

# The Origin and Evolution of the Surname Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin)



By  
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**Terrance Irwin** was born in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. on October 5, 1944. He received his education in a Catholic parochial grammar school and archdiocesan high school. After high school he began a career as a sheet metal worker and served a four-year apprenticeship followed by four years as a journeyman sheet metal worker. In 1971 he received his contractor license(s): C43-Sheet Metal and C20-Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning. He spent the next twenty four years as an independent contractor. In addition to this, during his thirty two years in the sheet metal industry, he also acquired a General Building Contractor's license (B) and a Real Estate Broker's License which he used for his own building construction projects during the 1970s. Realizing the value of education he continued taking college courses in the evening and graduated from the University of San Francisco with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1973.

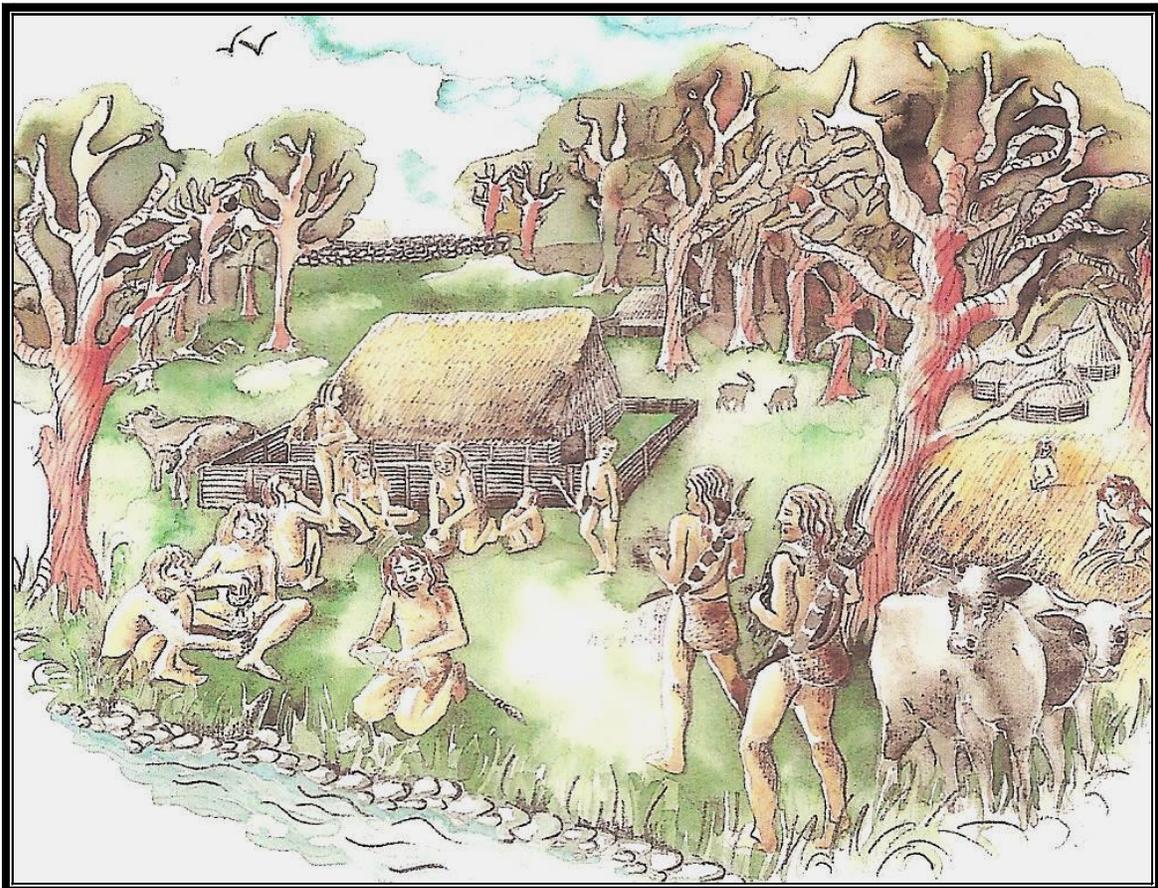
History in general and family history in particular has been and continues to be, an important endeavor for him and he has spent virtually countless hours in the pursuit of learning the fullest meaning of his Irish surname. As far as Irish surnames are concerned he is fortunate to have a surname that originated in one of the most sacred mythological centers in all of Ireland and arguably the most sacred mythological center in Ireland's Munster province.

The presentation following this biography is Mr. Irwin's attempt to fully explain the Ó Ciarmacáin/Irwin surname and how it fits into the all Ireland scheme of patronymic surnames. It also is an attempt to explain how the Ó Ciarmacáin/Irwin surname fits into the Munster provincial scheme of things. Whether he has been successful or not is for others to judge and viewers' criticisms and input via the internet system is most welcome.

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## Foreword

The first settlers at Lough Gur (Knockainy) were food gatherers who found a tremendously rich and fertile landscape. They were a people who first arrived there circa 3,000 B. C. For them Lough Gur must have been a perfect place to settle. The lake provided fish and the gentle hillside produced berries, nuts and trappings for animal hunting as well as protection from the elements. The rich limestone soils around Lough Gur next attracted some of Ireland's earliest farmers. Bronze Age and Iron Age people came later and brought their large herds of cattle that thrived on the rich pastureland. These ancient people also brought with them the megalithic tradition and they considered Lough Gur to be a sacred lake. The concentrations of ritualistic monuments, stone circles, megaliths and similar structures built around the lake on all sides are testaments to a sophisticated society. Each new wave of these settlers merged with the ones before them and they made from this fusion a civilization. It is from this civilization, this genetic pool that the Ó Ciarmacáin sept of Knockainy descends. As such their residency at Knockainy-Lough Gur spans a 5,000 year timeline contained within a five mile perimeter.



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## Chapter 1

# Tuatha De Aine

To begin with Pre-Gaelic Ireland (circa 3rd century A.D.) was unified linguistically and culturally but politically fragmented. Politically there were about 150 Kingdoms, called Tuatha, which ruled the island. Each of these kingdoms was unified by religious bonds to the local territorial deity or goddess who was believed to be the bestower of local sovereignty. The local goddess bestowed sovereignty only to her children who lived in her territory and pre-Gaelic Ireland, as such, was a land of "rightful occupiers" living in harmony with their local ancestral deities.

Present day Knockainy was, in ancient times, called Aine Cliach which means Ainy's territory. Ainy's children called themselves the Tuatha De Aine which means the people of goddess Ainy. Their sacred tribal center was the Hill of Knockainy where Ainy was believed to reside in her Otherworld residence.

Thus the deepest roots of the Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) surname begin here with their ancestral belief that, as Ainy's children, they were the oldest and most "rightful occupiers" of Aine Cliach (Knockainy). \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [Knockainy \(Ainy's Hill\)](#)

## Knockainy (Ainy's Hill)



This modern day marker rests on top of the Hill of Ainy. It marks the location of an ancient burial cairn and Ainy's Otherworld residence. Such hilltop burial cairns were scattered throughout pre-Gaelic Ireland, like parish churches, and were the spiritual focus of settlements bonded together as Tuatha (tribes).

## Chapter 2

# Race of Heber

In the early pre-Christian era, the politics of Ireland was changing. The Gaels, a minority and relative newcomers to the land, branched out and formed political networks referred to as dynasties. They swallowed up the ancient kingdoms of "rightful occupiers" and replaced them with their Gaelic dynastic kingdoms of "strangers in sovereignty."

Their political bond of allegiance was not to the local territorial deity but instead they were bonded politically by ties of blood and kinship. To justify their rapid ascent to power and give some sort of cohesion to the ties of blood and kinship basis for loyalty the Gaelic poet-historians endowed the Gaelic ascendancy with pseudo-histories and genealogies that would eventually tie together all of the dynasts of the island into one Gaelic ruling aristocracy.

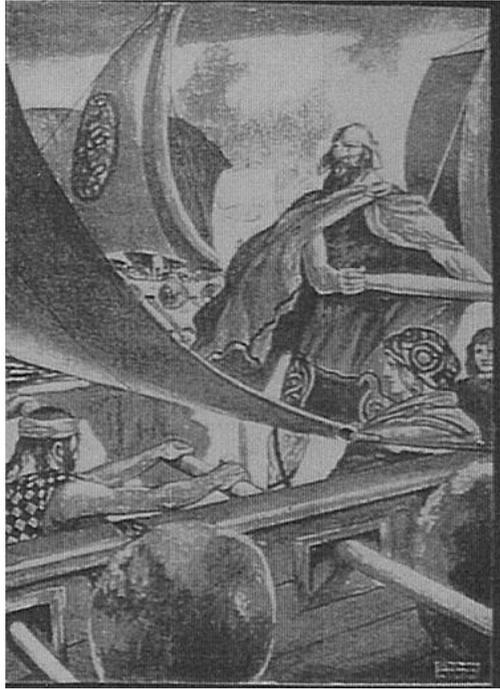
These Gaels were also known as Milesians. They were called so because, according to the pseudo-story concocted by the Gaelic historians, all true Irish (Gaelic) people descended from either Milesius of Spain (through his sons Heremon, Heber and Ir) or descended from Ith, the uncle of Milesius.

When it came time to become "Gaelic" the pre-Gaelic ancestors of the Ó Ciarmaics tied themselves into the Gaelic aristocracy by claiming descent from Heber. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [Milesius.](#)
- ["Sons" of Milesius – Four Celtic "Stocks."](#)

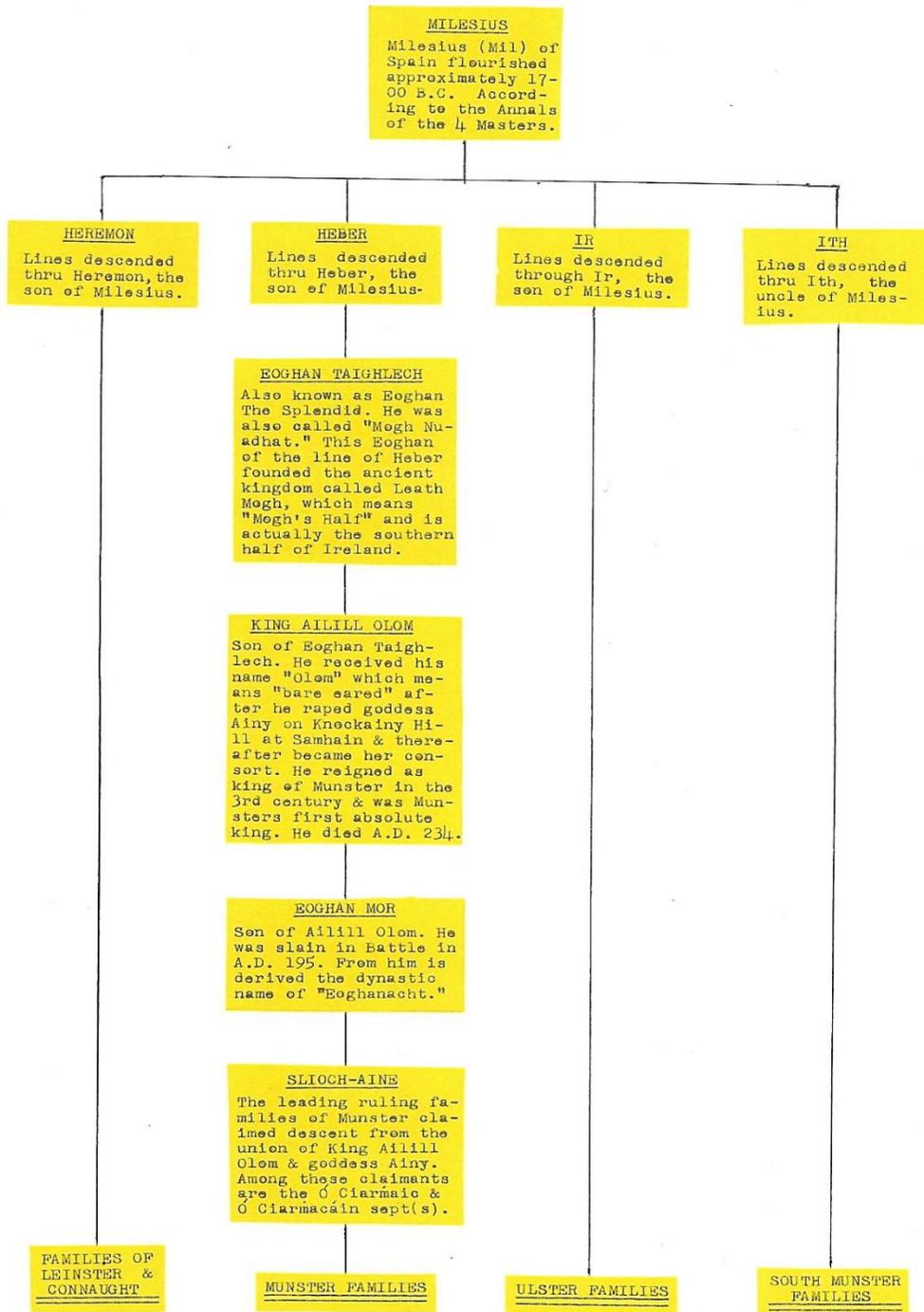
# Milesius



According to the Gaelic pseudo-historians the Milesians (Gaels) were the third group of people to permanently inhabit Ireland. The Gaelic predecessors were given the names Fir Bolg and Danann (Tuatha De Dana). As the legend goes, upon arriving in Ireland and before engaging in battle, the Milesians made an agreement with their predecessors that the winner of the battle would live in whatever half of Ireland he would choose and the loser would accept the other half. The Milesians won the battle and chose neither the north or south half nor the east or west half but instead chose the top half. The lower half accordingly was divided amongst the pre-Milesian population of Ireland with each chieftain being allocated specific hills or mounds throughout the island. The upper half accordingly was divided between Heber, Heremon and Ir (sons of Milesius) and the progeny of Ith (Milesius' uncle). Thus, Ireland came to be an island of two populations. One lived above ground and one lived below ground and they co-existed in a state of semi-peaceful rivalry thereafter.

By this legendary myth the Milesian pseudo-historians "buried" their predecessors (Firbolg and Danann) in an underground realm of virtual irrelevance (without genealogies). Conversely, they unified the island of Ireland, politically into one Gaelic (Celtic) society made up of four Milesian stocks (all of whom were endowed with lavish genealogies): sons of Heremon, sons of Heber, sons of Ir and sons of Ith.

# "Sons" of Milesius – Four Celtic "Stocks"



## Chapter 3

# Slioch Aine

Ailill Olom, of the race of Heber, defeated the pre-Gaelic forces of Munster at the Battle of Ceann Abhradh in County Limerick. Thereafter he became Munster's first Gaelic provincial King and established the Eoghanacht dynasty which was named after Ailill's father (Eoghan the Splendid).

In keeping with their rise to power in Munster the Eoghanacht poet-historians composed a narrative, which served as a dramatization of how they came to be sovereigns of Munster. The story deals with the goddess Ainy who, as patron goddess of Munster, held the sovereignty of the province. As the story goes Ailill Olom went, at Samhain time, to the Hill of Knockainy and fell asleep on the hillside while listening to the cattle grazing. He was thereafter awakened from his sleep by goddess Ainy playing music on a bronze harp. Upon awakening Ailill proceeded to rape Ainy but not before she put up a violent struggle and tore off his ears. It was from this struggle that Ailill got the name "Olom" which means "bare ears."

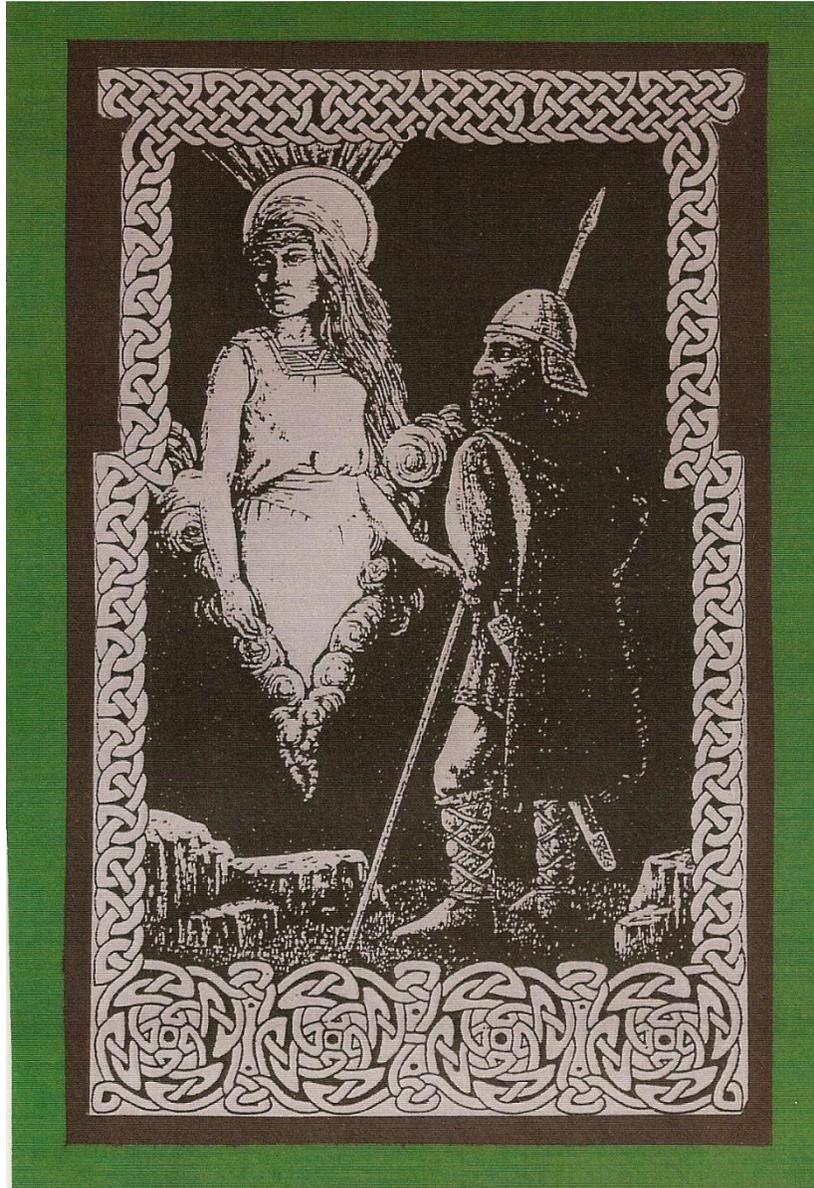
This story of the rape of Ainy was based on the tradition that she was the mate of King Ailill Olom and as such was the ancestress of the Gaelic Eoghanachts which was a way of further stressing their right to the kingship of Munster. Some of the oldest and noblest ruling families of Munster, Ó Ciarmaics included, claimed descent from this union and as such called themselves "Slioch-Aine" (progeny of King Olom and Ainy).

When it came time to become Eoghanachts (the race of Eoghan) the pre-Eoghanacht ancestors of the Ó Ciarmaics tied themselves into the Eoghanacht dynasty by claiming descent from King Olom and his consort Ainy. \*\*\*\*

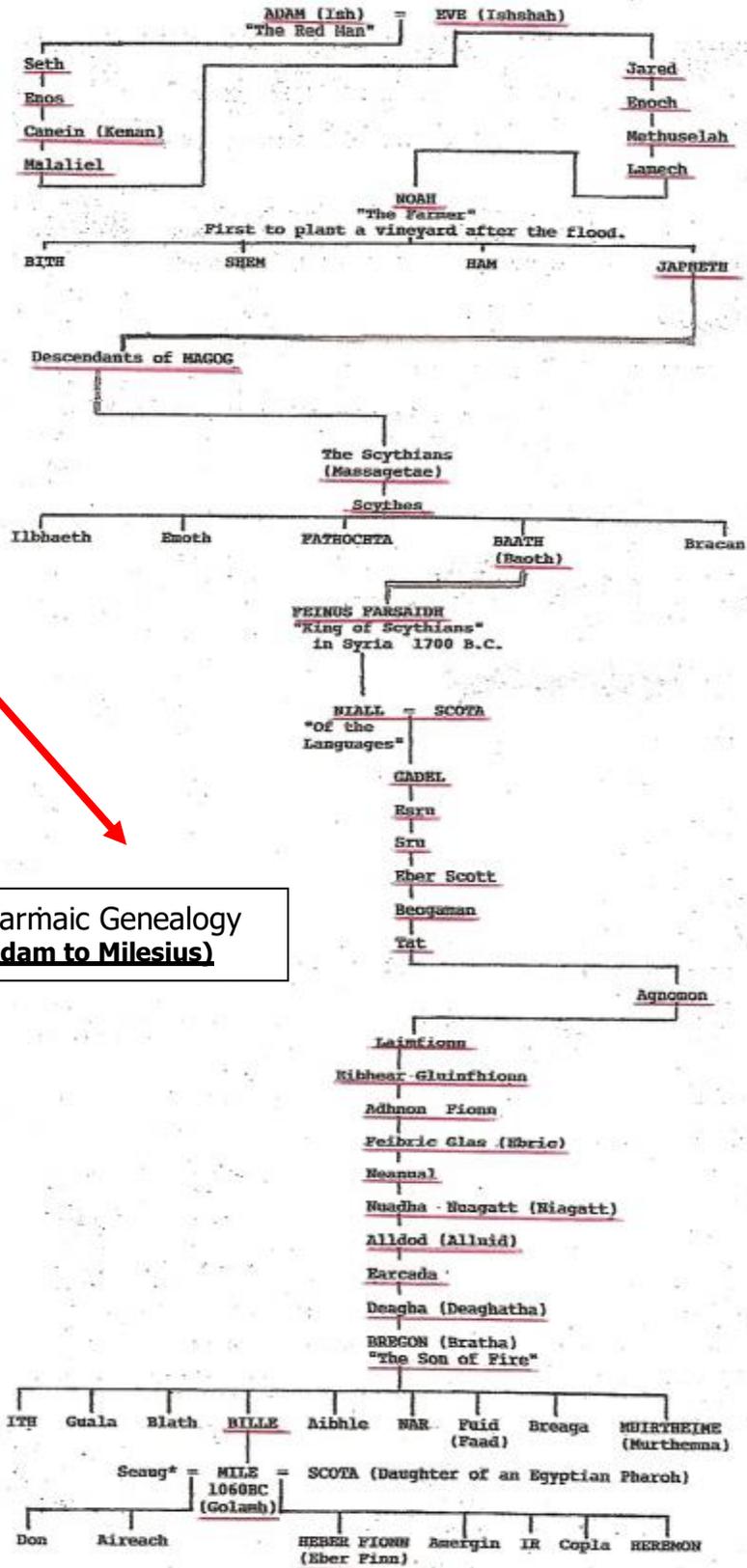
\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [King Ailill Olom and Goddess Ainy.](#)
- [Ó Ciarmaic Genealogy \(Adam to Milesius\).](#)
- [Ó Ciarmaic Genealogy \(Milesius to Ailill Olom to O' Ciarmhaic\).](#)

