

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PURCELLS OF IRELAND

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part One: The Purcells as lieutenants and kinsmen of the Butler Family of Ormond – page 4

Part Two: The history of the senior line, the Purcells of Loughmoe, as an illustration of the evolving fortunes of the family over the centuries – page 9

1100s to 1300s – page 9

1400s and 1500s – page 25

1600s and 1700s – page 33

Part Three: An account of several junior lines of the Purcells of Loughmoe – page 43

The Purcells of Fennel and Ballyfoyle – page 44

The Purcells of Foulksrath – page 47

The Purcells of the Garrans – page 49

The Purcells of Conahy – page 50

The final collapse of the Purcells – page 54

APPENDIX I: THE TITLES OF BARON HELD BY THE PURCELLS – page 68

APPENDIX II: CHIEF SEATS OF SEVERAL BRANCHES OF THE PURCELL FAMILY – page 75

APPENDIX III: COATS OF ARMS OF VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE PURCELL FAMILY – page 78

APPENDIX IV: FOUR ANCIENT PEDIGREES OF THE BARONS OF LOUGHMOE – page 82

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PURCELLS OF IRELAND¹

Brien Purcell Horan²

Copyright 2020

For centuries, the Purcells in Ireland were principally a military family, although they also played a role in the governmental and ecclesiastical life of that country. Theirs were, with some exceptions, supporting rather than leading roles. In the feudal period, they were knights, not earls. Afterwards, with occasional exceptions such as Major General Patrick Purcell, who died fighting Cromwell,³ they tended to be colonels and captains rather than generals. They served as sheriffs and seneschals rather than Irish viceroys or lords deputy.

Sir Hugh Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, the head of the family, was summoned to the Irish Parliament of 1295 as a baron.⁴ In this period, the Parliament had only one chamber. Once the Irish Parliament began to meet with a House of Commons and a House of Lords, however, the Purcells served in the Commons, not the Lords. The

¹ It is helpful to understand the geographical references made in this essay. Ireland is divided into counties. Each county in turn is divided into baronies. A barony is further divided into civil parishes. Each civil parish is divided into townlands. A townland is the smallest geographical subdivision in Ireland. The size of each townland differs, but one researcher stated that the average size of an Irish townland is about 325 or 350 acres. **As to the footnotes in this essay, apologies are offered in advance for their highly repetitious nature. Despite the repetition, the present writer, taking advantage of the ease of “copy and paste” computer technology, prefers to have each footnote stand on its own, rather than to indicate that a reference source was already cited in a prior footnote (“op. cit.”), which then requires the reader to thumb through previous footnotes until the reference is located.**

² The writer, a lawyer and former U.S. Army officer (Colonel, Army of the United States, retired), has degrees in history (B.A.) and law (Juris Doctor). He has been admitted to the bars of Connecticut and of the U.S. Supreme Court.

³ Patrick Purcell, Esq., of Croagh, Co. Limerick, who had previously served as a major general of the army of the Catholic Confederation, was Major General of Foot in the royalist army under James Butler, 1st Marquess and 12th Earl of Ormond (later 1st Duke of Ormonde), during the siege of Dublin in 1649 and during the siege of Limerick in 1651. This army combined both royalist and Confederate Catholic troops in the fight against Cromwell. Purcell was captured by Cromwellian troops and was put to death in October 1651 by Henry Ireton, Cromwell’s son-in-law and deputy. Purcell’s severed head was placed atop one of the gates of the city of Limerick. See, Richard Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts* (London, 1909), vol. II (1642-1660), pp. 272-274. After General Purcell’s death, his widow, Mary FitzMaurice, daughter of the 18th Baron Kerry, married James Butler, Esq., of Kilmoyler, Co. Tipperary.

⁴ The title of Baron of Loughmoe, borne by the head of the Purcell family from the 13th to the 18th centuries, was a feudal designation. It was not a peerage, and its holder was not entitled to a seat in the Irish House of Lords.

only exceptions to this were the various Purcell clergymen who before the Reformation sat in the Irish House of Lords as lords spiritual, because they were Catholic bishops or abbots.

Many landed families in Ireland encouraged younger sons to seek positions in the Catholic Church, and the Purcells were no exception. During the 15th century, John Purcell, Bishop of Ferns, was appointed papal nuncio by Pope Calixtus III in 1455,⁵ Jordan Purcell was Bishop of Cork and Cloyne circa 1429 to at least 1463,⁶ and Thomas Purcell (himself the illegitimate son of a bishop) became Bishop of Waterford and Lismore in 1483.⁷ Abbot John Purcell of the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr in Dublin (the abbey founded by King Henry II in atonement for Archbishop Thomas Becket's murder and which had received numerous grants from the early Purcells of Loughmoe) was pardoned after 1487 for supporting the claim of Lambert Simnel, pretender to the throne of England.⁸ Lambert Simnel, around whom some Yorkists had rallied at the end of the War of the Roses, threatened the throne of Henry VII by claiming falsely to be one of the two young Plantagenet princes who were thought to have been murdered in the Tower of London.

In the 16th century, the position of Abbot of the Holy Cross (abbot of the Abbey of the Holy Cross, Co. Tipperary) passed to Philip Purcell, brother of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe. Philip (who died in 1563) was the last abbot of this ancient Cistercian monastery prior to its dissolution by King Henry VIII at the Reformation, and he sat in the Irish House of Lords as a lord spiritual, styled on occasion as Earl of Holy Cross.⁹ Another Purcell elevated to high ecclesiastical position during this era

⁵ *Calendar of State Papers – Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 11, pp. 193-194.

⁶ *Calendar of State Papers – Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 8, p. 109 and vol. 11, p. 42. In 1463, King Edward IV and Jordan Purcell, Bishop of Cork and Cloyne, together sent a petition to Pope Pius II, alleging that the resignation of Jordan submitted to the Holy See was a forgery and praying that Jordan be restored to full powers in his diocese. *Ibid.*

⁷ Thomas Purcell received a dispensation from Pope Sixtus IV to become Bishop of Waterford and Lismore in 1483, because Thomas was the illegitimate son of a bishop and an unmarried woman related within a proscribed degree of kinship. *Calendar of State Papers – Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 13, p. 148. The bishop who fathered Thomas Purcell may well have been John Purcell, Bishop of Ferns and papal nuncio, in view of the fact that the latter had acted to advance the career of Thomas by appointing him as Canon of Ferns in 1479. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, p. 717.

⁸ *Calendar of State Papers – Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 13, p. 831; *Register of the Wills and Inventories of the Diocese of Dublin, 1457-1483*, ed. by Henry F. Berry (Dublin, Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1898), pp. xxxvii, 72-74, 213; John D'Alton, *Illustrations of King James's Irish Army List (1689)* (2nd ed.), vol. I, pp. 272-273. In the 15th century, proof of noble birth was an important factor in obtaining ecclesiastical preferments, and the papal records of that period pertaining to Ireland abound in references to the noble ancestry of priests and prelates, including various Purcells. Typical are the references to Patrick Purcell, later Archdeacon of Cashel, who is described in documents issued in the names of successive popes (Pius II in 1459 and Paul II in 1465) as "by both parents of a noble race of barons and dukes" (1459) and subsequently (1465) as "of a noble race of princes, barons and knights." *Calendar of State Papers – Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 11, p. 393 and vol. 12, p. 414. The Purcells were barons and knights, but not princes. The fact that Archdeacon Purcell is also described as emanating from a "race of princes" may suggest a maternal descent from Gaelic princes and kings.

⁹ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. IV, pp. 222, 225 and vol. V, pp. 40-41; *Irish Monastic and Episcopal Deeds*, ed. by Newport B. White (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1936), p. 98;

was John Purcell, Bishop of Ferns from 1519 to 1539, the second member of the family to hold this diocese. In 1537, the King's commissioners accused the lord bishop of a long series of "robberies and assaults," including the robbery of twenty houses in Feddred, when "the bishop, who was on horseback, frequently called for fire, to burn the said houses."¹⁰

By the 1600s, after many centuries in Ireland, the Purcell family had spawned numerous junior lines among the Irish landed gentry, mainly in Co. Tipperary and Co. Kilkenny. Almost all of these lines lost their property and position during the late 17th century and the first half of the 18th century as punishment for their Jacobitism and their failure to conform to the established Church of Ireland. The term Jacobite, from the Latin word *Jacobus*, meaning James, referred to those who, after he was dethroned in 1688, continued to regard the exiled King James II, a Catholic, and after him his son, as the rightful Kings of England, Scotland and Ireland, rather than those who actually sat on the throne. From 1689 on, numerous Purcells, like most Catholics in Ireland of similar background, were Jacobites. After King James II died in 1701, the Papacy in fact recognized his exiled son as King James III until the latter's death in 1766, and loyal Catholics accepted the Pope's view. Jacobitism, a singularly unsuccessful and ill-fated movement, was the principal political ideology of Irish Catholics from the arrival of James II in Ireland in 1689 until the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.¹¹

The purpose of this essay is to sketch the saga of the Purcells in a broad and general manner. Because this is an abbreviated treatment of the family, it will in some ways only scratch the surface of the topic. Portions of this essay are based upon construction and tradition and are subject to revision.

This essay will first describe the long and close connection between the Purcells and the Butlers of Ormond, a connection that was essential to the position of the Purcells. It will then use the history of the Purcells of Loughmoe, which, as the senior line of the family, was the best documented branch, to illustrate the evolution of the Purcell family in Ireland over the centuries. It will next examine several of the junior lines of the family and what happened to them in the 17th and 18th centuries. The final sections of this essay will treat the titles, family seats, and coats of arms of various Purcell lines and descendants, as well as several ancient pedigrees of the Barons of Loughmoe.

Part One: The Purcells as lieutenants and kinsmen of the Butler Family of Ormond

Dublin University Magazine (August 1853), p. 214; Hubert Gallwey, *The Wall Family in Ireland 1170-1970* (privately published, 1970), pp. 240, 247.

¹⁰ *Calendar of Letters and Papers – Foreign and Domestic (Henry VIII)*, vol. 19, pp. 299, 301-302.

¹¹ See Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and The Jacobite Cause, 1685-1766 – A fatal attachment* (Four Courts Press, 2002).

For five centuries, the Purcells owed their position among the landed gentry of Co. Tipperary and Co. Kilkenny to their role as loyal lieutenants to their kinsmen, the successive heads of the Butler family. This is one of the most important facts that can be stated about the Purcells. The Butler lordship in Ireland was composed principally of territory in these two counties and parts of Co. Waterford.

From the 12th century to the 18th century, the Butlers were one of the two most powerful Anglo-Norman families in Ireland. Beginning in the late 12th century, the head of the Butler family had the hereditary title of Chief Butler of Ireland, which gave rise to their surname.¹² In 1328, King Edward III created James Butler, 7th Chief Butler of Ireland as 1st Earl of Ormond. (James Butler, 1st Earl, had married the King's first cousin, Eleanor de Bohun, daughter of Elizabeth Plantagenet and granddaughter of King Edward I.) In 1661, King Charles II created James Butler, 12th Earl of Ormond, K.G., as 1st Duke of Ormonde. The "e" added to the name Ormond in the ducal patent was probably a misspelling, but it remained. Junior branches of the Butler family held numerous other peerages in the Irish House of Lords, including the Viscounts Ikerrin (later Earls of Carrick, descendants of the younger brother of James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond), the Viscounts Mountgarret (descendants of a younger son of Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond), the Viscounts Galmoy¹³ (descendants of an illegitimate son of Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond), the Barons Dunboyne (descendants of the paternal uncle of James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond) and the Barons Cahir (later Earls of Glengall¹⁴, descendants of an illegitimate son of James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond). There were numerous Butler and Purcell intermarriages over many generations, which reinforced the ties between the two families.

Over the centuries, several of the successive Lords Ormond resided principally in England. They therefore relied on junior branches of the Butler family and on their Purcell kinsmen to secure and maintain the Butler lordship in the midlands of Ireland. In the 15th century, for example, when the War of the Roses was raging, the 5th, 6th and 7th Earls of Ormond (three brothers who successively held the title) lived for long periods in England, where they were committed Lancastrians. James Butler, the 5th Earl, who served as Lord High Treasurer of England, was beheaded by

¹² The foremost genealogist of the Butler family, the late Patrick Butler, 28th Baron Dunboyne, a barrister and judge, writing when Charles Butler, 7th Marquess of Ormonde and 31st Chief Butler of Ireland was still alive, described the Chief Butler title as "the oldest hereditary dignity still enjoyed by the heir-male of any family in the British Isles." Letter dated 5 June 1983 from Lord Dunboyne to the present writer.

¹³ Piers Butler, 3rd Viscount Galmoy, was a very active Jacobite, serving as a Colonel of Horse in the Irish Army of King James II. After the Jacobite defeat of 1691, he followed King James II to France and later became a major-general in the French Army. The exiled King James II created him Earl of Newcastle in the Jacobite peerage of Ireland in 1692. Marquis de Ruvigny, *The Jacobite Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1904), pp. 128-129.

