, one of the churches attached to the monastery, lays the founder's burial place.

The monastery fort was enclosed behind a cashel – a stepped walled settlement: with individual stone cells for the monks, a stone chapel and graveyard. It was located close to a main trading route and Lough Ree. It was considered a building greater than the king's influence - a city within itself. Inside the enclosure, the monastic settlement resembled a collection of beehive stone huts with just a single opening. They looked very much like the Trulli, conical brick houses in Puglia, Italy.

The clerics had a powerful influence over provincial kings; it was a case of each looking to the other for support - from outside domination. The area of Ireland of greatest monastic influence was Connacht safest from Viking incursion and clan wars, found in north-west Ireland. By the middle of the sixth century, the greater part of Ireland was made up of kinglets.

Most rulers had a very strong link with the church – a clan chief could also be a priest, as could a lord – one position did not have greater importance than the other did. It would not be cynical to suggest that clan chiefs saw this as an easy way to achieve salvation, and the church, as a means of converting the chief's subjects. If these positions could be headed up by the same person or by a member of, the same family then it all became very convenient... It is not surprising to find that some families held these offices for generations.

Irish Christianity had a great influence on Britain and records should not be interpreted without some recourse into pagan Ireland and its traditions. Irish history, through the language of the bards, is much older and far more developed than

England's - it's neighbour to the east... although later history needs reference to early accounts by the Romans – particularly Ptolemy, and later Christian writings by priests and leaders like Cianan of Saigir. We have to be grateful for the visiting monks who stayed and had the necessary foresight to record what they saw and heard. In that, way we can form and date some events.

### CHAPTER III

King Duibhrea – Daughter - Abbess - Monastic House – Kilkeary Parish – Upper Ormond – Clan O'Keary from Mael – MacGioha Cheire – Annals of the Four Masters – Book of MacEgans – The Irish Annals – Gildas – Lord of Carbury – The slaying of 'H Ciardha ri Cairpri.

Saint Ciardha 620–679AD, an Abbess, founded in north Munster – in the area now known as Kilkeary, a monastic 'house' for thirteen postulants - a nunnery, in about 645AD. This settlement, in Upper Ormond, appears to have been the only one established during the early Christian era in that area - later defined as 'in the diocese of the bishop of Killaloe'. The church was elaborately decorated, especially around the altar; the walls painted to depict the apostles and the single roof span covered with split stone slates. For the period, this represented a building of influence and authority, a dwelling that catered for a number of nuns, visiting pilgrims and the needy, particularly women. The land close to the church was adopted as a burial ground for the local clan.

The O'Ciardha clan was one of the family groups who made up the Múscraighe Tribe who populated central and south/west Ireland – east of the River Shannon. The aristocratic

family Uí Raibne reputedly owned Kilkeary [Cell Cére]. St Ciar who was also of the family founded the church. Cousins held the churches of Dromineer, Toomevara, and Kilaughnane. These religious houses were all situated close to the rich pastures that line the east shore of the river. Other aristocratic branches of the family held smaller foundations whilst some of the family settled at the great monastery of Birr. The Uí Daigre, yet another branch, held the church of Latteragh and claimed that Odrán, its founder, was one of them. Uí Léinéne was a family of Uí Daigre, and as late as 1074, the annals record the death of Gilla Brénnainn Ua Léknine, Superior of Letracha Odráin.

Ireland was provided with territorial bishops, each generally given a diocese close to a royal residence. As more nunneries and monasteries established, their incumbents became bishops, abbesses – and some, great abbots. Most kings sought bishops for their own kingdoms, which gave them added power and influence. Sometimes their requests given other times they were allocated a monk under a bishop. The bishop, who was a monk, remained under an abbot, who was esteemed. As with the king so with the church – there was a difference between the north and southern parts of Ireland. The southern church favoured conformity with Rome the nunneries and monasteries governed by many different groups – some as independent establishments. Unity was urgently needed which took the form of a metropolitan episcopate. The first candidate was put up in 650 in the southern see of Kildare, in northern Leinster. Ultimately, both north and south united under Armagh whose bishop became Ireland's senior bishopric. It had been founded by Patrick and remained the most important of all his monasteries.

The Irish word for Abbot is *comarba* – meaning heir. Therefore, his is the heir of the founder. In many instances, the heir was also of the same dynastic family – the same kindred - the

link between the founder and the patron... Ciarán, first born of the saints of Ireland.

St Ciardha was a native of this district, her father Duibhrea, was a minor king - descended from 'the line of Connors', Kings of Ireland. To her father's name was sometimes added 'insula', an island - this refers to an island now called King's Island, surrounded by a branch of the Shannon called Abbey River. Loch Derg's southern side is in the Province of Ormond - where St Ciardha was born. Her great sanctity and many miracles attracted many holy women to share her monastic life. The Abbess - Lady Superior, had administrative power over her mother church and followed the example of her first teacher Columba who was not a bishop but a monk and priest. It is to her that the clan name was drawn - from an abbreviated form of Máel MacGíoha Cheire, one of the devotees - 'followers', of Saint Ciardha [Cheire]. This was the moment when the family name became established - from the naming of the saint - a close connection between the church and the secular head [king Duibhrea], reflected in the early writing.

The church did not suppress Gaelic but retained part of it within Latin. The monastic libraries kept these works and preserved them. Not only was this liberal attitude reflected in the churches writings but in the Christian services. Clerics used Irish in their studies and teaching consulting a written grammar of the Irish tongue. Whether they knew what the outcome would be is not clear but it made secular and clerical writing universal greater than English. The monasteries and nunneries housed the teachers of Latin. Their ringed stonewalls, built on a rampart mound, gave security and isolation from the unsettled land. These cashels were every bit as defensive as the lords castle a place where the whole community could shelter. This was no haphazard arrangement but a place declaring wealth and power. The books were supplied



from the continent for there was not just normal trade between the nearest reaches of France and Spain but religious sustenance as well. All religious houses had a scribe who attended to the matters of the day. In other times copied out books of learning so that they could be passed on. A Psalter, known as the Cathach attributed to St Colum Cille, was written at about the time St Ciardha was performing her good works. The Irish missionaries travelled on the continent baptising Germans and Austrians building up the faithful as they went. They went on pilgrimages 'seeking salvation and solitude' evangelising pagan people preparing a way for later monks to build on.

### **Kings of central/southwest Ireland**

**Muiredach 325-355**

I

**Eoganacht of Munster**

I

**Eochaid 356-365**

I

**Crimthann 365-378**

I

**Niall Noigiallaig 379-405**

I

**Loegaire 428-463**

From a pagan land to Christian, the age of small kingdoms

I

**King Duibhrea 590**

I

**Kings of Cashel**

I

**Uí Néill dynasty of southern Ireland**

I

**'H O'Ciardha ri Ciarpri, king of Carbury 1168**

I

**Mac Lochlainn of Cenel Eogain**

Treaty of Windsor 1175, south & southeast granted to Philip de Braose

It was not always the case that an Abbot was a bishop governed a diocese or administered a tribe's territory... there was no such organization these things interchangeable. This company of women who formed the foundation of St O'Ciardha's community in Upper Ormond was named after her, 'Cill Cheire' [Church of Keary]. It was here that she ruled with considerable skill, increasing the postulants - giving the foundation credence and sanctity. This was no trifling matter. To be officially recognised and canonized means she was accepted by Rome and worthy - of veneration. This allowed St Ciardha to expect obedience particularly in matters of the church and women. Being a daughter of the king added power and prestige. This link between king and church made it easier to assume and hold onto power. This close association between the ruling body, either local or national, and the priesthood is a feature of early religious foundation. It was in both their not only interests to have this close connection keeping power centralized but also greatly assisted religious foundation.

When the nunnery at Kilkeary was well established and capable of self-regulation she left, accompanied by five nuns, to start a new foundation in North Offaly, King's County, where she obtained a site for another nunnery from St. Fintan in Munster. It was in a place now known as Tehelly, in the parish of Durrow, formed in about the year 655AD. This was close to Clonmacnoise and St Ciaran Church. Following the tidal river

north, from the mouth of the river Shannon, you come to a loch called Derg - where the river enters the loch was built the settlement of Killaloe. The great river continues through the Lough northwards, to Clonmacnoise, a wealthy, sixth-century fort-like monastery, built of stone, before Lough Ree... Then onwards... to Carrick on Shannon.

It did not matter where St Ciardha travelled her title to property and obedience went with her. She and the bishop, who was son of the king of Munster, jointly ruled the church. An early law tract refers to the bishop of Cork and Emly as uasal-epscop, giving them a status equal to the king of Munster - who was overlord of the southern half of Ireland.

Later, St Ciardha [Canonized Pre-Congregation] returned to Kilkeary where she was reputed to have died of natural causes. Nothing is known of the subsequent history - of the nunnery or her burial place, but her death is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters, January 5<sup>th</sup> 679. The following stanza is from Leahhar Breac, the Book of the MacEgans:

‘The call of Semeoin, the sage,  
To Christ of purist...;  
A new, transitory, gentle sun was  
Ciar, the daughter of Duibhrea.’