## King Ailill Olom and Goddess Ainy



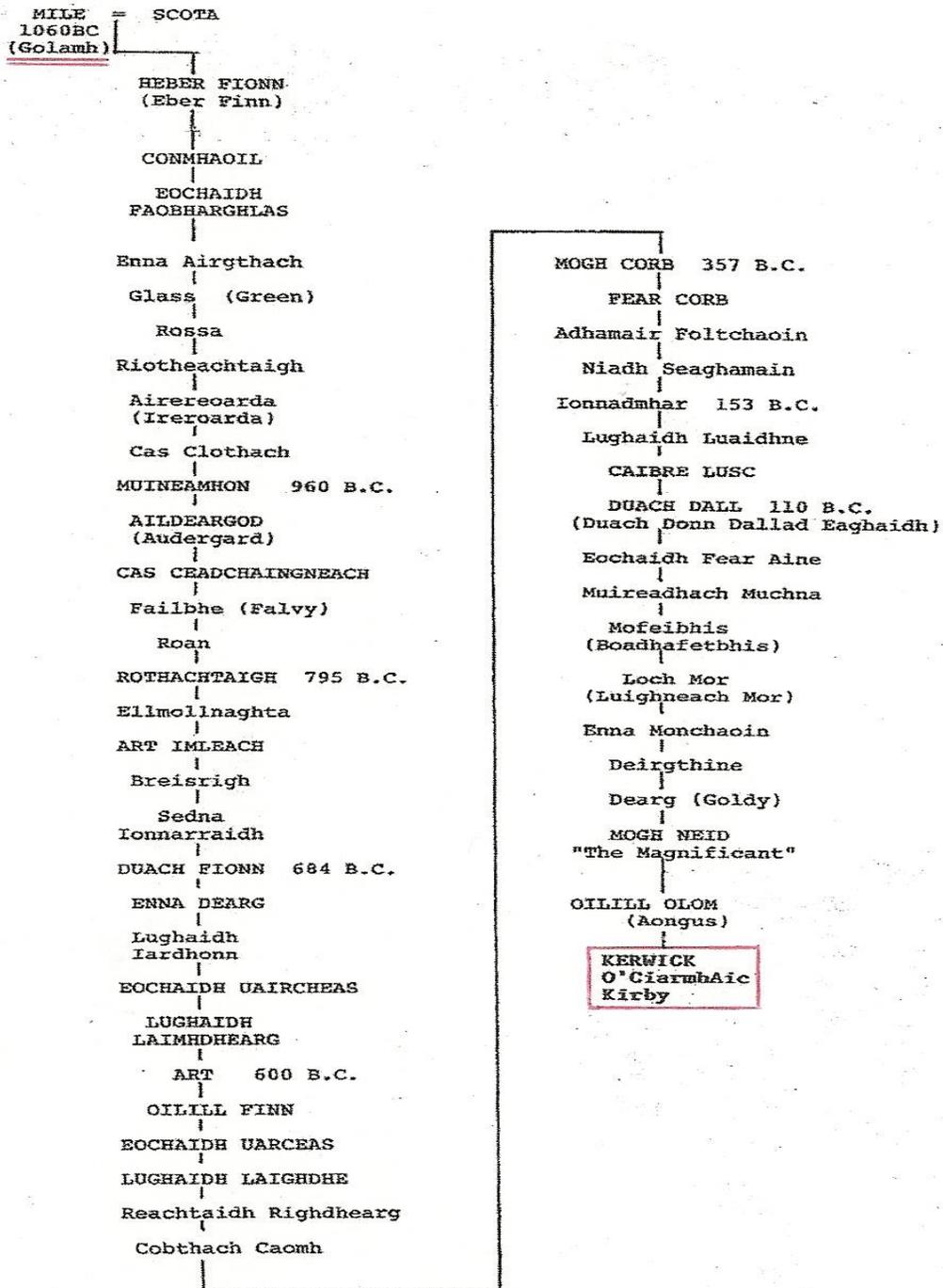
The Ó Ciarmaics “descend” from King Ailill Olom and Goddess Ainy (Slioch Aine). Their Gaelic genealogy extends all the way back from King Ailill Olom to Milesius. Milesius’ genealogy goes back still further to Adam and Eve.



Ó Ciarmaic Genealogy  
(Adam to Milesius)

# Ó Ciarmaic Genealogy

## (Milesius to Ailill Olom to O' Ciarmhaic)



## Chapter 4

# Ui Ainy

In the years 664-666 there was a great cattle plague throughout Ireland causing great political unrest. Many people concluded that the horrors of the plague, with its accompanying side effects, could only have been visited upon the land because of the ruling "strangers in sovereignty" who were not in harmony with the local territorial deities. Throughout Ireland a number of battles were fought and a number of political realignments took place.

At Knockainy in the year 667, at Samhain time, the Battle of Ainy was fought and a new political realignment took place there in its aftermath. Before the Battle of Ainy the Tuatha De Aine territory was ruled over by two competing polities: The Ui Fidgente and the Aradha. Present day Knockainy was located in Aradha Cliach (Aradha's Territory). The aggressive Ui Fidgente was a western Limerick (Eoghanacht) lineage and the Aradha claimed kinship to Leinster dynasts to the east of Limerick. As such both the Ui Fidgente and the Aradha were "outsider lineages" as far as Knockainy was concerned. After the Battle of Ainy the Ui Fidgente's "aggressions" were halted from expanding eastward beyond the river Maigue and the Morning Star Stream. The Aradha relocated northward into Tipperary.

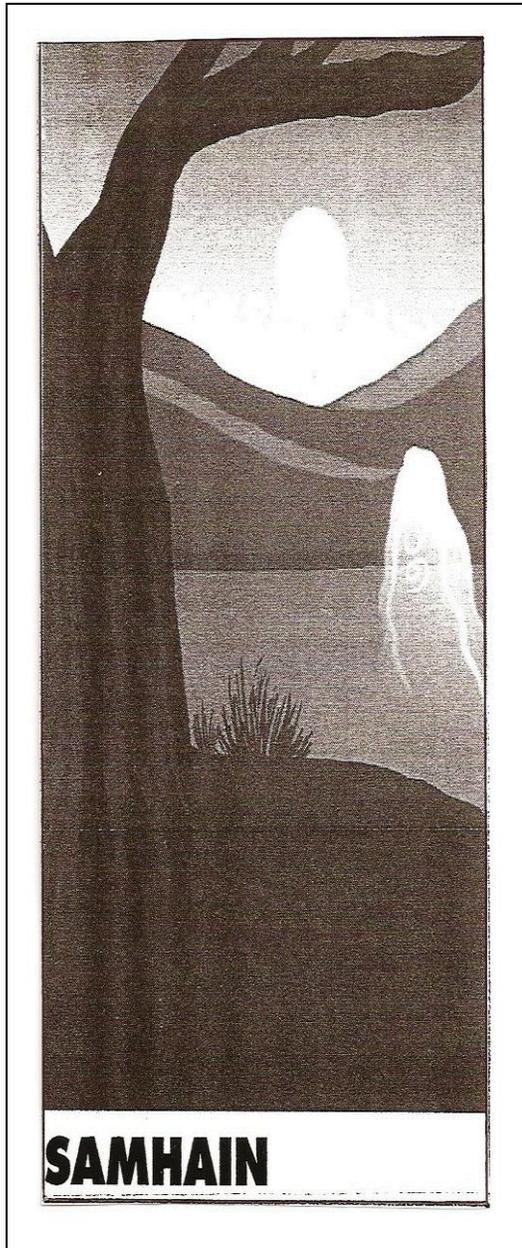
The Aradha Cliach territory thereafter was called Eoghanacht Ainy which was a name reflecting the new political alliance between the Tuatha De Aine and the Gaelic Eoghanacht dynasty. The newly established chieftain, in subordination to the Eoghanachts, would call himself "The Ciarnac." His Tuatha (Tuatha De Aine) would, in Gaelic fashion, come to be called the "Ui Ainy" (descendants of Ainy).

This change in tribal naming reflected the change from a land bonded to a territorial deity to a land bonded politically by ties of blood and kinship. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [Samhain](#)
- [Strangers in Sovereignty](#)

# Samhain



Samhain was not only a time when the human population was able to interact with the dead one but it was also a time of great political unrest. It was the time when creditors and debtors (lords and clients) settled their accounts. Lords expected their winter tribute from their clients at Samhain and partly consumed it in lavish feasts as they made "circuits" around the homes of their clients. The political tension at these feasts is shown by the number of banquet brawls described in the old Irish narratives. Though this was oftentimes drunken violence it was also structured competitive and socially purposeful violence serving, in the end, to established the rank order of prestige between peers and to demarcate relationships that had deteriorated to the point of enmity. Although Samhain did not mean that all lords suffered a political decline but only that there was a pause in the flow of political interaction and that it might be necessary to renegotiate with their clients. If clients were to defect to other lords it was generally the assumption that Samhain was the time to do it. And so it came to pass that the Battle of Ainy (667) took place at Samhain and the Ui Ainy came to become subordinated to and in alliance with the Eoghanacht dynasty.

## Strangers in Sovereignty



In Ireland, by the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the old concept of kingship had changed. The days of the "sacred king" (Ri) had passed. Prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> century boundaries between individual tuatha (tribes) had been fixed by time honored custom. Neighboring kings might steal each other's cattle but rarely each other's thrones. Each tuatha had its own particular ruling family; members of the family might struggle for power but for an outsider to participate was almost unthinkable. Ambitious kings no longer respected the status quo. Individual rulers jockeyed for power aiming at controlling their neighbors' kingdoms. When an outsider did gain control of a neighboring tuatha he was called a "stranger in sovereignty" by the Brehons (lawyers). Ruthless behaviour became the order of the day in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the country abounded with "strangers in sovereignty." It was in this context, following the Battle of Ainy, that the Ui Ainy, for mutual protection, allied themselves with the Eoghanacht. No longer would they, as their ancestors had been, be "sacred kings" (Ri). Henceforth, until Norman times, they would hold the semi-sacred office of chieftains in subordination to the Eoghanacht.

## Chapter 5

# The Ciarmac



A chieftain's name and the legends attached to it were of high political importance in 7<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland. Tribal poet-historians composed origin-legends in rhyme and verse for their patron chieftains. These origin legends were not mere pseudo-myths but were true reflections of how the chieftain and his kindred perceived and explained their rise to political prominence.

Following the Battle of Ainy (Samhain 667) the new Ui Ainy chieftain took the name-title "Ciar Mac" (Black Son) as his chieftain origin-legend name. It was through this name and the lore attached to it that the new chieftain, The Ciarmac, and his kindred, Ui Ciarmiac, were able to demonstrate how they perceived and explained their rise to the chieftaincy of the Eoghanacht Ainy (a position they would monopolize until Norman times some 600 years later).

Firstly the new Ui Ainy chieftain and his kindred perceived themselves to be the children of goddess Ainy (Ui Ainy) and as such were Knockainy's original inhabitants and rightful occupiers in harmony with, Ainy, their ancestral mother goddess. Also the Hill of Knockainy was the Otherworld dwelling place of Ainy and their revered dead ancestors and as such it was their sacred center and source of chiefly sovereignty and wisdom. It was at Samhain that the Battle of

Ainy took place and they became chieftains and it was also at Samhain that they acquired the chiefly wisdom, from the Otherworld, that qualified them to be chieftains. It was these perceptions which were the basis of and gave rise to the chiefly name-title "Ciarmac."

Ciarmac literally means black (ciar) son (mac) and the color black and dark, in ancient Irish custom and belief, was associated with Samhain, the Otherworld and the dead ancestors. Samhain (October 31-November 2) ushered in the Celtic New Year and was considered to be the dark half of the year. Samhain was also the time of the dark moon (Festival of the Dead) and the veil between this world and the Otherworld was drawn aside. The Otherworld, according to Irish belief, was a community of the dead which inhabited the countryside side by side with but invisible and inaccessible to the human race (except at Samhain). The principal dwelling places of the dead were the hilltop mounds, sidh, and the burial cairns on these hilltops were considered gateways to the Otherworld for those who were prepared to go there and return.

Gaining access to the Otherworld and the wisdom possessed by the dead ancestors was accomplished at Samhain by means of ritual and trance. The place of access was the hilltop burial cairn. As far as the method of entry was concerned, usually the person making such a trip was lulled into a deep, profound, magical sleep by a wise seer poet. The wisdom acquired was considered inspirational and could be acquired during the night of the Otherworld trip.

Ciarmac therefore means the "Black Son of Ainy" and the significance of black, in this context, refers to wisdom and sovereignty obtained from the Otherworld (black) at Samhain time (black) from Ainy and the dead ancestors (black). \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [The Lore of Find.](#)
- [Sacred Knockainy \(Four Directions and Five Zones\).](#)
- [Sacred Knockainy \(Sacred Provincial Capital\).](#)
- [The Chieftain's Poet.](#)
- [The Three Manifest Worlds and The Otherworld.](#)
- [The Twelve Winds and Their Colors.](#)
- [The Druidic – Bardic Circle of the Year.](#)

## **The Lore of Find**

The Gaelic people first arrived in Ireland circa 500 B. C. Upon settling they were impressed by the numerous ancient monuments found throughout the land left by earlier peoples. This newly arrived Gaelic culture rationalized these ancient monuments, especially mounds and burial chambers, by locating their own deities in them and thus created a spiritual environment throughout Ireland.

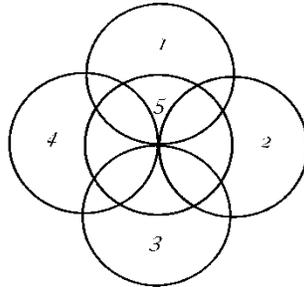
In the development of this culture of spiritual environment the seers played the leading role and so a figure who personalized the cult of the seers would have been of primary importance. The name given to this figure, who personified the cult of the seers, was "Find" which would signify "wisdom".

Thus the "Lore of Find" was one and the same as the "Lore of Wisdom." Find, by the ancients, was not imagined as a mystical divine being but instead, he was imagined as a human person. He was a human person who manifested himself in a number of Avatars (bodily manifestation of Find) such as Find File, Fionn MacCumhaill and Ciarmac.

A study of these avatars suggests that certain ideas were basic to the image of Find and were expressed in a number of standard ways. Firstly, knowledge was believed to be got from the dead ancestors, an idea which gave immediate relevance to grave mounds cairns and such places. When ritually understood this meant a great individual seer, seeking out a wise predecessor could obtain ancestral wisdom from his ancestors residing in their burial mounds.

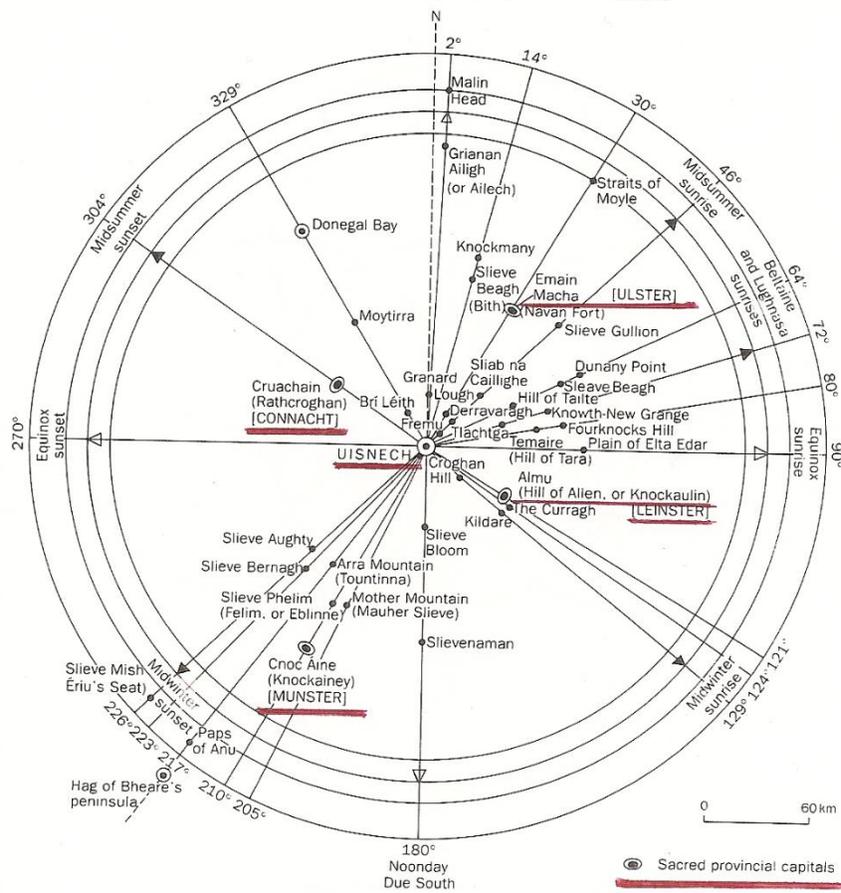
A number of septs, as they came to be allied to the various Gaelic dynasties, superimposed their perception of themselves with the Lore of Find. This appropriation of the Lore of Find served as a justification of their political successes in the political world of Gaelic-Dynastic Ireland. A leading Leinster sept, the Ui Gharrchon, associated the Lore of Find with their great center at Knockaulin, County Kildare calling him Find File. Another sept, the Ui Failghe, inhabited a large territory encompassing large parts of present-day counties Kildare, Offaly and Laois. They also borrowed the Lore of Find and centered it on a sacred hill in the heart of their territory called Almhu. They called their personification of Find, Fionn MacCumhaill. Yet another sept, the Ui Ainy, in like fashion associated the Lore of Find with their sacred center at Knockainy calling their personification of Find and wisdom Ciarmac.

## **Sacred Knockainy** **(Four Directions and Five Zones)**



Ancient Ireland was symbolically divided into Four provinces with a unifying or central fifth: The pattern of the Bardic and Druidic universe. Nationally the whole of Ireland was divided into the four provinces of Ulster, Leinster, Connaught and Munster and all of these provinces were unified by the sacred center at Meath. Provincially the Munster province was divided into five divisions: Tuadh Mumhan (North Munster), Des Mumhan (South Munster), Oir Mumhan (East Munster), Iar Mumhan (West Munster) and Meodhan Mumhan (Middle Munster). The sacred Hill of Knockainy, where goddess Ainy dwelt was not only the sacred center of Middle Munster but also the sacred center of the entire Munster province. It was from goddess Ainy that the Eoghanachts received the sovereignty of Munster.

## **Sacred Knockainy (Sacred Provincial Capital)**



Furthermore significant solar sunrise and sunset alignments link sacred sites in the four provinces to the fifth province (Meath) at the sacred hill at Uisneach. It is from Uisneach that a web of relationships is seen to run from every part of the island making a “mythical web” spun by the deities. This “mystical web” of sunrise and sunset alignments was further reinforced by the Gaelic poet-historians who sanctified the whole island of Ireland with their legends and sagas. According to these solar alignments Knockainy was considered the sacred provincial capital of Munster.

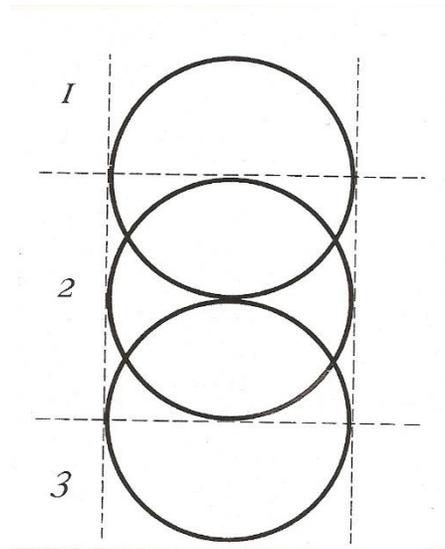
## The Chieftain's Poet



The Chieftain's poet (Ollam) often entertained at royal banquets. Their traditional accounts of ancient Goddesses (Ainy) and deeds of heroes (The Ciarrnac) were woven around actual settlements and landmarks (Sacred Hill of Knockainy) and the names of prominent local families (Ui Ciarnaic). Story tellers repeated them as heritage from time immemorial and their themes were indeed ancient. A web of stories and legends was laid upon the Irish landscape binding together its rocks, rivers and other natural features with the families who lived there, thus placing the whole country under the spell of mythology.

On a more political level one of the principal functions of the poet at banquets, fairs and inaugurations was to recite the chieftain's genealogy and sing his praises as part of the ceremony. The royal genealogy and the story of how the king or chieftain came to prominence (story of Ciarrnac) was the equivalent of a charter of right and was proof of the chieftain's title to rule.

**The Three Manifest Worlds**  
**And**  
**The Otherworld**

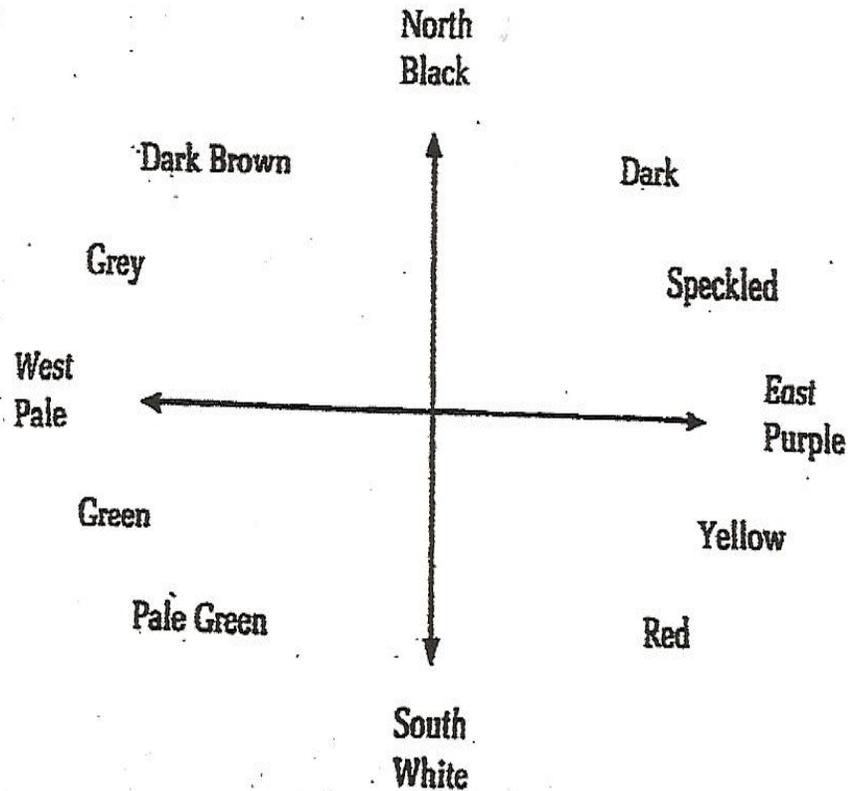


Ancient Ireland was divided into three interconnected worlds. The Upper World contained the sun, moon and stars. The Middle World contained humans and animals. The Underworld contained sacred springs, wells, lakes, caves, burial mounds and chambers. But in addition to these "manifest" worlds there was the Otherworld. This Otherworld, in Gaelic mythology, is an inscape of or an overlay upon the land. It is not conceived of as being "up, down or out there." Rather it is contiguous with every part of life and the Gaels perceived themselves as being potentially existent in all "Four" worlds.

Perhaps more than any other people the Gaels have always cherished the country of their true home – the Otherworld. It is the source of their wisdom, the place of their gods and the dimension in which poets and heroes are most at home. To the Gael the Otherworld is a dimension where everything is possible and where great deeds can be accomplished.