¹⁴ Jane Purcell (Mrs. Henry Nichols) was the daughter of William Purcell, Esq. of Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny, who died in 1753 at age 75. Jane Purcell's daughter Sarah Nichols (died 1814) was the wife of James Butler, 9th Baron Cahir and the mother of Richard Butler, 1st Earl of Glengall and 10th Baron Cahir. Canon Carrigan believed these Purcells were an offshoot of the Purcells of Esker in the barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny. Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* (1905), vol. II, pp. 82-85.

the Yorkists in 1461, after the Battle of Towton. His brother and successor, John Butler, the 6th Earl, who was highly respected even by the Yorkist King Edward IV, was the English ambassador to several European courts and the master of numerous foreign languages. Their younger brother, Thomas Butler, the 7th Earl, a friend of Henry VII, owned 72 manors in England, making him one of the wealthiest peers of the realm. The 7th Earl's daughter Lady Margaret Butler, who was born at Kilkenny Castle, was the grandmother of Queen Anne Boleyn and the great-grandmother of Queen Elizabeth I.

In contrast, the junior lines of the Butler family and their Purcell kinsmen remaining in Ireland were in a way very provincial country cousins to the Earls. They did not have the sophistication, education or wealth of the Lords Ormond. Their horizons were local and circumscribed. Their interests were limited to their land, their livestock, and to hunting, fishing and the military arts. They built castles to secure their lands and to guard the Butler lordship of the Earls of Ormond. When called upon by an Earl of Ormond, they were expected to do the Earl's bidding and provide troops to support him in his fights. When the Yorkists defeated the Lancastrians at the Battle of Towton in England, for example, the 6th Earl fled to Ireland and raised an armed force in Kilkenny and Tipperary to secure Ireland for the House of Lancaster. The army was composed of the Earl's followers and would surely have included various lines of the Butler and Purcell families. The Irish Government at the time was led by Thomas Fitzgerald, 7th Earl of Desmond, a Yorkist.

The FitzGeralds of Desmond were the traditional rivals and enemies of the Butlers of Ormond, and thus of the Purcells, and the two families constantly fought over land and over control of the Irish Government. The Butlers of Ormond were described above as one of the two most powerful Anglo-Norman families in Ireland. The FitzGeralds were the other family. In summer 1462, Desmond's Yorkist forces met and soundly defeated Ormond's Lancastrian troops at the Battle of Piltown in Kilkenny, where Ormond's army suffered massive casualties. The Irish Government thereafter remained in Yorkist hands until the accession of the Tudors. The funeral elegy of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe states that in the 1460s the Baron, in defense of the Butler lordship, routed Desmond's allies, the Roches, and drove them across the Slievecrot mountains.¹⁵

In 1565, the simmering rivalry between the Ormond Butlers and the Desmond FitzGeralds ignited into a private war. The Ormond army under Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, met and defeated the Desmond army under Gerald FitzGerald, 15th Earl of Desmond, at the Battle of Affane in Co. Waterford. The Baron of Loughmoe, head of the Purcells, and his family would have been expected to serve under

¹⁵ British Museum Add. Ms. 33993 entitled *In Obitum Jacobi Pursell Baronis de Lughma* ["On the death of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe"]. The late Irish scholar Anne O' Sullivan kindly shared her unpublished translation and analysis of this poem with the present writer in 1983.

Ormond's banner. Lord Desmond was badly wounded in the engagement and was taken prisoner by the Butlers. This was one of the last private battles fought in the British Isles, and Queen Elizabeth I was enraged that two of her subjects had flouted royal authority by waging a private war. The earls were summoned to England, but Elizabeth I subjected them to uneven treatment. She forgave Ormond, who was her cousin through Anne Boleyn and whom she liked. She imprisoned Desmond in the Tower of London. This imprisonment had serious repercussions, leading in 1569 to the first Desmond Rebellion in Ireland, which will be discussed in more detail below. Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, with his kinsmen and followers, fought against the Desmond troops in 1569 in Kerry; Thomas Purcell and his men were part of the Crown forces commanded by the Lord Deputy of Ireland and by Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond. Purcell was described in state papers at the time as "the Baron of Logmaye, chief of the Purcells in Tiberarye, a follower of the Butlers by force."¹⁶ These are but several examples of how the Purcells were called upon over the generations to serve the Earls of Ormond.

The link between the Purcells and Butlers appears to have begun in the 12th century. Sir Walter Purcell, the English knight who was the first Purcell to set foot in Ireland, was, according to the Irish annals, part of a retinue of 300 knights accompanying Prince John of England (later King John) on his journey to Ireland in 1185.¹⁷ Theobald, 1st Chief Butler of Ireland, also accompanied John on this journey. King Henry II had named his son Prince John as "Lord of Ireland" several years before, and John wished to travel to Ireland to take up his lordship.

Other examples of Butler-Purcell connections abound. A few more will suffice.

Sir Walter's son, Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe, acquired Loughmoe and surrounding lands in Co. Tipperary upon his marriage, circa 1220, to Beatrix Butler, daughter of Theobald, 1st Chief Butler of Ireland.¹⁸ As described in more detail below, various documents from the years 1305, 1338, 1362, and 1518, among other years, confirm that the Barons of Loughmoe held their lands from the head of the Butler family.

¹⁶ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland*, vol. 1 (1509-1573), p. 423; *Calendar of State Papers – Carew Mss.*, vol. 1 (1515-1574), pp. 389, 404.

¹⁷ Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. The Purcell pedigree in this manuscript is reproduced in "The O' Clery Book of Genealogies," Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85. British Museum Additional Ms. 33993 also contains a pedigree of the Barons of Loughmoe which describes Sir Hugh Purcell (son of Sir Walter Purcell) as the son of a "sister of King John with whom he came to Ireland." But unless Hugh (who would likely have been quite young in 1185) accompanied his father, it would have been Sir Walter who came to Ireland with John of England.

¹⁸ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 80, 117, 183 (note); Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, introduction, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

In 1297, King Edward I summoned Sir Hugh's grandson, also called Sir Hugh Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, and Theobald Butler, 5th Chief Butler of Ireland, as well as 30 other knights of the English nobility of Ireland, to procure horses and arms and join the King in England for his war against the King of France.¹⁹

Between 1328 and 1337, James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond, in his position as Lord Palatine of Tipperary, confirmed John Purcell's feudal title of Baron of Loughmoe as a baronial title of the Earl's palatinate.²⁰

The oldest surviving wing of the ruins of Loughmoe Castle was built between 1444 and 1494, probably by James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe and his Butler wife.²¹

In the 16th century, Edmund Purcell was captain of the Earl of Ormond's gallowglasses, that is, heavy infantry composed of armored, highly professional mercenaries from the west of Scotland. In 1544, James Butler, 9th Earl of Ormond sent Captain Edmund Purcell to England at the head of a hundred light infantrymen, or kerne, to join Henry VIII in a proposed expedition against the King of France. These were part of an Irish army of a thousand soldiers, or kerne. The Council of Ireland explained to the King that "*the custom is for every two kerne to have a page or boy to carry their mantles, weapons and victuals, who with the marshals, pipers, surgeons and the like have like entertainment as themselves*" and begged the King that all the kerne "*be gently entertained; lest their masters should conceive grudge against the writers for procuring their going and be discouraged to send men again.*" Captain Edmund Purcell died in 1549, and his grave slab is still visible in St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny.²²

During the same period, Ellinor Purcell, daughter of Thomas Purcell of Ballinrosse, Co. Tipperary, one of the junior Loughmoe lines, married James Butler of Grallagh, Co. Tipperary (1541-1579), a grandson of James Butler, 10th Baron Dunboyne by his wife Lady Joan Butler, daughter of Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond.²³

¹⁹ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. IV, p. 185.

²⁰ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829; Genealogical Office Ms. 50, pp. 61 and 119 (Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland); John D'Alton, *Illustrations of King James's Irish Army List (1689)* (2nd ed.), vol. I, p. 272; *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, vol. vi, pp. 316-317 (London, 1873); and Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families* (New York, 1972), p. 248.

²¹ Rory Sherlock, "Using New Techniques to Date Old Castles," *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 19-23. James Purcell's funeral slab at Holy Cross Abbey in Tipperary records that his wife was a Butler. *Triumphalia Chronologica Monasterii Sanctae Crucis in Hibernia*, Denis Murphy, ed. (Dublin, 1895), p. lix.

²² Sources on Captain Edmund Purcell: Sir Henry Butler Blackall, "The Butlers of County Clare," *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* (1952), vol. 6, p. 113 (footnote 28); *Calendar of Letters and Papers – Foreign and Domestic (Henry VIII)*, vol. 19, pp. 299, 301-302.

²³ *Journal of the Butler Society*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1994), pp. 582-583, citing an extract from Registered Pedigree No. 715, Genealogical Office Manuscript 182-A (National Library, Dublin), pp. 55-58. At the time of the Catholic Confederation, Richard Purcell of Ballinrosse was, along with James Butler, Baron Dunboyne, a captain in the regiment of horse commanded (1649-1650) by Colonel Richard Butler of Kilcash, younger brother of the 1st

In 1564, Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond granted to James fitzPhilip fitzPiers Purcell (that is, James, son of Philip, son of Piers) and his male heirs the office of the Earl's Master of Horse in Tipperary and Kilkenny.²⁴

Among the leaders of the rebellion in Ireland of the Confederate Catholics in the 1640s were four Butler members of the Irish House of Lords (the Viscount Mountgarret, the Viscount Ikerrin, the Baron Dunboyne, and the Baron Cahir) and several Purcells, including Major General Patrick Purcell, Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (husband of the Hon. Ellen Butler, daughter of James, 2nd [by patent] and 12th [by summons] Baron Dunboyne),²⁵ and Philip Purcell of Ballyfoyle (head of the Ballyfoyle line of the Purcells and husband of the Hon. Ellen Butler, daughter of Richard Butler, 3rd Viscount Mountgarret).²⁶

Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1644) and his wife Ellen Butler were the parents of James Purcell, penultimate Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1652). James Purcell married Lady Elisabeth Butler, Roman Catholic sister of the Protestant viceroy of Ireland, James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde and 12th Earl of Ormond, K.G.²⁷ Their son, Colonel Nicholas Purcell (d. 1722), was the last feudal Baron of Loughmoe. He commanded a Jacobite regiment of horse in the 1689-1691 war which included among its officers James Butler, 6th (by patent) and 16th (by summons) Baron Dunboyne. After his death and his wife's death, Loughmoe Castle and the Loughmoe properties passed out of the Purcell family.

Several of these Purcells will be discussed in more detail below.²⁸

Part Two: The history of the senior line, the Purcells of Loughmoe, as an illustration of the evolving fortunes of the family over the centuries

1100 to 1300s

Sir Walter Purcell, the first Purcell to arrive in Ireland and the progenitor of the Irish Purcells, was an English knight of Norman origin. As already stated, the Irish annals record that he was one of the knights who accompanied Prince John of England

Duke of Ormonde. *Journal of the Butler Society*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1994), p. 592, citing Trinity College, Dublin (T.C.D.) Manuscript E.3/24, p. 13.

²⁴ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. V, p. 138.

²⁵ "Some Funeral Entries of Ireland," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 and 8 (pp. 49-50) (marriage of Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe to Ellen Butler, daughter of Lord Dunboyne).

²⁶ Canon William Carrigan, *History of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 471-472; *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* (1970 ed.), p. 107; *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland*, vol. II (1754), p. 260 (note).

²⁷ *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland*, vol. II (1754), pp. 27-28, 252, 258.

²⁸ There were many more Butler-Purcell marriages than those mentioned in this section of the essay. Several other such marriages will be referred to in the remainder of the essay.

(later King John) to Ireland in 1185.²⁹ As will be described in more detail below, the annals also assert, whether accurately or not, that Sir Walter's spouse was a daughter of King Henry II. Walter Purcell received grants of land in Co. Kilkenny (including the manor of Kilmenan in the barony of Fassadinin, which he held before 1205), and he was seneschal of Leinster in 1219.³⁰ In English law at the time, a seneschal was the chief administrative and judicial officer of a province or territory.

Sir Walter Purcell was very closely associated with William the Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke (born 1146/1147, died 1219), also called the Earl Marshal. The historian Eric St. John Brooks wrote, "*Walter Purcell was one of the Earl Marshal's men, who is mentioned in the life of William Marshal I and who witnessed some of the Marshal's charters, including those of Kilkenny and Tintern between 1207 and 1211.*"³¹ The Earl Marshal was a very powerful figure at the courts of King Henry II and his sons King Richard the Lion Heart and King John. At the accession of King John's 9 year old son King Henry III in 1216, the Earl Marshal acted as regent of England. He held lands in England, Wales, France and Ireland. (The Earl Marshal had received his lands in Ireland upon his marriage to Isabel de Clare, daughter and heiress of Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, known to history as Strongbow, by Richard's Irish wife, Aoife, daughter of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster. After Strongbow's death, King John revived Strongbow's title of Earl of Pembroke for William.)

