

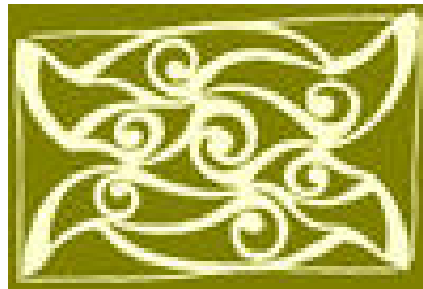
# Progress in Irish Family Names

Kay Muhr

(SNSBI 2021)

Ulster Place-Name Society

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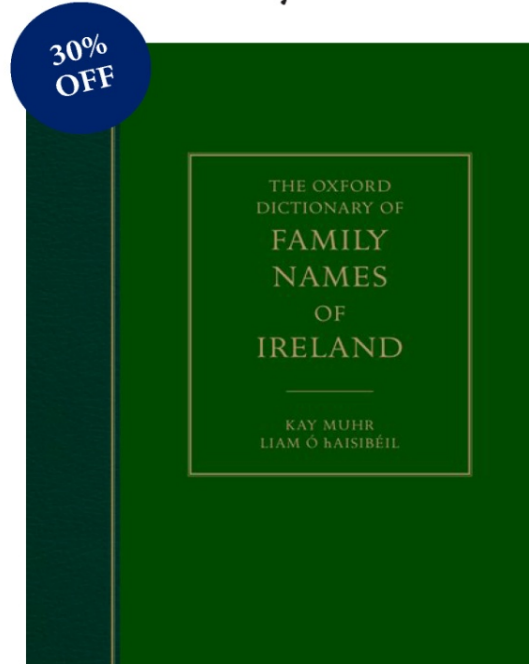
No longer representing a university department or research project, I find I have presented a more individual report than others, based on adding research specifically on family names to research on Irish place-names which may contain them. Funding, although important, will not be mentioned!

*Family Names of Ireland* contains the most numerous surnames (or surname spellings) in the island - namely all those with 100 or more bearers in the 1911 census covering all Ireland. About half of the names are from Irish Gaelic, followed by English, Scottish, Scottish Gaelic, Norman, Welsh, Manx and other languages, borne by those arriving in Ireland up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Many more surnames remain in the FNI database reserve than could be squeezed into the book: less common Irish names and variant anglicised spellings, likewise less familiar names in English, Scots and others.

# THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF FAMILY NAMES OF IRELAND

Kay Muhr and Liam Ó hAisibéil



**T**he *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names of Ireland* contains more than 3,800 entries covering the majority of family names that are established and current in Ireland, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland.

#### FEATURES

- An extensive introduction gives the history and formation of family names, of Irish and Scottish Gaelic, English, Scots and Welsh origin in Ireland, and the research methods and sources used to compile this dictionary
- Each entry contains the name's frequency in 1911, its main locations in both 1847-64 and 1911, its language/culture of origin, and an explanation of its meaning. Many entries also include extensive lists, in historical order, of early bearers as recorded in major Irish-language and administrative sources, ranging from the medieval period to the nineteenth century

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# Place-Names & Surnames in Irish

- FNI includes all surnames of whatever origin with 100+ bearers in the 1911 census of Ireland.
- Surname study began for me with recognising how many Irish place-names contained family names, in Ireland based on genealogy using personal names also built from Gaelic lexical elements. The family names begin *Ó* 'grandson' or *Mac* 'son', and the toponyms often begin *Baile* (Bally) 'homestead' of [X]. Both place and family names were later anglicised, usually by respelling from sound (the ancestor name bore the stress). However, for surnames, a similar English surname might be adopted as a replacement, and latterly a (supposed) translation might be used instead.

# Surnames in Irish Place-Names

examples:

- Fardinand O Shiell of Balliseill, chirurgion, 1601 in \$6574 (Mayo?). *Siadhail* 'slow'; English **Shield**.
- Aghye O Hossye, of Baelle lossey, 1586 Miler O Hogasa of Balliogasa, 1591 in *Fiants Eliz* \$\$4810, 5602 (Fermanagh). *Eoghas*; adopt English **Hussey**.
- Mullrony McEnanny of KyllmcEnanny, 1593 in *Fiants Eliz*. \$5808 (Connacht). *Cú Aonaigh* 'hound of assembly'- via 'coney' translated as **Rabbit**.
- Earlier family group names in the **Irish Genealogies** could be used as bigger district names, often for **Baronies**, and also for **Counties**. Eg: Same pedigree in three different MSS >\*\*, 12<sup>th</sup> century and later: barony of Oneilland and district of Clankarny.