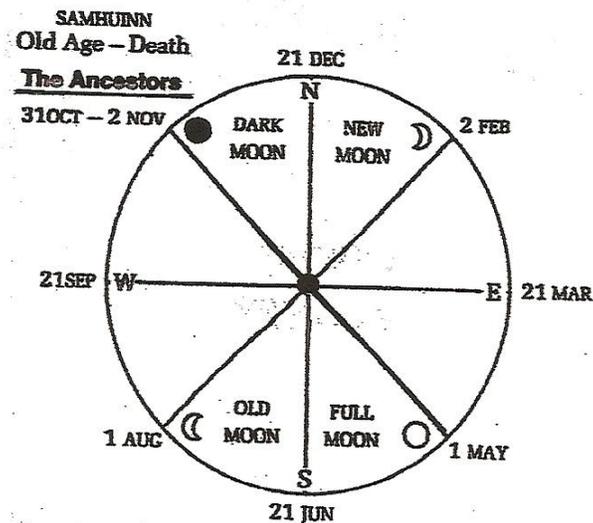
It is in this context that "The Ciarnac" went to the Otherworld and back and became endowed with ancestral wisdom necessary for his chieftaincy.

## The Twelve Winds and Their Colors



The ancient Irish people believed god made four chief winds and eight subordinate winds so that there were twelve winds in all. A specific color was ascribed to each of these winds so that all the colors of all the winds were different from each other. The wind of the north was given the color black and the wind of the northwest was given the color dark brown. In Irish "Ciar" can mean either black or dark brown.

## The Druidic – Bardic Circle of the Year



On the Druidic-Bardic circle of the year black and dark brown (Ciar) is the color(s) of that portion of the year called Samhain and the Winter Solstice. Samhain (October 31-November 2) was the time of death, old age, the ancestors and the "dark" moon. It was at Samhain that wisdom could be acquired from the dead ancestors. The Winter Solstice (December 21) was a time of death and rebirth, a time when the sun appeared to be giving way to the "darkest" night.

The concept of "darkness" was an important aspect pertaining to the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge. The goddess who ruled Samhain was given the name "Cailleach", the "Dark woman of knowledge." Poets of old practiced a form of sensory deprivation by seeking inspiration in total "darkness." The Druids place of learning was usually located to the north (ascribed the color black) of a settlement, that being the preferred sacred direction.

## Chapter 6

# Ui Ciarmiac (Eoghanacht Rule)

By the 10<sup>th</sup> century the once mighty Eoghanacht dynasty was beginning to crumble. Beneath the Eoghanacht confederation and under its hegemony lay a patchwork quilt of sub-kingdoms and minor local kingdoms in various degrees of subordination to each other and to the Eoghanacht. Most of them were ruled by dynastic stocks totally different in origin from their overlords.

One of the most important of these sub-kingdoms was that of the Ui Fidgente who claimed dynastic kinship with the western Eoghanachts. Their territory, like most Munster kingdoms, was far from homogenous and they ruled over a number of subject peoples. Until about 900 the Ui Fidgente remained a united kingdom and shortly thereafter it broke into two separate kingdoms: Ui Conaill Gabra and Ui Cairbre. Subsequently it further dissolved into several weak and petty kingdoms.

It was in this context and at this time that the first mention of a "Ciarmac" enters into the history books. According to the "Annals of Ireland" by the Four Masters (year 901): "an army was led by Flann, son of Maelseachlainn and by Cearbhall, son of Muireagan and they plundered from Gabra to Limerick." And "Cairmac King of Figentes of Gabra and of great renown died." And "Ciarmhacan, son of Flannabhra Ui Dun-Adhaigh, lord of Ui Conaill Gabra died."

The above entries from the "Annals of Ireland" needs some explanation here. First it seems evident that both "Ciarmac" and "Ciarmhacan" are most probably a father and son relation of Eoghanacht Ainy stock. How did Ciarmac of Eoghanacht Ainy stock come to be called "King of Figente?" And how is it that Ciarmhacan is described as a son of Flannabhra Ua Dunadhaigh, lord of Ui Conaill Gabra?

To answer the question of how Ciarmac became "King of Figente (Ui Conaill Gabra branch) I must mention the Irish terms "rig budein" and "rig nechtrann." "Rig budein" means "his own king" and "rig nechtrann" means "external king." Or in other words one, is a "local king" whereas the other was "encroaching from outside." Ciarmac, of Eoghanacht Ainy stock, was obviously "encroaching from outside." It was oftentimes the case at this time that if a senior branch of a family came to dominate the chieftaincy "back home" that the cadet branch would have to split off and make their fortunes away from the original base of the kindred. And in the year 901 this was probably Ciarmac's situation.

As far as Ciarmhacan was concerned Ciarmhac(an) indicates a son of Ciarmac. And so, the literal entry in the Annals of Ireland, "Ciarmhacan son of Flannabhra Ua Dunadhaigh" probably really means "Ciarmac's son the foster son of Flannabhra Ua Dundhaigh." Fosterage was one of the leading features of Irish social life at this time. It was practiced most especially by those of the higher ranks and it was not unusual for a chieftain to send his child to be fostered by other chieftains and noble families. It was said that Ochy Beg, King of Aine Cliach (Knockainy), had "forty foster boys in his charge, sons of Munster nobles." The relation was regarded as sacred and the principal function of fosterage was alliance building between royal families. Wide and effective networks of fosterage relations enhanced the king's/chieftain's chances of successful succession to kingship/chieftaincy.

In any event Ciarmac's "kingship" in Gabra and Ciarmhacan's fosterage to Flannabhra Ua Dunadhaigh "lord of Ui Conaill Gabra" ended in death for both of them in 901 as Flann's and Cearbhall's army, plundered its way from Gabra to Limerick.

Before the close of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the once mighty Eoghanacht dynasty would lose the kingship to another aspiring dynasty. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [The Munster Kingdoms](#)



## Chapter 7

### **Ui Ciarmiac (Dalcassian Rule)**

By the latter part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century the once mighty Eoghanacht Dynasty was beginning to crumble. At the same time another dynasty (Dal Cais) was on the rise. The Dal Cais, a tribal grouping based in the Clare-Limerick area, came under the control of Brian Boru in 976. Two years later he defeated and killed the Eoghanacht King of Munster and proceeded to wage deadly war against the kingdoms of Connaught, Meath, Leinster, and Breifne. By 1014 his victory at Clontarf united all of Ireland, nominally at least, under a single leader, though Brian himself was slain. It was at this time that the Ui Ciarmaic chieftains came to be subordinated to their new Dalcassian overlords. The Annals of Ireland, by the Four Masters, has several entries pertaining to Ui Ciarmaics during this Dalcassian era.

In the year 1087: "The battle of Rath-Edair (the fort of Edar located on or near the hill of Howth in County Dublin) between the men of Leinster and Munster, where Muircheartach Ua Briain and the men of Munster defeated the Leinstermen and Domhnall, son of Mael-na-mbo and Diarmaid Ua Briain, and Enda, son of Diarmaid; and where a great slaughter was made of the Leinstermen, together with the son of Murchadh Ua Domhaill, lord of Ui-Drona and Conall Ua Ciarmhaic and Ua Neill of Magh-da-chon, etc."

In the year 1115: "Diarmaid Ua Briain, King of Munster, was taken prisoner by Muicheartach Ua Briain; and Muircheartach Ua Briain assumed his kingdom again and set out with an army into Leinster and Breagha. Muircheartach Ua Ciarmhaic, lord of Aine; Domhnall Ua Conchobhair Ciarraighe; Murchadh Ua Flainn; the son of Flannchadha, lord of Muscraighe, were slain. The (great stone church) of Ard Breacain full of people, was burned by the men of Munster and also many other churches in the country of Feara-Breagh."

In the year 1123: "A great army was led by Toirdealbhach, son of Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair, as far as Bealach-Eochaille (Youghal), by which he took all the hostages of Desmond. The Gaileanga took a house at Daimhliag-Chianin upon Murchadh Ua Maeleachlainn, King of Teamhair; and they burned eighty houses around it and killed many of his people, on that occasion. Ua Maeleachlainn escaped being killed or burned, by the protection of Cianan. Domhnall, son of Donnchadh, royal heir of Teamhair, was slain by the Gailenga. An unusual attack was made upon the successor of Ailbhe, Maelmordha, son of Cloithnia. A

house was forcibly taken from him and the son of Cearbhall Ua Ciarmhaic, lord of Aine, in the middle of Imleach and seven persons were therein killed; but the chiefs escaped through the miracle of God, Ailbhe and the church. The Bearnan-Ailbhe (St. Silbhe's gapped or broken bell) was burned on this occasion. The person who had taken the house, Gillacaech Ua Ciarmhaic (who was after being named a deacon), was killed before the end of the month and his head was cut off, in revenge of the violation of the laws of god and Ailbhe."

In the year 1162: "Diarmaid Ua Laignen, lector of Cluain-Uamha (Cloyne Monastery, County Cork), was killed by the Ui Ciarmhaic."

It cannot be overlooked that in three of the just mentioned years (1115, 1123 and 1162) churches were involved and some explanation of this is relevant. It seems that as a result of the Viking wars (9<sup>th</sup> Century) the respect of the Irish for sacred places was seriously eroded and the annals record numerous raids on churches and monasteries. Also part of the trouble lay in the organization of the Irish church which was monastic rather than diocesan. Church positions were frequently held by laymen and in many cases, ecclesiastical positions of power were given to members of the founding family of the monastery, abbot, priory, etc. This tendency helped to open the way for the later assumption of power in some of the larger monasteries by local ruling families. These "secular clerics" oftentimes demanded their tithes and spoils from cattle raids. In this context internecine sept struggles oftentimes took place in connection with rival monastic power disputes.

It has often been said that surnames were introduced into Ireland by King Brian Boru. Though this cannot be accepted as historically accurate it is a fact that Ireland was one of the first countries to adopt a system of hereditary surnames; or perhaps it would be truer to say that such a system developed spontaneously. At any rate Irish surnames were well established during the reign of Brian Boru and members of the Ui Ciarmaic sept (plural) came to adopt the hereditary surname Ua Ciarmaic (singular) to themselves.

It was also during the waning days of Dalcassian rule in Munster (c. 1190) that the "Ua" (singular) and the "Ui" (plural) prefixes came to become "Ó." "Ua" and "Ó" actually served the same purpose but one form is older (Ua) and the other form (Ó) is more modern and can be used for both singular and plural name prefixes. They both mean grandson or even an earlier ancestor and more loosely they mean male descendant.

This "Ó" was not long in usage when another prefix modification took place. The "Ó" came to become O' (with an apostrophe) due to a very simple misunderstanding. An acute accent ( ' ) called a "fada" is used in the Irish language to accent some vowel sounds. It was always used in the case of "Ó" Irish surnames and thus Ó Ciármaic came to become "O' Ciármaic." In many manuscript works lines of script were closely packed together and there was not sufficient room to put the fada above the capital prefix "Ó." So instead the fada was put on the right hand side of the "Ó." For example Ó Ciármaic would become O' Ciármaic. Those unfamiliar with the Irish language, understandably, mistook the fada for an apostrophe and thus the misunderstanding arose.

Thus, as Dalcassian rule gave way to Norman rule (13<sup>th</sup> Century) the original Ua Ciármaic... later Ó Ciármaic... had come to be called by the hereditary surname O' Ciármaic which means the descendant of the Ciármaic.

## Chapter 8

# O'Ciarmaic (Norman Rule)

The Normans first arrived in Ireland in 1169 beginning a succession of military expeditions. With the death of Donal Mor O'Brien, King of Munster, in 1194 they were able to take advantage of the situation and establish themselves as the ruling power of not only County Limerick but also large parts of Munster as well. They soon became completely Gaelicized and ruled like independent monarchs over their Irish subjects. They intermarried freely with the Irish. They adopted Irish customs and language and as the saying goes they eventually "became more Irish than the Irish themselves."

Although dispossessed of much of their lands by the Normans and no longer "semi-sacred" chieftains many O'Ciarmaics nevertheless remained on their ancestral lands in the "demoted" position of "Tigerna" which means a lord. This arrangement of Gaelic lords subordinated to Norman overlords would continue on for more than three centuries and during this period the O'Ciarmaic people and the O'Ciarmaic surname would undergo changes of note.

As already mentioned the O'Ciarmaics were dispossessed of much of their lands by the Normans. While the dominant O'Ciarmaic lineages were able to remain on their Knockainy lands a number of the lesser lineages dispersed to other parts of Munster and even as far away as the Leinster province (Kilkenny). Several centuries later these "dispersed O'Ciarmaics" would resurface under the name of Kirby throughout Munster and Kerwick/Kervick in County Kilkenny and County Waterford. The Ó Ciarmácaín surname was yet to have come into usage and so the Norman dispossession and the O'Ciarmaic "diaspora" had no effect on it. The fact that some lineages split away from their native territory and were able to coalesce elsewhere deserves explanation and the short explanation is cattle.

Ireland at this time was a semi-nomadic land and although land was invaluable, cattle was the "portable wealth" which allowed a number of O' Ciarmaics to relocate elsewhere. Cattle and clients were two very important ingredients of how lords became lords. New "lords" from "elsewhere" could control farmers through their ability to enfeoff them with cattle, making them "clients." Cattle clientship was the key to a new lords ascendancy and a principal explanation of how outsider lineages ( i. e. dispossessed O' Ciarmaics) came to thrive in and even dominate other territories. For example near Macroom, County Cork in the Donaghmore Parish there exists a town called Ballykerwick, meaning Kerwick's town, and so evidently one of the "dispersed" O' Ciarmaic lineages settled and thrived there.

For the O' Ciarmaics who did not take their cattle (portable wealth) and coalesce elsewhere they next appear in Knockainy history in the year 1309. As the story goes, Hugh O'Grady, Chief of the Limerick O'Grady's married "the daughter and heiress of O' Ciarmaic" and it was through her that the rich pasturelands of Kilballyowen (Knockainy parish) came into possession of the O'Grady family. The O'Grady's eventually would eclipse the O' Ciarmaics and become the ruling lords of Knockainy and environs by two centuries later.

A century later the celebrated Irish poet O'huidrin, listing the old Gaelic ruling families of Ireland in a poem written about 1420, wrote of the O' Ciarmaics:

"Of Eoghanact Ani of wealthy lands  
O' Kirwick is the mainstay of the territory,  
A country inhabited by the noblest tribes,  
They are Ui Enda, Ani, Auluim."

Although this poem was written about 1420 the references to "the most noble tribes... Ui Enda, Ani, Auluim" reach back to Eoghanacht dynastic times and merit an explanation. First of all, before explanation, the "Ui Enda, Ani, Auluim" mentioned by O'huidrin would be, to postulate alternate spellings and without the "Ui" omitted, "Ui Enna, Ui Ainy, and Ui Olom."

In explanation the name Eanna, Enda and Enna (all spellings) is an old Irish personal name and as far as the Eoghanacht of Ainy is concerned the name Enna is clearly of dynastic derivation. The connection of Enna to the Eoghanacht dynasty is as follows: Corc McLaire, one of the early day founders of the Eoghanacht dynasty, was descended from Nad Fraich (King of Munster) and from him descended Ailill and descended from him was Crimthann (King of Cashel) and from him came Enna from whom the Ui Enna (descendants of Enna) took their tribal name. The Eoghanacht of Ainy is alternately known as the Ui Enna Ainy.

Next the Ui Ainy (descendants of Ainy) was that noble tribe whose chieftain originally called himself "The Ciarmac" and ultimately came to become the hereditary surname O' Ciarmaic. They claimed to be the original and therefore the oldest inhabitants of Aine Cliach (Ainy's territory).

The Ui Olom (descendants of Olom) was that noble tribe who were the hereditary poets of the Eoghanacht Ainy. The word "Ollam" in Irish means a chief poet and the word "Eolum" and the root "Eol" means knowledge which indicate wisdom or a sage. The Ui Olom (Ui Auluim) therefore monopolized the office of chief poet (Ollam) in the Eoghanacht Ainy polity and it was their primary power base. Also King Ailill Olom was believed to have been a poet in addition to being the King of Munster. The Ui Olom claimed descent from the poet-king Ailill Olom who was also the consort and mate of goddess Ainy.

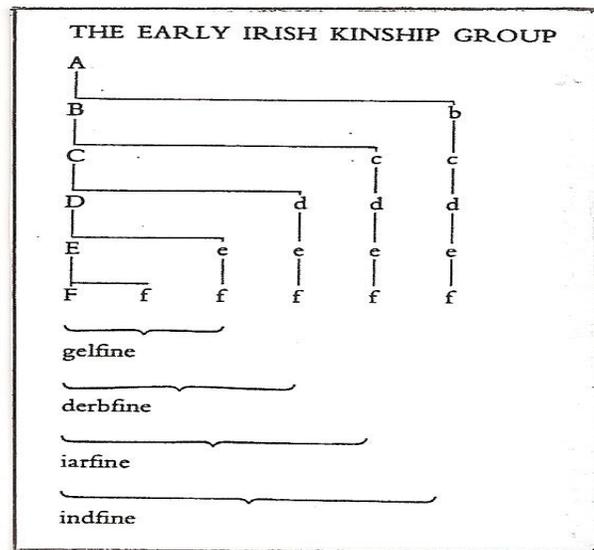
Lastly it is probable that the chieftaincy of the Eoghanacht Ainy was alternated between these three "noble tribes" with, as per O'huidrin's poem, "O Kirwick as the mainstay."

Although there was a marked dispersal of O' Ciarmaics following the Norman's arrival they still nevertheless remained numerous on their ancestral Knockainy lands. As their population continued to grow the use of various nicknames was adopted to distinguish different families in the area where the surname came to be very common. Some of these nicknames at first temporarily and then permanently replaced the principal parent surname. The Irish surname system at this time admitted, with considerable latitude, of the substitution of one for another of different forms of the same surname. It was about this time (15<sup>th</sup> Century) that O' Ciarmaic gave rise to a diminutive form by the addition of "áin" at its end (Ó Ciarmácáin). This additional "áin" when originally added had the force of a new patronymic surname and meant "son of." Therefore Ó Ciarmácáin meant the son (áin) of O' Ciarmaic (O' Ciarmác being the hereditary surname prior to the formation of the new surname of Ó Ciarmácáin) and became the hereditary surname of this newly formed lineage.

Thus we see that it was during the Norman period that the surname O' Ciarmaic first came to be dispersed throughout Munster and also that a cadet branch (Ó Ciarmácáin) was established. But there would be more changes to come in both surnames with the reassertion of English rule and the process of Anglicization.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*Additional reading this chapter:

- [The Early Irish Kinship Group.](#)
- [Gerald the Earl Fitzgerald.](#)
- [Septal Arms of O'Ciarmaic](#)



From the 7<sup>th</sup> century until Norman times (13<sup>th</sup> Century) the Ui Ciarmaic monopolized the chieftaincy of the Eoghanacht Ainy and remained on their ancestral lands. This was due, in no small part, to the structure of the early Irish family.

The large extended Irish "family" of old can best be referred to by the Irish term "Fine" which can be translated as "Kin-group" or "Kindred." It included much more than the conjugal family of parents and children. It was rather a group made up primarily of all males who had a great grandfather in common, that is up to and including second cousins. This was called the "derbfine." The "gelfine" was a kin group in the male line of a common grandfather. The "iarfine" was a kin group in the male line of a common great grandfather. The "indfine" was a kin group in the male line of a common great great grandfather.

On the "Fine" pivoted the greater part of one's claims, obligations, and loyalties. Each generation gave rise to a fresh "Fine" and so there was a constant hiving off process of eligible male descendants for the chieftaincy. Any member in the narrower kin group (derbfine) could be eligible for chieftain on the condition that one of his kin group (within his derbfine) was chieftain.

Kin relations of the wider kin group (iarfine and indfine) became ineligible for the chieftaincy but nevertheless, as members of the extended kin group (fine), were still entitled to remain and share in common their ancestral lands.

The Irish "Fine based" society was characterized by expansion from the top downwards. As sons and families of the ruling "fine" multiplied, so their subjects, clients, and followers were squeezed out and withered away. This constant displacement of commoners and of collateral royals by royals of the direct line of the ruling chieftain was, during this period, an Irish-wide phenomenon.

Also the rate at which the Irish "Fine" multiplied itself must not be underestimated. It was not uncommon for a chieftain to have twenty sons by ten different women and 60 grandchildren also. Irish society at this time was sexually permissive and Irish law drew no distinction in matters of inheritance between legitimate and illegitimate.

And so by Norman times, (13<sup>th</sup> century) the O' Ciarmaic remained on their ancestral lands in ever-growing members.

### Gerald the Earl Fitzgerald

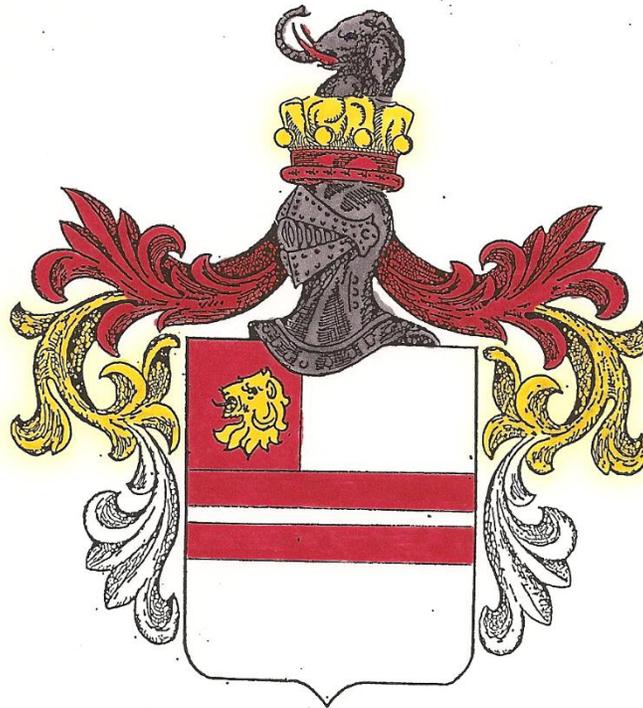


Gerald the Earl Fitzgerald (1338-1398), leader of the Munster branch of the Geraldine's, was a leading example of the Gaelicisation of the Norman lords. The center of his earldom was his castle at Lough Gur (several miles from the Hill of Knockainy). As the new Norman overlords of Desmond (south Munster) the Fitzgerald's were not slow to expropriate to themselves the Gaelic tradition of Ainy as the goddess of Munster sovereignty.

Thus we find the poet Gofraidh Fionn O' Dalaigh who was in the employ of the Fitzgeralds in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, referring to Gerald's father, Maurice the 1st Earl, as "Ainy's King" and to Gerald himself as "the son of Ainy's Knight." He (the poet O'Dalaigh) accordingly composed a story appropriate to the Fitzgerald's attainment of political eminence in Munster.

The story goes that Maurice was walking one day by the shore of Lough Gur when he saw the beautiful Otherworld woman, Ainy, bathing. He seized her cloak which act magically put her into his power and then lay with her. In this way Gerald the Earl, was conceived and when he was born Ainy appeared at the castle of Maurice the Earl to present the child to him. Thus the Fitzgeralds, as Ainy's offspring, claimed the right to the sovereignty of Desmond (south Munster).

Septal Arms of Ó Ciarmaic  
(Kirby-Kerwick-Irwin)



Ó CIARMAICÁIN  
(Irwin)

## **Septal Arms of Ó Ciarmaic (Kirby-Kerwick-Irwin)**

“Arms” first arrived in Ireland with the Normans. Up until then heraldry, in the true sense, did not exist there. As time progressed Irish heraldry differentiated into three differing heraldic traditions: The Norman tradition, the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and the Gaelic-Irish tradition. Norman heraldry shows clearly its military origins with a preponderance of clear simple devises designed for easy military recognition. Anglo-Saxon heraldic practice was characterized by great elaboration with individual shields often containing as many as a dozen emblems reflecting their preoccupation with family relationships and status in a subjugated society. Gaelic-Irish heraldry tends to relate to ancient myths and legends, which established their authority and hegemony over their ancient territories.