Sir Walter Purcell played a minor role in the dispute between King John and William de Braose, one of the significant episodes of that king's reign. William de Braose had been one of King John's favorites until 1206. A bitter falling out occurred shortly afterwards. De Braose fled to Ireland, where he was pursued by the King's men. In circa 1208, when the King accused the Earl Marshal of sheltering de Braose in Ireland, Walter Purcell consented to be one of the hostages for the Earl Marshal's surety and was delivered to the King.³²

²⁹ Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. The Purcell pedigree in this manuscript is reproduced in "The O'Clery Book of Genealogies," Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85. British Museum Additional Ms. 33993 also contains a pedigree of the Barons of Loughmoe which describes Sir Hugh Purcell (son of Sir Walter Purcell) as the son of a "sister of King John with whom he came to Ireland." But, as stated earlier, unless Hugh (who would likely have been quite young in 1185) accompanied his father, it would have been Sir Walter who came to Ireland with John of England.

³⁰ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 183-184.

³¹ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 183-184.

³² Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland Under the Normans* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911), vol. II, p. 265.

The lengthy 13th century poem recounting the life of the Earl Marshal mentions Walter Purcell several times.³³ This 800 year old biography in verse, consisting of 19,214 lines in Norman French, is a very unique work of history and literature. It was composed shortly after the death of the Earl Marshal in 1219 (when he was Regent of England), when the details of his life and exploits were still fresh in the minds of his family, friends and followers. The poem was written at the request of his son and heir, William Marshal, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (1190-1231).³⁴

A detailed explanation of the Purcell references in the poem follows.

The initial mention of Sir Walter Purcell in the poem is in connection with the Earl Marshal' s first trip to Ireland to see the lands he had acquired through his marriage to Strongbow' s daughter. As the poem recounts in detail, the earl needed King John' s permission to go to Ireland, and the King gave it with mixed feelings, as he was always in fear that the powerful nobles of his kingdom would become too independent in distant lands over which the Crown had only tenuous control. The poem explains that, after having great success on his French military expedition in Poitou, the earl returned to England, where he spent a long time hunting in the huge forests of that kingdom. The earl then asked leave to go to his vast lands in Ireland, which he had never seen. The King consented with regret, having refused the Marshal' s many previous requests. In the meantime, the King experienced a loss, the gravity of which he did not at first realize: the archbishop of Canterbury³⁵ died and also the Earl of Leicester. The Earl Marshal left for Ireland around Lent, and, when the King learned this, he regretted it and tried to find a way to prevent the journey. He ordered Thomas de Samford to find the earl and ask him to give his second son to the King as a hostage. Thomas met the Marshal at Striguil and conveyed the King' s message. The earl then sought counsel from the countess (his wife) and his barons, who advised him not to send his son. The earl was of a

³³ L' *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, edited by Paul Meyer (Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1894), vol. II. Sir Walter Purcell in circa 1223 witnessed two charters of William Marshal, 2nd Earl of Pembroke to religious institutions in Ireland, one to St. John' s Priory, Kilkenny and one to Moone Abbey. Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), p. 183.

³⁴ The loyalty of the Purcells to the Earls Marshal outlived Sir Walter Purcell and William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke. William Marshal' s son and successor, William Marshal, 2nd Earl of Pembroke was succeeded in 1231 by his younger brother, Richard Marshal, 3rd Earl of Pembroke. In 1234, a conflict broke out in Ireland between the supporters of King Henry III and the supporters of the Earl of Pembroke. Lord Pembroke died in Ireland on 16 April 1234 from wounds received at the Battle of the Curragh. Sir Hugh Purcell of Loughmoe, son of Sir Walter, apparently supported Richard Marshal in this conflict, because in September 1234 King Henry III pardoned Hugh for standing against the King in the war with Richard Marshal. *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. I, p. 326; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1231-1234*, 18 Henry III, p. 525.

³⁵ This was King John' s close advisor, Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor of England, who died in 2005. The historian John Gillingham described Hubert, who also had served for a time as Regent of England, as "one of the most outstanding government ministers in English history." John Gillingham, *Richard I* (Yale University Press, 1999), p. 274. The loss of Hubert' s wise counsel would have consequences for King John. As stated elsewhere, Hubert' s brother was Theobald, 1st Chief Butler of Ireland. Beatrix Butler, the daughter of Theobald and niece of Hubert, married Sir Hugh Purcell, Sir Walter Purcell' s son.

different view. The Marshal took Thomas by the hand and said to him, “*Sir, I shall willingly send all my sons to the King if he wishes it, but, in the name of God, what does he have against me?*” Thomas replied that the King wanted nothing more than to prevent the trip to Ireland and had only given his permission with reserve. The earl said, “*By God, for better or worse, I shall go to Ireland, for he gave me permission to do so.*” The earl embarked the next day, having sent his son Richard as a hostage. When he arrived in his Irish lands, most of his men greeted the earl with full honors, but there were those who were upset at his coming. At this time, the office of royal justiciar of Ireland was held by Meiler,³⁶ one of the earl’s men, who was very much against the coming of his lord. Meiler communicated to King John that, if he allowed the Marshal to stay a long time in Ireland, it would be to the King’s detriment. The King then ordered the earl to return to England and bring Meiler with him. The earl thereupon sought the advice of his men, who expressed their fears that the King was harboring ill rather than good intentions. For his part, the earl felt that his departure from Ireland would result in discord and war among his followers. He entrusted to Jordan de Sackville the protection of a large part of his territories, from Gowran (Co. Kilkenny) to Dublin. He instructed John d’ Erlée to guard Ocancelei (all of Co. Wexford and portions of Co. Wicklow and Carlow) and Ossory (all of Co. Kilkenny and portions of Co. Laois). John d’ Erlée excused himself, explaining that this was too much for him and that he would assist with all his might whomever the earl gave this responsibility to. The earl countered, “*You will take it, and I will leave my cousin Stephen of Evreux with you. I will leave you Reinfrei Fils Paien and seven of the knights whom I have brought along with me, as I shall only take with me Henry Huesé alone. I command you to act in all things according to the advice of Geoffrey FitzRobert, of **Walter Purcell** [written as Walt. Porcel and once as Gaultier Porcel in the Norman French poem] and of Thomas FitzAnthony. Maillard, my standard bearer, will remain too.*” John d’ Erleé counseled him to take hostages from his barons, but the earl energetically refused this. He called on all of his men to assemble at Kilkenny, and he said to them, “*My lords, here is the countess, whom I lead to you by the hand, the daughter of the earl who enfeoffed all of you when he conquered this land. She will remain among you, pregnant. Until God leads her back to me, I pray you all to guard her faithfully, because she is your lady, and I have no land here except through her.*” They promised to do this, but there were those who broke their pledge.

The poem continues to recount the saga. The earl and Meiler traveled back to England separately, but, unbeknownst to the earl, Meiler before leaving had ordered his men to wreak havoc in the Irish lands of the earl. Thus a war began. King John received Meiler warmly and the earl coldly. It was at this time too that the quarrel arose between the King and his erstwhile friend William de Braose. One day after dinner, the King found himself in his chamber with his principal advisors as well as Meiler, discussing the friendship between the Earl Marshal and William de Braose.

³⁶ This was Meiler Fitzhenry, whose father was an illegitimate son of King Henry I. Thus, Meiler was a first cousin once removed of King John.

Meiler stated that, if the King would allow him to return to Ireland, he would deliver both the Marshal and de Braose to the King as prisoners. The King then at once gave the order to his chancellor to send to all his men in Ireland, and notably to John d' Erlée, Stephen of Evreux and John de Sackville, letters commanding them to come to the King within two weeks of their receipt of the letters, under penalty of losing their lands in England. Meiler at this point took leave of the King to return to Ireland. When the Earl Marshal learned of Meiler's departure, he asked the King for permission to return to Ireland himself but was refused. In Ireland, Meiler assembled the Earl Marshal's men, and the letters from the King were distributed. Convinced that the King intended to dispossess the earl, his men sought counsel among themselves. Upon the advice of John d' Erlée and Stephen of Evreux, they decided to remain in Ireland to defend the earl's territories. Jordan de Sackville was sent to seek help from the Earl of Ulster, who quickly assembled a force of 65 knights, 200 sergeants and a thousand foot soldiers to defend the Marshal's lands. This force devastated the Irish lands of Meiler. Meanwhile, the Earl Marshal remained in England as part of the King's entourage. One day, when the King was leaving Guildford in Surrey, he called the Marshal to him and said, "*Marshal, do you have good news from Ireland?*" "*No, sire,*" the Marshal replied. The King, laughing, rejoined, "*Then I shall give you some. The countess [the Marshal's wife] was at Kilkenny. Jean d' Erlée, hearing the sounds of a fight, left with Stephen of Evreux and all the knights of the garrison, so that only sergeants remained. When they were all about two leagues away, Meiler appeared and laid siege to the countess. Seeing she was in danger of capture, she had a man climb down the battlements to alert Jean d' Erlée that she was under siege at Kilkenny. It was almost nightfall. Jean d' Erlée and his men slept at Odo, and the next day, early, they took up arms and went to fight Meiler, who was taken with several of his knights. Stephen of Evreux was killed and Raoul FitzPaïen too, and Jean d' Erlée was wounded, I am told, and died that same day – the honor of the combat however is yours.*" Later, the Marshal received the good news that the countess and his men had had further victories, news which upset the King. After the Marshal had remained a long time with the King, he received leave to return to Ireland in 1208 and quickly departed. Arriving in Ireland, the earl made his way to Kilkenny with the countess and his barons. There the earl, who was courteous and wise, warmly thanked those who had loyally served him. The earl's good fortune changed again due to the William de Braose affair. The King [as stated previously] had broken with his friend de Braose, who went into exile. The King's hate was so strong that de Braose could not prevent the war which the King was fomenting against him. He took refuge for a while in Wales, but, not daring to entrust himself to his men there, he resigned himself to boarding a ship in the middle of winter. For three days and nights he sailed with his wife and children. They finally arrived in Ireland during a violent storm, at Wicklow where the Marshal was staying. Learning of de Braose's arrival, the Marshal welcomed them and sheltered him, his wife and his children for 20 days. When the Bishop of Norwich, whom the King had sent to Ireland as his representative and chief judge, learned the news, he informed the Marshal in an arrogant tone of voice

that he had sheltered the traitor to the King. The bishop enjoined the Marshal to deliver de Braose to him without delay. The Marshal replied to the bishop's messengers, *"I have no traitor here. I have sheltered my lord William just as I should, in as much as I was ignorant of any feud that the King might have against him. And, since I have now given him shelter, it would be treachery on my part if I were to deliver him to you. I shall conduct him in safety until he is outside of my lands. The bishop must not ask me to do what would be for me a cause for reproach."* The Marshal then turned de Braose over to Walter de Lacy, the latter's son-in-law. The indignant bishop hurriedly relayed the news of these events to the King, who was most irritated and ordered the Marshal to come to him. The Marshal obeyed. Shortly after the Marshal's arrival, the King assembled his army to go Ireland. At Pentecost he went to Pembroke and then arrived on the feast of St. John at Kilkenny, where he received a sumptuous welcome and where his army spent that day at the expense of the earl. From there, the King went to Dublin, where, in the presence of the barons of the region, he accused the Marshal of giving shelter to his enemy. The earl responded at once, *"Sire, I sheltered a lord who had arrived under my roof. If I took care of him when he was miserable, you must not take it badly. I did not believe I was doing anything bad, because he was my friend and lord, and I did not know you had anything against him. The two of you were fine together when I left England to come here. If anybody, except for you, wants to say there is more, I am ready to defend myself according to the judgment of your court."* None of the barons moved; otherwise the King would have willingly had him face judgment. The King, seeing that he could not do more, was very irritated. He asked the earl to give to him as hostages Geoffrey FitzRobert, Jordan de Sackville, Thomas de Samford, Jean d'Erlée, **Walter Purcell** and the castle of Donmas. The earl responded, *"You have my sons as hostages and all my castles in England. If you want my castles and fortresses in Ireland, I will give to you as surety as many of them as you want, as well as the sons of my vassals. In this manner behaves one who has no bad intentions."* The King returned to his chamber and recounted these words to his men, who told him that the Marshal's offer was large and that assuredly he could have no bad intentions. The King then took with him the Bishop of Norwich, the Earl of Winchester, the Constable of Chester, and Peter FitzHerbert and had them inform the Marshal that he did not wish any hostages other than the men whom he had spoken to the Marshal of. Of these men, the Marshal had only two of them with him at the time, **Walter Purcell** and John d'Erlée. The Marshal asked for their consent, which they gave without hesitation. The earl, in front of the assembled royal court, then gave to the King as surety his castle and hostages. The King had the hostages held in separate locations in England: Jordan at Gloucester, Thomas at Winchester, John at Nottingham, where he had to endure many miseries, and Geoffrey at Hereford. The latter fell ill in prison and died. **Walter Purcell** was entrusted to the custody of Peter FitzHerbert, from whom he had nothing but praise. For almost a year the hostages remained in prison, wrongfully so, because he on whose account they were put in this situation had done nothing wrong. It was at this time that the war began between King John and Llewelyn of Wales, the King sent for the Marshal,

and he released the hostages. When the Welsh war ended, the Marshal asked for and received leave to go to Ireland. While there, the King of France made preparations for his fleet to invade England, and King John called the earl back to England to advise him.