It was in the middle, and latter part, of the first millennium that proper written records were kept. ‘The Irish Annals’, Book of Kells and ‘The lives of the Saints’ are three sources of early recorded history - written by scribes in Latin - the result of intended missionary zeal by Christian bishops and their scribes.

Gildas developed Latin literature in a style and order fit for publication. His paragraphs, sentences and words were impressions build upon the spoken word – placed together by sound and syllable. The language was from Europe but based

upon English. As Ireland was the first large country to become Christian - outside the Roman Empire, scholars had to write the Irish language, in Latin characters. They were compelled to write with an alphabet. Ogam notches became outdated in the seventh century - still not deciphered. Latin preserved the first written records. This is when the K began to be used. Thereafter Latin began to be changed - English, Welsh and Irish adapted and added to - developed into a modern literature.

Ciardha is the Gaelic spelling of the family name - used by scribes in about 650AD. Later writers increasingly used Cary or Carey, as a more identifiable written form. The written Irish-language was mainly derived from Latin and assumed closer integration to the accepted form of spelling and pronunciation in the sixth century - probably when the K was first used in some written texts. In its softer anglicised form of Cary or Carey, it is natural not to make the difference so hard. What era or part of the country 'K' rather than 'C' used, is unclear...perhaps the use of K [as in kick, or quick, in the Gaelic Q form] happened when the Gaelic Cill [church] was replaced by the Latinized Kil - for place-names on maps - hence, Kilkeary and Kilkenny. Most place names are in that form. The method of spelling might indicate who commissioned the work, when, and for what purpose.

The history about the right language and spelling of a family name explains what happened in Ireland that caused such disturbance and distress. The clan chiefs, Anglo-Irish aristocracy, their upstarts, the invaders, clerics and politicians may deserve censure, for the chaos that marks the islands history, but the people certainly do not. The derivations of a name throughout the centuries give proof to the matter... from Ciardha to Ciara, Cheire to Carie, Carey, and Keary & Kearey.

This unity under Gaelic kings, represented by Ui Neill, continued for nearly two-hundred years, until the Normans were

invited to save the then ruling body. From this moment, Gaelic Ireland began to lose its identity and power base. This call, on an outside body, was to have far-reaching effects and was not reversible.

The O'Ciardha [O'Cary or O'Keary] clan were a senior branch of the Cenel Cairpri, descended from Cairpre... populated the central southwestern areas of Ireland, an ancient Gaelic warrior kingdom speaking Gaeltacht... The chiefs of clan O'Ciardha were closely related to the supreme ruler of southern Ireland... they were minor kings, ruling that part of southern Ireland located just below Loch Derg... in today's northern Tipperary.

‘O’Cary rules over Carbery of bards,  
He is of the tribe of Niall of the nine Hostages,  
There are none but themselves there,  
Of the clans of Niall over Leinster.

The main clan lands were Slievefelim or the Silvermine Mountains and Hills in the kingdom of Munster, not far from Ossory... They were a senior group controlling a vast area related to Ui Neill. Another branch of O'Ciardha – further east, inhabited Carbury, Co Kildare. This extended family grouping - Cairbre Ua gCiardha, were also a prosperous family with many cattle.

The ancient place of St Ciardha's monastic house. Situated in a valley between two towns - Nenagh and Toomyvara, and two mountains – Slievekimalta and Devilsbit. To the north lies The Central Lowlands: an area of farms, market towns, peat bogs, glens and lakes. Before intensive cultivation, the land was heavily forested. As with the growth of many settlements the nearest navigable river influenced its development; in this case it was

the River Shannon and in particular Lough Derg, five miles north of Nenagh; its southern banks bordered Lower Ormond and Arra and Owney.

The main family territory was roughly in the centre of the country and conforms to an area of hill and lowland. It was bog-free downland, rich in minerals and well drained and hedged. This part of inland central-Ireland is bordered by several clan territories and like all such lands continually fought over.

These early Munster tribal lands were divided by between cousins, into east and west groups. Unfortunately, both groups suffered from several competing branches, which weakened the power base. The eastern cousin's centre was at Cashel, and the other, the northern group of lower Shannon; it was to this area that O'Ciardha was clan chief - becoming king of Thomond. He later included over lordship – suzerain, of the Ostmen of Waterford and Limerick, including their two important cities. This large area approximately conforms to today's Co Tipperary.

The central/southern Uí Néills, Uí [*means' children of'*], a term of gentility - denotes those of the ruling family. This is a much older form than Ó or more strictly 'Ua'. It was to this branch of the Ó Neill's that the Ó Ciardha clan became indelibly linked. The Kearey clan were a 'sept'... a corruption of the word 'sect' adopted by the English settlers, to describe Gaelic ruling families or clan groups. This allegiance between the O'Neill's and the O'Ciardha continued until the latter lost all their clan lands over a period of six hundred years, ending at the same time as the restoration of Charles II, after Cromwell's death.

Edward MacLysaght's, *More Irish Families*, 1982, pp50, agrees that the majority of those called Carey [or Keary] belong to the O'Ciardha sept - are a senior branch of the Cenel Cairpri. It can be seen that whether C or K used it refers to the same people.

Kilkeary, in Co. Tipperary today, is a small parcel of land seven miles southeast of Nenagh, in Toomevara RC Parish. This is a relatively modern name forming a link with its more ancient past. Originally, the ecclesiastical name was Templedowney [Teampul Domnan the church of St. Domnan]. Toomevara is derived from Tuaim ui Mheadhra, O'Meara's Mound or tumulus. The parish was an area of many hundreds of acres; Kilkeary was spelt Kylkeary in the first quarter of the first millennium, a place of pilgrimage and substance.

In all research into genealogical connections into the O'Ciardha, [Keary] clan, certain names are always cropping up; in particular, O'Meara, O'Kennedy and O'Carrolls.

Toomevara parish contains the districts of Agnameadle, Ballymackey, Kilkeary, Templedowney and Ballygibbon. It has three ancient ecclesiastical ruins one of which was an ancient foundation for women established by St. Ciardha. There are also several ruined castles, some habitable, others not, being just ruins.

The name of this district was written by 'The Scholar of Aegus', as Cill Cheire, the church of St. Kera or Cera [Church of Keary]; it is situated in the ancient Muscraidhe Thire, the Upper and Lower Ormond. In Aegus written, 'Ciar Ingen Duibhrea,' meaning St. Ciardha, daughter of king Duibhrea, who was a clan chief.

The ancient church of Kilkeary was built about 625AD, 57 feet long and just over 19 feet wide. It is in ruins having all its features destroyed except for a few massive stones – one of several tons. It was built in a semi-cyclopean style of Lange limestone rocks and is believed to be of the seventh and eighth centuries. In the graveyard is a monument to Major General William Parker Carrol of Ballygrenade, a descendant of the O'Carrolls of Ely... Previously, in 1702, an earlier member of the family was buried here

William Carrol was from Lissenhall, on the far side of Nenagh Town and had a very distinguished career in the Spanish Army during the Napoleonic Wars. He was highly thought of in England and married an illegitimate daughter of George III. William was also a Politician who partitioned for the separation of the Northern and Southern Grand Juries in the county, in the 1830s.

The fact that the Carrols used the Kilkeary graveyard – the site of the nunnery, was in keeping with G alic tradition. The Carrols, Kennedys' and Meara were all inhabitants of the east side of the Shannon – neighbours..., originally owned by the O'Ciardha. When the O'Ciardha were being harassed and evicted some transferred allegiance to the security of these clans.

Kilkeary nearest large town is Nenagh, seven miles west; an important centre for its Anglo-Norman association and Franciscan Friary, which the Kennedy founded in 1240, and Cromwell destroyed, in 1650. It was one of the new walled towns designed in 1171... the citizens fearing incursions from warring factions lent a hand with the building... the town council passed a law whereby every person – including: shop owners, priests and women. Every person was allotted a day in the week that each had to help in building the town walls.

Toomyvara, a pleasant small market town, lies four miles east, lying astride an important crossroads.

The Vikings, 795AD – Scandinavians called Norsemen, more than likely from Holland, pillaged and plundered coastline and river settlements around Ireland and Britain... building fortresses at Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Limerick - the main towns of Ireland... These guardians, of main river inlets, were kings, who were tribal chiefs or earls... in no way could they be described as rulers of large tracks of the countryside. They lived in stone houses with a surrounding wall



punctured by fortified gates. Circling this stronghold were a number of ditches and mounds with offset entrances.

Finding Ireland particularly accommodating the Norsemen chose the best land and settled... marrying into the population, becoming known as Ostmen. They felt at home... in this pagan land... a land of tales, songs, myths and legend - it was much like their own former homeland.