The arms of the Gaelic-Irish have a number of common features. In part this is due to the role of genealogy in early Irish society. The myth of a common origin (Milesians) was a potent means of unifying the different Celtic and pre-Celtic peoples of Ireland. And the enormously elaborate Gaelic pseudo-genealogies, tracing every Gaelic family in the country back to the same individual, were designed to reinforce that myth. In addition the nature of Gaelic law meant that, in effect, what you could own depended on to whom you were related. These two factors: The importance of the origin myth and the property rights of the extended family are reflected in the Gaelic-Irish heraldic tradition.

The nature of property relations within the large extended Gaelic-Irish family meant that arms were used in quite different ways from those practiced amongst the Normans and Anglo-Irish. In particular most arms were regarded as the property of the sept. And a sept, briefly defined, is a group of related people having a common ancestor, inhabiting the same locality, and bearing the same surname. Conversely Normans and Anglo-Irish considered the right to use arms as strictly hereditary within a single family. It is in this context that the O’Ciarmaic arms came to become the septal arms of families, who, post surname anglicization, came to be called Kirby, Kerwick, and Irwin.

All arms, regardless of tradition, are, simply stated, composed of two parts: The arms (shield) portion and the crest (top) portion. The O’ Ciarmaic arms (shield portion) simply described is as follows: “An argent (silver) shield with two horizontal bars gules (red) and a lions head or (gold). The crest (top portion) simply described is as follows: “Out of a crown or (gold) and argent (silver) an elephants head tusked gules (red).” These heraldic symbols, just described, have a meaning and tell a story.

The lion's head on the arms (shield) can be explained in the context of their (O' Ciarmaic) subordination and military service to their Dalcassian dynastic overlords (O'Brien's). The lion's head is undoubtedly a borrowing from the O'Brien arms. As chieftains, subordinated to the O'Brien's, the O' Ciarmaics were called, at various times (c. 1,000-1200), to military service and fought under the O'Brien banner which, according to legend, bore three lions (king of beasts).

To explain the elephant head requires a more complicated explanation reaching back into more ancient times. The elephant head is quite simply a heraldic way of conveying the meaning of "Ciarmac" (Black Son) and it denotes the otherworldly source of the O' Ciarmaic chieftain's power. Firstly the elephant is known for its exquisite memory. Even today we use the expression "he has the memory of an elephant" when referring to those endowed with superior memories. The elephant therefore represents memory and, by extension, wisdom. The fact that the elephant head rests upon a crown of gold and silver is clearly a reference to the O' Ciarmaics royal status as chieftains of Eoghanacht Ainy.

The red tusks of the elephant also denote an otherworldly source of the O' Ciarmaics chieftaincy. The ancient Irish people believed god made four chief winds and four subordinate winds and four other subordinate winds so that there were twelve winds in all. Furthermore to each wind was ascribed a specific color so that all colors of all the winds were different from each other. The wind of the southeast was given the color red and on the druidic circle of the year red is the color of that portion of the year called Beltane. Beltane represents "youth" and in ancient Ireland youth and wisdom were interconnected because true wisdom and knowledge was understood as being inspirational rather than gradually acquired. This concept was often expressed in the imagery of a divine and youthful child (as in Ciarmac...Black Son of Ainy) who personified the fullness of wisdom inspirationally from the very beginning.

Thus the red-tusked elephants head, as mentioned previously, is a heraldic way of portraying the meaning and significance of the chiefly title "Ciarmac" (Black Son).

## Chapter 9

# Ó Ciarmacáin (English Rule)

The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century were the centuries in which the Gaelic Irish came face to face with the reality of English conquest. In 1569 and then again in 1579 the Fitzgerald overlords of Munster involved their subordinates in rebellions of tragic proportions against English rule in Ireland. The Munster province, in particular, experienced a great wave of destruction and depopulation and the once royal O Ciarmaic (Ó Ciarmacáin) sept fell into a state of servitude and deprivation. For the purposes of this surname study several events of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century are important to note in order to follow the evolution of the surname Ó Ciarmacáin: "Surrender and Regrant", Fiants, Civil Survey, 1659 census and the process of surname anglicization.

To the English mind the Irish system of land tenure seemed disorganized and primitive. In 1534 a new law on inheritance was passed which was called the "Law of Surrender and Regrant." To understand the complexity of the situation one must know that under the old Gaelic law chieftains had not owned the land. It belonged to the tribe; the chieftains were only empowered to redistribute it within the tribe. Under the new English law, however, those who claimed land in Ireland and surrendered it to Henry VIII would have his land returned back and a title would be created for him, which would be inherited thereafter according to the English law of primogeniture. Prior to "surrender and regrant" the Irish chieftains and their followers alike had unlimited access to grazing and farming lands but thereafter found themselves impoverished in a way they had never imagined. The Ó Ciarmacáins, now a cadet branch of the O' Ciarmaic chieftains, had already lost their eligibility for the chieftaincy due to the fact that their royal extended family (derbfine) had failed to produce a chieftain. Thus at this time, with the addition of surrender and regrant, the Ó Ciarmacáins found themselves in a doubly weak position. Then in 1543 Murrough O'Brien, King of Thomond, journeyed to London and surrendered the royalty rights and title of his family in exchange for an English earldom. The O'Brien entourage to London included a number of his subordinate lords including the chieftain O'Grady who was knighted at the time. Thereafter O'Grady became the lord of the barony of Small County, (see Map below) which roughly corresponded to the Eoghanacht Ainy territory. The red arrow indicates that in the mid-1500's O'Kerwick was still significant enough to be mentioned but that "O'Grady L" was the lord of the area. The Ó Ciarmacáins by this time had come to be small cottiers.



per cabin means one hundred seventy people... and so forth. As a reasonable estimate of five people per cabin then this indicates that Knockainy parish, at Civil Survey time, may have only had about four or five hundred surviving residents. What happened to the numerous O' Ciarnaics and their cadet branch of Ó Ciarmacáin who had lived and thrived there since generations immemorial? Could some of them have truly marched off to "Hell or Connaught" and remained in Connaught where their descendants live today? Could some have been sold into slavery in the new world where their descendants live today? Did most of them perish in the rebellions and campaigns of the 16th and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries? All of these questions, left unanswered, could, and probably do, have a definite relevance as far as the rarity of the Munster Irwins (Ó Ciarmacáin) are concerned. Another point to be mentioned is that, according to this Civil Survey, not one Irwin, O' Ciarnaic or Ó Ciarmacáin is listed as owning as much as one square inch of land indicating that they certainly did not fare well, economically, during this century. Two hundred and fifty years later the 1901 census of Ireland indicates that, for the most part, the residency pattern of Munster Irwin's is overwhelming clustered in, abutting or near County Limerick. This I would postulate means that for centuries (Norman times through Cromwell) that Ó Ciarmacáin people (later to be surnamed Irwin) were tied to the land in a form of vassalry with no means to go anywhere else except to stay put no matter how adverse the situation may have been.

In 1659 there was a "census" of Ireland taken. I searched the index for this census and although it is not complete Ireland-wide it is complete for the province of Munster with the exception of four baronies in County Cork. Given the fact that many people believe that Irwin is always of Scottish origin in Ireland the data from this census, regarding the Irwins of Munster, is relevant. The census pays attention to the number of "new" Scotch and English settlers in Ireland. The Scottish were found to be widespread in Ulster with the exception of County Monaghan and most of County Antrim. But interestingly enough this census index states "no Scotch settlers in the provinces of Munster and Connaught." I agree that "no" is a strong word but suffice to say that, for Irwin surname purposes, the odds are that there were few, if any, Scottish people in Munster in 1659 who could have been the source of Scottish Munster Irwins.

The census also goes on to list a number of interesting ratios. In Connaught and Munster the Irish outnumbered the English by ten to one. In Ulster the ratio was 1-1/2 Irishmen to every one Scotch/Englishman. In Leinster the ratio was 5-1/2 Irishmen to one English/Scotchman. So from these census records it can be derived that the odds are extremely low that a Scottish person relocated from

Scotland circa the mid-1600s and gave rise to the Irwins of Munster. Another point of interest before leaving the 1659 census is that for all of the province of Munster there was not one Irwin recorded and I postulate quite simply that the reason for this is that there were no Irwins (land holding Scottish ones) there in 1659. Lastly and most importantly, as far as the surname Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) study is concerned, we see that during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Irish surnames were becoming anglicized and I will deal with that issue now.

The successive invasions of Ireland from the Normans to Cromwell, culminating in the destruction of the Gaelic order had a profound and lasting effect on the surnames of the Irish people. In the wake of the collapse of the Gaelic order there set in, among the surviving Irish people, the fashion of changing Irish into English surnames. Thence forward an "O" or "Mac" to a man's name was no recommendation in the eyes of the powers that ruled the country. The people were taught or forced to believe that they must have an English surname, or at least an English version of their Irish surname. Hence the almost wholesale rejection of the "O" and "Mac". To reduce one's name as much as possible to the level of English pronunciation, to give it an English appearance, to modify it in some way and to some degree was almost a condition of life.

The anglicization of Irish surnames was accomplished by five general methods: by phonetics, by translation, by attraction, by assimilation and by substitution. In the phonetic method the surname was written down more or less as it was pronounced but without any regard to the Irish spelling. In the translation method many families adopted an English surname which was supposed to be a translation of the Irish surname but was, in most cases, incorrect. In the attraction method a surname of comparatively rare occurrence was often attracted and confounded with a better known surname of somewhat similar sound. In the assimilation method an Irish name is assimilated to a foreign name (usually English or Scottish). The Irish surname, "Ó Ciarmacáin," was anglicized by the process of "assimilation" in that it was assimilated to a British surname of similar sound.

In English Ó Ciarmacáin is pronounced "O' Kirwickin." Without the Irish prefix "O" then "O Kirwickin" becomes "Kirwikin" and thereafter came to be Irwin which is a British surname borne almost entirely by Scottish and English colonists in the northern Ulster province of Ireland.

Also I might add that some "Ó Ciarmacáins, instead of becoming Irwin, may have become Irvin/Irvine. The confusion between the "v" and the "w" is due to the fact that the pronunciation of Irish consonants depends upon whether or not

it is "slender" or "broad." The dot over certain consonants, called the seimhiu, denotes an "aspirated" letter, the sound of which is very different from an "unaspirated" one. The "m" in Ó Ciarmacáin with a dot (seimhiu) over it is a broad consonant and, in this case, pronounced like a "w." A slender consonant is a consonant flanked by "e" and/or "i." A broad consonant is a consonant flanked by "a" and/or "o" or "u." Given the fact that Ó Ciarmacáin with a broad consonant "m" is flanked by an "a" it was properly pronounced like a "w". However, for an Anglo-Irish magistrate, improficient in Irish, it would have been an easy mistake to consider the "m" in Ó Ciarmacáin as a slender consonant and pronounce it like a "v" and hence Ó Ciarmacáin would become assimilated to the British surnames of Irvin and Irvine.

Before leaving the topic of anglicization I must clarify one very important point. "Officially," as far as the Anglo-Irish magistrates were concerned, there were Irish people in Munster surnamed Irwin. But "unofficially," for centuries after surname anglicization took place, the Irish people continued to speak Irish and use the old Irish surnames in the conversational language. The great famine (1845-1850) and its aftermath of death and emigration dealt a near fatal blow to the Irish language and the use of Irish surnames but as late as 1851 (census) the percentage of County Limerick Irish speakers was 37.4% with the note that "lower classes generally speak Irish" and the "middle classes speak English." Given the fact that the Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) people were economically of the lower classes, as late as 1851, most of them spoke Irish and used the Ó Ciarmacáin surname. Thus, the original Ó Ciarmacáin surname continued to live on, unaffected by any changes in the English form, wherever the Irish language continued to be spoken. And so, not only Ó Ciarmacáin, but most Irish surnames were able to be recovered and recorded that would otherwise have disappeared forever. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

- [Ainy and English Rule](#)
- [Connaught Province](#)
- [The Potato Patch](#)
- [Quotes](#)
- [Illustrations](#)

## Ainy and English Rule



As Munster's patroness of sovereignty Ainy was also regarded as Munster's foremost Banshee. Banshee, quite simply, means an "otherworld woman." Up until the 16<sup>th</sup> century beautiful Ainy had bestowed sovereignty to those whom she favored. She granted provincial sovereignty to the Gaelic Eoghanachts in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. She granted territorial sovereignty to "The Ciarrnac" chieftain and his kindred in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Then in the 13<sup>th</sup> century she granted the sovereignty of Desmond (south Munster) to her consort Maurice Fitzgerald (1st Earl of Desmond). Up to and including the Normans, Ainy's major role was as protectress and bestower of sovereignty.

Beginning with the Desmond Wars of the 1500's and continuing on through the Cromwell campaigns of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century the establishment of English rule in Knockainy and throughout Munster came to be established. Henceforth Ainy's major role changed and became that of an enigmatic being, a strange voice crying out from the portals of the unknown in anguish over the demise of her province.

The English never bothered to consult or confide in Ainy regarding her land, her children, or provincial sovereignty. They looked upon Ainy with disdain and never consorted or mated with her, as did the previous rulers. As a result of not being in tune with Ainy, her land and her people, English rule was one of death, destruction, famine, disease, and barbarity.

The myth of Ainy and the English in Munster was that of her changed role, which became that of an old Banshee who foretold and lamented the deaths of those who have "O," and "Mac" in their surnames, that is, Munster families of Noble Gaelic descent.

## Quotes:

**To better explain British rule in Munster (late 1500s and Desmond wars) and how it affected the Ó Ciarmácaín (Irwin) surname (nearly extinct) I add here the following Quotes and Illustrations:**

“The land grabbing of Elizabeth’s officials resulted in an uprising involving settlers of the Pale and Munster. Elizabeth recognized the provocation and pardoned the rebels, except James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald: he had done the unforgivable by giving a religious reason for his rebellion. He went into exile in Europe, but returned in a crusading mood in 1579. He was joined in rebellion by the Earl of Desmond and by some lords of the Pale. Elizabeth sent an army of 8,000 and this time there was no quarter. The rebel leaders died in battle or were executed. This suited government officials who continued the confiscation of land. Munster was subjected to a plantation involving 4,000 new colonists. The relative size of this number is better appreciated when we see that at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the population of Ireland was, by some estimates, under one million. Most were in Leinster and Connaught – war had almost denuded Ulster and Munster of inhabitants.”

and

“The English commanders in Ireland decided to make Munster a dead area. No person or animal was to be spared and the whole countryside was to be flattened. Munster was invaded during March, when traditionally the herds of cattle were moved on to the plains, and crops were just about to be sown. The people who survived the first massacres died of famine. Edmund Spenser was a poet and courtier who went to Ireland as Secretary to the Lord Deputy. He acquired land in Ireland and wanted to settle there. After the execution of Desmond he was given 4,000 acres of land in Munster. He described Munster before and after the invasion: ‘Sure it is...a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven; seamed throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish...with goodly woods...good ports and havens opening upon England and Scotland, as inviting us to come to them.’ ‘That in short space... a most populous and plentiful country was suddenly left devoid of man and beast; yet, sure, in all that was there perished not many by the sword, but all by the extremity of famine which they themselves had wrought.’ To quell resistance, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Military Governor of Munster ordered that: ‘the heads of all those which were killed in the day should be cut off from their bodies and brought to the place where he encamped at night, and should there be laid on the

ground by each side of the way leading into his own tent so none could come into his tent for any cause but commonly he must pass through a lane of heads.'

and

"starvation of 30,000 in six months of the Elizabethan Wars in Munster...that from Dingle to the Rock of Cashel not the lowing of a cow nor the voice of the ploughman was that year to be heard were indications of the success of the authorized efforts to root out the Irish."

and

"Virtually halving the total population in one decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was an acceptable consequence of confiscation and facilitated the plantation of more and more immigrant settlers."

**Then less than 100 years later, in the mid 1600's (Cromwell) the status and population of the Ó Ciarmacáin kindred sank even lower during the Cromwell wars:**

"He (Cromwell) arrived in Ireland in 1649...By the time the struggle was over, almost two years later, one quarter of the Catholic population was dead, and those found wandering the country orphaned or dispossessed were sold into slavery in the West Indies. The 'Act of Settlement', drawn up in 1652, confiscated land from the native Irish on a massive scale. All transplantable persons' were ordered to move west of the river Shannon by May 1654 on pain of death; in the famous phrase, it was a matter of indifference whether they went to 'Hell or Connaught.' The mass exodus continued for months, with many of the old and sick dying on the journey. Cromwell's soldiers were paid off with gifts of appropriated land and remaining as settlers, constituted a permanent reminder of English injustice...In 1641 the percentage of land in Ireland owned by Roman Catholics was 59%. In 1688 it was 22% and by 1703 it was 14%. The Protestant population, about 10% of the total lived in fear of an uprising by the vast majority of dispossessed and embittered Catholics. In order to keep the native Catholics in a position of powerlessness, a number of acts were passed collectively known as the Penal Codes."

and

"The majority of Catholics remained as laborers on their own land. Many were utterly displaced and took to the woods as outlaws. Catholics who were allowed to rent land lived in fear of dispossession. They were subject to higher rents than the colonists, and had shorter leases, often renewable half-yearly."

and

“During period of great upheaval or transplantation, the leaders of the sept or clan might have been killed or forcibly removed to other areas. In many of these instances however, the bulk of the family remained near their traditional lands, although powerless.”

and

“In 1659 the population of the Barony of Small County was 120 (English) and 2,950 (Irish) for a total of 3,070 inhabitants in the entire barony.”

and

“A massive programme of confiscations began aimed at transplanting all Irish landowners to Connaught. The main class affected by transplantation was that of influential landowners and those at the very top of the scale. Those at the bottom, the tenants and landless, remained where they were.”

and

“In 1641, Ireland’s population was 1,466,000 and in 1652, 616 thousand. According to Sir William Petty, 850 thousand were wasted by the sword, plague, famine, hardship and banishment during the Cromwell wars of 1641-1652. At the end of the war, vast numbers of Irish men, women and children were forcibly transported to the American colonies by the English government. These people were rounded up like cattle, and in clearing the ground for the adventurers and soldiers these people were transported to Barbados and the English plantations in America. It was a measure beneficial to Ireland, which was thus relieved of a population that might trouble the planters; it was a benefit to the people removed, who might thus be made English and Christians... a great benefit to the West India sugar planters, who desired men and boys for their bondsmen, and women and Irish girls...to solace them...estimates vary between 80 thousand and 130 thousand regarding the amount of Irish sent into slavery in America and the West Indies during the period 1651-1660.”

**In the aftermath of the Desmond Wars (1579) and the Cromwell Wars of the mid 1600’s the status of the Ó Ciarmacáin kindred is as follows:**

“The vast majority of poor tenants eked out a living from agriculture. They had either short leases for limited amounts of land or were simply tenants at will on small holdings sometimes 10 or 12 acres but more often no more than an acre or two. Nearly all were subject to ‘rack-renting’ by the middlemen. The system worked like a screw press. The increase in the rent of any farm at the close of any half year might be small but the screw still went on revolving, the pressure increasing until at

least human nature could no longer endure it; agrarian outrages burst out and on these the man hunt followed."

and

"In 1785 Britain's Attorney General John Fitzgibbon stated: "I am very well acquainted with the province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable peasantry in that province. I know that the unhappy peasantries are ground to powder by relentless landlords. It is impossible for them any longer to exist in the extreme wretchedness under which they labour. A poor man is obliged to pay 6 pounds for an acre of potatoes, which 6 pounds he is obliged to work out with his landlord at 5 pence per day. The lower order of the people of Munster are in a state of oppression, abject poverty, sloth, dirt and misery not to be equaled in any other part of the world."

and

"The numerous cottier class...the wretched hovels in which they and usually their animals lived; or it would be more accurate to say, sheltered themselves by night...the wretched patches of garden which were attached to these."

and

"The cottages of the Irish, which are called cabins, are the most miserable hovels that can well be conceived: they generally consist of only one room; mud kneaded with straw is the common material of the walls. These are rarely above 7 ft. high. They are about 2 ft. thick and have only a door which lets in the light instead of a window. Half a dozen children, almost naked, were sleeping on a little straw with a pig, a dog, a cat, a chicken and a duck (Ireland in 1780's)."

and

"The removal of Ireland's chiefs created a leaderless but not a submissive nation. The most obvious cohesive element in Irish culture was religion. Dismantling their religious institution did not however subdue them for they still had their language. Closing their schools did not defeat them nor did their removal to the bogs and the mountains. The undoing of the Irish people was the English legal system. Using it the English government gained control of Irish land, caused starvation and deported thousands to the cane fields of the Caribbean. From the English point of view this was all right and proper. The only problem was it didn't work, for the Irish were still needed to labour in the fields."

and

"...it became clear to those who spoke it (Irish) that they could no longer rid themselves of the English tongue than of English rule. Abandoned by the upper classes it retreated both geographically

(westwards) and socially downwards throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Gaelic culture ceased to be aristocratic: its custodians were now the peasantry. Huddled over the turf fire, deeming themselves lucky if they had buttermilk on their potatoes, they saw English as the language of the 'Teach Mor' or 'big house', the new palladian mansions in which the landlords drank and gambled and exchanged ideas on how to rid the district of Whiteboys (one of the several secret societies born of peasant discontent)."

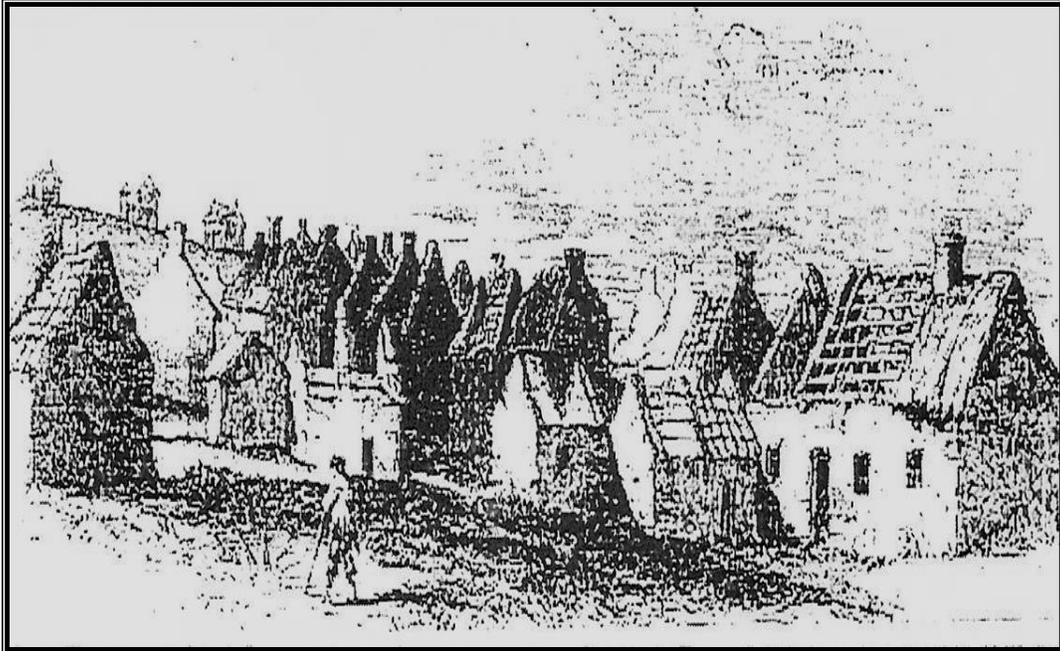
and

"...the end of the Cromwellian campaigns, before the policy of "To Hell or Connacht" was enforced. Even then, the human population was so depleted in some areas that wolf packs, going out of control, roamed the countryside threatening livestock and people in the settlements that remained. Cromwell's administrators took a variety of steps in the war on wolves. In 1652, for example, a public wolf hunt was organized at Castlerock, on the outskirts of Dublin. In addition, the export of wolfhounds was forbidden, and any Irish fleeing the country were to have their wolfhounds confiscated. Huntsmen were also ordered to keep packs of dogs that included a couple of wolfhounds. Licenses to shoot wolves were issued and land was granted to some adventurers on condition that they paid part of their rent in wolves' heads...the bounty for a priest was set at 5 pounds the same as for a male wolf...in his wake (Cromwell) starvation and degradation were so acute that scenes of cannibalism were widely reported...burnt crops and houses...farm animals were slaughtered and while the soldiers gorged themselves, the Irish went hungry. As the Army moved into the hills, the residents moved ahead of them, abandoning homes and animals. The soldiers feasted, slept in comfort and burned the houses in the morning." (The above information was written by Des Johnson in his "Miss Eire" column written in the Irish Echo newspaper (New York) in the January 19-25, 1994 issue).