In total, the poem contains six references to Walter Purcell, for approximately the years 1207 to 1211.³⁷

It can be stated with authority that Sir Walter Purcell was a younger son of the Purcells of Catteshall (sometimes written as Catteshill or Catteshull) in Co. Surrey, England. His exact place on the Catteshall family tree is unknown, but his connection to the Catteshall Purcells is established by a process of elimination. Simply put, based upon surviving records, there was only one Norman family named Purcell in 12th century England: the family of Oyn Purcell of Catteshall and his descendants. The heads of the Catteshall Purcell family held, as English barons, the manor of Catteshall directly from the King, in return for serjeanty service as usher to the King. As royal courtiers, they were well connected at the Norman and later Plantagenet courts. Sir Walter Purcell, a knight who was himself obviously quite well connected at the royal court, could only have been a junior member of the Catteshall line.³⁸

In the 12th century, four successive Purcells held the manor of Catteshall directly from the King, each serving in turn as usher to the King. Oyn Purcell, the first one, was a Norman who acted as the King's usher during the reign of Henry I, son of William the Conqueror. Whether Oyn Purcell was born in Normandy or England is unknown. The fourth and last, Ranulf Purcell, who preferred to call himself Ranulf de Broc (perhaps because his mother's family, the de Brocs, were more prestigious than the Purcells), was a trusted confidant of King Henry II and the archenemy of Archbishop Thomas Becket. Ranulf was one of those principally responsible for Becket's murder.

The saga of Becket would play a role both in the English invasion of Ireland and in the lives of the early generations of Purcells in Ireland. It is thus useful to sketch Ranulf's part in this important event.

³⁷ *L' Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, edited by Paul Meyer (Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1894), vol. II, lines 13507 (p. 122), 14329 (p. 152), 14366 (p. 153), 14378 (p. 153) 14387 (p. 154), and 14464 (p. 156). In 1901, a translation of the poem from Norman French to modern French was published. *L' Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, edited by Paul Meyer (Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1901), vol. III. The present writer has made use of the latter text (pp. 183-202) to summarize the context and content of the references to Sir Walter Purcell in the poem.

³⁸ For an understanding of the complex details of the Purcells of Catteshall, see *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State* by J.H. Round (London, 1911), pp. 98-108 and Eric St. John Brooks, "Catteshill and another usher serjeanty in the Purcel family," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. X (1932-3), pp. 161-168. See also, at the end of this essay, the discussion of "Purcell of Catteshall, Baron by tenure" under the appendix section entitled "TITLES OF BARON HELD BY THE PURCELLS."

In December 1164, following Archbishop Thomas Becket's secret escape from England, Henry II issued a writ to his sheriffs to "[s]eize also all revenues and possessions of the archbishop's clerks for the Exchequer, as Ranulf de Broc and my other officers shall inform you."³⁹ The 14th century Icelandic saga of the life of Becket (derived from a lost Latin biography) describes the de Brocs as "the greatest ruffians in England."⁴⁰ Under Ranulf's merciless direction, hundreds of Becket's household and dependents, with their families, were stripped of their possessions and forced to leave England in the middle of winter.⁴¹

In 1166, in the church at Vézelay in France, while celebrating High Mass on Whitsunday, June 12, Becket "solemnly lit candles, one by one, inverted them, and dashed them out on the ground," excommunicating half a dozen followers of the King, including Ranulf de Broc, for seizing possessions of the see of Canterbury.⁴² Until Henry II managed to obtain indirect papal annulment of Thomas Becket's pronouncements, these excommunications complicated the King's ability to use the services of these followers, because he could not meet with men who were under a sentence of anathema.⁴³ The reconciliation between Henry II and Becket (which led in 1170 to the archbishop's return to England and subsequent martyrdom) was effected in part by the argument of the papal legates that Becket's next step would be to impose, with papal support, an interdict upon all of England, which would silence all church bells throughout the kingdom and cause the cessation of Masses, marriages, and any public worship.⁴⁴

One issue that complicated a reconciliation between the King of England and Archbishop Thomas Becket was the King's reluctance to confirm Becket's right to regain one of the important possessions of the see of Canterbury, Saltwood Castle in Kent, which had been forcibly seized by Ranulf de Broc and had become a chief residence of his family.⁴⁵

³⁹ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), p. 219, citing *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, London, 1875 ff.), vol. V, p. 152.

⁴⁰ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), p. 219, citing *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*, ed. Eirikr Magnusson [a 14th century Icelandic text, "The Saga of Archbishop Thomas"], published in *The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages*, vols. I and II (London, Master of the Rolls, 1875-83)], vol. I, 321.

⁴¹ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), pp. 219-220. Among the exiles were Becket's sisters Mary, Rohesia and Agnes. Winston wrote that a "forlorn procession of destitute exiles...wound its way along the roads of France throughout the winter of 1164-5." *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁴² *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), p. 244, citing *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, London, 1875ff.), vol. V, p. 383.

⁴³ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston, pp. 260, 264-5. On Palm Sunday in 1169, Thomas Becket solemnly excommunicated, among others, the bishops of London and Salisbury and Robert de Broc, Ranulf's brother. *Ibid*, pp. 286-287.

⁴⁴ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), p. 291.

⁴⁵ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), pp. 293, 312, 315-316, citing *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, London, 1875ff.), III, 112 and *English Historical Documents*, ed. by David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953), vol. II (1042-1189), p. 756.

Becket returned to England on December 1, 1170, to face immediate persecution by the de Brocs. At High Mass on Christmas Day of 1170, he again dashed candles to the ground, excommunicating Ranulf's brother Robert de Broc and renewing his excommunication of Ranulf.⁴⁶ The last letter from Becket to the King consisted in large measure of complaints about the misdeeds of Ranulf:⁴⁷

...What has come of the restitution you ordered? It was put off for ten days on the pretext that your son's advisers had to consult Ranulf...For in the meanwhile Ranulf is destroying the property of the Church. He is openly collecting the provisions meant for me and storing them in the castle of Saltwood. Moreover, he has boasted publicly that I shall not long enjoy the peace you have granted us; that he will deprive me of life before I have eaten a whole loaf of bread in England. The persons who informed me of this are willing to prove it to you, if you wish...It is plain that the holy church of Canterbury, the mother in Christ of the Britons, is perishing because of the hatred directed at me. Rather than let her perish, I shall expose my head to the blows of Ranulf and his fellow persecutors. I am ready not only to die for Christ, but to endure a thousand deaths and all manner of torments, if he by his grace will grant me the strength to suffer.

The four knights who would murder Becket arrived at Saltwood Castle on December 28, 1170 and were welcomed there by Ranulf and Robert de Broc. Robert de Broc accompanied the four heavily armored knights to Canterbury; when they found the door to the archbishop's palace barred, Robert de Broc directed them to a hidden entrance. When the de Broc party, using axes, broke into the palace, Thomas Becket, preceded by a crucifer and procession, made his way from the palace through the cloister to the cathedral, the mother church of England. There in Canterbury Cathedral, during vespers on December 29, 1170, the knights confronted Becket and violently struck his head with their swords, fatally wounding him. After Becket's death, the four murderers returned to Saltwood Castle, but Robert de Broc remained at Canterbury, taking possession of the archbishop's palace. To prevent adoration of the archbishop's remains, Robert de Broc informed the Canterbury monks that he would hang the corpse publicly or dispose of it himself if they did not bury it promptly. The monks buried the remains in the crypt near the altar of St. John the Baptist; because the cathedral had been desecrated by the murder, no Mass could be said.⁴⁸

The news of the sacrilege of Becket's murder caused revulsion throughout Europe. There were soon reports of hundreds of miracles attributed to the dead archbishop

⁴⁶ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), pp. 293, 312, 315-316, citing *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, London, 1875 ff.), III, 130 and 485.

⁴⁷ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), pp. 333-334, citing *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, London, 1875ff.), VII, 393-5.

⁴⁸ *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (NY, Knopf, 1967), pp. 351-371 and original sources cited therein.

's heavenly intervention, and a cult of devotion to Becket quickly took root. In order to avoid personal excommunication and papal interdict of England, King Henry II asserted his innocence of the crime in numerous messages to the pope and in 1171 commenced his invasion and conquest of Ireland. Strange as the notion might seem today, the invasion was intended by King Henry as an act of loyalty to the pope that would divert attention from the scandal raging around the archbishop's murder.⁴⁹ While his bishops negotiated with papal legates in England a resolution of the Becket controversy, Henry II stayed away in Ireland for many months. Archbishop Thomas Becket was canonized by the pope in 1172 as St. Thomas of Canterbury.⁵⁰

In expiation of the murder, Henry II submitted in 1174 to a penance of public flagellation at Canterbury by the bishops of England and each of the 80 Canterbury monks, afterwards spending a night of prayer and fasting at Thomas's tomb. To further assuage his remorse, King Henry II founded the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr in Dublin in 1177.⁵¹ Several of Becket's principal enemies, including one of his murderers, conveyed property to the Church and founded monasteries and hospitals in penance for the death.

It was explained above that Sir Walter's son, Sir Hugh Purcell, married Beatrix Butler, daughter of Theobald Walter, 1st Butler of Ireland, in circa 1220 and as a result of the marriage received numerous (perhaps as many as 25) knights' fees, including Loughmoe, Co. Tipperary.⁵² The extensive lands comprising these knights' fees had of course been seized from the Irish by the English invaders.

Ms. 23 D 17 (790), a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, states that the mother of Sir Hugh was a sister of King John and a daughter of King Henry II.⁵³ In

⁴⁹ King Henry II's invasion of Ireland was directly linked to his efforts to atone for the murder of Becket. In 1155, Pope Adrian IV, the only Englishman to serve as Supreme Pontiff, had issued the papal bull *Laudabiliter*, authorizing the King to subdue an Ireland in which a celtic form of Christianity was thought to be evolving away from the strictures of Rome. Henry II did nothing about the bull for many years. In 1171, while his bishops were negotiating a resolution of the Becket fiasco with the Holy See, Henry decided to invade Ireland to show his loyalty to the Pope and to escape from the tensions he faced in England. (It should be noted that, while many scholars have accepted the papal bull as genuine, some have disputed its authenticity.)

⁵⁰ The shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury drew Christian pilgrims from throughout the Latin West for nearly four centuries, until King Henry VIII, at the Reformation, ordered its destruction in 1538.

⁵¹ The death of Becket, and the events preceding and following his martyrdom, are described in *Thomas Becket* by Richard Winston (New York, Knopf, 1967), pp. 335-381 and the original sources cited therein.

⁵² Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 80, 117, 183 (note); Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, introduction, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911-1920), vol. II, p. 95, fn. 1; *Register of the Abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin*, ed. by John T. Gilbert (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1889), pp. 159-160, 193-195, 358-359.

⁵³ Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. It contains a pedigree of the Purcells of Loughmoe which is reproduced in "The O' Clery Book of Genealogies," Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85.

similar fashion, British Museum Additional Manuscript 33993 contains a pedigree of the Barons of Loughmoe which describes Sir Hugh Purcell as the son of a “sister of King John.” This assertion of Plantagenet blood cannot be proven, but, if true, she would clearly have been an illegitimate daughter of the King. King Henry II, like most of the kings of that era, had illegitimate children, but there is no complete list. There were no doubt people who were known in their lifetimes as “bastard children” of Henry II but whose names are now lost to history. Additional Ms. 33993 contains elegies and a Purcell pedigree written down in the early 16th century. They were written by two unknown scribes in northern Tipperary who either were making a copy of existing documents or were transcribing old oral tradition into written form. The manuscript was owned by an unknown person who was likely a Purcell descendant.⁵⁴ This may suggest that, in the early 16th century, some 250 years or so after the death in 1240 of Sir Hugh Purcell, the story of his mother being a daughter of Henry II had been passed down in the Purcell family for many generations. Ms. 23 D 17 (790) was written by the annalist O’ Clery (Cú Choigriche Ó Cléirigh), one of the Four Masters, in the 1630s. The goal of O’ Clery and his three colleagues was to compile and transcribe many earlier written annals into one major text. The fact that Ms. 23 D 17 (790) provides the same account of Hugh’ s mother being a child of Henry II may also suggest that knowledge of this claim went well beyond the Purcell family.

Sir Hugh’ s wife Beatrix was herself closely connected to the highest circles of the Plantagenet court. Her father Theobald’ s brother was Hubert Walter, who had become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1193 and Lord Chancellor of England in 1199.

