

## **Contents**

Preface	i
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Landholding and Settlement	10
Chapter 2: Landlords and Tenants	44
Chapter 3: The Land and the People in 1841	77
Conclusion	103
Notes	106

## **Maps**

Killeshandra and Arva - 19th century	8
Map of the Escheated Counties of Ulster 1610 attributed to Norden	17
Bodley Map: Barony of Tullyhunco circa 1610	19
Taylor and Skinner Road Maps - 18th century	31
Eight townlands: Parish of Killeshandra - 19th century	36

## **Figures**

Figure 1	93
Figure 2	100

## Preface

I wish to express my gratitude to the many people who have helped me during the course of this study.

I wish to thank Professor Vincent Comerford and the teaching staff of the Department of Modern History, Maynooth College. I wish to thank in particular Dr. Raymond Gillespie and Dr. Carla King for their encouragement and guidance.

I am indebted to the staff of the following institutions for their courteous help and co-operation; the National Archives; the National Library; the Library of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth; the Public Record Office, Northern Ireland and the Registry of Deeds. I would like in particular to thank the staff of Cavan County Library, especially Brian Connolly who helped me at all times.

I am grateful to my extended family, friends and neighbours, particularly Kevin O'Connor who assisted me in numerous ways, to my classmates in Maynooth for their congenial company, to Noeleen Skelly, for her patient and efficient typing and above all to John whose unstinting help and encouragement made this study possible.

## Introduction

The townland is the distinguishing hallmark of rural Ireland. It is the small land unit, the micro-territory which identifies its inhabitants and locates them within a wider landscape. It is the home address, the common habitat of several surnames over many generations.

The territorial framework of the townland has its origins in the remote past. It is an area generally bounded by natural features and containing within its boundaries about 300 acres of land. While its significance as a unit of land lies in an older Gaelic system, today it is a well recognised administrative and geographical unit occupying the contemporary landscape. This being the case, it contains within itself elements of continuity and change which render it an appropriate avenue of research for the historian.

Although Co. Cavan is fortunate in being well supplied with the many scholarly publications from local historians since the 1920's, little attention has been paid to the study of the townlands. The contributions of Robert Vincent Walker, alias An Scolaíre Bocht (The Poor Scholar), to the local newspaper, the *Anglo Celt*, from 1920 to 1928, have enhanced our knowledge of the meaning and significance of many townland names but unfortunately this work was never completed.<sup>1</sup> A more recent publication, *Cavan: Essays in the History of an Irish County* has emphasised the role of people rather than place in the evolution of history and P.J. Duffy's essay, 'The making of the Cavan Landscape' gives an overview of the significance of townlands as territorial units in the 'humanised' landscape of Co. Cavan.<sup>2</sup>

Kevin O'Neill's scholarly study of the parish of Killeshandra, Co. Cavan, proposes a Marxist view of the causes of over-population and poverty in that parish in 1841.<sup>3</sup>

The locale of the present study is also the parish of Killeshandra but the area chosen for examination will be two groups of four contiguous townlands. It is envisaged that this micro-study of eight small territorial units spanning a time period of 233 years, that is from 1608 to 1841, will throw some light on the evolution of the townlands and their inhabitants, from the plantation of Ulster to the eve of the great famine.

In choosing a locale for study, the historian is aware of certain immutable topographical features which help to shape the personality of that area and its inhabitants. This awareness is further heightened if the historian is a 'native' and can identify with the townlands and with the shared experiences of the people dwelling there.

The boundaries of townlands, however, are part of man made landscape. They were defined by the inhabitants in a more remote past and they represent the economic and social response of a pastoral people to a shared environment.

The subsequent busy hedges and ditches which became part of the drumlin landscape in Co. Cavan represent modifications effected by a more settled tillage based population. They also represent the colonial response to a 'frontier' territory.



In the long run, their enclosures and mearings reflect the sub-division of the townlands which took place as a response to population pressure in the 19th Century.

These three themes, settlement, consolidation and population as agents of continuity and change in the townlands will be the main concern of this study.

Chapter 1 will seek to try to come to an understanding of how the pre-plantation Gaelic Society in Co. Cavan organised itself and how the townlands functioned as land units for that society. It will also seek to examine how the newcomers assimilated certain aspects of Gaelic territorial organisation into the plantation scheme. It will trace the phases in which the new-comers inserted themselves into the old society and how both these societies reconstructed themselves. It will attempt to trace patterns of change and continuity within these societies over a long period of time.