**As so after the devastation of the Desmond and Cromwell Wars the status of the Irish had degenerated to that of the lowest of servile classes. The Ó Ciarmácaín surname, once numerous in it's Knockainy land of origin, was now almost extinct. As was the case with other Irish septs, at this tragic time, the only princely thing that the Ó Ciarmácaín kindred survivors had was their chiefly and noble surname but even that would be taken away from them by means of Anglicization and even further decimation would come as a result of the Great Potato Famine (1845-1850).**

## Illustrations:

No. 1



### **THE TUDOR CONQUEST (16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

Farm animals were slaughtered and while the soldiers gorged themselves the Irish went hungry. As the army moved into the hills the Irish residents moved ahead of them, abandoning homes and animals. The soldiers feasted, slept in comfort and burned the houses and villages in the morning.

No. 2



**OLIVER CROMWELL**

Cromwell landed in Ireland in 1640 with a Puritan army of 17 thousand men. They were Bible reading, psalm singing, fanatical "soldiers of god" who hated Catholics. They looked at Ireland as a Promised Land assigned to them, the chosen people, by god. It was their mission to extirpate by sword the heathen Papist Catholics. To keep the troops venom at a boiling point there were chosen to travel with the troops, Puritan preachers distinguished for their demoniacal hatred of Irish Catholics.

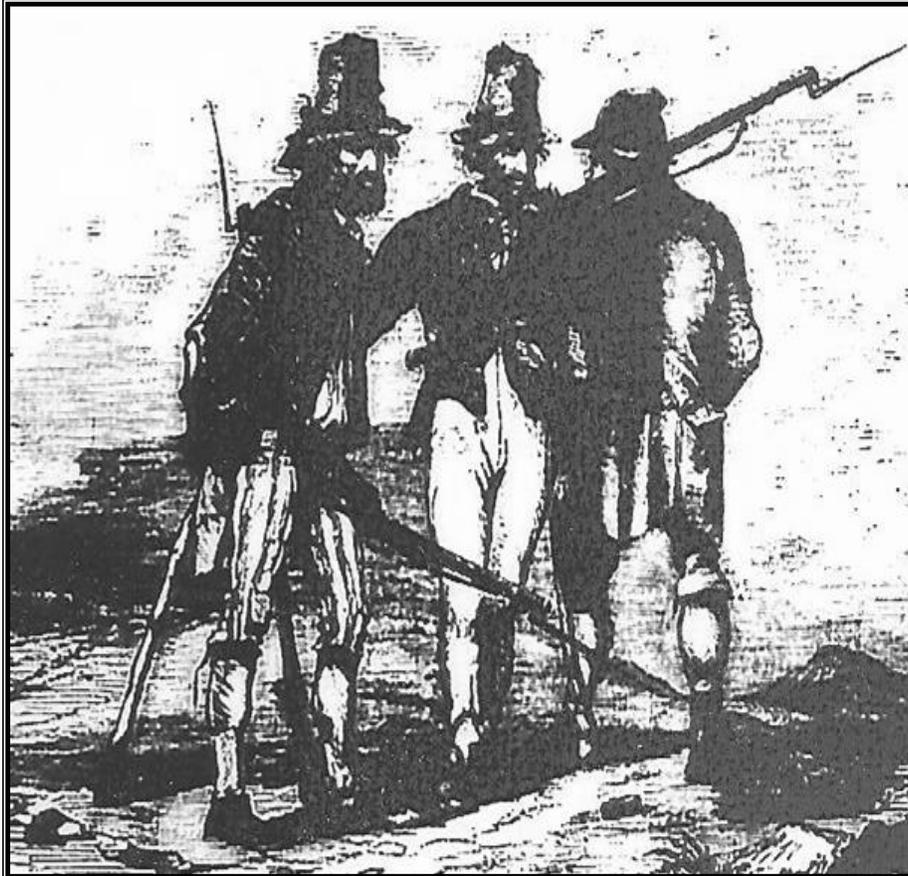
## No. 3

### **The Penal Laws**

- The Irish Catholic was forbidden the exercise of his religion.
- He/She was forbidden to receive education.
- He/She was forbidden to enter a profession.
- He/She was forbidden to hold public office.
- He/She was forbidden to engage in trade and commerce.
- He/She was forbidden to live in a corporate town or within five miles thereof.
- He/She was forbidden to own a horse of greater value than five pounds.
- He/She was forbidden to purchase or lease land.
- He/She was forbidden to accept a mortgage on land, or security for a loan.
- He/She was forbidden to vote.
- He/She was forbidden to keep any arms for his protection.
- He/She was forbidden to hold a life annuity.
- He/She was forbidden to buy land from a Protestant.
- He/She was forbidden to inherit land from a Protestant.
- He/She was forbidden to receive a gift of land from a Protestant.
- He/She was forbidden to rent any land that was worth more than thirty shillings a year.
- He/She was forbidden to reap from his land any profit exceeding a third of the rent.
- He/She could not be a guardian to a child.
- He/She could not, when dying, leave his infant children under Catholic guardianship.
- He/She could not attend Catholic worship.
- He/She was compelled by the law to attend Protestant worship.
- He/She could not, himself, educate his child.
- He/She could not employ a teacher to come to his child.
- He/She could not send his child abroad to receive education.
- Any Catholic gentleman's child who became a Protestant, could at once take possession of his father's property.
- Any Catholic priest who came to the country would be hanged.
- The priest was banned.
- The school master was banned.

Following the Williamite wars and the Treaty of Limerick (1690) the "Second Phase" of the Penal Laws went into effect thereby further reducing the surviving Irish into a state of abject poverty in their own land.

No. 4



**UNARMED AND LEADERLESS**

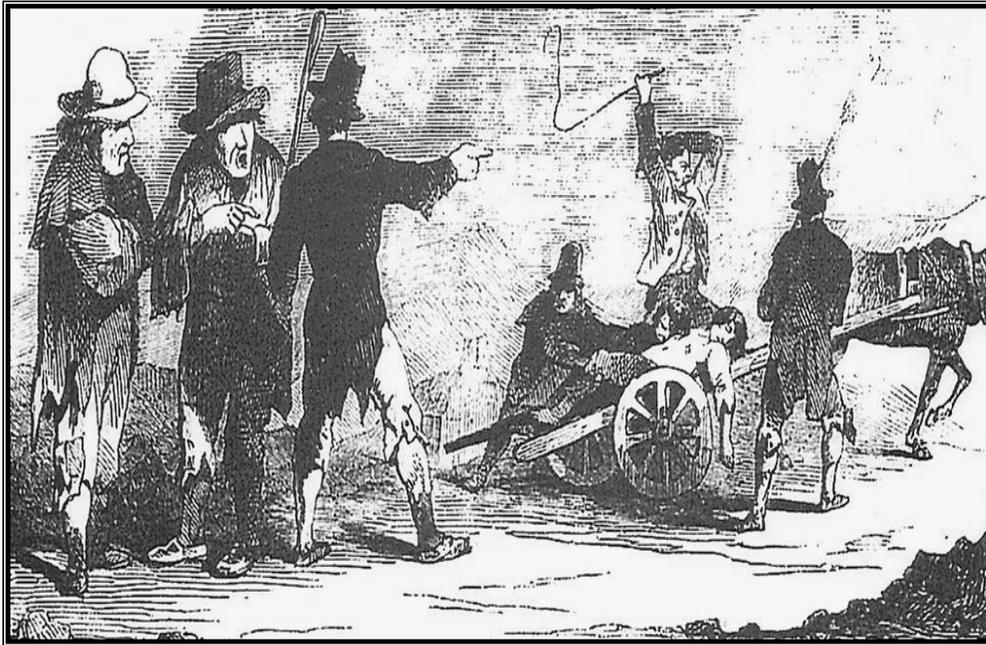
Under the Penal Laws it became illegal for the Irish to bear arms. Few young men remained in Ireland and those that did were inadequately armed, leaderless and no match for the British army of occupation.



### **THE WEEKLY SOLDIERS PAY**

Each Saturday the weekly exaction of the soldiers pay was extorted from the Irish populace with incredible atrocity. With bugles sounding and drums beating the soldiers entered the various houses and pointing their muskets at the tenants threatening them with instant death if the sum demanded was not immediately given. If the continued payment of these taxes had exhausted the means of the people then beds, sheets, dishes, furniture and even the garments of the women were torn off their person and sold in the market place for a small sum. As such every Saturday bore a resemblance to the day of Judgment and the clangor of the trumpet smote the people with terror, almost equal to Doomsday.

No. 6



**GENOCIDE**

In the years 1652 and 1653 the plague, following the devastating wars, had swept away whole counties so that one might travel 20 or 30 miles and not see a living creature.

No. 7



### **DEPOPULATION AND WOLF PACKS**

By the end of the Cromwellian Campaigns the human population of Ireland was so depleted that wolf packs, growing out of control roamed the countryside threatening livestock and people in the settlements that remained. The bodies of many wandering orphans and widows whose husband or father had been killed or exiled or died were preyed upon by wolves. Scenes of starvation and degradation were so acute that scenes of cannibalism were widely reported.

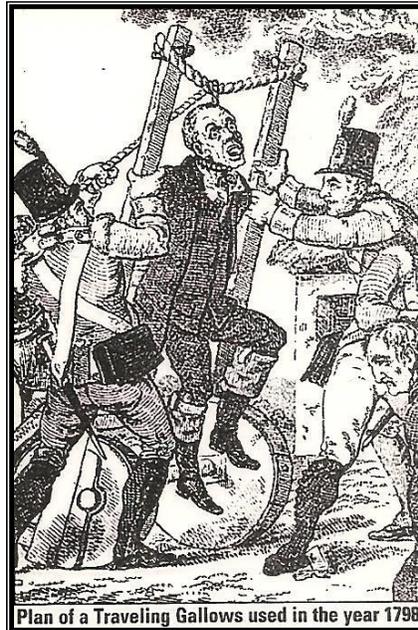
## No. 8



### **SLAVES ABROAD-SLAVES AT HOME**

When the Cromwell campaign was over, the surviving Irish had to be dealt with. The removal of Ireland's chieftains created a leaderless but not a submissive society. Ireland's religious institutions were dismantled, their schools were closed, their language was scorned and their names were anglicized. Most men of military age had been killed. Many of the survivors had been sent to the British colonies as slaves. The women, children and old men who survived on their ancestral lands were spared because they were needed to labor in the fields of their new English landlords.

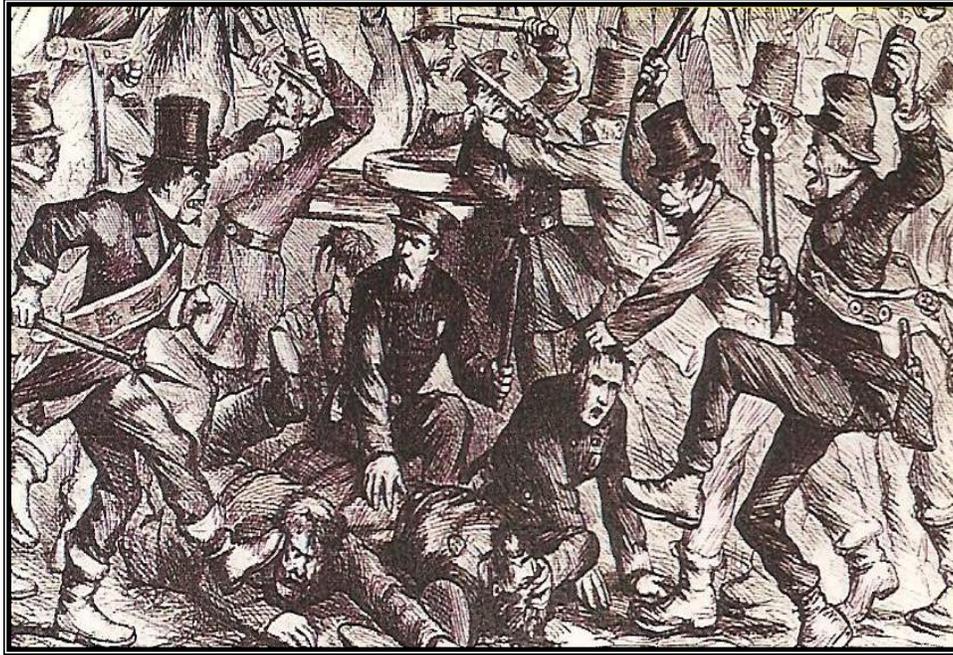
## No. 9 and 10



### **A SMOTHERED WAR AND 1798**

From the Treaty of Limerick in 1690 until 1798 Ireland was in a state of "smothered war." In 1798 a futile revolution took place and was cruelly suppressed.

No. 11



**SUBHUMAN IRISH**

In England the Irish were depicted as subhuman gorillas thus making their decimation acceptable to the public of Britain.

No. 12



**IRISH CULTURE**

Under British rule Irish music, art, literature and education institutions ceased to exist in the open but not in secret.

No. 13



**HEDGE MASSES**

The priest was banned and hunted with bloodhounds and forced to say Mass in the woods and "behind the hedges" clandestinely for fear of death.

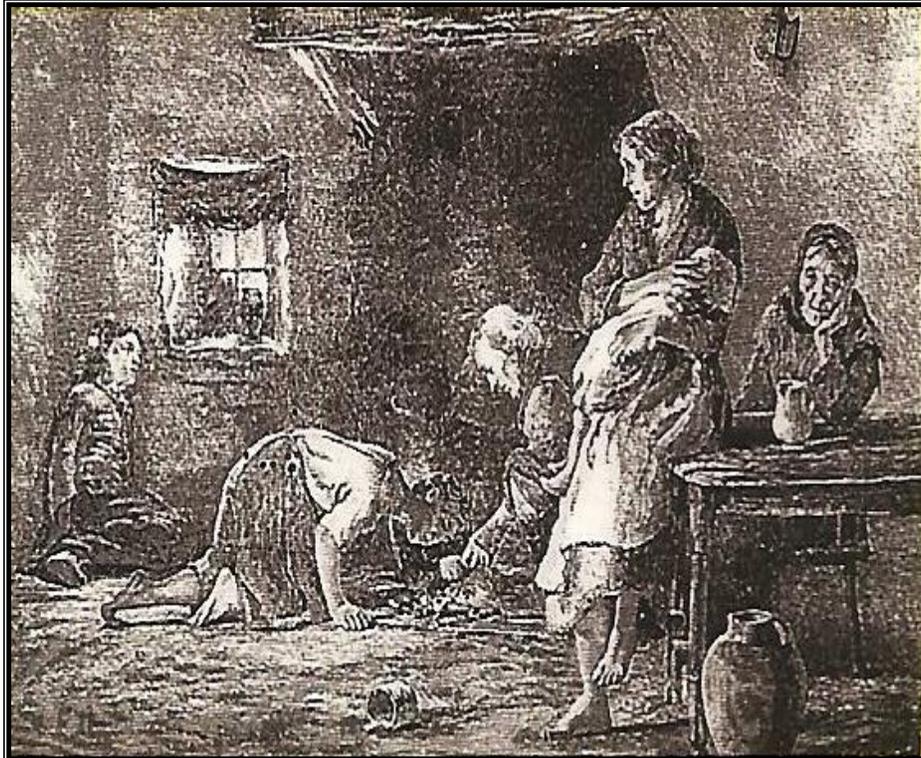
No. 14



**CATHOLIC PRIESTS TORTURED AND HANGED**

In 1650 the bounty for a captured priest was five pounds. Once captured they were tortured, hanged and sometimes drawn and quartered.

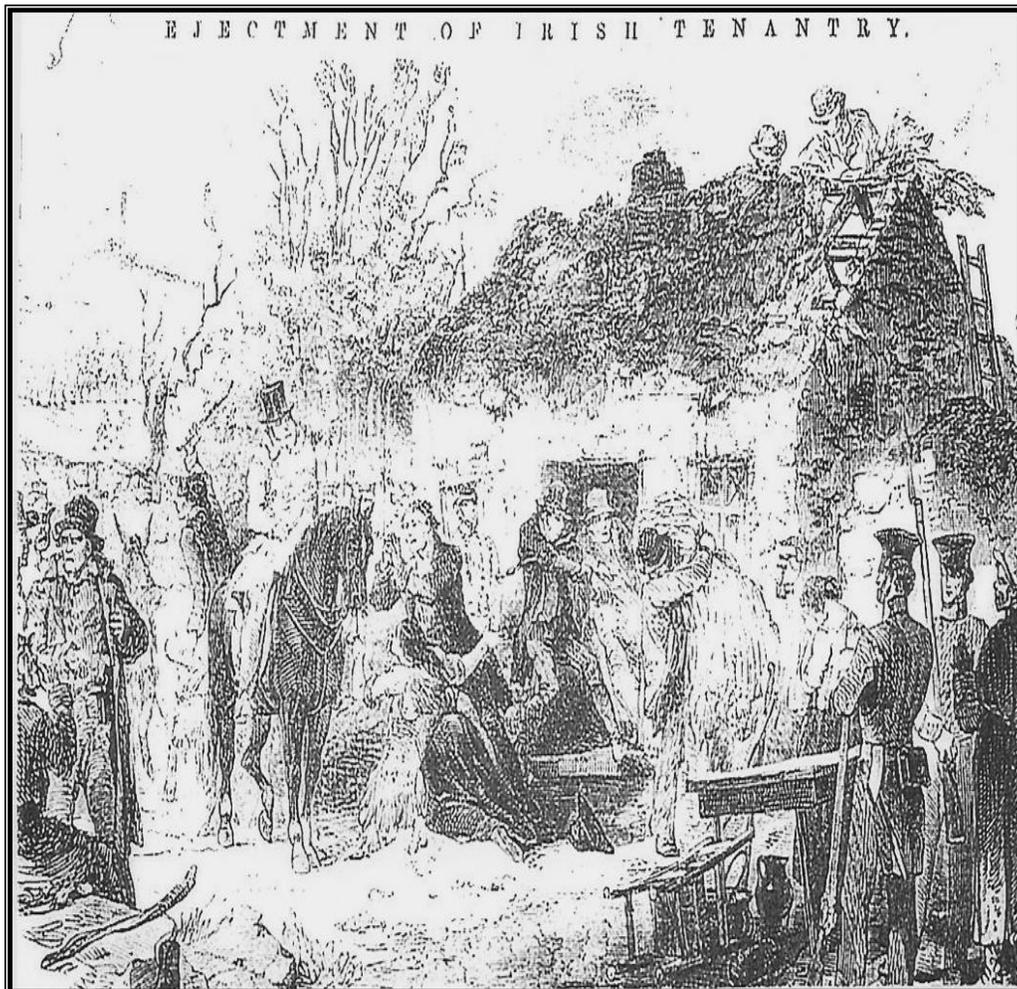
No. 15



**THE IRISH 'CABIN'**

The cottages of the Irish, called 'cabins', are the most miserable looking hovels that can be conceived. The furniture, in very many, consisting only of a pot for boiling potatoes, a bit of a table and one or two broken stools. Beds are not found universally, the family lying on straw.

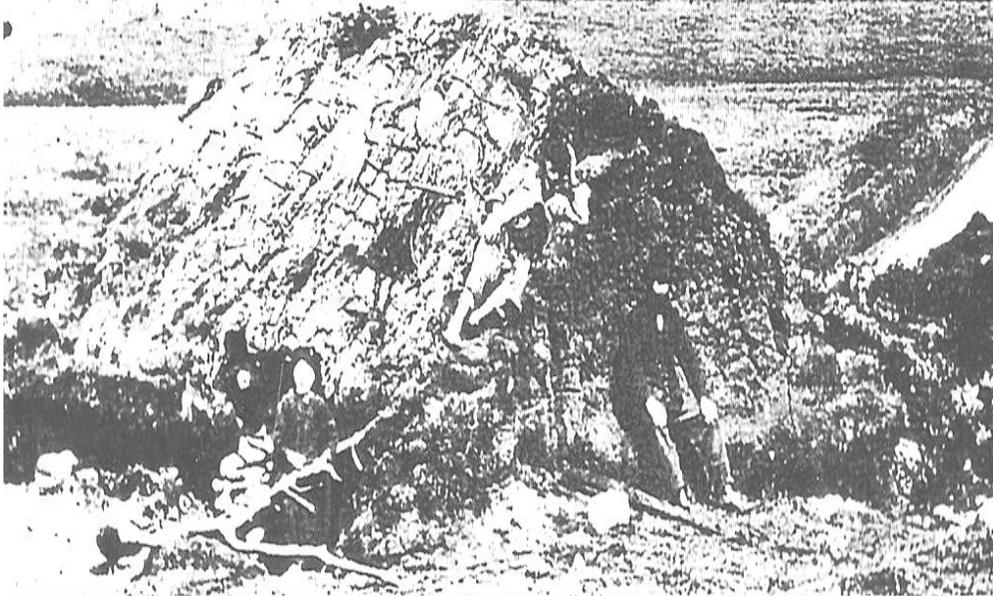
## No. 16



### **EVICTIIONS**

By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century very few Irish people owned their own land. It had been confiscated and owned by "absentee landlords" who charged an ever escalating exorbitant rent. When the Irish tenant could not pay the rent he was evicted. With the help of the British army their houses were thrown down and they were turned out in the depth of winter to exist as best they could.

No. 17



### **SCALPEENS**

Following the evictions the dazed people stayed on to live in the ruins of their old homes but even the ruins were later demolished, burned and scattered so that the homeless people had no other choice but to move on. With no place to go they often relocated as close to their farmstead as possible in "scalpeens" which were holes in the ground covered with sticks and turf that lodged entire families.

## No.18



### **TO HELL OR CONNAUGHT**

The "Act of Settlement" drawn up in 1652 confiscated land from the native Irish on a massive scale. All "transportable persons" were ordered to move west of the river Shannon by May 1654 on pain of death. Under the famous phrase it was a matter of indifference whether they went to "Hell or Connaught." The mass exodus continued for months with many of the old and sick dying on the journey.

In time returnees from Connaught and those who had managed not to leave relocated as close to their old farmsteads as possible into "scalpeens" which were holes in the ground covered with sticks and turf that lodged entire families. They were allowed to return back and stay for one reason! The new English landlords needed them to work the land which was once theirs.