This Sir Hugh Purcell was, as stated above, the first Baron of Loughmoe.⁵⁵ Like most of the English settlers of the Pale of Ireland and outlying territories in this period, Sir Hugh and his wife Beatrix Butler were intensely devoted to the cult of St. Thomas Becket and made several grants to the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr in Dublin. It is unknown to what extent Sir Hugh’ s devotion to Becket was an effort to atone for the direct role of his own family (that is, of Ranulf Purcell alias de Broc⁵⁶) in the

⁵⁴ See the late Irish scholar Anne O’ Sullivan’ s unpublished translation and analysis of the poem entitled *In Obitum Jacobi Pursell Baronis de Lughma* [“On the death of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe”] in British Museum Add. Ms. 33993, which she shared with the present writer in 1983.

⁵⁵ The historians Eric St. John Brooks, in his *Knights’ Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 183-184, and Goddard Henry Orpen, in his *Ireland Under the Normans* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911-1920), vol. II, p. 95 [note], both referred to Sir Hugh as Baron of Loughmoe.

⁵⁶ As stated elsewhere, the first Purcell to hold the manor of Catteshall in return for service as usher to the king was Oyn Purcell, usher to King Henry I, son of William the Conqueror. He was the progenitor of the Purcells in England and, through them, in Ireland. Oyn was succeeded at Catteshall by his son Geoffrey Purcell and then by the latter’ s son Ralf Purcell, who is thought to have died circa 1156. Instead of going to Ralf’ s son Ralf the younger, however, the manor of Catteshall then went to Ralf the younger’ s great-uncle, Ranulf Purcell alias de Broc, a younger son of Oyn Purcell. As a son of Oyn Purcell, Ranulf Purcell alias de Broc was thus likely the great-uncle of Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe. *The King’s Serjeants and Officers of State* by J.H. Round (London, 1911), pp. 98-108 and Eric St. John Brooks, “Catteshill and another usher serjeanty in the Purcell family,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. X (1932-3), pp. 161-168. Eric St. John Brooks cited a

martyrdom of the archbishop – or for that matter, the role of King Henry II, if Sir Hugh Purcell was indeed the monarch’s grandson. In a 13th century charter witnessed by “Walter Purcell, my father,” Sir Hugh granted Kildroch to the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his father, his mother, his “wife Beatrix” and his children.⁵⁷ In another charter Sir Hugh Purcell granted the church of “Locmuy” [Loughmoe] to the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his late “wife Beatrix of happy memory” and his ancestors and descendants.⁵⁸ Sir Hugh founded a Franciscan friary in Waterford city in 1240 and was buried there in the same year.⁵⁹ The Franciscans of Waterford prayed for his soul every day thereafter, until they left Waterford city in 2019.⁶⁰

charter roll of 1205 calling Ranulf de Broc the son of Oyn Purcell (“filius Oyni Porcelli”). “Catteshill and another usher serjeanty in the Purcel family,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. X (1932-3), p. 162.

⁵⁷ *Register of the Abbey of St. Thomas’s, Dublin*, ed. by John T. Gilbert (Roll Series) (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1889), pp. 159-160. In another charter, the Archbishop of Cashel gave permission for the Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr to accept the grant of the church of Loughmoe by “Lord Hugh Purcell and John Purcell, his son and heir.” *Ibid.*, pp. 315-316. In yet another charter, John Purcell, “son and heir of H[ugh] Purcell,” granted to the Abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin the tithes of the church of Loughmoe and other possessions which “my mother Beatrix” gave to the abbey. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200. It should also be stated that the Butlers, the family of Sir Hugh Purcell’s wife Beatrix, had a Becket connection of their own: they claimed to be related to Becket. Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, Introduction, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; article on “Theobald Walter” in *Dictionary of National Biography* (1908), vol. III, pp. 529-531. The several grants by Hugh and Beatrix of lands, churches and advowsons in and around Loughmoe to the Abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin, and the grant of the church of Loughmoe (“Lochmy”) to the same monastery strengthened Thomas Carte’s belief in a kinship between Becket and Beatrix’s father. Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, Introduction, pp. xxxv-xxxvi. *Burke’s Peerage* (1970 ed., p. 2047) repeats a suggestion in *The Complete Peerage* that Theobald’s grandfather married a sister of Gilbert, father of St. Thomas Becket. See also, Theobald Blake Butler, “The Butler-Becket Tradition”, *Journal of the Butler Society*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1985), pp. 424-425. In 1454, James Butler, 5th Earl of Ormond formally claimed that the Earls of Ormond “were lineally descended of the blood of the glorious martyr St. Thomas sometime Archbishop of Cantabury [sic].” *Ibid.*, p. 424, citing *Parliamentary Rolls*, vol. 5, p. 257.

⁵⁸ *Register of the Abbey of St. Thomas’s, Dublin*, ed. by John T. Gilbert (Roll Series) (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1889), p. 193.

⁵⁹ *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. by John O’ Donovan (Dublin, 1856), vol. III, p. 299; Rev. Brendan Jennings, OFM, “Brussels Ms. 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De Provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci,” *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 6 (Nov. 1934), p. 81; John D’ Alton, *Illustrations of King James’s Irish Army List (1689)* (2nd ed.) (1861), vol. I, p. 272, citing Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum* (1786), p. 704. One surviving manuscript containing a burial register of the French Church, as the monastery founded by Sir Hugh Purcell is now called, records: “hugo purcell miles ac fundator monasterii minorum in Civitate Waterfordie, sepelitur in sinistro cornu altaris autentici dicti monasterii prope parietem, qui obiit Anno Domini Milesimo (*blank*).” This translates as: “Hugo Purcell, Knight, founder of the monastery of the Friars Minor in the City of Waterford, is buried at the left hand side of the high altar of the said monastery near the wall. He died A.D. 1().” No trace of his tomb remains today. The register also notes the burials of Edmund Purcell, formerly Judge of the Bishop’s Court, and Richard Butler, son of the Earl of Ormond, and his mother and sister. “A List of Early Burials in the French Church, Waterford,” edited and translated by Julian Watson, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 103 (1973), pp. 70-77.

⁶⁰ *The Irish Times*, 10 May 2019.

More than a century after the arrival of the Purcells in Ireland, the first Sir Hugh's grandson, also called Sir Hugh Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe,⁶¹ still identified himself as an Englishman who was duty bound to uphold English rule in Ireland and, when called upon, to fight for the English Crown.

In February 1296/1297, King Edward I granted to this Sir Hugh Purcell "free warren in his demesne lands of Corkteny [Corketeny]" and in other demesne lands in counties Tipperary, Kilkenny and Limerick.⁶²

The second Sir Hugh was Sheriff of Tipperary in 1295. As "Hugo de Purcel", he was summoned to sit as a baron in the Irish Parliament held in 1295, but he did not thereby become a peer of the realm but instead remained a feudal baron.⁶³ The early Parliaments in England and Ireland were composed of key representatives of the feudal baronage: that is, of knights who held their lands directly from the King in return for military service.

In 1295, while sheriff of Tipperary, Sir Hugh was accused of attacking Silvester le Ercedekne's castle on the Thursday after Easter, breaking into chests and coffers, and stealing goods worth 500 pounds ("*...money, robes, tablecloths, napkins, coverlets, sheets, fallings, hacquetons, gambisons, habargeons, helmets, spears, bows, and other armour, ... cups and silver spoons, gold rings, precious stones, brooches, girdles woven with silk, and other jewels ..., 471 cows...180 afers...48 stud mares...48 oxen..., 4 great (horses) ...,1500 sheep...400 lambs...215 pigs...150 goats...80 kids...46 bacons, 20 carcasses of beef, 4 tuns (dolea) [barrels] full of wheat flour, 3 tuns of oat flour, 4 tuns of ale which they drank and consumed*"); Sir Hugh denied the accusation,

⁶¹ In pleadings dated 1296, this second Sir Hugh refers to the first Sir Hugh (husband of Beatrix Butler) as his "grandsire", that is, grandfather. *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. ii, p. 430.

⁶² *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 175; *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. I, p. 826. Sir Hugh was lord of Corketeny, or Corca Tine (now in the parish of Templemore, directly adjacent to the present-day Tipperary parishes of Loughmoe West and Loughmoe East). *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 826. The fact that Corketeny was among the demesne lands of the King confirms that Sir Hugh held it *in capite* as a baron, that is, as a tenant-in-chief of the Crown. There are references throughout the 14th century to the Purcell lordship of Corketeny. *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, vol. I, 826, 860; vol. II, 38, 90, 316. It is clear that the feudal barony of Loughmoe and the feudal lordship of Corketeny were held by the same person. On his marriage to Beatrix Butler c. 1220, the first Sir Hugh Purcell received Loughmoe and "Corkyteny". See *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, vol. II, 430 and see, generally, Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 80, 117, 183 (note); Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, introduction, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911-1920), vol. II, p. 95, fn. 1; *Register of the Abbey of St. Thomas, Dublin*, ed. by John T. Gilbert (London, H.M. Stationary Office, 1889), pp. 159-160, 193-195, 358-359. Another Hugh Purcell forfeited the manors of "Corketen", "Logmy" [Loughmoe] and "Okryrn" in co. Tipperary in 1362. *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, vol. II, 89. Thomas Purcell styled himself Baron of Loughmoe and Corketeny ("baron of Logmo and Corkhyny") in 1518. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 52-53.

⁶³ Sir Bernard Burke, *Burke's Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire* (London, 1883), pp. 627-632. Although in England in 1295 a writ of summons to Parliament created an hereditary peerage in the person summoned and his heirs, this was not yet true of Ireland. Thus, the writ issued by John Wogan, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and summoning in the King's name "Hugo de Purcel" to the 1295 Irish Parliament did not raise Sir Hugh Purcell to the rank of baron in the peerage of Ireland. *Ibid.* Theobald Butler, 5th Butler of Ireland, also sat as a baron in the Irish Parliament of 1295.

stating that certain miscreants indicted for felonies had taken refuge at the castle and that, as sheriff, he, in trying to enter the castle by virtue of his office to apprehend them, was attacked and had "three Englishmen" of his party slain there before the felons fled.⁶⁴

On 3 January 1296, King Edward I commanded 27 knights of the English nobility of Ireland, including Sir Hugh Purcell and Sir Theobald Butler, to be at Whitehaven on 1 March "with as powerful and becoming a force as they could to aid the King in doing what he intended for the preservation of his regal rights and the honour of his crown." The King further ordered these knights to be ready to depart on the King's service and proposed to be present at Whitehaven himself.⁶⁵ In 1296/1297, Walter Serjeant was pardoned after Hugh Purcell testified before the King that Serjeant had "well and manfully" served King Edward I in the war of Scotland.⁶⁶ During 1297 and 1298 Sir Hugh was still on the King's service, staying in England for some of that period.⁶⁷ On 4 May 1297, along with thirty other knights of the English nobility of Ireland, he was commanded by King Edward I to provide himself without delay with horses and arms and to prepare to join the King in his war against the King of France.⁶⁸ (The text of the King's letter read: "*Whereas the King would soon want the assistance of Hugh Purcell and his other lieges in Ireland, by reason of the present war between the King and the King of France, the King entreats and commands him on his fealty and affection to the King that without delay, he provide himself with horses and arms, so that he may be prepared to come to the King and to go with the King in the King's own proper person, wherever the King shall demand. The King shall retain him by his side and he shall never be sent away from the King, wherefore it becomes him to be prompt in coming.*") A document dated 29 November 1297 states that Hugh Purcell was about to join the King "in foreign parts".⁶⁹ On 10 April 1298, the King wrote of "the good service rendered...in Flanders and elsewhere" by Hugh Purcell, formerly sheriff of Tipperary.⁷⁰

In circa 1300, a border war between English inhabitants of counties Tipperary and Kilkenny resulted in the deaths by crossbow of a number of people; as a consequence of this war, Sir Hugh Purcell, again sheriff of Tipperary, was ordered to pay on behalf of his men and himself a fine of 20 marks for each Englishman slain and 5 marks 40 d. for each Irishman.⁷¹ By the 14th century, both the counties of

⁶⁴ *Calendar of Justiciar Rolls, Ireland* (23 Edward I), pp. 6-7; see also *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 97.

⁶⁵ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 126; *Calendar of Close Rolls* (1288-1296), p. 502; *Patent Rolls* (24 Edward I), vol. 3, p. 181. Sir Theobald Butler was Theobald, 5th Butler of Ireland (d. 1299).

⁶⁶ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 175-176; *Patent Rolls* (24 Edward I), vol. 3, p. 181.

⁶⁷ *Patent Rolls* (Edward I), vol. 3, pp. 230, 331; *Calendar of Justiciar Rolls, Ireland* (25 Edward I), pp. 119, 164; *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 228.

⁶⁸ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 185.

⁶⁹ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, pp. 218-219; *Calendar of Close Rolls* (1296-1302), p. 188.