Through the ages, this settlement, on the river mouth, was important. Later it was called Limerick and came to play a vital role in the development of the country... a place well known for its salmon fishing and its access, up the river, into the heart of the country.

In Loch Derg, longboats are at anchored, close to the shore... some drawn up on the beach others hauled up onto logs - under repair. These are the property of Viking raiders, who are frequent visitors – their coming and going accepted by the inhabitants. A number of the Vikings strike up relationships with the inhabitants, marry, and have children... They remain working the land and fishing. This was a convenient fraternization, which ensured a safe harbour and a place where boats could be restocked, and take on water. Like many immigrants to a new land, they took an active part in its development becoming more committed to its survival than the original inhabitants, which the incoming Normans found to their cost...!

In the 830s, the Viking raids became even more extensive defeating the Uí Néill in battle and plundering widely... the clergy were at this point part of the nobility and church property protected by law. Monks could not act as security nor make bequests without his abbot's consent for the abbot was the administrative head of the church.

The Norse raids lasted until the 870s... died out, and erupted again. Ten years later 'the great Norse tyrant' Barith was killed... not before destroying Cianan of Duleek's oratory.

The kingdom of Uí Failge comprised the baronies of Offaly in County Kildare and part of the diocese of Kildare... their kings related to the ruling Laigin dynasty. However, the southern Uí Néill maintained precedence in Munster until the reign of Feidlimid mac Crimthainn in AD886. In the latter part of the first millennium, the Uí Néill was probably the most important family grouping – dominating both the northern and southern parts of Ireland. They were descended from Niall Noígiallach who themselves were from Conn.

The Vikings at the battle of Dublin 919AD killed Niall Glundub, ancestor and over-king of the Uí Néill. During the battle, five other kings and many other nobles killed. Glondub was related to Niall, the last of the kings of Tara, the legendary seat of the high-kingship, and ejected by Brian Boru when he rose to power.

In 920, a Norse settlement was enlarged at the mouth of the Shannon, which became the city of Limerick. It was the start to a flourishing trading place, the beginning of the salmon industry and the vitalling of many Viking boats. In 937, the Limerick Vikings clashed with those of Dublin on Lough Ree and were defeated. The Shannon was of major importance in military campaigns in all of Ireland's history. The association with the Norse never diminished – eventually they become integrated into the Irish community. The city was criss-crossed by wooden streets, houses and workshops. Mathgamaim sacked the city in 964 after previously capturing Cashel from the Eoganachta. All those fit to fight were killed the others enslaved. His brother Brian later killed him.

The monastic movement established great ecclesiastical centres and one of these was at Kildare, in the early ninth century, where Uí Néill appointed provincial governor by the monasteries and king of Leinster. He lived there with his brother the abbot and his sister the abbess. The heartland of Leinster was the vale of the Liffey, and the valleys of the Barrow and the Slaney. At Domnach Sechnaill generations of the same family reined as abbots; this fact gives light how leadership of the church was passed onto succeeding generations.

The Irish chieftain's allegiances fluctuated depending on what thought to their advantage. In this, the Ciardha clan was no different. They were frequently mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters from 952 onwards to the death of Ua Ciardha tighearna Coirpre [O'Keary lord of Carbury]. Again in 993 when Mael Ruanaig O'Ciardha, king of Carbury was killed by the Teftha. This killing went on... the tribes were continually seeking a way to gain territory. Even in 1128, we finally read of the slaying of 'H Ciardha ri Cairpri, another king of Carbury.

*It is important again to stress that confirmation about name, place and time is impossible to confirm. Not only does the language change but the spelling within that language. Family groups within a tribe split into clans, and clans into septs. Kings described as lords, and lords as kings However, that should not present a problem. It is not a question of trying to change history or give credence but present a picture where the Ciardha fit into early Christian Munster.*

## CHAPTER IV

Cinel Eoghain - The Central Lowlands – Battle of Clontarf – Boru - King of Thomond – Toomavara Parish – The Scholar of Aegus – New walled towns – Viking raids – King Murchertach – Lough Derg – River Shannon – O Connor – Killaloe – Nenagh – Friars Island.

The kingship of the Cinel Eoghain became lessened - dropped out of succession. By 976, Brian Boraimhe [Boru] asserted control over the whole of Munster. It was during this time that Amlaib Cuaran's [AD945-80] daughter and grandson were baptised and given Irish Christian names – Mael Muore and Gilla Ciarain. Later, during the Battle of Clontarf, 1014, Brian heralded the claim to the throne of all Ireland including the land held by the Ostmen. Support however by other Irish leaders was not forthcoming. A number of clans leaders populating north Leinster and Munster, one being Maelsheachlainn O' Ciardha, bribed just before the battle to desert with his men, fought with the Norsemen - to remove Brian's power in Limerick. This united gathering failed and Brian won a great victory although he never lived long enough to reap the rewards for he was killed in his tent pitched on the field of battle.

Boru's reign shattered the old order, his death allowed Máel Sechnaill II to be high king of Ireland until his demise in 1022. The Ostmen were allowed to remain and develop their towns, which gradually became main centres of importance. All those clans linked to the O'Neill's, including the O'Ciardha, lost political power – new relationships were formed – some gained advancement others declined. The O'Ciardha clan started to split up - part moved to the kingdom of Man, others to the Isles and a further group retreated to western Munster – today's Co Cork and Kerry, whilst others fled to the hills or joined other clans.

The main nucleus of older members continued to maintain their old ways close to the ancestral home.

Enjoying large areas of land, or what it produced, did not burden the Irish lord or 'leader. It mattered not to him that another might quote amounts he was more concerned about 'status' according to whom he knew, who served him and who needed his power and position. This was a major failing in the Irish leadership system accepting the rank others accorded him, showing greater deference, that 'the other was the greater lord'. When he died all that deference died with him and there was turmoil, until the whole lot settled down again...more than likely, to show a different order! The king was not a judge... he was there to lead his people into war and to be a chair at the various meetings. However, it was rare that the eldest male descendant or nominated leader was not accepted... he had to be strong enough to demand obedience, having proved his worth with deeds. The pagan brehons, previously known as the Druids, were the lawyers and governed the social system. They were not the poets or filid although holding the same high office.

Kincora was a stone built fortress guarding Lough Derg and was at one time Brian Boru's capital, although Cashel still represented the ancient seat of the Munster kings. Brian first established himself as king of Munster in place of the traditional Eoganacht king of Cashel in 1002. Mael Sechnaill, king of Tara, who had been ruling since 980, acknowledged his supremacy.

Two years before, High king Murchertach presented Kincora to the Church where it became the seat for the new archbishopric of Munster. Gilla Espaic, or Gilbert, was made bishop of Limerick about 1106 and appointed papal legate. This action made an alliance between the High king and southern reformers to the traditional head of the Irish Church. The O'Brian's' moved to their new capital in Limerick ruling the

Ostmen - their vassals. It was at Limerick, called by the Norse name, 'the Lax Weir', that salmon fishing was highly valued becoming a chief industry - many Viking ships rode at anchored in the Shannon lakes. Ostmen, meaning 'Eastmen', the name given to Christianized semi-Irish settlers in Ireland after 1014, were an established entity before the invasion of England by the Normans.

The waves of the sea and salmon depicted on the bottom-third of the family Coat of Arms suggests that the sea that feeds the river Shannon and Lough Derg played an important part in the life of the family - sufficient to be recorded on the O'Ciardha shield...

Murchertach divided Ireland up into twenty-four sees in 1111. This action replaced the old monastic order. Eight years later Turloch sought High kingship after Murchertach's death. The O'Brian's and the kingdom of Cashel never assumed great power again. Turloch had his fleet based on Loch Derg and his fortress at Dunleogha, which held Connacht and the bridges over the Shannon. Turloch had twenty-three sons all had land at the expense of others taken on as vassals or else thrown out. The aristocracy was so avarice, so numerous, that there was no other outlet for them but war. Munster was divided between three of his sons, Muirchertach, Diarmait and Tadc who died within a month. Tribe extinction by war, expulsion or ill health frequently was the case.... about thirty years later, with the advent of the Cistercians some order was restored.

Turloch More O'Connor, 1119 – 1156, was High king. He was the son of Rory O'Connor, king of Connacht in 1106. Ireland contained a hundred kinglets arranged into five bigger groupings roughly into today's provinces. The High King also ruled one of the provinces - held the power base of these other provinces. In Ireland, there were three grades of kings. At the

bottom was the king of the smallest kingdom called a *tíath*, next in order an overking *ruiri* and finally king of overkings *ri ruirech*. By the middle of the twelfth century, these titles changed to one of lordship. Lower down the social scale came noblemen who were linked to the lord - normally by a feudal bond – owed an allegiance to. At the bottom of the scale came the commoners some freemen others not. Where a clan inhabited a border between counties or shared land with the diocese, which is the case of the O’Ciardha - Killaloe, the likelihood of that clan remaining strong, is slight. Wars and disputes undermined ancient rights especially when the warrior chiefs were away fighting... weaknesses were soon exposed.