## No. 19

Parts of Connaught plus County Clare were reserved for the Irish (area in white). It is possible that some Ó Ciarmacáins (Irwin) from Munster relocated there in the mid-1600s and still live there. It is also possible that some Ó hEireamóins (Irwin) from Leinster relocated there in the mid-1600s and still live there. In County Sligo plus parts of Mayo and Roscommon Irwins (Scottish-English planters) were recorded as being there.



## **IRWIN TWO ACRE "POTATO PATCH" AT RATHAINY**



In 1641 Ireland's population was 1,466,000 and in 1652, following Cromwell's genocide of the Irish race, there were only 850,000. Nearly 65% of the inhabitants of Ireland were wasted by sword, plague and famine. Irish men, women and children were forcibly transported to the Barbados and the American colonies as slaves by the English government. They were rounded up like cattle and their ancestral lands were taken away and used to pay the English soldiers for their military services.

The surviving Irish Catholics remaining in Ireland were allowed to stay for one reason: to work for the new English landlord on his stolen land. In Knockainy the land was cleared of its small farms and made into vast pasturelands. The Irish worked as laborers on these pasturelands and received no money payment but only the "right" to live on a one or two acre parcel of land often times referred to as a "potato patch." The Irish laborer's only food source were potatoes grown on their "potato patches" since all other food and produce was shipped from Ireland to England at gunpoint.

At this time the Ó Ciarmacáin family, now surnamed Irwin, lived on a 2 acre farmstead at Rathainy where they had their potato patch. They worked the land for the wealthy landlord until the early 1800's when Eóin Irwin married Mary Carroll and they moved to a neighboring farmstead at Ballycahill consisting of 12 acres. At Ballycahill Eóin Irwin built his stone, thatched "cabin" and raised his family of nine.

## THE IRWIN "CABIN"



When considering the site for a new house in 19th century Ireland material preparations were of secondary concern. Out of respect for the Fairy population of the area, sites of ancient occupation or activity such as pre-historic earthworks or megaliths were avoided. By consulting with the oldest living inhabitants the builders also hoped to avoid accidentally blocking routes taken by local divinities or by spirits of the mortal dead on their funeral path to the grave. Throughout Ireland a strong belief persisted that if a new house was constructed across a Fairy path the inhabitants would suffer. To avoid these calamities four piles of stone were left as markers at the corners of the chosen site. If the "Noble People" left them undisturbed during the following night work might safely start thereafter. It was in this context that the Irwin cabin at Ballycahill came to be constructed.

Above is a photo of the Irwin cabin as it looked when it was first built. Typical of Irish "cabins" at the time it measured approximately twelve feet by twenty four feet. It had three windows, one door, one fireplace and a thatched roof. In 1841 (census) some 40% of Irish "homes" were one room "mud cabins". As late as 1861 (census) there were 580,000 mud cabins still in Ireland occupied by an average of eleven people, plus whatever animals they possessed. Given that the population of Ireland in 1861 was about 5.8 million it seems that, according to these unbelievable statistics, most everybody in Ireland lived in small, overcrowded, mud or stone cabins in residence with farm animals.

## **IRWIN "CABIN" RUINS AT BALLYCAHILL**



In the Knockainy area Irish Catholic survivors of the Cromwell Wars of the mid 1600's had their lands confiscated and were meted out 2 acre parcels of land on which to live. They were charged exhorbitant rents and it was necessary for two families (each on a 1 acre "potato patch" parcel) to occupy the 2 acre parcel in order to pay the high rents.

At Rathainy the Irwin and Carroll family occupied a 2 acre parcel together. It was circa 1809 that Eóin (John) Irwin married his neighbor Mary Carroll. It was also at this time that Eóin Irwin and Mary Carroll moved a few farmsteads from their Rathainy farmstead to the neighboring townland of Ballycahill. It was at Ballycahill that Eóin Irwin was able to occupy a 12 acre plot of land and construct a house for his family which would number 9.

By The mid-1800s there were only a handful of Irwin families still living on their ancestral Knockainy lands. Three of these families, through DNA Testing, have been proven to be very closely related. According to ySearch.org QYV7H (Irwins of Rathainy and Ballycahill, Limerick), AURXF (Irwins of Kilfrush) and GYZQH (Irwins of Bulgadine, Limerick) all share a very rare allele of 10-11 for DYS 459 A and B.

The above families of Rathainy, Ballycahill and Kilfrush still retain the spelling of their surname as Irwin. The above family of Bulgadine left county Limerick and after a brief residency in county Kilkenny went to America where their surname became "Ervin" and still remains as such.

## POTATO FAMINE OR GREAT HUNGER?

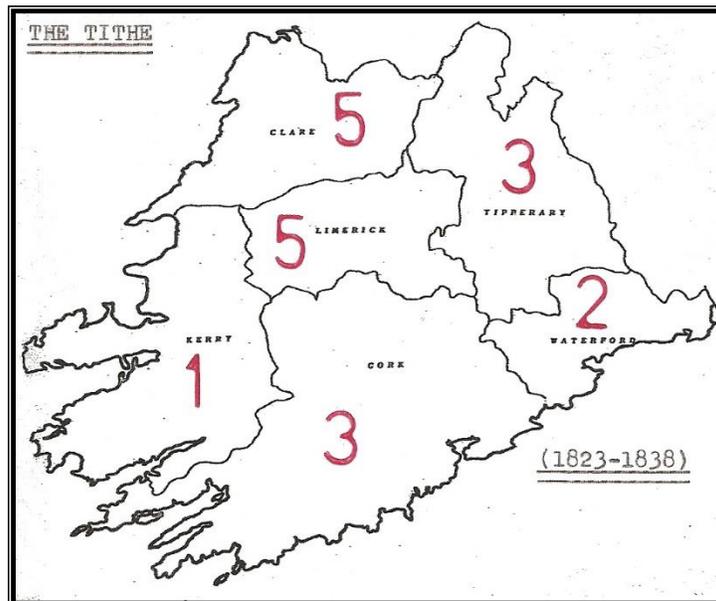


By the mid-1850s, following the Irish Potato "Famine", the native province of the Ó Ciarmacáins suffered another loss of nearly 24% of its people. When the potato crop failed (1845-1850) it was a misnomer to refer to it as a "famine". More and more historians are referring to it as the "Great Hunger." The reason being that there was not a food famine in Ireland at all during the 1845 to 1850 period. Total food production in Ireland was more than adequate enough to feed its people without the potato. The fact of the matter was that the Irish people for centuries had been socially and economically engineered by the British to subsist solely on potatoes while the rest of the edible produce from Irish farmers was shipped to England at gunpoint for a hefty profit. In fact even the best potatoes were shipped to England while the Irish people in Ireland ate the "lumper" potatoes which were an inferior potato susceptible to the blight. And when the blight came to Ireland in 1845 Britain allowed its Irish "subjects" to starve or be "shoveled out" (shipped) to America.

## Chapter 10

### **Irwin (Rare Munster Surname)**

Starting with the Desmond rebellions, followed by the Cromwell campaigns then followed by the Williamite Wars and then again followed by the century of the Penal Laws, the population of Munster, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had been sharply decreased. Between 1720 and 1740 bad harvests continued to cause much hunger and starvation in the land. In 1740 and 1741, during what came to be called Ireland's first "Great Hunger," the Irish population suffered another great loss. Ireland's recorded population in 1740 was 3.1 million. Ten years later the population was only two million. More bad harvests followed and this, combined with the English trend of turning land to grazing instead of tillage, gave rise to a population always on the verge of starvation. As pressure increased on the land to feed its laborers more and more farmers began cultivating potatoes. The potato could flourish on land not suitable for most other crops. In 1821 the potato crop failed, throwing much of Munster into another period of famine and starvation. Even in "good years" by the end of May, when the annual stock of potatoes had been eaten, the poor Irish farmer had to subsist on oatmeal, berries, seaweed, and whatever else was "edible" until the new potato crop could be harvested. By the time of the Great Hunger (Potato Famine) of the 1840's the Irish were living on small "potato patches" in a state of virtual slavery and subsisting solely on potatoes. Britain's willingness to let the Irish people solely depend on an inconsistent crop rendered the Irish weak and poor; conditions which would help prevent insurrection against the crown. Then between 1846 and 1851 the great potato famine of Ireland took place and it is estimated that by 1851 the population of Ireland had fallen by two million. One million people had died from famine or famine related diseases and another million had emigrated. However even when the famine was over the population decline did not stop. Emigration between 1841 and 1863 is estimated to have been about three million. By 1901 the population of Ireland stood at just over four million which was half its pre-famine level. No other European country so late in its history lost such a high proportion of its population over such a protracted period. The Ó Ciarmácaín (Irwin) surname in Munster at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was truly, as mentioned in Father Woulfe's book "Irish Names and Surnames," a "rare Munster" surname. Of note also, Munster people surnamed Irwin were not only rare but, according to a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century surveys, they were also poor, Catholic and renters.



The "tithe" was a tax on land due to the Protestant Church of Ireland and was often paid in kind as opposed to money. Catholics and other non-members of the Church of Ireland had to pay tithes, so the tax naturally aroused strong resentment. There was no standard method of evaluating land for taxation and in some cases, especially in the south of Ireland, the tax seems to have fallen disproportionately on poor landholders. Town and city dwellers were exempt from tithes. The tithe appointment books were compiled for each parish generally between the years of the Tithe Acts (1823-1838). For the entire province of Munster there were only nineteen Irwin households recorded in the tithe records: three in County Cork, five in County Clare, five in County Limerick, three in County Tipperary, two in County Waterford and one in County Kerry.



The first attempt to prepare a uniform valuation of property for the purpose of assessing local taxes on "rates" was under the Poor Law Act of 1838. The results were unsatisfactory and legislation from 1846 onwards provided for a new uniform valuation of buildings and land in Ireland. Sir Richard Griffith, a geologist, engineer, and surveyor played such an important role in directing the painstaking valuation of property that the finished work is known as "Griffith's Primary Valuation," or "Griffith's Valuation" for short. Griffith was called the "father of Irish geology" but he could also be dubbed the "stepfather of Irish genealogy" given how important the Valuation has become as a substitute for lost census records. This survey commenced in Dublin in 1848 and concluded in the north of Ireland in 1864. For the entire province of Munster there were only 100 Irwin landholders recorded in Griffith's Valuation records: forty three in County Limerick, twelve in County Tipperary, one in County Waterford, twenty six in County Cork, eight in County Kerry and ten in County Clare.

In 1876 the British government conducted a survey in Ireland known as "Land Owners in Ireland." The scope of this survey was to record all owners of land in Ireland of "one acre and upwards." In 1876 it must be remembered that to be poor and landless was to be Irish and Catholic. Reaching back to 1641 Irish-Catholics owned 58% of the land in Ireland, in 1703 they owned 15% of the land and in 1778 only 5% and this percentage, most likely, had even dwindled further by this survey time (1876). In searching the index page for County Limerick (where most of the Irwins were clustered) they did not own any land in all of County Limerick of "one acre and upwards." Thus it can be noted that the County Limerick Irwins, like their Irish-Catholic counterparts and unlike most Scottish Irwins in Ulster, were landless renters.

In 1901 Sir Robert E. Matheson published a special report "Varieties and Synonyms of Surnames and Christian names in Ireland" and eight years later it was republished under the name of "Special Report on Surnames in Ireland." In this special report Matheson endeavored to determine the numerical strength, derivation, ethnology and distribution of surnames in Ireland. He compiled the following statistics for Erwin and Irwin. According to the birth statistics of 1890 for all Ireland there were nineteen "Erwin" births throughout Ireland: only one in Leinster, none in Munster, none in Connaught and eighteen in Ulster. According to the birth statistics of 1890 for all of Ireland there were one hundred and eighteen "Irwin" births throughout Ireland: three in Leinster, twelve in Munster, seven in Connaught and ninety six in Ulster. Combining both, "Irwin" and "Erwin" throughout all of Ireland we arrive at the following statistics: "Irwin/Erwin" in Leinster totaled four, "Irwin/Erwin" in Ulster totaled one hundred and fourteen, "Irwin/no Erwins" in Connaught totaled seven, "Irwin/no Erwins" in Munster totaled twelve. Breaking these numbers into percentages and trying to make a general statement as to the origins of people surnamed Irwin in Ireland I would postulate that 85% of the people surnamed Irwin in Ireland (mostly in Ulster and overlapping into Leinster and Connaught) are of British (Scotch-English) planter stock. I would further postulate that 6% of the people surnamed Irwin in Ireland (mostly in Leinster with some overlap in Connaught and Munster) are of native Irish stock & derive their name from the sept of Ó hEireamóin, which originated in County Offaly. Lastly I would postulate that 9% of the people surnamed Irwin in Ireland (almost entirely in Munster with some overlapping in Connaught and Leinster) are of native Irish stock and derive their name from the sept of Ó Ciarmacáin which originated in Knockainy in eastern County Limerick.

As a follow up study on the just mentioned birth statistics, I have examined all of the 1901 census returns for the Munster province and have established further evidence as to the separateness of the Munster Irwins (Ó Ciarmacáin) from the almost exclusively Protestant Ulster Irwins (planter stock). According to the 1901 census of Ireland there was seventy-eight Irwin households in the Munster province. Twelve of these households were Protestants and all twelve were not native born Munster families:

- To be more specific for County Limerick there were four Protestant households all of whom lived in Limerick City (urban dwellers). One household head was a watchmaker from County Mayo. One household head was an "R. I. pensioner" from County Tyrone. One household head was a widow and her deceased husband's birth data was therefore unlisted. One household head was a watchmaker from County Donegal.

- To be more specific for County Cork, there were six Protestant households. One household head was a clergyman "Clerk in Holy Orders (Vicar)" from County Armagh. One household head was a "Board of Public Works, Civil Engineer" from County Tyrone. One household head was a "carpenter" from County Leix. One household head was an "agricultural laborer" born in County Derry. One household head was a "shopkeeper" born in County Derry. One household head (another one) was an "agricultural laborer" born in County Derry.
- To be more specific for County Clare there was one Protestant household. He was a "Dist. Irish R. I. C." born in England.
- To be more specific for County Kerry there were no Protestant Irwin households.
- To be specific for County Tipperary there were no Protestant Irwin households.
- To be more specific for County Waterford there were three Protestant households. All three of them were urban dwellers in that they all resided in the City of Waterford. One household head was a "tailor" born in County Armagh. One household head was an "engine fitter" born in County Antrim. One household head was an "R.I.C. Pensioner" born in County Kilkenny.

Thus it can be seen from the 1901 census data that, as far as can be determined, virtually all Munster Irwin Protestants lived in or near urban centers and were British civil servants, tradesmen or merchants. Also 100% of them were not native to the Munster province but were merely conducting business or retired there. Conversely sixty-six Irwin households (the balance of Irwin entries recorded in the Munster census of 1901) were all native born Munster families. They were 100% Catholic families. And, carrying over data from the 1876 land survey, they were 100% landless renters (in 1876). The contrast between the Munster Protestant Irwins (planter stock) and the Munster Catholic Irwins (native Irish stock) is as vast as the contrast between Ulster Scottish Irwins and Munster Irish Irwins (Ó Ciarmácaín).

Language can also be another means of identifying ethnicity in Ireland. Of the sixty six Munster Irwin Catholic families thirty nine listed no Irish speakers enumerated during the 1901 census. However twenty seven Irwin Catholic families were enumerated as having Irish speakers in their households at census

time (1901). Broken down as a percentage, as far as the 1901 Munster census is concerned, 41% of the Irwin households in Munster had Irish speakers. I do not have the data for the percentage of Munster households that had Irish speakers during the 1901 census, however I did find governmental statistical data for Irish speakers in Munster during the 1891 census, some ten years earlier. The percentage of Irish speakers in 1891 in all of the province of Munster was 29.5%. Given that from 1891 to 1901 the Irish language was on the decline it would seem reasonable to say that the 41% statistic for Munster Irwin (Catholic) Irish speaking families was substantially above average for the 1901 census year. Coupled together, namely that 100% of Munster born Irwin families were Catholics and 41% of them had Irish speakers present at census time (1901) in a province that had an average of under 29.5% Irish speakers some ten years earlier (1891), it would seem to be further proof of the disconnection between the British Planter Ulster Irwins and the native Irish Munster Irwins.

The fact that, according to my calculation, Irwins (Ó Ciarmacáin) of Munster make up only 9% of the all Ireland Irwin population needs some sort of explanation. I hold that no historian is doing his job if he tells his readers, "I simply don't know" and leaves it at that. Those who want to read about their past are entitled to some interpretation of the unknown no matter how unorthodox some may feel it to be. I have already mentioned that wars, rebellions, famine, transportation and emigration have all contributed to the reduction of Munster Irwins (Ó Ciarmacáin). But in addition to the preceding I consider it important to include several other contributing factors:

- Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) is a "monogenetic" surname (single origin from one family from one area) as opposed to a "polygenetic" surname (multiple origins from multiple families and multiple places).
- Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin), as a branch off of a parent surname (Ó Ciarmaic), had a three or four hundred year late start.
- Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin), has been anglicized and mis-anglicized to be split into a number of other surnames (i.e. Irwin, Irvine, Irvin and Carey).

It seems also worth mentioning that Ó Ciarmacáin, pronounced oftentimes as O' Kerywokyn, was also anglicized to Carey (removal of "O"...removal of "wokyn"...retaining of "Kery" spelt "Carey"). Below is documentation consisting of top half (cover page of Fr. Woulfe's book "Irish Names and Surnames") and Page 463 of his book (bottom half) showing "Carey" as one of the anglicized forms of Ó Ciarmacáin.

# Stoinnte Saedéal ir Saill IRISH NAMES AND SURNAMES

COLLECTED AND EDITED  
WITH  
EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

BY

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## KIRBY - KERWICK - IRWIN

- Ó CIARMAICÁIN—I—O *Kerymokyn*, (Irwin, Irwine, Carey); 'des. of CIARMAICÁIN' (dim. of CIARMAIC, black-son); a rare Munster surname.
- Ó CIARMAIC—I—O *Kervick, O Kerwick, O Kervy, O Kerby, Kerwick, Keerwick, Kerby, Kirby*; 'des. of CIARMAIC' (black-son); the name of an ancient family in East Limerick, who were chiefs of Eoghanacht Aine, the district lying around Knockany, until after the Anglo-Norman invasion, and are still numerous not only in Limerick, but throughout Munster. It would appear from the Annals of the Four Masters (A.D. 1087) that there was another family of the same name in Leinster, doubtless that now represented by Kerwick in Co. Kilkenny. Ó CIARMAIC has long been corrupted in the spoken language of Limerick and Kerry to Ó CIARBA, q.v.

Thus, the Munster Irwin (Ó Ciarmáicáin) surname at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was truly, as mentioned in Fr. Woulfe's book (Irish Names and Surnames), a "rare Munster surname."

Lastly and finally, I have written a great many words discussing the rareness of the Munster surname. Likewise I have written a great many words discussing the separateness of the Munster Irwins to the Ulster Scots Irwins. It must be realized however that the surname of Irwin in Ireland is a shared surname to Irish people of both great traditions (Irish and Scottish alike). In researching Sir Robert Matheson's, "Special Report on Surnames in Ireland", in chapter one and paragraph one he states:

"The history of our country lies enshrined in the surnames; and on our shop fronts and in our graveyards may be found side by side the names of the descendants of the Milesian Prince, of the Scandinavian Viking, and the Norman Knight." This sentiment certainly applies to Irwin people of all persuasions (politically, religious and otherwise) as our shared surname collectively continues to make its way honorably onto the pages of Irish history for now and forevermore. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* Additional reading this chapter:

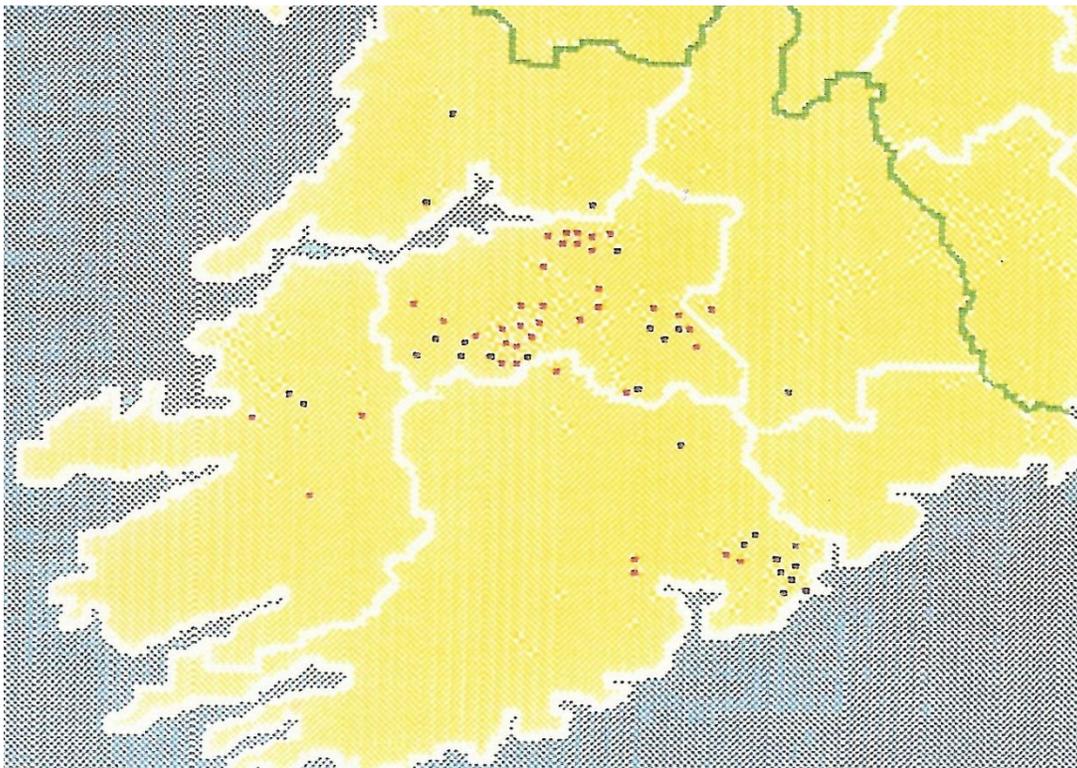
- [Munster Born Irwin Catholic Irish Speaking Families \(1901 census\).](#)
- [All Ireland Irwin \(all origins\) distribution.](#)
- [Kirby \(Griffith Valuation\).](#)
- [Kerwick \(Griffith Valuation\).](#)
- [Evolutionary Path of the Surname Ó Ciarmacáin.](#)
- [Irwin \(Zones of Distribution\).](#)
- [Munster Catholics \(1861-1891\).](#)

**Munster Born Irwin Catholic Families**  
**(Census of 1901)**  
**Irish Speaking and Non-Irish Speaking**

Parish data in the census of 1901 recorded for each resident household its surname, religion, area of origin and whether or not it had one or more Irish speakers.

The map shows the distribution of 66 Roman Catholic households called Irwin who were living in Munster. All of them were Munster born. The blue dots on the map represent the 27 Catholic families (41%) which had Irish speakers. The red dots represent the 39 Catholic families (59%) which did not have Irish speakers.

There were in addition 12 Protestant families called Irwin. In contrast to the Catholics, all the Protestants were born outside Munster. Most of them were from Ulster.