Chapter 2 will concern itself with examining the web of relationships as they pertained to one another within and beyond the townlands. Structures of power and subordination which came into place at the time of the plantation will be examined and the mentalities, values and expectations of various groups will be explored. The lease, the written record of landlord and tenants affairs will receive the greatest attention because it reflects changes in the economic and social power of both these groups. It is hoped to demonstrate that relationships between landlord and tenant adapted to each other in response to the requirements of the physical environment on the one hand and the forces at work in the wider world.

Chapter 3 will deal with the link between population and resources in the townlands in 1841. It is hoped to demonstrate that the inhabitants of the townlands were not a cohesive homogenous group. The townlands contained within them several social and economic hierarchies which were variously equipped to meet a massive food shortage like the potato famine. Chapter 3 also seeks to demonstrate that the pre-famine population was already adjusting downwards, and suggests that in the long run, it would have arrived at an equilibrium with resources.

Sources used for this study include cartographic and documentary material relating to the plantation of Ulster. The major printed sources are, George Hill's *Plantation in Ulster*, the 'Ulster Plantation Papers' printed in *Analecta Hibernica* (1938) and the *Ulster Inquisitions*. Hill's *Plantation in Ulster* is a particularly valuable and convenient source as it contains details of all the Schedules of Grants in the Ulster Plantation.<sup>4</sup> It also contains *Pymnar's Survey*, which again is a useful source for helping to trace the development of the plantation settlement in Ulster. The 'Ulster Plantation Papers' edited by T. W. Moody and printed in *Analecta Hibernica*, 1938, are also indispensable for a study of this period. The *Ulster Inquisitions* are a rich source for a townland study in the Killeshandra area.<sup>5</sup> Fortunately the barony of Tullyhunco was completely covered by these enquiries which took place between 1628 and 1662. The Inquisitions record landholding and tenants in most townlands. They define the mearings and boundaries of some townlands and describe their topographical features. Therefore they are essential for the study of townlands in Killeshandra parish. The Bodley maps were created as a result of

observations and with the help of oral information given by local people.<sup>6</sup> By modern standards the maps are quite inaccurate and have many shortcomings. However they provide the first comprehensive mapping of the baronies of Cavan, a county which had no cartographic history until its inclusion in the Ulster Plantation plan. As J. H. Andrews has pointed out in his critique of the Bodley maps, the individual townlands are inaccurate in shape and they are also inaccurate in the position of their boundary junctions. They are also inexact in their relative sizes.<sup>7</sup> Some topographical features like rivers, mountains and lakes are exaggerated and others underestimated. However, the maps are still an indispensable source for the study of the townlands under review. They are generally reliable in the spellings and forms of the names given for the townlands. They are also reliable in the contiguous placing of these land units. The major mistake with Co. Cavan was the underestimation of the poll (townland) at 24 plantation acres. The average statute measure for the Co. Cavan townland is 233 acres or 146 plantation acres.<sup>8</sup>

The post-plantation surveys are also useful guide to settlement. However, they have their shortcomings. For example, the information given by Pynnar with regard to the Drumheada estate of Sir James Craig does not coincide with that obtained at the local inquiry or 'inquisition' in 1629, where it was recorded that the whole estate had been let to native Irish. The Hearth Money Rolls, as Dickson, Ó'Gráda and Daultrey have shown, are a reliable guide to population changes in Ireland.<sup>9</sup> However, the Hearth Money Rolls for the 1660's are not easy to interpret. For example, it is difficult to assess why some townlands have clustered households with hearths and other townlands



are not represented in the tax. It is generally acknowledged that the 1660's Hearth Taxes only provide returns for about 50 per cent of the households.<sup>10</sup> However the Hearth Tax gives some idea of the social structure in the townlands towards the end of the 17th century and they are a guide to levels of cultural integration.

The two groups of townlands chosen for study belonged to two different estates: those of Lords Farnham and Gosford. The Farnham Estate papers are preserved in the National Library of Ireland and those of the Gosford estate are available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Both these sources contain rent books, leases, journals, correspondence, surveys, maps and miscellaneous documents. The rent books of the Gosford estate are much more comprehensive than those of the Farnham estate. Unfortunately useful 18th century material for the Farnham estate was sent to various lawyers and it was never returned. The Gosford Papers, on the other hand, include the 'history' of townland leases from the mid 18th century 'middleman' era down to the 19th century. The Farnham papers, contain 2 bound folios which were very useful for this study. These include the requests and 'applications' of various tenants and thus provide a useful guide to landlord tenant relationships from the 1820's to the 1850's. The Gosford Papers provide very little direct correspondence with the tenants and general instructions about the property were usually sent to the representatives of the estate at Arva. The Registry of Deeds also proved a most important archive for tracing land transactions in the 18th Century and these transactions help to fill vacuums in the source material for landed estates.