Bridge links Killaloe with Ballina, into north Co Tipperary... along the Nenagh road stands the round tower of Derry Castle in Loch Derg, depending on the tide. In the Loch, Friars Island - which contains the ancient church of St Lua, the first bishop of the See of Killaloe?

## THE

### MACLOCHLAINN KINGS OF CINEL EOGHAIN

**Murchertach** [High King]

1156 – 66

**Connor**

**Niall**

**Melachlin**

**Murchertach**

1166 – 70

1170 – 76

1176 - 85

1188 – 96

**Connor Beg**

1201

**Donal**

1230 – 81

Already we have seen that the O’Ciardha clan chiefs were ‘vassals’ under the protection of another – in this case it was the O’Neill’s. They in turn had vassals... and so on. If one or another lost power there was an readjustment... if one clan was split-up through interclan wars they lost status – in some cases the clan became extinct – their land and rights forfeited. For clans to survive their chiefs had to demonstrate their strength, usually in battle... it was necessary to have allegiances to ensure security. The O’Ciardha was part of the Eoghanacht as were the O’Sullivans, O’Donoghue, O’Mahony and possibly the O’Carthys... as well as others. It is impossible to say which were the more senior or who favoured most.

The Irish clan system worked through the rent of land – the chief owed his position to an overlord to whom he paid either cash, cattle, service or all three for the land. He was expected to supply men to fight the lord’s battles and to give support and succour – safe haven, in times of defeat... all to contribute towards ‘payback’. Every family in the clan did similarly only towards the clan chief. In its simplest form it worked well but when more complicated broke down, especially when there was nothing to repay or barter for the sum owing.

This hieratical grouping of families with a corporate entity gave a political and legal involvement recognised by those around them. A single person or group could represent the clan as long as they had political influence or property. Over a period, the clan rulers multiplied by birth and marriage, by so doing displaced



those lower down the social scale. Even though you were of the leaders family this did not guarantee your position.

The clan system revolved around ‘a common people’ based within an identifiable area of land, say, a valley. It was accepted that a particular man’s claim to noble rank and apparel was derived over many centuries. When the dynastic clanna covered the population of this area and its founder accepted as their common ancestor – the chief was born. To marry outside the valley – the community was a rarity. The clan law in Ireland is a customary law, which is slightly different in Scotland and Wales.

The obviously more powerful Normans, whom Sechnaill showed devotion to, particularly towards Henry I, dominated the ruling bodies in Ireland. It was in 1163 that Giolla Ciaran O’Draighnan died at the Abbey of Fore a year before Abbot Moel Coenighin O’Gorman. Six years before Strongbow married Aoife after the subjugation of the native Irish by the Normans in 1169.

Domnall Mac Lochlainn, king of the Uí Néill, had total power of southern Ireland until he fell from office. [Uí Neills’ of Meath and Ailech ruled for over 500 years] Domnall lost his power after appealing to Henry II for help. The English invasion sanctioned and authorized by Pope Adrian 1155 was lead by Henry’s Cambro-Norman barons under the call to invade and help Domnall re-claim his land. Between 1169 and 1171 the Cambro-Normans, under the earl of Pembroke, Richard FitzGilbert de Clare, the earl of Strigoil, ‘Strongbow’, not only seized all of Leinster and Dublin but also invaded neighbouring provinces too defeating Rory O’Connor, high king of Ireland. This sizing of land was made under the guise that it was owed - a payback for help received. Henry II demanded and received fealty and tribute from all the surrounding kings. There followed a

further diminution of the clans, O'Ciardha again elected not to show fealty although a liegeman of Ui Neill.

From about 1170 onwards, the English began to colonize Ireland. This was to the ultimate detriment of the old order of Gaelic kings; they were never to rule their own provinces again. It was from this point that clan O'Ciardha began to diminish once more – their lands and titles stolen - being distributed to English sympathisers. In 1171 O'Connor and O'Carroll with others were defeated in battle by Strongbow established the Normans as supreme. In 1175 Kerry, Limerick, Clare and Tipperary, the kingdom of Limerick [land of the O'Brian's], was signed away by Henry II and given to Philip de Braose. Munster became more French than any other place outside France.

In 1183-5 Gerald of Wales, described Ireland as being a land of bogs, wood and lakes in his commentary *Topographia Hiberniae*. This was about the only factual thing he wrote about the Irish and was true for most of the north and central plain, at least for the next five hundred years – until land clearing and cultivation took place. What Gerald did predict correctly was that 'Ireland would not be conquered', he noticed, that the native's fighting skills improved with time - put up a greater organised resistance as new fighting skills were learned and old strongholds strengthened. This could certainly be attributed to the old order.

In 1189 Conor O'Connor, son of Rory - the last native king of Ireland, was turned out of Connacht and slain. His son Cathal Carrach, motto The Red Hand of Ireland, claimed the kingship, as did Rory's brother Cathal Crovderg. De Courcy eventually recognised him as king of Connacht. When Ruaidri Ua Conchobair died in 1198, buried in Clonmacnoise, Gaelic Irish power ended. Limerick was fortified by the building of King John's Castle set on the shores of the Shannon, to quell O'Brian's kingdom of Thomond.

In 1202 Crovderg, brother of Ard Ri, 'of the Red Hand' [O'Ciardha clan motto the same], inaugurated king by ancient ceremony at Carn Fraoich. The English considered him the greatest of all the Irish kings.

Kylkeary was then considered an unwallled urban settlement. It had many streets and numerous inhabitants - Irish as well as immigrant English. It traded in wool and hides and supported itself with vegetable products. The church and nunnery provided a visiting place for travellers passing through. It covered an area of many hundreds of acres with Nenagh, its closest Manor Town – now owned by Butler, had 'incorporation' conferred upon it – a privileged position. The charter granted that any tenement held for a year and a day 'was owned', and if by an Irishman, to be declared 'free as an Englishman'. There was of course an acceptance that one did not openly declare and display too many old Gaelic customs.

Towns like Nenagh began to be built-up with a gated retaining wall. Forests were felled and new methods of agriculture developed. Masons and stonecutters enticed to construct the walls and houses, helped by the inhabitants who mixed the mortar and carried the stone. The citizens help was not always voluntary even though it was for their safety. Laws were passed forcing the population to assist in the work. No one was left out of the labour force all had to give a hand. If a man could not work because of illness or work, having to be done in his own business his wife had to take his place. Nenagh felt secure and the town prospered. Churches were extended and re-built; education was ordained as being necessary. English laws were followed and a degree of prosperity was felt.

The English language began to be the common means of expression. Art and science was imported together with the administration of finance and justice. Anglo-Irish dynasties

gradually assumed the ruling hand - enclaves creating a frontier, which undermined the old feudal nobility. Many of these Anglo-Irish families still occupy seized lands to this day. What was a continuing feature in this subjugated and colonised land was that the colonists never thought of themselves as being natives but as Englishmen. The Irish annals describe how King John tried to ensure good relations with the natives but fell out with the northern king Aed us Neill and the Connacht king Cathal Crobderg Ua Conchobair. Both paid homage but neither trusted King John.

The Norsemen raided Limerick in 831 which they left when driven out by Brian Boru, the then king of Thomond, which became the chief seat of Donal O'Brien, King of Munster. The founder of the cathedral was Bishop O'Brien in 1217.

Between 1219 and 1232, Richard de Burgh's nephew Hubert was temporarily in charge of England...this gave Richard considerable influence. It was his interests in Limerick and Tipperary that gave him such a good base to conquer and subdue Connacht..., which he proceeded to do. All this occurred close to the clan land of the O'Cairdha who had cast his lot in with O'Connor. The Munster chronicle reports for 1248 that 'many of the kings' sons of Ireland were slain that year. There was a great deal of killing and raiding, endless campaigns, fire-raising, cattle raids and pillage...the place was in turmoil.

The Lordship of Leinster, partitioned between the five daughters of William Marshal, husband of Strongbow's daughter Isabel, resulted in Kilkenny being given its liberty from the crown. This was at the end of the thirteenth century. Another change just prior to this was the rise of William, baron of Naas – a tenant of the lords of Leinster. The lordship of Ireland granted to Edward 1 in 1254 and continued by his son who died in 1327. John Fitz Thomas of Offaly, earl of Kildare passed on the

earldom to his son Thomas. In 1258, the sons of the king of Thomond, and associated nobility including the O'Ciardha met and conferred supreme authority to Brian O'Neill... unfortunately; he was killed at the abortive Battle of Downpatrick in 1260.