## **Irwin \* All Origins \* All Ireland \* Name Distribution**



MacLysaght found Irwin to be almost entirely of British planter stock and interchangeable in spelling over the years with Irvine and with Erwin and Ervine. In fact, the surname Irwin in Ireland could be from any one four origins. Two were from Britain. The Anglo-Saxon 'Eforwine' had a meaning of 'boar-friend'. The Scottish place-name Irvine, pronounced to rhyme with Irwin, is thought to be from old Celtic words equivalent to the modern Welsh 'ir', fresh, green, and 'afon', river. From Irish Gaelic, Woulfe has two family names, which he describes as rare: Ó hEireamóin, O'Hervan; a south of Ireland name; and Ó Ciarmacáin, O'Kerywokyn, a Munster name, which produced Irwin as well as Carey.

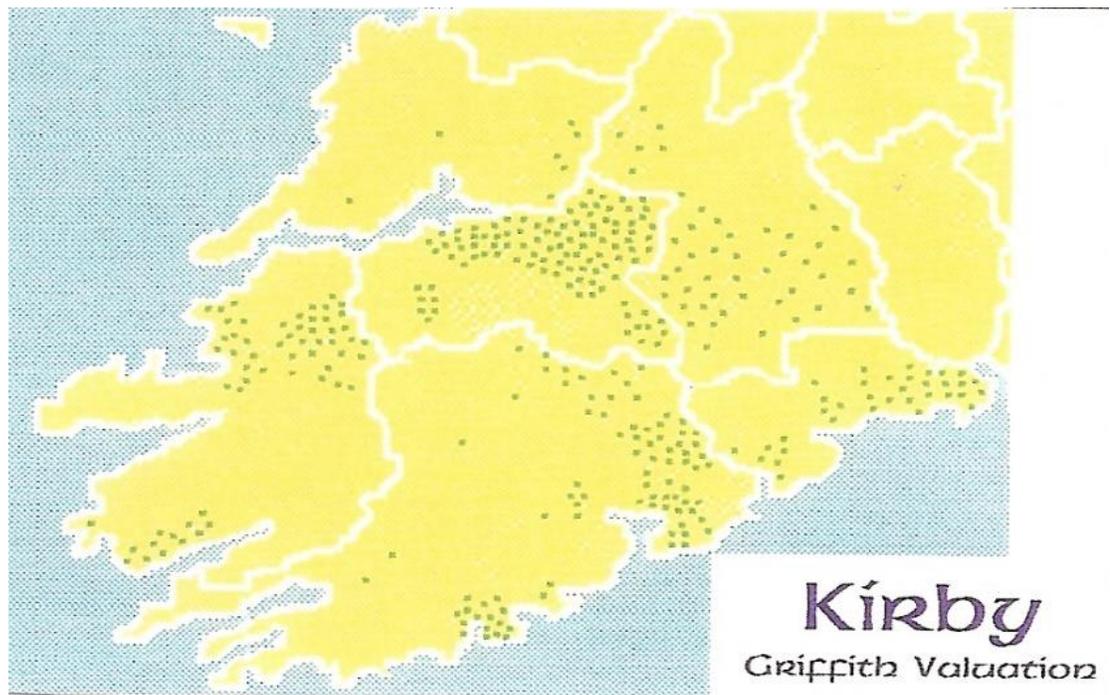
The map shows the distribution of some 2,100 families in 1992. Each dot represents 0.1% of the total. There are about 800 Irvine families, about 38% of the joint total. Only 8% of them live in the Republic, and most of those live in Dublin. This suggests a Northern origin with movement south in relatively modern times. The names Ervine and Erwin, with some spelling variations, each have about 130 families. They are virtually unknown in the Republic.

Irwin differs from the other spellings in its strength and distribution in the Republic. There were 1,300 Irwin families in 1992. As would be expected from the planter element, Northern Ireland stands out by the density of Irwin settlement. Two thirds of all the families live there. A fifth of the total live in the

area around Belfast, Lisburn and Antrim, which is twice the national average and points to Scottish and English ancestry. However, fully a third of Irwin families live in the Republic, and only about a fifth of these live in Greater Dublin. This indicates a longstanding settlement pattern.

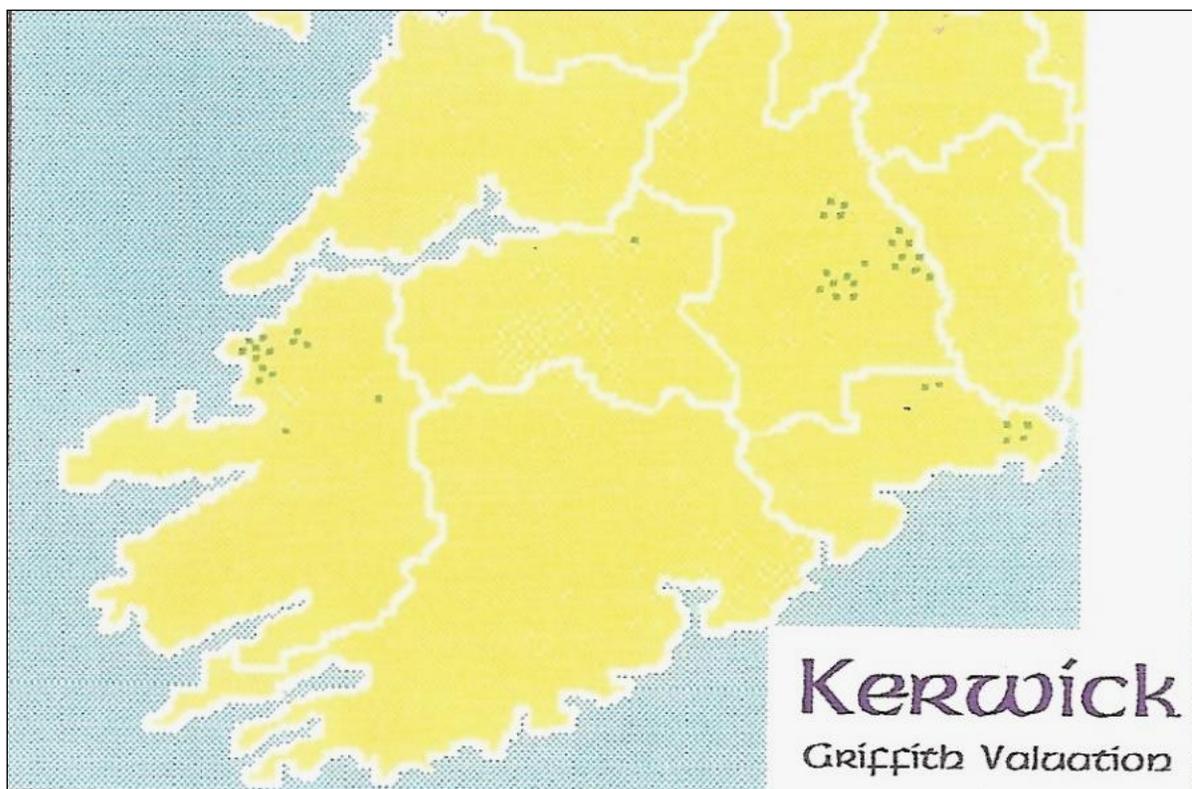
Irwin is virtually the sole form in the Republic outside Dublin. Therefore MacLysaght's interchangeable planter spelling theory applies only to the North. In the South, the Gaelic origin appears to be more significant than he recognized.

*(The above is taken from page one hundred eleven of "Surnames of Ireland" by Edward Neafsey).*



The name Kirby may be of either English or Irish extraction. Some Kirby families in Ireland will be descendants of settlers from the north of England where this name is fairly common but most, however, are of Irish origin, being lineally descended from forbearers named Ó Ciarmaic.

Ó Ciarmaic (originally pronounced O' Kirwick) came to be corrupted in the spoken language of Limerick and Kerry to O' Ciarba (pronounced O'Kirba) and thereafter Kirby became the anglicized form of their surname. Ó Ciarmaic, the older surname and parent surname of Kerwick and Irwin, is still numerous in its province of origin (Munster). The above map shows the distribution of Kirby families in Munster during Griffith's Valuation of the 1850s.



It was during the Norman era that people surnamed Ó Ciarmaic of Knockainy, County Limerick relocated to County Kilkenny in the Leinster province. It was there that their name became reasonably anglicized to "Kerwick." In Kilkenny the family remained "Kerwick" and in the County Waterford it became "Kervick." The above map, taken from Griffith's Valuation of the 1890s, does not show the distribution of Kerwick families in the Leinster province but only in the Munster province. People surnamed Kerwick seemed to be smally clustered in counties Kerry, Tipperary and Waterford. As a cadet and newer branch of Ó Ciarmaic (Kirby) they are understandably less numerous and widespread.

## Evolutionary Path of the Surname Ó Ciarmácáin

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Usage</u>	<u>Political Status</u>
Tuatha De Aine	Pre-667	Pre-Gaelic	Tribal Name (pre-ascendant)	Sacred King (Ri)
Ui Ainy	7 <sup>th</sup> century	Gaelic	Tribal Name (ascendant)	Aspiring Ascendant
The Ciarmác	667	Eoghanacht	Chieftain (name-title)	Eoghanacht Chieftain
Ui Ciarmaic	c. 667-1000	Eoghanacht	Kindred Name	Chieftain Kindred
Ó Ciarmaic	c. 1000-1400	Dalcassian & Norman	Hereditary Surname (1 <sup>st</sup> )	Territorial Lord
Ó Ciarmácáin	c. 1400-1650	Norman	Hereditary Surname (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Territorial Lord
Irwin	1650-present	English	Hereditary Surname (anglicized)	Landless tenant

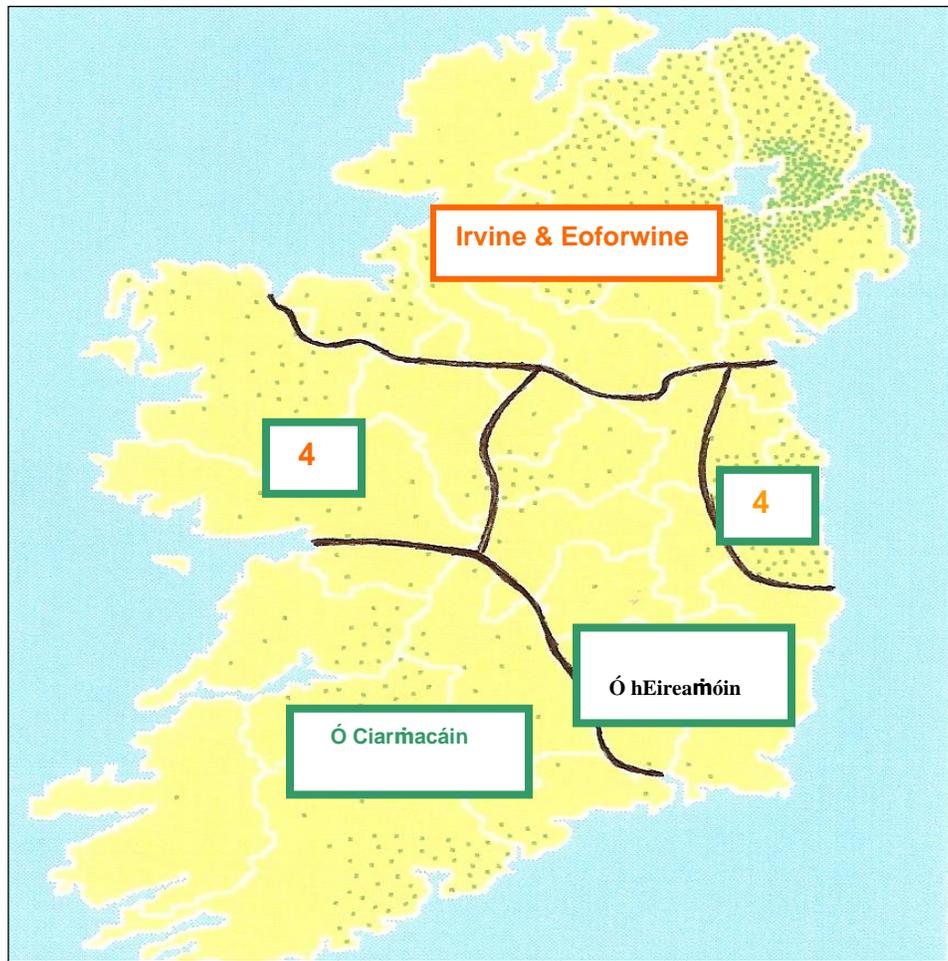


**Sacred King (Ri)**



**Landless Tenant**

## Irwin (Zones of Distribution)



### \*\*\*\* Legend of map:

- **Irvine – Scottish and the most numerous.**
- **Eoforwine – English and the 2<sup>nd</sup> most numerous.**
- **Ó Ciarmácáin – Irish and the 3<sup>rd</sup> most numerous.**
- **Ó hEireamóin – Irish and the least numerous.**
- **4** **Indicates Irwins of all four origins in residence.**

## Munster Catholics (1861-1891)

### POPULATION OF IRELAND,

For the Years 1861, '71, 81, '91, arranged by Dioceses and Ecclesiastical Provinces, with the Area of each Diocese.

TAKEN FROM THE CENSUS RETURNS, 1891.

PROVINCES AND DIOCESES.	AREA IN STATUTE ACRES.	CATHOLIC POPULATION.				TOTAL POPULATION.			
		1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
<i>PROVINCE OF CASHEL.</i>									
{ Cashel, . . .	518,804	114,831	99,021	90,999	78,046	120,011	104,067	94,710	81,216
{ Emly, . . .	245,155	60,707	55,003	51,216	44,681	62,196	56,272	52,598	46,095
{ Cork, . . .	659,088	206,918	201,441	200,355	178,072	239,213	232,705	229,376	205,593
{ Killaloe, . . .	1,012,447	211,098	183,839	174,167	153,512	225,096	195,954	184,751	163,077
{ Ardfert & Agha- doe (Kerry), . . .	1,252,000	215,028	210,512	213,433	190,017	221,939	216,949	220,355	196,083
{ Limerick, . . .	504,901	162,324	142,488	135,838	119,994	172,622	151,286	144,236	127,484
{ Waterford, . . .	66,857	39,472	38,246	37,434	34,344	43,506	42,313	40,988	37,605
{ Lismore, . . .	573,742	139,769	124,071	111,046	94,115	145,265	129,481	115,713	98,280
{ Cloyne, . . .	830,966	202,294	183,943	169,835	147,381	215,166	196,692	180,781	157,788
{ Ross, . . .	254,143	64,540	61,491	60,068	52,622	69,903	66,746	65,657	57,725
Total of Province,	5,918,103	1,416,981	1,300,055	1,244,391	1,093,684	1,514,917	1,392,465	1,329,168	1,170,946

The above census data pertains to the Catholic Province of Cashel which roughly corresponds to the Munster province. For census years 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 the Catholic population of Munster remained pretty much static at 93%.

It is a belief held by many that to be Catholic in Ireland is an indication of one's "Irishness" and conversely to be Protestant in Ireland indicates one's "English/Scottishness." If this is true then 93% of Munster during these census years was "Irish" and only 7% was therefore "non-Irish."

I have heard Irwin referred to as a "Protestant name." In Ulster this is truly the case but in Munster quite the opposite is true. As discussed in earlier paragraphs on the 1901 census there were seventy eight Irwin families in Munster of which only twelve were Protestant. But as already noted all twelve Protestant families were not Munster born whereas 100% of the Munster born Irwin families (all sixty six) were Catholic. Therefore even though Irwin is justifiably labeled a "Protestant name" in Ulster it is equally justifiable to label Irwin a "Catholic name" in Munster.

## Chapter 11

# **Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) DNA and Haplogroup**

All humans belong to a Haplogroup, an ancestral clan, whose markers represent branches of the tree of Homo Sapiens. The test for determining one's Haplogroup is a test that looks for rare mutations (single nucleotide polymorphism) on the male Y-chromosome. The nickname for this testing procedure is "SNP" (pronounced "SNIP").

According to SNP tests Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) surnamed people who closely match the 111 marker DNA panel (see Ó Ciarmacáin-Irwin Modal this chapter) will test positive for the L21 SNP. In addition to the L21 SNP there are new SNPs, recently discovered, for which Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) surnamed people should test positive. Presently (April 2014) these new SNP discoveries are: DF13, CTS4466 et al, 18384907, 18572166 and 22576571 and they are all "downstream" of SNP L21. Also at this time the latter two SNPs, just mentioned (18572166 and 22576571) are presently the "terminal SNPs" for Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) surnamed people. So in the future, as research progresses, the Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) haplogroup designation could change depending on new SNP discoveries for which Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) people test positive.

Prior to the L21 mutation (about 4,000 years ago) the Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) ancestors had accumulated a number of more ancient SNPs labeled "upstream." The list is quite long but the key SNPs giving direction to our migratory path from the beginning of the R1B haplogroup are: M343, P25, P297, M269, L23, L51, L11 and P312. In the interest of clarity and brevity the story of this DNA history will begin with the branch of the Homo Sapiens Family tree known as "ARBINS" (R1B). "ARBINS" is a convenient term used to avoid the repetitious "bearers of haplogroup R1B." This appellation is patterned after R1A's (Aryans from R1A) name appellation.

According to the well-known and respected chemist, Anatole Klyosov haplogroup R1B arose at or near the Altai mountain region of South Siberia, circa 16,000 years ago. Thereafter various R1B tribes followed different circuitous paths westward away from Central Asia via present day North Kazakhstan...the south Urals...the Russian Plain and 10,000 years later finally reaching the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

By 6,000 years ago those tribes of the R1B haplogroup that would ultimately finish their epic trek in Ireland left the shores of the Black Sea and Mediterranean via two separate routes. From the Black Sea "river borne" Arbins would follow the network of river routes north and west and ultimately end up leaving continental Europe for Britain and thereafter Ireland. From the shores of the eastern Mediterranean "sea borne" Arbins would wind their way across the Mediterranean shores and ultimately reach Iberia (Spain) some 5,000 years ago. Those "sea borne" Arbins who had taken the Mediterranean route to Spain, arriving there 5,000 year before present (ybp) soon thereafter acquired the SNP 312 at or near Spain.

The last leg of the sea borne Arbins journey (Spain to Ireland) was perhaps the most celebrated in myth and legend (Milesians). The voyage(s) from Spain to Ireland was probably an incremental one spanning numerous generations. From Spain they probably followed the French Coast up to France's Bretagne peninsula... thence across the Channel to the Cornwall peninsula... then perhaps to Wales... and ultimately on to south Ireland.

They sailed these voyages, settling and resettling all along the way, in their ocean-going boats (now called "Curraghs" in Irish). The curraghs were made of a latticed wooden frame lashed together with raw-hide and covered with animal hides which had been tanned in oak bark and stitched together with flax thread. These stitched seams were waterproofed with fat from sea mammals and other animals. Depending on durability requirements curraghs hulls were stitched together in a single hide construction, double hide construction or even triple hide construction all of which were placed together in contact. These curraghs could be propelled by oars, masts with sails and riggings or both. The sails (pre-woven cloth era) were of animal skins sewn together with fine cat gut. Curraghs intended for long voyages were furnished with solid decks...steering oar and steersman...rowing seats...and a crew of 10 to 12 men. Their size (the large ocean sailing curraghs) could range between 45 to 60 feet in length and 12 to 15 feet in beam. Smaller riverine curraghs would be constructed much smaller and could literally be carried on a person(s) back from river to river.

This lightweight and flexible hull design made them very fast sailors. The lattice-work wooden frame provided strength for extreme sea-worthiness, maneuverability and an astonishing load capacity. It was in these varying sized light vessels that our pre-L21 and L21 mutation ancestors committed themselves to the mercy of the most violent Atlantic storms and ultimately came to colonize Ireland's south coast about 4,000 or more years ago.

Between four and five thousand years ago our first L21 mutation ancestor was born probably somewhere in the south of Ireland. Most of his descendants would remain and become very numerous there. In time descendants of our first L21 ancestors would spread out and colonize not only south Ireland's coastal region but also its hinterland.

Ireland at this time was heavily forested and nearly impenetrable by land and so our L21 forbearers colonized south Ireland via the numerous fjords, rias and estuaries that extend deep into south Ireland's heartland and also via its vast network of rivers and tributaries that criss-cross in all directions.

To accomplish this river-borne colonization they depended on their sturdy and versatile currachs which, being smaller than their ocean-going currachs, were light and portable and of a shallow craft.

The Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) sept of Munster descend from those "L21s" who remained in south Ireland. But even though most of the L21 descendants remained in Ireland a minority of them, in their currachs, left Ireland as seafarers (fishermen, merchants, raiders and colonists) and resettled elsewhere.

Those of the L21 majority who remained in Ireland would mainly "cluster" in Ireland's southern province of Munster and give rise to the Haplogroup now known as the "South Irish Cluster." Today they bear, for the most part, "Eoghanacht" surnames such as O'Leary, O'Shea, O'Connor, O'Keefe, Sullivan, Kelly, Donahue, Callaghan, Healy, Crowley, Driscoll, Desmond, Donovan and Irwin to just name a handful.

As "Eoghanachts" they claim ancestry from Milesius of Spain and his son, Heber, who purportedly flourished circa the 17<sup>th</sup> century B.C. They also claim ancestry from Eoghan Mor I, called Mogha Nuadhad, who fought a battle with Conn of the Hundred Battles, Monarch of Ireland, in 123 A.D. Resulting from this battle Mogha compelled Conn to divide Ireland into two equal parts. The south part came to be called "Leath Mogha (Mogha's half). The northern part came to be called "Leath Cuinn" (Conn's half). And furthermore Conn was forced to give his daughter in marriage to Eoghan's son Oilill Olum and from this union were born three sons: Eghan Mor II, Cormac Cas and Kian from whom descend the prominent southern "tribes." These "tribes", also referred to as "races", are the Race of Cormac Cas (Dalcassions)...the Race of Kian (Clan Kian)...and the Race of Eoghan (Eoghanachts).

The Eoghanachts in the 3rd century A.D. were further subdivided into seven "septs": Eoghanacht of Chaisil...Eoghanacht of Locha Lein...Eoghanacht of Raithlind...Eoghanacht of Glendahnach...Eoghanacht of Ruis Argait... Eoghanacht of Arann...and the Eoghanacht of Ainy (to whom belong the Ó Ciarmácáin/Irwins). All of the traditional ruling families of these septs now have surnames largely populated by L21 positive people or haplogroups "downstream" of the progenitor of the L21 mutation.

Whether or not the large "South Ireland Cluster" of L21 population truly descends from these people (Milesius, Heber, Eoghan Mor and Oilill Olum) is not provable. Many modern historians consider these individuals to be legendary only and whether or not they were actual historical figures is a matter of debate and beyond the scope of this presentation. There are arguments to be made either way.

What is known for sure is that ancient Ireland was polygamous and that royal kindreds enjoyed superior wealth and power and tended to reproduce themselves at a much higher rate than average. Thus these royal kindreds would come to constitute a steadily increasing proportion of the population which certainly seems to hold true as regards the large L21 population in south Ireland today.

What is also known for sure is that by looking at the amount of variations (number of mutations that have accumulated over time in a haplogroup) it is possible to estimate a date of origin of a SNP. Thus our DNA indicates that the first ancestor of ours to have the L21 mutation lived between four and five thousand years ago. This was well before any of the legendary warriors and chieftains (already mentioned) ever existed. So whether or not these legendary figures are historical or fictional is best left up to future studies and historians to debate. At the end of this chapter is the 111 marker DNA Ó Ciarmácáin (Irwin) Modal (last updated May 1, 2014).