⁷⁰ *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, p. 236; *Calendar of Close Rolls* (1296-1302), p. 153.

⁷¹ *Calendar of Justiciar Rolls, Ireland* (28 Edward I), pp. 350-353.

Tipperary and Kilkenny were firmly in Butler hands. In February 1301/1302, the King wrote to Hugh, and to Philip, Maurice and Adam Purcell, as well as many other subjects in Ireland, including Edmund Butler (6th Butler of Ireland), informing them that he wished to be provided with a strong force of men-at-arms for his war in Scotland.⁷²

Between 1297-1299, Arnald de Ambidones, a merchant from Gascony, obtained certain Limerick property and rents from Hugh after successfully suing him in respect of his failure to pay 190 L. (livres, or pounds) for "8½ lasts of hides"; later Arnald complained that "*Hugh, against Arnald's will, reseized the oxen and afers and put them in his ploughs, and caused the sheep to be shorn and took the wool, and took cows, hogs and other animals out of his possession, and forbade the tenants to pay him their rent...*"⁷³ This may have been a debt incurred while at war for Edward I in France.

In a Latin document in which he is described as Lord Hugh de Purcell ("De domino Hugo de Purcell"), he is stated to hold Corketeny from Edmund Butler, 6th Chief Butler of Ireland, in 1305 in return for military service.⁷⁴

The Purcells' sense of themselves as Englishmen in Ireland (or to use the term employed later, "Englishmen raised in Ireland") still persisted to a greater or

⁷² *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, vol. 4, pp. 359-360 and vol. 5, p. 19.

⁷³ *Calendar of Justiciar Rolls, Ireland (25-27 Edward I)*, pp. 140, 216, 246-247, 291.

⁷⁴ *Red Book of Ormond*, ed. by Newport B. White (Irish Manuscripts Commission), pp. 71, 148. This is somewhat puzzling. The fact that Sir Hugh Purcell, Sheriff of Tipperary, was summoned to the Irish Parliament as a baron in 1295 and that King Edward III granted him free warren in the King's demesne lands in Corketeny in 1296 suggests that Sir Hugh held Corketeny directly of the King. But by 1305 he was holding Corketeny not from the King but from the Chief Butler of Ireland. What caused this change in tenure? We know that by 1296 there was a lawsuit brought by Theobald Butler, 5th Chief Butler of Ireland against his second cousin once removed, Sir Hugh Purcell. The lawsuit appears to have alleged in effect that tenure of "two messuages and five carucates of land in Corkytyn [Corketeny], Drumtilihi, Camryd and Gortnecluyth" in Co. Tipperary should never have gone to Sir Hugh's grandfather, Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1240) upon the latter's marriage (as her second husband) to Beatrix Butler, daughter of Theobald, 1st Chief Butler of Ireland. It averred that the 1st Chief Butler, who had been seised of these lands "in fee and lordship in the time of the peace of King John," had given these lands to his daughter Beatrix and her first husband Thomas de Hereford and the heirs of their bodies. As this couple had no children together, the lands should have reverted to the Chief Butler. Sir Hugh countered that his great-uncle, the 2nd Chief Butler of Ireland, by charter had quitclaimed these lands to his grandfather, Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe, after the latter married the 2nd Chief Butler's sister Beatrix, widow of Thomas de Hereford. The younger Sir Hugh produced as evidence the actual charter, but the 5th Chief Butler disputed its authenticity. The purported charter read: "*To all Christian people to whose notice these present letters shall come, Theobald Walter, Butler of Ireland, greeting. Know that I have for me and my heirs and assigns granted and totally quit-claimed to Sir Hugh Purcell, his heirs and assigns, all right and claim which I have or in any way can have in the Thoyhe [Tuath] of Corkytyn [Corketeny], also the Thoyhe of Okeryn [Ikerrin], so that I and my heirs shall never make any claim or challenge to the same forever.*" *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. II, 430 and Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. I, p. xxxvi. Based upon the documentary evidence that by 1305 Sir Hugh Purcell held Corketeny from Edmund Butler, 6th Chief Butler of Ireland, it appears that the Chief Butler's lawsuit was successful in confirming him as the feudal overlord of the Purcell lands at issue.

lesser degree in the middle of the 14th century.⁷⁵ In the second quarter of that century John Purcell, son of Walter Purcell and grandson of the second Sir Hugh of Loughmoe, was Baron of Loughmoe and Lord of Corketeny.⁷⁶ In a March 1338 inquisition taken weeks after the death of James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond, it was confirmed that John had held several knights' fees in Corketeny (it is unclear whether it was two or ten knights' fees) from the 1st Earl, as lord of the manor of Thurles, in return "for 4 [pounds] of royal service when scutage runs, a sparrowhawk yearly and doing suit at court."⁷⁷ John captured The O'Kennedy at Thurles, after O'Kennedy had led an uprising of the native Irish in December 1348 and had burned the Butler town of Nenagh and various English strongholds near Nenagh.⁷⁸ "He [Donald O'Kennedy] was encountered by the Purcells who made him prisoner on Friday following the Feast of the Annunciation, and on the 4th of the Nones of June, they had him...juridically hanged at Thurles, and drawn at the tails of horses."⁷⁹ Thurles is some 7 miles from Loughmoe.

In the middle of the 14th century, bubonic plague decimated Tipperary and Kilkenny and took its toll among the Purcells. John Clynn, a Franciscan friar who lived in Kilkenny at that time, penned a manuscript just as the lands of the Butler lordship were ravaged by the Black Death. Expressing his impression that the plague had put the entire world "within the grasp of the Evil One", he wrote, "I leave this parchment to continue this work, if perchance any man...escape this pestilence and carry on the work which I have begun."⁸⁰

Due to widespread death from the bubonic plague and to poor communication, a period of confusion ensued in which it was unclear which Purcells were alive and which were dead. There survives among the Ormond Deeds a letter written circa 1350 by a certain Hugh Purcell describing what became a succession dispute between closely related rivals for the lands and position of the head of the family. What is intriguing about the letter is that, nearly two centuries after the Purcells had arrived in Ireland, it was written in Norman French, the language of the English upper classes. A certain Hugh Purcell wrote the letter. He was a close relation but apparently not a direct descendant of John Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe. Hugh wrote

⁷⁵ An Irish official document from 1341 describes divisions between "the English raised in England and the English raised in Ireland" ("*inter Anglicos in Anglia oriundos et Anglicos in terra Hiberniae oriundos*"). Charles Richard Elrington, editor, *The Whole Works of the Most Rev. James Ussher, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland*, vol. XI (Dublin, 1857), p. 458.

⁷⁶ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. I, p. 860. In this Ormond document, dated at some point between 1328 and 1337, John Purcell, lord of Corketeny, witnessed a deed to James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond and 7th Butler of Ireland.

⁷⁷ *Calendar of Inquisitions*, vol. VIII, pp. 117-126 (12 Edward III). Doing suit at court referred to attending the county court of Tipperary monthly. This was the court of the Earl of Ormond, as lord palatine of Tipperary.

⁷⁸ A.J. Othway-Ruthven, *History of Medieval Ireland* (London, Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1968), p. 266, citing *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clynn and Thady Dowling*, ed. by R. Butler (Irish Archaeological Society, 1849), p. 34.

⁷⁹ Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 184, citing *The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clynn and Thady Dowling*, ed. by R. Butler (Irish Archaeological Society, 1849), p. 34.

⁸⁰ Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (New York, Ballantine, 1978), p. 95.

from Kilmallock to a person unnamed ("tres reverent et tres honuré seigneur") explaining that "le fitzWilliam...Purcell [the son of William Purcell] who held Corketeny and the seignory of the same away from him [Hugh], contrary to right, is dead", and he claimed the lordship for himself.⁸¹ Meanwhile, in 1356, his rival, Geoffrey Roth Purcell, submitted himself to James Butler, 2nd Earl of Ormond, "until the coming of a certain true heir of the Purcells, lords of Corketeny."⁸² Hugh Purcell succeeded temporarily in advancing his claim but in 1362 his manors of Loughmoe, Corketeny and Ikerrin in Tipperary were forfeited to the Crown. In letters patent dated 3 October 1362, King Edward III transferred the forfeited manors of Corketeny, "Loghmy" [Loughmoe] and Ikerrin to his first cousin once removed, James Butler, 2^d Earl of Ormond and 8th Chief Butler of Ireland.⁸³ The following month, Lord Ormond granted Corketeny and Ikerrin for life (without mention of the manor of Loughmoe) to Geoffrey Roth Purcell and Geoffrey, son of John Mor Purcell.⁸⁴ The succession then passed to the descendants of Geoffrey Roth Purcell. The National Library of Ireland holds a document (Deed 1069 of the Ormond Deeds) dated in November 1362 bearing the wax seal of Geoffrey Purcell (it is unclear whether it was Geoffrey Roth Purcell or Geoffrey Purcell, son of John Mor Purcell). It is the first surviving example of the use of a boar on the Purcell coat of arms.⁸⁵

By the 1360s, the English identity of the descendants of the Anglo-Norman conquerors of Ireland had become diluted. Many spoke the Irish language, in addition to English and Norman French. Still others had married Irish wives and adopted Irish customs and dress. In 1366, the Irish Parliament enacted the Statutes of Kilkenny to halt this assimilation. The preamble, in Norman French, raged that “*...now many English of the said land [Ireland], forsaking the English language, manners, mode of riding, laws and usages, live and govern themselves according to the manners, fashion and language of the Irish enemies; and also have made divers marriages and alliances between themselves and the Irish enemies aforesaid; whereby the said land, and the liege people thereof, the English language, the allegiance due to our lord the king, and the English laws there, are put in subjection and decayed...*” England’s obvious fear was that the adoption of Irish customs by the English families of Ireland would threaten the English lordship of Ireland.

⁸¹ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. I, p. 826. (Letter from Hugh Purcell, which the editor of the Ormond Deeds tentatively dated as circa 1350).

⁸² *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. II, p. 38. In the same indenture, Lord Ormond pardoned Geoffrey Roth Purcell and his "subjects," in return for 14 cows, for any trespasses committed by them and admonished them to "keep peace and fealty with him."

⁸³ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. II, p. 89. These letters patent are witnessed by Edward III's son, Prince Lionel, Earl of Ulster and governor of Ireland. Lionel and the 2nd Earl of Ormond were second cousins.

⁸⁴ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. II, p. 90.

⁸⁵ The use of boars in various Purcell coats of arms likely derives somehow from a play on the Purcell surname. The word "porcellus" in Latin means a little pig or piglet. A piglet as a symbol, however, conveys no martial threat. In contrast, another member of the pig family, the wild boar, was often used in heraldry to embody the fierce and tenacious aggression of a warrior. See also *Irish Names and Surnames* by Patrick Woulfe (Dublin, 1923), p. 662.

The Statutes of Kilkenny prohibited the English of Ireland (that is, English families long settled in Ireland, like the Purcells and Butlers) from marrying Irish wives, taking Irish names, having Irish bards in their household, and worshipping in the same churches and chapels used by the Irish. Englishmen in Ireland who had gone native were required to use the English language, as well as to employ English martial skills like archery and lancing rather than Irish military methods. In legal terms, these statutes codified an official separation between the English of Ireland and the native Irish that lasted for centuries. In practical terms, however, the fact that Parliament felt the need to enact them at all meant that it was already too late: the attraction of the Irish language and culture and of the daughters of Irish chieftains as potential brides was too strong to resist. The statutes were impossible to enforce, and they were openly flouted. The assimilation continued apace in future generations, so that some Anglo-Norman families, including the Purcells, in due course would be described as *hiberniores hibernis ipsis*, that is, more Irish than the Irish themselves.

1400s and 1500s

Thus, in the wake of the Statutes of Kilkenny, there arose the phenomenon of Anglo-Irish gentry who when necessary made solemn official assurances of their Englishness while actually living lives more akin to those of Irish chieftains whose main concerns were their own lands and wealth. An excellent example of this is James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe in the middle of the 15th century.

James' s father, Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, had seized by force two messuages and four ploughlands in Magowry and Skehanagh, Co. Tipperary, from the St. John family and enfeoffed James Butler, Earl of Ormond, of them. These had formerly been Purcell lands. The St. John family regained these lands only by resort to the courts. Circa 1465, James Purcell was described in a contemporary document as having repeated his father' s actions by again seizing the same St. John lands in Magowry and Skehanagh "*with force and arms, in manner of war, with banner displayed, contrary to law and against the peace of our sovereign lord the King.*" The italicized language contains a very serious charge, because an allegation of using force, in manner of war, with banner displayed and against the King' s peace, was an accusation of waging a private war. This was considered a grave defiance of royal authority. Only the Crown was empowered to wage war. James Purcell, who in the same document is said to be "*maintained and supported by divers English rebels and other Irish enemies of the King that he will not obey any process of the Common Law,*" was ordered to surrender himself to the King' s judges in Ireland until the issue of title to these lands was decided.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ *Statute Rolls of the Parliament of Ireland*, ed. by Henry F. Berry (Dublin, H.M. Stationary Office, 1914), pp. 411-415.