# Genealogy: *Genelach Clainne Cernaich id est hUa Nialláin* (RB502 146f27; cf. LL, Lec., BB)

→ <sup>a</sup> LL. : *Genelach Hūa Nialláin. Murchertach m. Con-chocaid m. Ruadrí m. Áeda m. Cellaig m. Muirchertaig m. Lorcāin m. Ailella m. Cummascaig m. Cernaig m. Šubne m. Éicnig m. Colgan m. Šubni m. Rōnāin m. Baītāin m. Muridaig m. Ēogain m. Nialláin m. Fēic m. Fēidlimid m. Fíachrach Cassāin m. Colla Fochrí.* ★ Lec. : *Do Genelach Claindi Cernaig so. Cumasgach m. Cernnaig meic Maíl-Ciarāin m. Eachach meic Cernaig m. Eachach m. Cumasgaig m. Oilealla m. Lorcāin meic Oilealla m. Cumasgaig m. Cearnaig meic Suibne m. Ēignig meic Colgan m. Suibne m. Rōnāin. Ag Suib[ne] mac Ēignig immorro comraigid Hūi Anluain ⁊ Cland Cernaig. Ar slic[h]t Coscraig meic Suibne atāit in rīgraid. Ar slic[h]t Cernaig meic Šuibne atād Cland Cernaig. Fer-dā-chrīch m. Suibne m. Crunnmaíl m. Rōnāin m. Bāedāin ⁊rl.* ★ BB. : *Genelach Claindi Cernaich. Māel-Ciarān m. Cumuscaigh m. Cernaich m. Maíl-Ciarāin m. Eachach m. Cernaich m. Echach m. Cumuscaidh m. Ailella m. Lorccāin m. Aililla. Dā mac Ailella m. Cumuscaich m. Cernaigh m. Suibne m. Ēicnich m. Colgon m. Suibne m. Rōnāin. Fear-dā-chrīch m. Suibne m. Cruind m. Crundmaíl m. Rōnāin m. Bāedāin.*

(Hui Anluain = surname O'Hanlon)

# Gaelic Surnames

- Noun phrases: *Ó (Ua)*, *Mac meic* ‘grandson’ or *Mac*, ‘son’ of an ancestor name, plus female forms in Irish, the ancestor name bearing the stress. (Adjectival form from ancestor name occasionally).
- Dating: *Ó* from late 9thc, *Mac* 11thc (*Ó Murchadha*)
- Irish Genealogies: recorded 12thc on, give linear and family pedigrees: > abbreviated as sept & sur-names.
- Anglicised spelling often now, but Irish forms also used.
- Immediate pedigree, place, occupation also used to identify. (What is a surname? – decided by convention)
- ‘while hereditary, these were highly flexible and variable’ Hammond, M. *Naming Practices* 2019, 8.



# Norman surnames in Ireland

- From late 12thc in Ireland, a century after Britain
- Gaelic context: up to about 1750, Irish was the prevailing language. [The historians' simplified convention of presenting personal names and surnames in English transliteration is misleading].
- Many Norman families also learned and used Irish, and adopted alternative Irish surnames
- Some names now associated mainly with Ireland: Barry, Burke, Clare, Forrestal, Lacey, Nangle, Prendergast, Supple (from *de la Chapelle*).
- For example:

- **Lacey:** ‘locative name from Lassy, Calvados’. EBs Ilbert *de Laci* 1086 in Domesday Book; Irish: Hugo *de Lasaighi*, lord of the Foreigners of Ireland (*Gaill Éireann*), 1184 in Miscellaneous Annals (Ulster); Uga *De Laci*, killed by Ó Miadhaigh, 1186 in Annals of Ulster; Walter *de Lascy*, 1199 in Cal. Docs Ireland §90.
- **Burke:** ‘an Anglo-Norman pronunciation of Old English *burh*’. EBs Ailricus *de Burk*, 1086 in Domesday Book (Suffolk); Irish: William *de Burgo* (Latin form) to Ireland in 1171; Bháiter [i.e. Walter] *a Búrc*, earl of Ulster, lord of Connacht, 1271 in Annals of Ulster.
- **Clare:** from Clare in Suffolk: EBs Thomas *de Clare*, 1290 in CDI §780 (Limerick); Ricard *a Clara*, 1318 in Annals of Ulster.
- **Barry**, from Barry in Wales, possibly imported there: EBs *In Barrach Mór* ‘the great Barry’ [adj], 1261 in Annals of Ulster (Breifni); Richard *de Barry*, tax collector, 1295 in Cal. Docs Ireland §222 (Waterford).
- *a Búrc* (1271), *a Clara* (1318) show reduction of unstressed *de* in Irish.



# English Surnames in Ireland: but

- ***Adoption***: for Irish names of similar sound
- ***Confusion***: of places Hereford, Hertford; -field, -vale, -ville, -well; -ford, -ward, -wood etc.
- Flack & Fleck, compare the vowel change in anglicised Irish Ferry/Farry, Mellon/Mallon
- Boomer (Huguenot) confused Bulmer, Balmer
- **Usual**; and unusual names in small numbers:  
Shilliday (1796 on) possibly a variant of Yorkshire Shillito 'scaly toe' (see *FaNBI*).