One of Strongbows knights Hugh de Lacy, one of the largest landholders in Hertfordshire were granted the province of Meath, part of Longford and Offaly for the service of fifty knights. He in turn dolled out lordships – entire baronies and sub-divisions of manors, to his followers - who proceeded to erect fortified enclosures to protect new immigrants. Not all this went down well with the inhabitants! In Limerick and Tipperary, a sheriff was installed to collect revenues and impart his judicial and military powers. This pressure further pushed the O'Ciardha clan into the hills and inaccessible places. The result of the sub-division of land and the installation of overseers created an outpost for the barons to protect Leinster and Dublin from incursion and provided a jumping off place to subdue outer regions of southern and western Ireland.

In 1297, Tipperary County was required to send an elected representative to attend the Dublin parliament – towns within the county two years later and of both by 1300. This act had the effect of displacing the old order - the Gaelic Irish - the Gaelic nobility. The Normans took over all and imposed themselves marrying into the Irish leadership, developing the towns and cities for their own.

Enormous progress was made to integrate all the population in the new community. Forests were cleared to form cultivated land, new methods of agriculture introduced to produce more food. Trades and commercial enterprises contained within the newly built walled towns - like Nenagh. It

was a period of prosperity, which allowed monastic houses to flourish. This progress later reversed...

Carbury [Cairbre] in Kildare is a place with pre-Christian remains close to a ruined Church of Temple Doath, built on Carrick Hill, next to Carrick Castle... a castellated manor house built in the 1300. Five years later De Bermingham slew O'Connor, Prince of Offaly, and about thirty of his relatives... he then went on to appropriated all their lands. The River Boyne rises off this hill to the south, which offers a good view over the great central plain. Within sight - the ruins of a least four castles, all built by the De Berminghams.

A few years later a Gaelic reconquest swept away many of the Anglo-Irish ruling bodies - their manorial systems and associated village settlements. The old forms of address, writing and reference returned to and life reverted - to before English rule. This was the pattern where the old order tried to reassert itself. It was crushed... these times were the start of the gallowglasses who were the 'bondsmen' - mercenaries of the future. They came originally from north-west Scotland - afterwards used by the Irish - acknowledging their usefulness. Their recruitment, of any number, could be from a single clan, or a number of clans - especially disposed clan leaders without land, home or roots. The lord had to be able to keep them and their families, provide food and a dwelling. This was a very expensive undertaking so few were taken on. Using huge axes like the Normans and protected by chain mail they acted very much like samurai who, experienced in war, gave protection and allegiance unto death. They joined forces with O'Connor who sought help from King Haakon of Norway to oust the Normans from Ireland and become King. The plea came to nothing for King Haakon died before a landing made. Another attempt made by inviting Edward Bruce of Scotland in 1316 but this too failed after

causing mayhem for three years – after being killed at the battle of Faughart.

The great plague struck the country in the winter of 1348 – it was the Black Death - which had already laid waste the population of Europe. Friar Clyn describes the result as depopulating Kilkenny to the extent that ‘there is hardly a house where there is only one dead’ – it believed the end of the world had arrived! Whether this was believed or not, nothing was the same afterwards. Any disputed land or a family death, which made inheritance impossible... the land, went back into the holdings of the lord of the manor.

In 1354, Ormond granted land to O’Meara near Toomevara. Four years later another parcel of land granted to the O’Kennedys’ only this time the land was in the manor of Nenagh. All together, it appears these two were granted all of Lower, and part of, Upper Ormond. The O’Carroll’s, Murrough of Uriel, chiefs of Ely, other prominent families connected to the O’Ciardha clan. These two clan families, the O’Carrolls and O’Kennedys, occupied land, which bordered and overlapped on ancient O’Ciardha territory. In legal parlance when a clan is without land, their legal claim to clanship revoked.

The ‘Statutes of Kilkenny’ passed by the Irish Parliament in 1366, prohibited colonists from intermarrying with the native Irish or learning their language. This change unsettled the population and created in its wake absentee property owners who did not want to return to ‘a land of unrest’. By 1364, there were considerable financial problems caused by these absconders. Thirty years later King Richard II created the first of a succession of Irish kings of arms. He wanted to control all those areas that the native Irish had reasserted their office in - their way of life. Heralds were needed to marshal the arms of the various knights, give military advice and regularise the battles. This was the start

of a continual battle. The Gaelic Irish, Anglo Irish and Normans began to unite to form a united front against England. The Irish question began to reassert itself...

In the towns and villages of Ormond, which included Kilkeary, the Anglo-Normans had to negotiate and deal with local cultivators or freemen and the serfs called betaghs. This was similar to the English manorial system only not so efficient for the people too, were bought and sold with the land. Everything, their labour, animals and produce taxed. Eventually, they tried to oust them to take over their property for they did not understand them nor want to integrate with them. They had tried to emancipate them but they would not pay the fee. However, they still wanted their labour, which they needed. This created a lot of bad feeling and resentment.

Niall Mor O'Neill, king of Tir Eoghain, was optimistic that, he would be made the English crown's representative over all Ireland – to bring about stability. It was not to be. After a considerable number of expeditions, battles and disputes Niall Garbh O'Donnell died in 1439.

By 1430, the original Irish lords only occupied the less fertile parts of the country. Those that did were no match for the Anglo-Irish who operated intensive farming methods. They were doomed if they continued to try to maintain the old ways of living. They were not slow in adopting a more conciliatory tone so they gradually assumed alliances both by marriage and sharing common goals. They began to drop the right to govern like royalty. The White Earl of Ormond related to both Mac Murchada of Leinster and Ua Neill of Ulster; held Tipperary and the majority of Kilkenny. Ireland was a land divided between the Anglo-English lords, as Butler earls of Ormond, and the Gaelic highly divided world of ancient custom, language and local chief. The affect this had on the English crown was great for it



occupied the attention of Richard II to the extent that Henry of Lancaster landed in England and seized the throne. Richard's sally into Ireland in 1399 failed to unite the land under one king. There was not another landing in Ireland by an English king during the Middle Ages – the 'War of the Roses' took all the energy and finances making England weak. [In the mid 1400s, the County of Meath, central Ireland, split into two, English and Irish].

'The Pale' was a fortified earthen rampart built in the fifteenth century to enclose the royal administration lands of Louth, half Meath and Kildare including Dublin – became known as the Pale [from palatinate – territory of feudal or sovereign lord]. Thomas Fitz Maurice [1456–78] was one of three surviving Anglo-Irish magnates. Previously, the earl of Kildare had been the most powerful. However, the earls continued to assert their right to maintain their own land even when faced by intervention by Edward IV and Henry VII. The Gaelic Irish chiefs began to assert themselves for they were now versed in better ways for making war – they had benefited from previous struggles. This was not the time to build but to claim back lost land.

This inattention - ruination by neglect, was to happen to castles, churches and monasteries. Local people able to carry the heavy loads away stripped them of their lead, stone and wood. The demolition and destruction mainly affected estates and properties of vacant absentee owners.

In 1534, Thomas, Lord Offaly, the son of the ninth earl of Kildare and leader of the Anglo-Irish, declared, 'to be the king's enemy.' He was after the governorship of Ireland. That stirred-up the pot of rebellion... again put down in no short measure by Skiffington - Henry VIII's representative.

The Irish lords and military leaders still relied upon the 'long, two-handed sword' as their chief weapon of war – for close fighting. To discourage enemy horses ten-foot spears were

anchored into the ground [the lancers resorted to short swords for infighting] whilst arrows kept their riders at bay. Chain mail, helmets and heavy coats protected their bodies although still wearing sandals without stockings.

How different this was to the mass of peasants who made up the army. Many were barefooted; none wore a headdress, Axes, swords and clubs plain and unfinished. Their strength came from knowledge of the country, which they could exist on, and the hardships they could bear.

It is important to understand that it was not always the case that an elder son or any son at all, inherited the chief's position. Naturally the chief, before he died, tried to ensure his son did take over his position and to that end he trained his son in such a way that this would happen. However, as I say that was not always the case? Quite often, when a chief died the elders who they wanted to lead them asked the clan, this was done by a show of hands. Normally it went to the strongest - the champion, one who could not be challenged. On the other hand, the old chief's lands were dolled out according to the antiquity of the person – to the clan elders, not necessarily to his family and his sons.

## CHAPTER V

House of Tudor - Henry VIII – Rebellion – English Pale – Conn O'Neill – Destruction of Gaelic world - Hugh O'Neill - The Connacht & Munster Councils – Presidencies in Munster - Down Survey – English migration to Ireland – Act of Plantation – Shane - Downfall of the last Gaelic lordships.

Ireland had been a 'lordship' of the Norman English crown now Hugh O'Neill 1540–1616, became second Earl of

Tyrone in 1585 leading an uprising with Spanish help, which was defeated in 1601. After this set back Ui Neill, rather than submit to English influence, chose exile, as did O'Donnell and ninety of his followers. Amongst those to leave were O'Ciardha henchmen who chose the Netherlands. Dermot O'Ciardha of Offaley stayed to create an opposition movement and to oversee the scattered clan families. The establishment in 1570 of presidencies in Munster and Connacht saw a push by the English to take a grip of the land north of the river Shannon. It had been a hard task to subdue the lords of Munster, who excommunicated the queen.