This James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe was a celebrated soldier and cattle-raider in Co. Tipperary and was an example of the odd contemporary term "degenerate Englishman," a disparaging phrase used by London during this period to describe members of the English nobility and gentry of Ireland who, like James and his Butler wife, adopted Gaelic customs, spoke Irish fluently, and kept an Irish bard or poet in the household to record their exploits and sing of them. London deeply deplored cultural enrichment of this sort.

James Purcell is the subject of an extraordinary Gaelic funeral elegy which in the early 1500s was reduced to written form in the northeast of Co. Tipperary by an unknown scribe. The manuscript is entitled, in Latin, "*In Obitum Jacobi Pursell Baronis de Lughma*" ["On the death of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe"] and is now preserved in the British Museum (British Museum Add. Ms. 33993). The funeral elegy describes James as having curly red hair and ruddy skin, as being a descendant of Charlemagne and of Geoffrey Roth Purcell and as having desired to reconcile Normans and native Irish. It has been translated from the Irish by the late Anne O'Sullivan.⁸⁷ A couple of stanzas give a sense of this poem:

I did not realise how spoilt I was by the son of Thomas [James, Baron of Loughmoe] with locks that curled like horns, until clay was thrown on that nobleman I lacked for nothing ...

Should anyone wish to praise him since he is dead they would say that the French of whose race he was were not anxious to seek a quarrel with him ...

Know that Loughmoe is full of sadness and Killahara after the King [the Baron], all wish to weep for the soldier and none thinks of stopping.

A strange thing occurred in the household of the baron, at the height Of our mourning for the lion of fierce valour the fire went dark...

Though it is my duty as poet to enumerate his exploits the truth is that it is not difficult for me to remember them, however numerous they were, it was my charge to keep an account of them.

[There follows a description of some three dozen cattle raids and armed engagements led by James. The following stanza provides a flavor.]

The prey he took from Guirtin Classach, Cluain O Sgilleog was

⁸⁷ Anne Cronin O' Sullivan (Áine Ní Chróinín) (1910-1984) was a distinguished scholar of the Irish language. She kindly shared her unpublished translation and analysis of the elegy with the present writer in 1983.

***a bloody affray, his people burned Newtown and the mist
did not cover the slaughter of all...***

The 16th century manuscript contained several funeral elegies, of which that of James Purcell was the most intricate. Anne O' Sullivan wrote:

His [James' s] elegy makes great claims for him. It is the finest of the group [of several elegies] being written in a much prized metre that allowed more scope for metrical ornamentation than the simpler metre used in the others... The baron' s

"battle-roll" consists, in the spirit of his time, of a list of successful cattle-raids. These were wide-ranging and carried out indiscriminately against Anglo-Norman and Gaelic lords... In one episode he is seen on a wider stage campaigning in support of the Butler lordship when it was invaded by the Earl of Desmond about 1468. James, we are told, routed Desmond' s allies, the Roches, and drove them across the Slievicrot mountains, bordering the Glen of Aherlow... Compared with the other elegies he was on a very close footing with his poet who fears that he and his fraternity will no longer be welcome at Loughmoe after James' s death... Bardic poetry was a stylised form of oral art and its highly condensed thought expressed in esoteric allusions and kennings to suit the metre is difficult to render in translation. Much of its artistic quality is inevitably lost. Archaic ideas are another feature. When a lord takes possession of his land he is deemed to have married it symbolically so when he dies, as his wedded spouse, it mourns him, the seasons become disturbed, the earth' s fruitfulness declines and the elements join in the mourning, the air keens, fires go black and rivers rise up in anger...When it was still part of a living tradition, however, the bardic idiom was immediately comprehensible to an aristocratic company. The elegies would have been chanted ceremoniously to a musical accompaniment at the obsequies, an impressive performance, according to accounts. It heightened the dignity of the occasion and gratified the mourners' pride as they listened to their lord' s prowess being so elegantly extolled. After the funeral the poem would have been committed to memory and circulated orally until some future occasion led to its being transcribed into manuscript and preserved as a permanent memorial.⁸⁸

The massive ruins of Loughmoe Castle are still an imposing and somewhat forbidding sight on the Tipperary landscape, midway between Thurles and Templemore. It was likely during James' s tenure that the oldest surviving section of Loughmoe Castle, the massive south tower, was built. The south tower, with its spiral staircases, vaulted floors, narrow loopholes and walls ten feet thick at the

⁸⁸ From Anne O' Sullivan' s unpublished translation of and analysis of the elegy, shared by Mrs. O' Sullivan with the present writer in 1983.

base, is today the best preserved portion of the ruins.⁸⁹ A recent scientific study has determined that the south tower was built between 1444 and 1494,⁹⁰ which would have corresponded roughly to the period when either James or his father Thomas was Baron of Loughmoe. The stone mantelpiece above the fireplace of the great hall of the south tower once bore two heraldic shields: the Purcell coat of arms on the left and the Butler coat of arms at the far right.⁹¹

James and his Butler wife were buried at the Abbey of the Holy Cross, near Loughmoe.⁹²

A deed dated 1 March 1518 from a later Baron of Loughmoe confirms that the Purcells still held Loughmoe from the Butlers of Ormond:

Thomas Purcell, baron of Loghmoe [Loughmoe] and Corkyny [Corketeny], co. Tipperary, grants to Peter [Piers] Butler, [8th] Earl of Ormond, and James Butler, his son and heir, all his manor of Corkhyne together with the said barony, with all their rights and appurtenances, viz., in waters, mills, ponds, pools, fisheries, moors, marshes, etc. and free customs, as his ancestors had and held them from old times; to have and to hold to the Earl and his heirs of the chief lords of the fee ·· · Given at Logmo.⁹³

Thomas' s children included James Purcell, his successor as Baron of Loughmoe, Philip Purcell, who became Abbot of the Holy Cross, and Ellen Purcell, who married John Butler, a younger son of the 1st (by patent) and 11th (by summons) Baron Dunboyne. In 1534, James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, with "his nation" ("*Jacobus Purcell cum sua nacione*"), that is, the entire House of Purcell, along with Piers and Margaret Butler, Earl and Countess of Ossory (later the 8th Earl of Ormond and his countess), were named as intercessors to ensure compliance with a

⁸⁹ See Harold G. Leask, *Irish Castles* (Dundalk, Dundalgan Press, reprinted 1977), pp. 132-133.

⁹⁰ Rory Sherlock, "Using New Techniques to Date Old Castles," *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 19-23.

⁹¹ This suggests that the south tower was completed during the lifetime of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (alive in 1465) rather than that of his father Thomas. James Purcell' s wife, as stated previously, was a Butler. On the other hand, we do not know who James' s mother, the wife of Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was. She may have been a Butler too. The Purcell shield, now defaced, was still visible as late as 1892. See John Davis White, *Anthologia Tipperariensis* (Cashel, 1892), pp. 129-148. The Butler shield was still visible in 1984.

⁹² *Triumphalia Chronologica Monasteri Sanctae Crucis in Hibernia*, Denis Murphy, ed. (Dublin, 1895), p. lix. This source stated that the tomb of James ("HIC IACET NOBILIS ET GENEROSUS VIR IACOBUS PVRCELL / BARO DE ···" – "Here lies the noble and gentle James Purcell, Baron of ···") and his Butler wife ("···BVTLER VXOR EIVS" – "Butler, his wife") was in front of the high altar, on the gospel side. Ibid. In a letter to the *Tipperary Star* newspaper of 19 May 1990, the late Sister Áine Ní Chearbhaill, Hon. Secretary of the Templemore History Society, wrote that this tombstone of James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe and of "Helen Butler his wife" , with its Latin inscription carved in Gothic lettering, is the oldest in the Abbey of Holy Cross. She also mentions the tomb of Donagh O' Fogarty (died in 1583) and his wife Helen Purcell.

⁹³ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. IV, pp. 52-53.

covenant by which William, Abbot of the Holy Cross, resigned his abbacy to James' s brother Philip Purcell.⁹⁴

In 1543, Philip Purcell, Abbot of the Abbey of the Holy Cross and his kinsmen Patrick Purcell of Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny, who was the head of a prominent cadet branch of the House of Loughmoe, and James Purcell of the Garrans, Co. Kilkenny were among the signers of an address to King Henry VIII praising James Butler, 9th Earl of Ormond in the following terms: "...his intent hath been and is to his power and possibility so to put away Irish usages, extortions, and abuses ... He helpeth to bring up at his charges...[the] children [of the signers]...after the English sort...all the Irishry in effect do bear [him] more mortal hate, encompassing his destruction above any man living." In their address to the King, the signers also affirmed their loyalty to the House of Tudor. This is another example of how the Purcells would stress their Englishness (their English blood, their speaking English as their principal language, and their following English customs, such as riding with an English saddle) when it suited them, while at the same time remaining completely at ease in the Irish language and culture surrounding them.

When, at the Reformation, King Henry VIII dissolved the Catholic monasteries in Ireland, Abbot Philip Purcell lost his seat in the Irish House of Lords as "Earl of Holy Cross," a lord spiritual. In 1561, Philip transferred his life interest in the dissolved abbey to Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, who had conformed to the Anglican church.⁹⁵

Thomas Purcell succeeded his father James as Baron of Loughmoe. In 1569, he was one of the signatories of a letter to Queen Elizabeth I praising Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond for restoring law and order in Co. Tipperary.⁹⁶ In the same year, he fought against "Irish rebels" in Co. Kerry.⁹⁷ This was the period of the first Desmond Rebellion, which lasted from 1569 to 1573. As explained above, the Earl of Ormond and his followers, including the Purcells, defeated the FitzGerald Earl of Desmond at the battle of Affane, a private pitched battle in 1565. Following the battle, Queen Elizabeth I imprisoned Lord Desmond in the Tower of London. A combination of factors – not only Desmond' s imprisonment but also the efforts of the Tudor government in Ireland to restrict the powers of the FitzGerald in their territory and to advance the newly established Anglican religion in place of Catholicism – induced Desmond' s followers to rise in rebellion, with fighting in

⁹⁴ *Irish Monastic and Episcopal Deeds*, ed. by Newport B. White (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1936), pp. 73-74; Edmund Curtis, "Medieval Seals Out of Ormond Archives" , *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 67 (1937), pp. 74-75.

⁹⁵ *Irish Monastic and Episcopal Deeds*, ed. by Newport B. White (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1936), p. 98. Philip Purcell was the last Catholic abbot of this ancient Catholic abbey before the Reformation. He was also, by virtue of his office as abbot, Vicar General of the Cistercian Order in Ireland.

⁹⁶ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. V, pp. 176-178.

⁹⁷ *Calendar of States Papers – Ireland*, vol. 1 (1509-1573), p. 423; *Calendar of State Papers – Carew Mss.*, vol. 1 (1515-1574), pp. 389, 404.

Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork, Kerry and other locales. Thomas Butler, the Protestant 10th Earl of Ormond, was one of the commanders of the Queen's troops, and Thomas Purcell of Loughmoe and the soldiers he commanded, all Catholics, had to join him.

It is very difficult to keep track of the chaotic shifting of alliances which characterized so many of the Anglo-Irish gentry of Co. Tipperary during the Desmond Rebellion. Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond was one of the main pillars of English rule in Ireland during the Elizabethan period, having spent considerable time in London and formed a close friendship with his cousin, Queen Elizabeth I. But his kinsmen back in Ireland often had priorities in conflict with the Earl's.

James Butler, 9th Earl of Ormond and his wife Lady Joan FitzGerald, daughter of James FitzGerald, 11th Earl of Desmond, had had seven sons, of whom Thomas, 10th Earl of Ormond was the eldest. At the time of the Desmond Rebellion, Sir Edmund Butler, Edward Butler and Piers Butler, younger brothers of the 10th Earl of Ormond, were themselves in open rebellion.⁹⁸ In 1568, Edward Butler and the son of Sir Edmund Butler were accused of having attacked the lands of Mac-i-Brien:

With six hundred gunners and kerne [Irish light infantry], one hundred galloglass [heavy infantry, usually composed of Scottish mercenaries], sixty horsemen and three hundred slaves, knaves and boys, Edward had invaded Ara, carried off three hundred coffers that lay within two churches, to the value of five hundred pounds; and remaining during two days and two nights round these churches, his men ravished all the poor women, young and old, married and unmarried, who had fled into the said churches.

In April 1569, the Lord Deputy of Ireland sent a Commission from Dublin to Tipperary to investigate the crimes of the brothers of the Earl of Ormond and take evidence. The Commissioners spent a night at Loughmoe Castle while in Tipperary, and Edward Butler, showing his defiance, arrived at Loughmoe with a great number of kerne, "which pilfered and spoiled the poor people of the town, so as all night we had but howling and crying..." The 10th Earl's youngest brother, Piers Butler, whom the Commissioners intended to meet in Kilkenny with a view to arresting him and transporting him to Dublin, "retired to his bed at Loughmoe, sore sick or so feigning himself" in order to avoid the journey to Kilkenny.