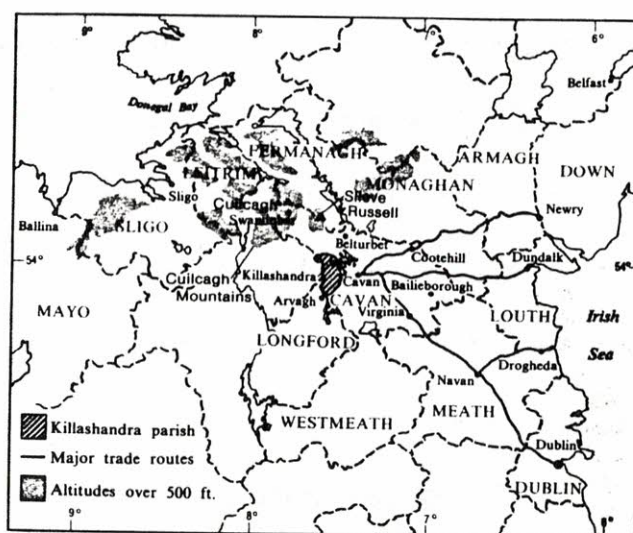


The most important material used for the final chapter in this study is the 1841 census for the parish of Killeshandra. The 1841 Census for Killeshandra parish is a unique source. Most of the individual forms from this pre-famine census were destroyed in the debacle of the Civil War and only the forms of Killeshandra parish have survived as a group. The 1841 census was the first reliable census of Ireland. The range of questions put to each household regarding causes of death, emigration, marriage age and occupation of heads of household have provided a valuable insight into social and economic circumstances in the parish on the eve of the famine and they also provide demographic data which is of enormous value to the historian. For the purpose of this study, the 1841 census was used in conjunction with estates rent books and the Tithe Applotment Book for Killeshandra 1831. The data was processed with the help of a computer in order to analyse land resources, population structure and population trends in the townlands on the eve of the famine. The 1841 census is not just a quantitative source but it sheds much light on social structures and on the economic conditions of the inhabitants of Killeshandra parish in 1841.

## **The Locality**

The townlands which are the subject of this study are situated in the parish of Killeshandra and the barony of Tullyhunco, Co. Cavan. The barony of Tullyhunco is Co. Cavan's most westerly barony and it borders on Counties Leitrim and Longford. The parish of Killeshandra encompasses the two market towns of Arva and Killeshandra, both of which had their origins in the

plantation of Ulster. Killeshandra sprang into existence in the early 17th century, was utterly destroyed in the 1641 rebellion but after the Cromwellian settlement it quickly revived with the return of its landlord family, the Hamiltons. Arva, the smaller of the two towns is situated about seven miles south of Killeshandra. This town was the commercial centre for the Acheson (later Gosford) estate but because of its peripheral situation, its lack of a resident landlord and its roadless hinterland it did not receive a patent for its market until 1765. With the building of roads in the 1760's and the development of a thriving linen industry, Arva developed into an important commercial centre in the 19th century.



*Killeshandra and Arva, 19th century.*

The parish of Killeshandra is part of the Upper Erne Valley and its most important topographical features are its swarms of drumlin hills which are interspersed with lakes, rivers, marshes and bogs. This landscape is part of the border region of drumlins which stretches from Strangford Lough to Donegal Bay. Sticky gley soils and poor drainage are the agricultural disadvantages of this type of region but nevertheless this drumlin area produced large crops of

oats, flax and potatoes in the pre-famine years. The ubiquitous tillage implement was the one sided spade or loy which was suited to the difficult sticky clay in a hilly environment.

Estyn Evans refers to the drumlin belt as 'Orange Country' and in the past the townlands under review did indeed reverberate to the beat of the Orange drum.<sup>11</sup> The barony of Tullyhunco was allotted to Scottish 'undertakers' under the Ulster Plantation Scheme in 1610. As a result of this colonial settlement, the locality has since that time accommodated within its environs several 'cultural frontiers' and communities of interest. The towns of Killeshandra and Arva with their weekly markets, their busy linen trade, and situated as they were on the borders of the county became important meeting places for the several communities living within the hinterland. They were the focal points for Roman Catholics, Protestants, Methodists and Presbyterians. At fairs and markets, merchants, dealers and hawkers brought news and material goods from the outside world. In the 19th Century, Killeshandra and Arva became the arenas where local tensions and animosities were expressed in the form of sectarian battles and 'riotous assembly'. These towns also provided the stage, on fair days, where the itinerant evangelistic ministers, particularly the Methodists, preached from horseback and sought to bring the people from the 'darkness and thralldom of Popery' to a more enlightened spiritual world.

It is with the interaction of the several societies with each other, their response to a natural environment and to the outside world that this study will concern itself.