The lands of O'Carroll and O'Kennedy to the east of Lough Derg above Cashel – encompassing ancient O'Ciardha clan land, were not within the English marches until, The Connacht and Munster Councils of 1569-71. There was rebellion in 1579, which ended in the defeat of Tyrone, who surrendered four years later. Ireland was now a conquered land. Queen Elizabeth had succeeded where others had failed.

The suppression of the monasteries during the reformation and the civil disturbances after, led to the destruction of many church treasures. The churches of Keary and Fethard in Co. Tipperary, and Askeaton in Co. Limerick were ravaged... important statues and other treasures were destroyed, although some rare wooden statues and bronze processional cross from Ballylongford, Co. Limerick and embroidered cope from Waterford survived.

Another vast emigration to continental Europe followed. The English administration did everything in their power to Anglicize the customs of the few remaining native Irish. The few Gaelic adherents that survived the Tudor and Stuart Plantations were eventually ruined by the anti-Catholic legislation enacted by the Dublin Parliament after the victory of William III. These laws stopped estates being handed down to the eldest son instead they

had to divide them between all the children which resulted, over-time, to estates being whittled down to that of just small freeholders. The chiefs were unable to maintain patronage within their clans, which eroded the social systems - developed over many years. From that time, the clan system gradually wilted away even though the local peasantry continued to support the old ways.

The process known as plantation began in the Tudor period, but mainly by James I, in Ulster and Munster, and led to the settlement of 40,000 Scottish and English immigrants by 1641. There was much more to come...both plantation and unrest!

In the Down Survey of 1646, the O’Kennedy, the O’Mera and the McGrath families, owned the land of Toomevara parish. Many of the O’Ciardha clan were integrated into the O’Kennedys’ for protection assuming their name and customs. The ancient ecclesiastical foundation for women established by St Ciardha was still a recognised site, although a ruin.

Migration from Britain into Ireland continued apace throughout the pre-Protestant years mainly to areas, mainly eastern, which were fertile – had access to natural resources and the sea. This influx greatly improved social and material benefit from the skilled workers and farmers passing through. This movement had the additional effect of enlarging the knowledge and horizons of those who were involved. This caused a split in the society – both religious and social. The clans were always at odds with each other - trying to gain more power and space. It was an age-old way of life, which not only sapped the strength of family groupings but also did nothing to advance society. Many families were being pushed out by the aggressive and vibrant newcomers – those given plantation lands. Many moved into

Tipperary from neighbouring Leinster gradually easing out the inhabitants...

Colonel Owen Roe O'Neill, a nephew of the great Hugh O'Neill, spent his entire career in the Spanish army of the Netherlands – he was not the only one. At this time, there was an almost greater alliance between the Irish nobility and the Spanish, particularly in the Netherlands, than towards the English and Anglo-Irish. Certainly, this existed with 'the old order'. Colonel O'Neill and Colonel Thomas Preston attempted to expel the Scottish Covenanters, who unbeknown to him at the time, had connections with Cromwell's army...needlesstosay, he failed.

The population of Ireland in the 1650s now divided into those who were actively disloyal – the original native Irish; the old English subjects who were now through intermarriage and assimilation Gaelic and Catholic and the newer loyal English who were Protestant landowners and titleholders who included the latest Scots settlers in Ulster. The Act of August 1652 declared that all the Irish and Anglo-Irish, who could not prove "Constant Good Affections", to the Cromwellian cause should lose one-third of their estates, the remaining two-thirds made over as 'new areas for transportation'. The settlements changed the character of Ireland forever and with that the landowning aristocracy as well.

In Ireland's Natural History, published in 1652 and jointly dedicated to Cromwell and Fleetwood, debated the possibility that Protestants from Europe induced to settle the island. Cromwell's concern was that there might be either an uprising in Ireland or incursions from abroad by Catholics. In this, history proved him right. There needed to be a new start in colonising Ireland by settlement - by reliable people - educated Protestants.

September 1653 saw a new Act of Plantation. This time grants were given to English towns - to entice skilled tradesmen

to immigrate. Adventurers were apportioned estates and the Army paid for in gifts of land. Whole areas made over in this way to the English. Two thirds of all Ireland were distributed and within those areas was all of Leinster, Kilkenny, Kildare, Kerry and Carlow; Kilkeary was not included coming within the County of Tipperary. Other than a small strip made over to the English, Clare and Connaught were left to the Irish. Whereas this action may have been sensible as a way to control the population and prevent an uprising, it was undoubtedly immoral and caused great resentment. A quarter of Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare, Kilkenny and Carlow were very English and had been for generations since Henry. Everybody else being forcibly removed - from towns and villages, compatriots, and children included. Some people could stay but they had to declare themselves Protestants. People with prefixes O, M, or Mac were banned and their land forfeited. However, these Gaelic prefixes could still be used in Irish areas. In this manner great estates were built up by the English moneyed classes who were in the main the ruling Protestant aristocrats and gentry.

In Upper and Lower Ormond, and throughout much of Ireland, some of the old established catholic, landowning families, the O'Ciardha amongst them, took refuge in the hills and other outlying places to escape domination and subjugation to the Protestant forces. This broke up many of the clan families after losing their land. Eventually their legal rights were forgotten - and thereby forfeited - by lack of use, neglect and absence. The descendants of the old order took their dead to ancestral graveyards in Ballinaclogh and Kilkeary – perpetuating their ancient rights...

## CHAPTER VI

End of nine-year war – Conquest of all Ireland – A land of forts – Flight of the Earls – Plantation – Uprising - Thomas Baintreadhachd - Keary of Fore – Saint Fechin’s Abbey – Thomas & Mary O’Ciardha – Orangemen – Transportations – Parish of Kilkeary – Limerick hold out - Act of Union.

It would appear from documented sources that at this time the name Thomas always retained for the first-born son of the head of the clan. Thomas O’Ciardha of Offaley, Fore, a branch of the Cahill family of Connaught, derived from Cathal, [No. 102 of the Cahill of Connaught pedigree] also known as Thomas Baintreadhachd [Thomas the Widower] was the ancestor of Keary of Fore from Co. Meath. In Hart’s Irish Pedigrees of 1887, pp499, Keary/Carey [O’Ciardha] of Fore, Co Westmeath, were descended from Dermot O’Ciardha of Offaley. During the 1650s reverted to the Keary form of spelling because another member of the family, using the C, had become protestant.

Thomas O’Ciardha was killed by Cromwell’s Parliamentary troops in 1654 at the burning of Saint Fechin’s Abbey. The monastery was an important monastic centre founded in AD630 later to become a small-fortified town defended by two gates, a canal, a mound and a ditch. The monastery withstood several burnings and raids eventually becoming an Anglo-Norman Priory under the rule of the order of St Augustine. The last Prior, William Nugent, surrendered the house and possessions to Henry VIII. The town of Fore allied to the English - being close to the English ‘Pale’.

It was during the sacking of the Abbey of 1654, by the English Parliamentarians, that Thomas’s three sons: <sup>2</sup>Thomas, who married Mary O’Brian of Naas, niece of Hugh O’Byrne, Patrick and James escaped and found refuge with Hugh O’Byrne

of Dublin, one of the Confederate Catholics. In the early 1600s, the O'Byrne family owned vast estates round Clare, Naas in Kildare, and Wicklow.

In 1653-65 Leinster was one of four equal land provinces of Ireland made-up by areas such as Kilkenny, assigned by the English parliament as security for soldiers and adventurers, Carlow and Kildare, retained as a government reservation and Queens, an area included in the plantations of the Catholic James I. The throne of England was, after James II, occupied by Mary and William of Orange – hence Irish Protestants becoming 'Orangemen'. This reign effectively destroyed the Catholic landowning classes

The aftermath of the Cromwellian plantation period found some Irish catholic citizens selling-up, others quite demented by worry, some running away and others executed. The transportations completed finally in July 1655. There were many arrests for failing to transplant, in fact so many that the goals were full... hangings made space available until an excuse was made to let some go. Those picked on were landowners not the landless. A few years later some of the new owners sold up to others who increased their grants by purchase to become the new 'gentlemen'. It was generally a clearance of the old landowners and even in the Restoration; things were never the same again - the old ways in Kilkeary superseded. Some old freeholders went to Irish counties whilst others went aboard, mainly to Spain and Holland - away from English influence changing their names and making a fresh start. By this time, the clan was almost non-existent.

In the Civil Survey of 1654-1656, the Parish of Kilkeary, spelt Kylkerry, showed even at that late stage spellings were not regularised, it also suggests that the parish was considerably larger containing several townships and parcels of land. The parish



began at the ford of Bellasuillsane, at the river of Geagh, bounded with the parish of Kynaneafe followed the river southward to Poellacholla, which adjoins Tampledony, Ballymacky, Grenanstowne and Lisbony. The parish was described in the survey as having good arable meadows and pastures, several springs and a number of plough-lands. The Hearth Money Rolls indicate that several members of the family living in Co Tipperary started to use the English form of Ceary to retain their estates. They were better off under the Restoration settlement, for they received back three-fifths of their land. That was before the 1691 Jacobite War... by the end they had even less. Those of the family who retained their Gaelic native Irish name lived outside Clonmel's walls.