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## Ó Ciarrnacáin (Irwin) Modal

(111 Markers)

Allele	DYS393	DYS390	DYS19	DYS391	DYS385	DYS426	DYS388	DYS439	DYS389-I	DYS392	DYS389-II	
	13	24	14	10	11-15	12	12	11	13	13	29	
Allele	DYS458	DYS459	DYS455	DYS454	DYS447	DYS437	DYS448	DYS449		DYS464		
	17	10-11	11	11	24	15	19	29		15-17-17-17		
Allele	DYS460	GATA-H4	YCAII	DYS456	DYS607	DYS576	DYS570	CDY	DYS442	DYS438		
	11	11	19-23	15	15	17	17	35-36	13	12		
Allele	DYS531	DYS578	DYF395S1	DYS590	DYS537	DYS641	DYS472	DYF406S1	DYS511			
	11	9	15-16	8	10	10	8	10	10			
Allele	DYS425	DYS413	DYS557	DYS594	DYS436	DYS490	DYS534	DYS450	DYS444	DYS481	DYS520	DYS446
	12	23-23	16	10	12	12	15	8	11	22	20	13
Allele	DYS617	DYS568	DYS487	DYS572	DYS640	DYS492	DYS565					
	12	11	13	11	11	12	11					
Allele	DYS710	DYS485	DYS632	DYS495	DYS540	DYS714	DYS716	DYS717				
	36	15	9	16	12	25	26	19				
Allele	DYS505	DYS556	DYS549	DYS589	DYS522	DYS494	DYS533	DYS636	DYS575	DYS638		
	12	11	13	12	11	9	12	11	10	11		
Allele	DYS462	DYS452	DYS445	Y-GATA-A10	DYS463	DYS441	Y-GGAAT-1B07	DYS525				
	11	30	12	12	24	13	10	10				
Allele	DYS712	DYS593	DYS650	DYS532	DYS715	DYS504	DYS513	DYS561	DYS552			
	20	15	19	15	25	16	12	15	25			
Allele	DYS726	DYS635	DYS587	DYS643	DYS497	DYS510	DYS434	DYS461	DYS435			
	12	24	18	10	14	18	9	12	11			

**Note:** This modal is taken from the FTDNA printout of the author's (#75606) DNA test results. It is also displayed on Y-Search at QY7VH. Data from two other related Irwin tests are as follows:

- Y-search AURXF differs from the 111 Modal presented here at DYS 464 A,B,C,D(15-15-15-17).
- Y-search GYZQH differs from the 111 Modal presented here at DYS 464, A,B,C,D(15-15-17-17).
- Y-search GYZQH differs here from the 111 Modal presented here at YCA II(b) ...22 instead of 23.
- Y-search GYZQH differs with Modal presented here at CDY (b)...37 instead of 36.
- Y-search AURXF and GYZQH both differ from the 111 Modal presented here at DYS 446...14 instead of 13.

**Note also:** All three participants mentioned (QY7VH, AURXF and GYZQH) are all Irwin surnamed people. Although GYZQH is, in America surnamed Ervin, in Ireland his oldest known forbearer was surnamed Irwin. QY7VH oldest known Irish born ancestor lived at Rathainy...AURXF lived at Kilfrush...GYZQH lived at Bulgaden. It has been determined that all three probably had a common ancestor in the late 1700s early 1800s. Their common ancestor was probably at Rathainy, Knockainy Parish, County Limerick which is within a several mile radius of Kilfrush (AURXF) and Bulgaden (GYZQH). All three of these town lands are in east/central county Limerick.

All three participants ((QY7VH, AURXF, GYZQH) are proven to be definitely related because of a very, very rare score at DYS 459 that they all share. For DYS 459 their score is 10-11 which can only be seen in that combination in less than 1/2 of one percent of those tested. In almost all other cases (99.5%) the combination score for DYS 459 is 9-10.

## R1b-L21....CTS4466 Trek (Siberia – Ireland)



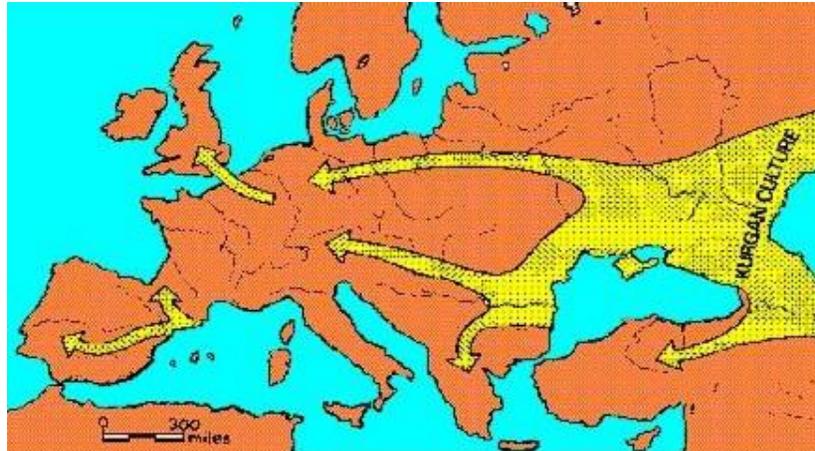
The oldest R1b subclades are found in the Altai region of South Siberia. Thus, it is theorized that the R1b haplogroup began in this region about 16,000 years ago. Presently the Altai Mountains and Steppe are located in south Siberia (Russia) bordering Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia.



The Eurasian Steppes were capable of sustaining large herds of wholly mastodons, horses, bison, etc. Groups of R1b hunters followed these herds wherever their seasonal migrations would take them.



The R-Haplogroup ancestors of R1b had followed the great herds of wholly mammoths from the western shores of Europe to the eastern shores of Asia for thousands of years. This east-west hunting pattern became no longer possible due to conditions brought on by the Great Ice Age. As the vast ice age glaciers began and continued to melt immense rivers and lakes were formed which served to isolate the R1b hunters to Asian lands. It was not until eight thousand years ago that these great rivers and lakes receded to passable proportions. Also, about this time the great wholly mammoth herds were thinning and becoming extinct. It was in this context that the R1b people relocated westward along the Scythian shores of the Black and Caspian Seas.



The R1b people adapted to their new environment along the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas, mixed with indigenous people there to form the Kurgan Culture. They also became proficient in seamanship (both riverine and open sea). About 6,000 years ago, as the Great Ice Age glaciers continued to melt, the Mediterranean Sea rose to the point of breaching the Dardanelles and flooding coastal settlements along the Black and Caspian Sea basin. Once again, the R1b people were “refugees”. Some of these refugees took to their riverine craft and headed north and west to central and western Europe. Other R1b refugees headed south and went to the shores of the eastern Mediterranean. The forbearers of the R1b-L21 Ó Ciarrnacáin took the Mediterranean seaborne route and generations later they came to settle in the Tagus River estuary region of Portugal.



By the time the R1b-Ó Ciarmácáin ancestors had settled on Iberian/Atlantic shores the Mediterranean Bronze Age was already underway. In Iberia they mixed with various tribal people to form the “Bell Beaker” culture. The British Isle Bronze Age began about 2500 B.C. when large deposits of copper and tin were discovered near coastal regions of Spain, Armorica, Cornwall, Wales, and south-west Ireland. The “Iberian” seafaring Ó Ciarmácáin ancestors were, at this time, bearers of the P312 mutation. Given the logistics at this time it was commercially advantageous to change “homeports” from Iberia to the Armorica peninsula (Bretagne, France). It was here that the Ó Ciarmácáin ancestors became the bearers of the L21 mutation circa 2500 B. C. From Armorica they had open sea access from Iberia to the British Isles and river access to continental Europe. Using their seamanship skills, geographic positioning and versatile, fast moving currachs they prospered and would become numerous along the shores of these trade routes.



**It is estimated that 75% of the Irish people directly descend from the father of the first L21 SNP bearer. It can be reasonably assumed that this progenitor must have been a very rich and powerful man. It seems that at the beginning of the Irish Bronze Age (2500 B.C.) that this rich and powerful man (probably a merchant sea lord) “homeported” the bulk of his shipping operation in southwest Ireland near the copper mines at Ross Island (Kerry) and Mount Gabriel (Cork). In time his progeny settled at or near these copper mines and eventually moved into the Munster hinterland to become “cattle lords” with numerous “clients.” Over 2,000 years ago these L21 Ó Ciarmácáin forbearers became CTS 4466 SNP bearers. The CTS 4466 SNP bearers presently make up the subclade known as South Irish Type 2.**



Bearers of Irish type 2 SNP (CTS 4466) were quick to take advantage of Britain's weakened position after Rome abandoned its colony there. CTS 4466 Irish sea raiders, pirates and colonists looted and plundered western Britain (Wales and Cornwall). Several generations later these sea raiders were expelled and returned back to Ireland (5th century) where they would establish Munster's Eoghanacht dynasty. The CTS 4466 people that remained behind in western Britain (Wales and Cornwall) had offspring there whose progeny still can be found in those counties.



**THE FOUNDING FATHER OF THE R-L21 LINEAGE**  
(Caption next page)

This caption is a quote from Dr. Joe Flood's website: " The Phylogenealogy of R-L21: four and a half millennia of expansion and redistribution." In my option, this picture plus Dr. Flood's words illustrate an accurate image of the founding father of the R-L21 lineage:

The L21 mutation occurred during an extraordinarily rapid expansion of the effective population of the R1b haplogroup on the Atlantic seaboard. In only a few hundred years, 'Western R1b' formed over 300 Y-chromosome branches that survive to the present day and which define our current categories of Western R1b.<sup>9</sup> Batini et al. (2015, Figure 1) show that the branching of R1b at this time was spectacular, equal to that of all other European haplogroups taken together. No other effective male population expansion of this rate, magnitude and extent is known until the modern era.

The companion paper Flood (2016) proposes that the original Western R1b men were a closely related group of mariners and traders who came to the Atlantic seaboard from the Mediterranean around 2700 BC.<sup>10</sup> These invaders are often known as the 'Bell Beaker Folk' because of their distinctive drinking vessels. The Bell Beaker period marked a period of unprecedented cultural contact in Atlantic and Western Europe on a scale not seen previously nor seen again.

With boats as their major form of transport and trade as a major means of sustaining communities, the Bell Beakers established their initial colonies near to tradeable resources, on the coast and up major rivers. They appear to have leapfrogged to specific areas, probably to exploit valuable metals like gold, tin and copper- very much in the manner of their descendants in the New World four millennia later. The Beakers formed maritime colonies in quick succession in Iberia, southern England, Ireland, the Rhone Valley, Brittany and the Middle Rhine. These settlements grew together connected by the sea trade routes of the 'Atlantic culture' (Cunliffe 1994, 2001, 2010), with the south of England at the centre. As Bradley (2007: 26) puts it, 'The islands' distinct geography ... allowed them to form links with regions of the European mainland that would not have been in regular contact with one another.'

## Afterword

### Irish Genealogies

"The preservation of *senchas*, traditional historical lore, always remained a function of the poets. In this capacity, they were the custodians of tribal myth, origin-legend, genealogy, king-lists and synchronisms of kings. These they recorded, elaborated, and, on occasion, fabricated. Their purpose was not historical in the modern sense. These legends are aetiological myths, narratives in verse or prose which explained the origin of a tribe or dynasty, its location and distribution, its territories and why it occupies them, and its relation with other tribes or dynasties. After a fashion, these myths functioned as charters of traditional rights. Genealogy formed an important part of this type of literature. In Ireland, a man enjoyed his status, rights and privileges in virtue of his descent, and a knowledge of his genealogy was no mere matter of idle curiosity or antiquarianism. A jurist was bound to consult genealogical records, oral or written, in the discharge of his duties in regard to inheritance, and an Old Irish text urges: 'Memories shall determine to whom inherited land belongs: Old antiquaries shall be questioned on their conscience truthfully in thy presence...let genealogical branches be extended when children are born.' Genealogical material was also of high political consequence. Dynasties ruled the kingdom in virtue of their descent from ancient royal lineages (and possibly in pagan times, from the tribal god or avatar) and, in this case, their genealogy was proof of their legitimacy and of their title to rule. Again, the work of the poet-historian is not strictly speaking historical, for such genealogy reflect tribal and political associations as well as biological descent. When new tribal or dynastic groups rose to power and overthrew a ruling dynasty, the genealogists often forged a link between them and their predecessors and in this way continuity and legitimacy were assured. Vassal folk and conquered peoples living within the kingdom of a dominant dynasty are often link genealogically (and demonstrably unhistorically) to their overlords. This is not an unabashed fiction or simple deception but rather the mode in which the genealogists, and, doubtless the families concerned, conceived the relationship. When the relationship changes, the genealogical affiliations of the families concerned are altered accordingly. The introduction of ecclesiastical learning and of writing had a profound effect on native historical learning. The genealogies were extended backwards to Noah and to Adam and, by a slow process of accretion, assumption and speculation, Ireland was provided with a mythical prehistory."

(Excerpt taken from "*Ireland Before the Normans*" by Donncha Ó Corráin page 75-77)

## Final Note

This essay on the origin and evolution of the Munster surname of Irwin (Ó Ciarmacáin) was an effort of almost terrifying complexity. I say this because much of the subject matter is based on myth, local lore, legend, pseudo-history and patently forged genealogies which were a product of ancient political and territorial considerations.

Furthermore I am not an Irish speaker and research work performed in an unfamiliar language, written in an unfamiliar alphabet and dealing with illogically anglicized surnames posed other great difficulties.

In addition much of the data used to compile this essay was derived from an early Gaelic ascendancy mindset, which, by today's standards, seems so unorthodox as to be incomprehensible.

Finally this essay has required long and patient study and I do not say that it is free from error in every detail. But I can honestly claim to have left nothing undone to make it as complete and reliable as possible.

Toirdealbač Ó Ciarmacáin  
Terrance Irwin

San Francisco, California, USA  
June 1, 2010

## **Sources/Suggested Reading**

### **Book Cover:**

- Picture from T. Irwin collection.

### **Tuatha De Aine:**

- "Ireland Before the Vikings" by Gearoid Mac Niocaill and "An Illustrated History of the Irish People" by Kenneth Neill.
- Picture from T. Irwin collections.

### **Race of Heber:**

- "Ireland Before the Vikings" by Gearoid Mac Niocaill... "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain.
- "Celtic Gods, Celtic Goddesses" by R. J. Stewart ... "Ancestral Map of Ireland" by Kane Strategic Marketing, Inc.
- "Ireland in Pre-Celtic Times" by R. A. S. Mac Alister ... "The Races of Ireland and Scotland" by W. C. Mac Kenzie... diagram constructed by T. Irwin.

### **Slioch Aine:**

- "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain... "Lough Gur Journal."
- (Picture adapted by T. Irwin from pictures in "The Celtic Year" by Shirley Toulson).
- "A Guide to Irish Roots" by William and Mary Durning.

### **Ui Ainy:**

- "Cattle Lords and Clansmen" by Nerys Patterson ... "Ireland Before the Vikings" by Gearoid Mac Niocaill.
- "Cattle Lords and Clansmen" by Nerys Patterson ... "The Druid Tradition" by Philip Carr-Gomm.
- "An Illustrated History of the Irish People" by Kenneth Neill.

### **The Ciarmac:**

- "Ireland Before the Normans" by Donncha Ó Corráin ... "The Annals of Ireland" by The Four Masters... "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain... "The Druid Tradition" by Philip Carr-Gomm. Ciarmac picture from T. Irwin's photo collection.
- "The Celtic Tradition" by Caitlin Matthews ... "The Druid Tradition" by Philip Carr-Gomm.

- "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain... "Celtic Gods and Goddesses" by R. J. Stewart.
- "Mythic Ireland" by Michael Dames.
- "An Illustrated History of the Irish People" by Kenneth Neill... "Mythic Ireland" by Michael Dames.
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- "The Celtic Tradition" by Caitlin Matthews.
- "The Druid Tradition" by Philip Carr-Gomm.

#### **Ui Ó Ciarmaic (Eoghanacht Rule):**

- "Ireland Before the Normans" by Donncha Ó Corráin... "The Annals of Ireland" by The Four Masters... "Cattle Lords and Clansmen" by Nerys Patterson.
- "The Annals of Ireland" by The Four Masters... "Early Irish and Welsh Kinship" by Charles Edwards.
- "Ireland Before the Normans" by Donncha Ó Corráin.

#### **Ui Ó Ciarmaic (Dalcassian Rule):**

- "The Annals of Ireland" by The Four Masters.
- "The Annals of Ireland" by The Four Masters... "The Course of Irish History" by T. W. Moody.
- "Irish Families" by Edward Mac Lysaght... "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe.

#### **O' Ciarmaic (Norman Rule):**

- "Anglo-Norman Ireland" by Michael Dolley ... "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe.
- "Cattle Lords and Clansmen" by Nerys Patterson... "Irish Names of Places" by P. W. Joyce... "Keatings History of Ireland (Volume III) by Geoffrey Keating.
- "Keatings History of Ireland (Volume I, II & III) by Geoffrey Keating.
- "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe.
- "Ireland Before the Vikings" by Gearoid Mac Niocaill.
- "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain... "Heraldic Scroll of Ireland" by Mullins of Dublin ... "Martin's Irish Surnames Company" by Robert Martin who sent me a "Page 67" of an unnamed book stating the Arms to be O' Ciarmaic.
- "Clans and Families of Ireland" by John Grenham. "The Celtic Tradition" by Caitlin Matthews... "A Social History of Ancient Ireland" by P. W. Joyce.

### **Ó Ciarmacáin (English Rule):**

- "The Twilight Lords" by Richard Berleth ... "Seventeenth – Century Ireland" by Brendan Fitzpatrick... "Ireland a Thousand Kings" by W. L. Weir ... "Historical Essays on the Kingdom of Munster" by The Mac Carthy Mor, Prince of Desmond.
- "A Genealogical and Historical Map of Ireland" by Heraldic Artists, Ltd. ... "The Irish Fiants of the Tudor Sovereigns" which was a government survey ... "Hell or Connaught" by Peter Berresford Ellis ... "Civil Survey of Ireland (1654 – 1656) which was a government survey.
- "Civil Survey of Ireland" (1654 – 1656), which was a government survey.
- "Census of 1659" (Index) ... "Irish Families" by Edward Mac Lysaght... "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe.
- "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe... "Regent Graphics" which is an Irish-American clothing mail order company which had an excellent explanation of Irish consonants, alphabet and pronunciation in its mail order brochure... "Irish Dialects and Irish-Speaking Districts" by Brian O' Cuiv.
- "Myth, Legend and Romance" by Dr. Daithi O Hogain (see Banshee entry).
- Comment by T. Irwin and Map from "Hell or Connaught" by Peter Berresford Ellis.
- "American Irish Political Education Committee" (newsletter dated June 1995)... "American Irish Political Education Committee" (newsletter dated June 1996 and December 1996)... "Irish Echo Newspaper (December 11 – 17, 1996 issue) ... "Ireland" by Robert Kee ... "The Great Irish Famine" which is a school curriculum book approved by the State of New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education dated September 10, 1996 ... "Land and Popular Politics" by Donald E. Jordan, Jr. ... "Griffith's Valuation Survey" showing original old two acre parcels.
- "Timeline Ireland" by Annabel Wigner.

### **Irwin (Rare Munster Surname):**

- "American Irish Political Education Committee" (newsletter dated March 1996)... "Irish Echo Newspaper (December 11 – 17, 1996 issue) ... "American Irish Political Education Committee" (newsletter dated July 1990).
- "The Tithe of Ireland" (1823-1838) ... "Griffith's Valuation" (1848-1864).
- "Land Owners of Ireland" (1876), which was a government

survey ... "Special Report on Surnames in Ireland" by Robert E. Matheson. Map and data by Edward Neafsey, the author of "Surnames of Ireland."

- (Census of Ireland 1901).
- "Special Report on Surnames in Ireland" by Robert E. Matheson and Census of Ireland 1901.
- Comment by T. Irwin.
- (Griffith's Valuation data plotted on map by Edward Neafsey, the author of "Surnames of Ireland").
- (A timeline compiled by T. Irwin).
- Original map plotted by Edward Neafsey, author of "Surnames of Ireland," and Irwin zone division and names inserted by T. Irwin based on data in books: "Special Report on Surnames in Ireland" by Robert E. Matheson ... "Irish Families" by Edward Mac Lysaght... "Irish Names and Surnames" by Fr. Woulfe.
- (Census of Ireland 1891).
- "Ireland Before the Normans" by Donncha Ó Corráin.

#### **Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) DNA and Haplogroup:**

- A Social History of Ancient Ireland by P. W. Joyce.
- Europe Between the Oceans (9000BC – AD 1000) by Barry Cunliffe
- Facing the Ocean (The Atlantic and Its People) by Barry Cunliffe
- The Origins of the British by Stephen Oppenheimer
- Saxons, Vikings and Celts (The Genetic Roots of Britain and Ireland) by Bryan Sykes
- CRO-Magnon (How the Ice Age Gave Birth to the First Modern Humans) by Brian Fagan
- The Brendan Voyage by Tim Severin
- Ó Ciarmacáin (Irwin) Modal (96 markers) compiled by T. Irwin
- Close Matches (Munster people) who had a tradition of Munster origins and whose DNA printouts were near matches of T. Irwin's (YSearch DNA Database).
- The phylogenealogy of R-L21: Four and a half millenia of expansion and distribution (website) by Doctor Joe Flood. THIS IS A MUST VIEW!
- Holly Leaf Chronicle at Volume XXII, Fourth Quarter 2006, Number 4, See pages 20 to 22 (Discovery of unrelated Irish branches to Scottish branches) (Irwin branches of O'hEireamoin of Leinster Province & O'Ciarmacain of Munster Province).
- Holly Leaf Chronicle at Volume XXIII, First Quarter, 2007, Number 1, See page 20 (Brief narrative of William "Billy" Irwin AKA Liam O'Ciarmacain).

- Holly Leaf Chronicle at Volume XXIII, Second Quarter 2007, Number 2, See pages 34 to 40 (Condensed version of "The Origin and Evolution of the Surname O' Ciarmacain (Irwin)" which is labeled as "Part One."
- Holly Leaf Chronicle at Volume XXIII, Third Quarter 2007, Number 3, See pages 29 to 35 (Condensed version of Irwin family "bumpy road" from Ireland to U.S.A.).
- Note: The Holly Leaf Chronicles mentioned above are quarterly publications of the Clan Irwin Association (CIA).
- McCarthy Surname (Y-DNA) Study - Join us: Google the preceding & then click "SNP R-A541 (Irish Type II) & then scroll down to Page 3 of 6. In the middle of the page, you will see boxes with surnames of Y-DNA related Y-DNA Septs: McCarthy, Crowley, Irwin, Donovan, Hayes, Hourihane & Regan. Thereafter follow the O'Ciarmacain box down to its terminal SNP of BY15518.
- I (the author) belong to the following FAMILY TREE Y-DNA (FTDNA) Study groups which have all been most helpful in the study of my Y-DNA... I recommend that you join the appropriate FTDNA GROUP(S) as soon as you are adequately tested: Corca Laidhe... Eoghanacht Septs...Irwin Clan Surname...Munster Irish...R-L21 and Subdades, R1B - CTS 4466 Plus...Ui Fidhgeinte.
- The Munster O'Ciarmacain Sept originated in County Limerick and are, according to their Y-DNA profile, of the Ui Fidhgeinte Haplogroup. For those interested in ancient genealogies Google etc. contains many such genealogies.
- Phylogenetic Alignments with Genealogies of Descent from ailill olom – wordpress.com @ mccarthydna.files.wordpress.com. THIS IS A MUST VIEW.

**Afterword:**

- Ireland Before the Normans by Donncha O' Corrain

**Final Note:**

- By T. Irwin

**Back Cover:**

- Hill of Knockainy from T. Irwin collection

## The Hill of Knockainy



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