# An example of Translation/Adoption

- Revising FaNBI2: **Ingoldsby** from Ingoldsby (Lincs), was adopted for *Mac an Ghallóglai* (also anglicised **Gallogly**) by interpreting *Ingols*, and *gall* of Irish *gallóglach* ‘foreign warrior, galloglass’, as ‘English’. This gave rise to English and **Englishby** forms, more common later than Ingoldsby.
- It seems that the surname Ingoldsby was brought to Ireland by gentlemen given land in Clare and Limerick in the later 17th century (Census and Poll). Later pronounced in Ireland as Inglesby (without –d-), interpretation as ‘English’+ by led to the adoption in Ireland of a form **Englishby** used as a rough translation of Gallogly (with Ingoldsby continuing alongside).
- Early Bearers: James *Englishbee*, 1796 in Flaxgrowers Ireland (Kilsaran, Louth); Paul *Inglesby*, 1827 in Irish Tithe Applotment (Stockhole, Cloghran, Dublin). [FNI reserve]

# Welsh surnames in Ireland: but

- Welsh surnames also derive from genealogy but were fixed much later than in Irish. Identification by pedigree (with *ap* 'son'): eg. 3-generations : Thomas *app Morgan App Thomas*, soldier, 1572 in Fiants Elizabeth §2178 (Marryborough, Laois).
- In Ireland most became named **Walsh** 'Welsh', or in Gaelic *Breathnach*: David son of *Cadygan*, the Welshman, 1295 in Justiciary Rolls Ireland (Kerry); *Cadigan Welsh*, 1299 in CDI §551 (Cadogan also as a surname); Walter *Brenagh* alias *Walshe*, 1549 in Fiants Edward §275 (Burnchurch, Kilkenny).
- From another Welsh name: **Powell / Howell**: from *ap Hywel* 'son of *Hywel*'. Robert *ap Howell*, otherwise called Robert *Powell*, 1534-36 CPR §8 (Dublin); Rice *Appowell*, landholder, 1590 in Fiants Elizabeth §5400 (Mariborough, Laois).
- **Pritchard / Uprichard** 'son of Richard': Evan *ap Richarde*, yeoman, 1571 in Fiants Elizabeth §1774 (Mariborough, Laois).

# Irish & Scottish Gaelic surnames

- Scottish Gaelic belongs to a similar culture to Gaelic Irish, and both shared a common literary language until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, historical context differs: Gaelic records in Ireland; richer medieval administrative records, in Latin, in Scotland, also a custom of taking surname of the clan chief. Typically *Mac*- surnames, but there are *Ó* names from medieval Scotland: Hanna, Milligan, Sloan (see next).
- Although there was much contact across the sea between Ireland and the west of Scotland, names are called Scottish Gaelic in FNI when recorded earlier in Scotland than Ireland.
- Since *Ó* and *Mac* were seen as a sign of Gaelic wildness, and also were unstressed when a personal name precedes, the prefixes were sometimes dropped in anglicised forms.
- Lack of stress could cause confusion between *Ó* and *Mac* prefixes. Thus references like 'Manus *McCrossane* and Murtagh McManus *McO'Crossane*, 1609 in Irish Patent Rolls.

- Scottish names in Ó (*Ogha*) spell it A-, presumably pronounced [ə], then confused with *de*, or Scots o' 'from', or Welsh *Ap*.  
**Carson**: *Acarson* and *de Carsan*, cleric 1276, 1394, 1445, Dumfries. Latest Egidia *Akersane* 1531. **Hanna** : earliest Gilbert *de Hannethe* (Wiggetone) & ref Gilbert *Hahanith* 1296. Latest Mathew *Ahanney* 1565 (Melrose) and John *Ahannay* 1566.  
**Milligan**: 1296 *ap Molegan* (Wigtowne), Thomas *Ameligane* 1477 Dumfries; a cleric Schir William *Amuligan* 1510, latest *Amulliekin* 1612. **Sloan** John *Aslowane*, 1531 (Garroch); John *Aslowane*, burgess, 1562 (Edinburgh); George *Aslowane*, 1613 (Garroche); Eduard *Aslowane*, 1616 (Fell, Kirkcudbright).
- A-spelling (for [ə]), in Ireland too: in Fiants, HMR: Conner Aglesane, *Fiants Eliz.* §1399; Brian Amelone, *Fiants Eliz.* §2609; Laughnan Anaghten, *Fiants Eliz.* §2946; Donnell A Kelley, Shane A Higgen, Phelim A Relye, *Fiants Eliz.* §3223; Edm Affay, *Fiants Eliz.* §3986; Widow Amolikan, 1669 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Mogley, Tickmacrean, Antrim); Donkan Askelly, 1669 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Ballypatricke, Culfeightrin, Antrim).

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