Many of the old gentry, including the O'Ciardha and the O'Kennedys, had been evicted from their estates. In exchange they had been given 'fractions' - huts to live in, where they had to stay without possessions. One of the clans, the O'Kennedys of Ormond, had their 'fraction' confiscated in the Williamite wars - because forty-eight of the clan families wished to maintain their Gaelic inheritance... this did not go down well with the Anglo-Irish who expected them to conform. Other families, related to the old gentry, hid under another name for fear of losing what little they had managed to retain.

The O'Ciardha and O'Kennedys were not the only clans to live by deception. It is clear that few of the old families realigned back to their former allegiances. They had not been happy under the previous relationships and wanted to make a change. Some, of the elderly stayed at home and worked for their new masters, tilling their own land... others, wishing to leave were allotted land in Connaught. In Ormond, the more adventurous gentry took refuge in the inaccessible valleys of Glenculloo between the

Slieve Felim hills, from where their descendants still carried their dead to be buried in the churchyard at Kilkeary.

In 1659, Kilkeary, in the barony of Upper Ormond, held 769 households with a population of about four thousand persons. Kilkeary was a direct grantee land made over to a new sitting owner James Dalton. Some years later, during the Restoration period, some of the transferred settlement land given, perhaps shared, in some cases bought back, by the old landowners. These old landowners included the O'Meara, O'Connor's' and, Charles and Antony O'Carroll. Catholics held twenty percent of land in Kilkeary, Toomevara and Nenagh. This percentage became reduced during the 1700s. In Petty's Census of 1659, the O'Ciardha made up the largest percentage living in the Baronies of Scrine, Co Meath and Ballybritt, south Offaly. The McCareys of Moycashel Barony, Westmeath were also in abundance.

Ireland was still massively a Catholic population ruled and given their laws by an Anglo-Irish hierarchy. The country's link to Rome gave it its cultural base allied to the Continent through the Irish Colleges in France; the Italian military academies and those businesses engaged in overseas. To the English the Irish appeared a threat even though Ireland was a poorer cousin.

The Irish population in 1690 was now nearly two million and growing. Limerick was a prosperous seaport and used as bastion against British influence... it was the last to hold out. The Jacobites used the town and its river to retreat to... Limerick's city walls held... but only just! William confiscated all the land belonging to those Catholics who later escaped to France. The result of the defeat was The Treaty of Limerick in 1691 – it was the third great defeat. Thomas and Bridget Carey of Legbourne in 1692 saw the defeat of the Catholic cause. A number of families allowed retaining their property if considered docile enough -

accepting English law; however, all Catholics were subject to Penal Laws.

This eldest son of Thomas Baintreadhachd, 'Thomas O'Ciardha, had three sons: <sup>2</sup>Thomas the Elder, died in Spain nine years later, Patrick who escaped from Limerick at the same time entered Spanish service in the military and Hugh who married Margaret O'Brian daughter of Dermot O'Brian of Naas. Their son John O'Brian married Mary daughter of Owen M'Kewen of Clontarf and Swords. Their second child was a daughter born in 1749 who married in 1780 Hugh O'Moore of Longford, Castlepollard, in the County of Westmeath. The whole family were Catholics - held Gaelic allegiances to language and habit.

At that time, there were a number of landholding and public office Acts that restricted the rights of Catholics - prevented them assuming state office and property. If an individual wished to 'get on'- 'improve his lot', he had to go where there was money to be made, skills passed on and property to be bought. That goal could only be accomplished by appearing to adopt the Protestant religion, using a name translated into English or adopting a more recognisable English name.

[This was the start of the O'Ciardha spelling being given up and the more English 'C' or 'K' used - to form and spell Kearey]. By adopting these changes, a move then made either to live in a settlement area or to find a new life abroad.

In the diocese of Killaloe, which included Kilkeary, there were only a few beneficed clergymen. Less who actually resided in the area? There were about three Catholic priests to one clergyman. Churches were not maintained allowing rotting roofs and broken walls to let in the damp and rain. This state - the paucity of the clergymen, also affected other church property, including glebe houses. Idleness was also recorded when it came to tithes collecting and ministering to their parishioners.

There was an exodus from the countryside as there were few opportunities for the ambitious and capable. The landowners patronised the tenant farmers who at onetime had been self supporting - now relied upon handouts and loans because of the potato blight. The problems were so acute that stealing crops was carried out, to survive and prevent children starving. Not long before generations of families had lived in harmony together, populating land not belonging to them with the knowledge that they would not be evicted... this was not the only time the English Parliament had taken their land away from them...

The O'Ciardha family had lost much in the confiscations, but some poor land kept as insurance... for hashier times ahead. Irish politicians blamed the depressed state of the economy to English restrictions on Irish trade. The poverty of the rural economy was blamed on those who maintained pasturage instead of promoting the growing of seed and potatoes. This put down to the shortness of tenures – farmers were not allowed to think long-term, for it was a hand to mouth existence. The local opinion as opposed to that of Dubliners was under the threat of the quaterage tax. This tax was about people who wished to pursue a profession or trade but for whatever reason, usually because they upheld the old Gaelic traditions, thereby, excluded from membership of the relevant guild.

The annual pilgrimage to Lough Derg still went on although forbidden by law... the Church too, also frowned upon these acts of piety much to the chagrin of the local population who benefited from the additional circulating-cash.

Economic fluctuations prompted by taxation, which upset the normal domestic industry, particularly the cost of seed, potatoes and livestock, created unrest. Rebellion was in the air and tensions increased in rural areas releasing sectarian antipathies – there was a general collapse of Protestant morale for

looking towards the Catholic majority... they were outnumbered. There were several threats both real and imaginary of invasion, rebellion and insurrection coming from France and Spain.

Tenant farmers, working from small farms in the diocese of Killaloe, mainly produced vegetables and corn, larger farms grazed cattle. Leases could last for up to forty years. Farmers made their own repairs and improvements, draining the land and rotating their crops. The landowners made sure their land was occupied so that land did not lie to waste and become overgrown. When a farm became vacant, the new lease ran according to periods of prosperity or want – in times of plenty they were short term. The result being, tenants not taking a long-term view of their future by planning ahead, keeping back some of their produce to use as next years seed... nor did they have a planned rotation of crops or devise ways to improve the drainage by digging ditches and drains. If you cannot foresee a future, you might just as well live for the present...

## CHAPTER VII

Conversion and coercion – The poor majority – High rents – Daniel O’Cary – Irish immigration to America – Penal laws – Relief Act – American War of Independence – Agricultural crisis – New cotton weaving machinery – United people – New agitation – Act of Union – Absentee landlords – Old ways broken - O’ Ciardha= Carey & Kearey.

In the mid 1750s, the poor majority in Ireland lived in utmost poverty. Their accommodation was squalid and their diets made up of potato, turnips and a little wheat, milk and on rare occasions beef. The population was increasing at an enormous rate... It was only the narrow coastal plain, which provided a

market economy - where they managed to sell some of its produce. The poorer folk, living further inland - up in the hills, depended on a subsistence economy. High rents were increasingly being left unpaid, which generated debts - the result of which meant evictions. The property owners forced the poor to pay an ever-increasing amount for rent; the interest rates on owed money continued to rise. The whole system discouraged improvements in property and proper farm management, particularly towards land drainage and any sort of saving – as a cushion for poor harvests. It was a self-generating national disaster, which seemed to be unstoppable – and as it turned out, was!

About this time Dianiel O’Cary, adopted the Protestant religion and, wishing to anglicise his name still further - in order to make a distinction between the families, asked for a meeting with the then head of the family, to declare an oath whereby he would reassume the spelling of Keary - removing the prefix O and the use of C. Many of the Irish began to look beyond their local areas for employment. The more adventurous found that America and the Caribbean offered them more.

America became an important land for Irish immigrant labour. The life appealed too many - for its religious nonconformity and political independence. The American war of Independence started in 1775 and was an inspiration to many of the Irish poor to get back at the English.

O’Halloran, an Irish historian, writing in 1778 gave O’Meara as a Lord Chief of an ancient house, descended from the O’Briens. Many of the O’Ciardha clan joined in his service with the Irish Brigade. A number of the clan then started to use the anglicised form of O’Carey, or O’Cary more often at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Margaret Keary's second son <sup>3</sup>Thomas Padrick married Julia, daughter of Roderick Murphy of Castledermot in Kildare, who had four sons the eldest being named □ Thomas, as was the custom. He was the first of this family to stop using the prefix 'O' and to begin using the name of Keary. He married Mary, daughter of John Keogh of Castlepollard, an agricultural town in Westmeath, in 1815; that died in Dublin in 1836, interred in the churchyard of Artane.

In the late 1770s, there was a widespread agricultural crisis. This was not the first time that this problem, with the national food crop, had occurred - poor harvests, low cattle prices, high cost of wheat, potatoes and milk. All this, had been felt before. The massive problem for Ireland was that the population relied upon a staple crop of potatoes – where the English relied upon bread as the staple diet the Irish relied upon potatoes. Corn was relatively simple to import and had a better shelf life. Potatoes needed careful handling from a suitable source and weight for weight was wasteful – it was also a difficult commodity to ship.

The enclosure movement caused further resentment, rents increased yet again and there was a decline in wages - inflation was rife. A number of militant movements raised popular passions - to influence the landowners and government - to reduce rents... all to no avail. Taxation, tithes, rents and church dues were a continual grievance.

Commercial cotton spinning and weaving was introduced into Ireland in 1777. Three years later modern machines and expertise – brought over from England, established an enterprise, which gave employment to many unemployed folk in towns and villages... This was the start to the great Irish linen industry.

The latest steam engines were imported from England to provide power for many of the mills... no longer did the manufacturers have to rely upon water to drive their wheels.

These engines required coal and allied services that in themselves created new business ventures..., which prospered, initiating further capital expenditure. Heavy industries like mining, iron and steel producers, pottery manufactures, tanning, glass ware and coach building all needed raw materials... delivered by road, canal, river and ports... These large building projects needed capital investment. Investors saw the opportunity to make a profit – they could see the outcome of an abundance of cheap labour and the profitability created by those first cotton mills.

This was the time rural populations in village and town showed a remarkable turn inwards – towards uniting - engaging in shared interests. These rural folk were in the main Catholics and spoke Gaelic, keenly aware that the city workers were ‘a set apart’ from their life in the village. Sporting events, fairs, markets, wakes, funerals, cockfights, hunting and field events abounded. These gatherings united people and stimulated political thought. Gradually the unrest grew until eventually nightly political meetings arranged. In Tipperary, Neath and Limerick under the pretext of hurling and playing football, crowds gathered, bands played, shouts were heard and fights broke out...these events confirmed Catholic strength and highlighted resident disaffection. Protestants feared the worst barricaded their houses on fair days and remained indoors. United Irishmen and Orangemen took to using these outings to start airing grievances, which always led to fights.

Thomas, son of Christopher Carey, and brother of William, Mathew and James...owned a newspaper in Dublin. He was sympathetic to the cause of united free Ireland printing stories about absentee landlords and the terrible conditions rural folk were living in. These articles produced attacks from The Establishment who accused him of printing seditious stories. Thomas was tried at the Kings Bench and acquitted. The ruling



body continued to hound him and force his printing business to close down.

The whole family were involved in the printing trade as either reporters or tradesmen. Mathew Carey 1785-1824, became internationally known as a publisher. Born in Dublin in 1760 he was indentured to serve his apprenticeship as a letterpress printer and to make up the sticks of type to be clamped into the forme. Later, befriended by Benjamin Franklin, immigrated to America where he married Miss Flavahan, devoting all his energies to the publication of the Douay Version of the Bible, founding the first American Sunday School Society and becoming one of America's greatest publishers.

Dublin, by the turn of the century was the second biggest city in the British Isles. The most industrious and wealthy areas of Ireland were those closest to the English mainland; and in the middle of that coastline was Dublin, the seat of power - the legal centre and administrative capital. Its population contained the greatest number of professionals, guildsmen, artisans, journeymen and apprentices. This power gives a reason why Dublin was the centre of such unrest and revolution. The final straw was the drought of 1781.

Later, a marvellous engineering scheme put into place, the construction of a great canal and series of locks to join Dublin to the River Shannon. This feat opened up the interior and controlled water distribution to the central plains eliminating the fear of future droughts. Ireland was now an independent country but sharing a common monarch... in reality, many ties were there to check true self-government, which was never workable.

In 1790, the Act of Union saw London replace Dublin as the centre of political power for the Irish. By 1797, The United Irishmen were a powerful force in Leinster and plans were made to have a general uprising. Oaths were taken to ensure a

committed gathering, which included trades people, shopkeepers and many of the middle class. The Orange Order objected and mass atrocities were perpetuated.

In the 1800s, Kilkeary Parish was reported, by Ireland's Ordnance Survey, as lying to the north of Co Tipperary between Nenagh, CloghJordan and Templemore and bounded to the east by Clonlisk in Kings. St. Ciardha's Church [Cill Cheire] lay near the centre of the Barony of Upper Ormond, situated one and a half miles southeast of Toomevara. [The barony contained 14 Parishes] It was described as 'a small parish chiefly under cultivation with the nearby village of Toomevara, declaring 790 inhabitants, its nearest large settlement. Fairs held on Whit-Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, September 29<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup>. for cattle, corn and butter.

In 1818, although there were a number of the family who used the Keary spelling this was the first time that 'ey' was used in Ireland and it is to Patrick and Mary [nee Lonergan] we find recorded, initiating the event. Unfortunately, it did not last long; they removed the 'e' five years later.

With the passing of a few more years Carey [with or without the 'e'], Carew and Keary, seem to be an almost interchangeable choice by family members recorded in the Powerstown RC register. By the 1850s, Griffith's Primary Valuation gives 68 Kear[e]y households in all of Ireland...

Powerstown lies in the civil parish of Kilgrant in the barony of Iffa and Offa East between Clonmel and the village of Kilsheelan. As in North Tipperary, Offaly and Westmeath, these spellings became common variants of O'Ciardha.

It is difficult from this distance to comprehend the importance the spelling makes to the use of one's name. However, records prove that it does... prompted no doubt by strong reasons at the time. Even today, some family members

feel free to use the Gaelic form whilst others use the anglicized version.

The amount of farmland in Ireland was now unable to feed the expanding population. This fact occurred in almost all regions not just in the rich more industrial sectors with the greatest labour force. The problems stemmed from the way land was controlled by rents and tithes. Tenure was restricted so that farmers budgeted and planned for short-term gain. This did not bode well for economic rotation of crops; the construction of land drainage ditches; the removal of stone from the fields or the latest views on animal husbandry; the use of better soil management to increase fertility was much talked about.

The landowners, the landlords and the absentee property agents, skimmed the cream off the milk – the profits off the country's wealth. Most of the money found its way towards the rich English boroughs and aristocracy. It was a case of negligence, ignorance and lack of care on the part of local and national government in both England and Ireland. The potatoes blight finished off what poor economy had started.

It is believed by many that in the middle of the nineteenth century people lived close to where they were born - and never left the village. Records disprove that view. Even without those facts, reality dictates that that would be impossible. This was the age of large families. A large percentage of young people not long out of school would have to travel far to find and be trained for work. Local recourses could not sustain such large numbers and houses were in short supply. By 1851, over fifty per-cent of the population was living more than a couple of miles from their birthplace. The advent of the bicycle made travelling to work easier and the coming of the railways added to the distance travelled.

It was the growth of towns and cities, which drew the migrant workforce. It was not just the need to earn money or to find housing it was exciting for the young and the job options more varied.

‘O’Hart’s Irish Pedigrees of 1887, pp499, gives the ‘Keary’ family as [MacCeachraigh] of Galway as distinct from Carey. [*Mac and Mc means the same as O – son of*] Keating’s history gives the family as being numerous in Mayo and Sligo and recites: ‘there are other anglicized forms of the Gaelic name: the extinct Mac Fhiachra or Mac Fhearadhaigh, formally both of Tyrone and Galway, the synonym of Kerin [O’Ceirin or O’Ciarain] in Mayo and Cork. The English form of Mac Giolla Céire [*giolla means boy*] being further corrupted in Carr – [O’Carra and Mac Giolla Chathair] in Galway and Donegal’... and Mac Chathair in Co. Donegal. Carey is more likely to be found in Cork, Kerry and Tipperary’.

There are a small number of Gaelic Irish, mainly in Cork, Galway and Dublin, who still use the old family name of O’Ciardha. However, those who use Keary [recorded today by the place named Kilkeary] rather than Carey are based in southwest Ireland and Dublin. When the Normans, Parliamentarians and Anglo-Irish forced the Gaelic Irish off their ancient clan lands, it was to mainly western areas they went, Galway, Kerry and Cork.

It would seem that it was mainly immigrants to America, England and its Empire, at the turn of the eighteenth century, who used Kear[e]y... this more Anglicized form. Those worldwide who use the Carey form are however, more numerous.

Dublin was a setting off point for the immigrants, mostly to land at Liverpool. From there was a regular coach service to London and other chief cities where there was work to be found. If London bound then it was to Westminster, and as likely as not,

*'The Rookeries'* where cheap lodging was to be found – perhaps with relatives. Thomas Kearey arrived there in about 1816 with his bag of tools... ready to start a new life...