By June 1569, Sir Edmund Butler was in league with James FitzMaurice FitzGerald, who was leading the Desmond uprising in place of his cousin, the imprisoned Earl of Desmond. Sir Edmund Butler was deeply hostile to Sidney, Queen Elizabeth's Lord Deputy of Ireland. In July and August 1569, Piers Butler plundered Callan and then

⁹⁸ The details, set forth in this and the following two paragraphs of this essay, of the rebellion of the 10th Earl of Ormond's younger brothers are all taken from W.F. Butler, M.A., M.R.I.A., "Plot and Counterplot in Elizabeth Ireland", *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, vol. 15, No. 60 (Dec. 1926), pp. 633-648.

the town of Leighlin Bridge, killing nine men and burning four young children in the latter location. Learning of his brothers' conduct, the Earl of Ormond hurried over from England and met his three brothers near Kilkenny on September 1. Sir Edmund and Piers accompanied the 10th Earl to Dublin, where the two rebel brothers were imprisoned. Sir Edmund then escaped from Dublin Castle, and Piers was released on bail. Parliament passed an Act of Attainder in 1570 against the three brothers as "vile and ingrate traitors." Queen Elizabeth pardoned the three in 1573, but the attainder was not reversed. At the end of the first Desmond Rebellion, Sir Edmund and Edward switched to their eldest brother's side and fought against the rebels. Twenty years later, in the late 1590s, Sir Edmund Butler's son, another Piers Butler, joined in the rebellion of O'Neill and O'Donnell. When this Piers Butler was later captured, his uncle, the 10th Earl of Ormond, had him hanged as a traitor at Thurles, near Loughmoe, and had his head brought to Dublin.

It is possible that Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, might himself have had conflicting loyalties at the time of the first Desmond Rebellion. Purcell probably dealt more with Sir Edmund Butler than with the 10th Earl, because during the Earl's frequent long absences in England Sir Edmund acted as the representative of his brother the Earl within the Ormond lordship. Purcell's dealings with the 10th Earl could be complicated. In addition, Purcell would have felt himself targeted by the government of the Protestant Lord Deputy. The government clearly wanted to clip the wings of Catholics like Thomas Purcell, who, like others of his background, lived as a kind of independent warlord. In the end, Purcell, like the 10th Earl's younger brothers, would have had no choice but to join the side of the Earl of Ormond and the government. The author Philip O'Sullivan Beare, writing circa 1602, described an engagement between the forces of the Earl of Desmond and a Butler army at Goart-na-Pisi. He stated that the Butler army was commanded by Edward and Peter (Piers) Butler (brothers of the Earl of Ormond), Lord Dunboyne (a peer of the Butler family) and Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe. The FitzGerald's were victorious and the flower of the Butler army was cut down.⁹⁹ This would have been circa 1581.

It is likely that Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe added the massive central and north wings to Loughmoe Castle, transforming it from a fortified keep to a comfortable manor house.¹⁰⁰ The carved initials "T.P." and "I.F.P." were still visible on the mantelpiece of the great hall of the south tower of Loughmoe Castle in 1984. These were the initials of Thomas and his wife, Joan FitzPatrick.

⁹⁹ *Compendium of the History of Catholic Ireland*, written in 1602 by Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare, translated from Latin by Matthew J. Byrne (Dublin, 1903), p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Henry S. Crawford, "The Purcells of Loughmoe Castle," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 39 (1903), pp. 234-241; Harold G. Leask, *Irish Castles* (Dundalk, Ireland, 1977), pp. 132-133.

Thomas and his wife had at least four sons and a daughter, Ellen Purcell, who married Piers Butler of Nodstown, Co. Tipperary (1558-1627), a grandson of James Butler, 9th Earl of Ormond.¹⁰¹

Thomas Purcell died circa 1599. The memorial hymn played at his funeral still survives, and a recording of it can be heard on the internet. It was composed by John Scott in 1599, and Thomas apparently commissioned it to be played at his obsequies. It is called *Scott's Lamentation for the Baron of Loughmoe*.¹⁰² Thomas was succeeded as Baron of Loughmoe by his eldest son Ralph Purcell.

The choices of Ralph Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, marked a break with the past. In 1598, Ralph, along with many Butlers, including the Viscount Mountgarret, the Baron Cahir, and, as mentioned above, the Earl of Ormond's nephew Piers Purcell, joined the rebellion of O' Neill and O' Donnell against the Crown.¹⁰³ When the Earl of Essex, Queen Elizabeth I's favorite, arrived in Ireland in 1599 to suppress the uprising, Ralph Purcell was in command of a force of rebels.¹⁰⁴ Essex's military campaign was unsuccessful, and he was forced to enter into a truce with the leader of the rebellion, Hugh O' Neill, Earl of Tyrone.

Several factors combined to impel Ralph to oppose the Crown. Queen Elizabeth I's government was granting land confiscated from Catholics in Munster (which included Co. Tipperary) to English soldiers and colonists who were Protestant. This was extremely threatening to Catholics like the Purcells, who believed that any pretext might be used to dispossess them of their ancient lands and give them to Protestant settlers. The influx into Ireland of English and Scottish Protestants would continue under Elizabeth's successor, King James I. In Ireland at this time, families like the Butlers and Purcells then came to be referred to as the "Old English," to distinguish them from the recent settlers, who were called the "New English." In addition, the Crown viewed Catholics in Ireland with increasing suspicion, which was to an extent justified. After the suppression of the first

¹⁰¹ Sir William Betham's abstract of the will of Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe in the Public Record Office, Dublin; Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829; *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland*, vol. 2, p. 20 and vol. 4, p. 28.

¹⁰² "The division of 'Scott's Lamentation for the Baron of Loughmoe' ... is made in a manner we have never before witnessed in music. It is founded on phrases of *three* bars in triple time. The first two parts are each composed of *two* of these phrases, introduced by a bell-like leading strain. The third part is composed of *four* such phrases, and the fourth and fifth of *seven* each. The effect, as might be expected, is altogether unique." "The Ancient Music of Ireland," *The Citizen - A Monthly Journal of Politics, Literature and Art*, No. X, vol. II, p. 212 (Dublin, 1840).

¹⁰³ *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. by John O' Donovan (Dublin, 1851), vol. VI, p. 2083; *Calendar of State Papers - Carew Mss.*, vol. III (1589-1600), p. 299.

¹⁰⁴ *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. by John O' Donovan (Dublin, 1851), vol. VI, p. 2083; *Calendar of State Papers - Carew Mss.*, vol. III (1589-1600), p. 299 (listing rebel military leaders in Co. Tipperary to include Ralph Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, with 200 foot and 6 horse, and Lord Cahir and his brother James Butler with 300 foot and 12 horse). As explained below, when O' Neill (Earl of Tyrone) and O' Donnell (Earl of Tyrconnell) fled from Ireland to Spanish Flanders, several Purcells accompanied them and served in their regiments.

Desmond Rebellion, Pope Pius V had excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I. The Queen realized that this excommunication would deeply weaken her support among Catholics in Ireland. Many Catholic gentry in Ireland had already long viewed Elizabeth as an illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII and thus as a person with no right to the throne. It will be recalled that the Pope had refused to annul Henry VIII's marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and he deemed the King's second marriage to Anne Boleyn, Queen Elizabeth I's mother, as adulterous and invalid. In fact, some in Ireland considered King Philip II of Spain, until his death in 1598, as their rightful king. This was because King Philip II had become co-monarch of England and Ireland when he married Queen Mary I of England and Ireland, the Catholic daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon and the elder half-sister of the Protestant Elizabeth I.

1600s and 1700s

Ralph Purcell died early in the 17th century and was succeeded as Baron of Loughmoe by his younger brother, Richard Purcell. Richard Purcell had also supported the rebellion in 1599.

Richard was pardoned in 1602 for leading a rebel force of 200 foot and 60 horse, and he was at various times alleged to be involved in purported Spanish conspiracies in Ireland against the Crown.¹⁰⁵ Richard Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, and Sir Walter Butler of Kilcash, a Catholic who later succeeded as 11th Earl of Ormond, were accused of stealing 700 cows and 3000 sheep in a 1601 raid against Richard's kinsman, FitzPatrick, Lord of Upper Ossory.¹⁰⁶

Richard Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was imprisoned in Dublin Castle in 1606 on a charge of murdering the Sheriff of Tipperary, Adam Tobin, in a quarrel, conviction on which charge would have meant forfeiture of his extensive Loughmoe estates. The quarrel arose from a property dispute between Richard and his mother Joan Purcell (born FitzPatrick), Dowager Baroness of Loughmoe on the one side and Margaret Purcell (born Tobin), Baroness of Loughmoe, widow of Richard's elder brother Ralph, on the other side. When Margaret initiated the lawsuit against her brother-in-law Richard, her brother, Sheriff Adam Tobin, seized goods and cattle from Richard as surety. Richard rode to the location where his property was detained, accompanied by four horsemen (including his brother) and a dozen footmen, all armed. The sheriff, informed of Richard's arrival when hunting nearby, hurried to the scene. When Richard's horse reared, one of the sheriff's men seized the opportunity and wrested the Baron of Loughmoe's staff out of his hand.

¹⁰⁵ Rev. Wm. P. Burke, *History of Clonmel* (Waterford, 1907), p. 432 (footnote jj); *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1601-1603)*, p. 537.

¹⁰⁶ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1601-1603)*, p. 33.

Purcell having lost his staff leapt from his horse and drew his sword half way out of the sheath, but the sheriff being likewise lighted, and having a dart in his hand, suddenly closed with him and told him that if he would not keep the peace, he would stab him with his dart. Purcell, retiring backward from the sheriff, fell upon his back, and withal the sheriff fell upon him, and both being down and struggling together, Purcell lying undermost upon the ground, cried out to his men, “Purcello Abo ” (which is an invitation or call which the Irish lords use to their followers when they would have them stick to them in any danger or distress). Thereupon divers of Purcell ’ s men drew their swords and gave the sheriff sundry wounds in his head, whereof he died about twenty-four days after, and hurt divers of the sheriff ’ s men.¹⁰⁷

London followed this case closely, seeing an opportunity to seize the Loughmoe estates and grant them to a Protestant. Letters survive from the Lords in Council in London to the Lord Deputy of Ireland instructing the latter that Richard, “ sometime a notorious rebel” and the perpetrator of many other “ execrable murders” , should not be allowed to escape his just punishment and informing him that His Majesty intended to grant the lands Richard would forfeit to a well-deserving servant.¹⁰⁸ In the same period, acting under martial law, the authorities arrested and executed Richard ’ s first cousin, Redmund Purcell, on charges of being a “ notorious thief and rebel.” ¹⁰⁹ Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond, wrote to Lord Salisbury imploring him not to pardon Richard Purcell due to his commission of murders and other offenses.¹¹⁰

In November 1606, Richard Purcell wrote a letter from Dublin Castle, where he had been imprisoned for four months, to the Lord Deputy, refuting the charges against him, denying any accusation of involvement in Spanish plots in Ireland against the King, and complaining of persecutions against his family:

His [Richard ’ s] goods, which by the law should be allowed for his maintenance, are all taken···And to help all this, his little boy [Theobald Purcell, later Baron of Loughmoe], who was a towardly scholar, is now debarred from the school, to the end his rudeness and ignorance may give way hereafter to their [Richard ’ s enemies ’] designments against them, as they have done to himself; he [Richard] having been at the study of laws, and having been compelled by the poverty of his parents (occasioned by the extremity used towards them) to leave it, so that he sees even before his eyes the end of his life and fortune···Those who procured my noble Lord of Ormond [the Protestant Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond] to persecute his father and mother [the

¹⁰⁷ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1606-1608)*, pp. 30-31, 113-115. Purcello Abo, meaning Purcell Forever in Irish, was a family battle cry.

¹⁰⁸ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1606-1608)*, pp. 10-11, 46.

¹⁰⁹ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1603-1606)*, pp. 471-472.

¹¹⁰ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1606-1608)*, p. 47.

*Catholic Thomas and Joan Purcell, Baron and Baroness of Loughmoe] from time to time, by long imprisonment and such other extremities, and to take a principal part of their lands to his own hands, continue their old malice...*¹¹¹

In the end, a Tipperary jury, deliberating all day, acquitted him of murder and convicted him of manslaughter. He retained his lands. He died in 1624 and was succeeded at Loughmoe by his son Theobald.

Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, sometimes called Tibbot Purcell, was a Member for Tipperary in the House of Commons of the 1634 Irish Parliament.¹¹² Along with four Irish peers of the Butler family (the Viscount Mountgarret, the Viscount Ikerrin, the Baron Dunboyne, and the Baron Cahir), Theobald was a leader in Munster of the rebellion of the Confederate Catholics.¹¹³ The rebellion began in 1641, when Catholic gentry, while still professing loyalty to King Charles I, attempted to seize control of the English administration in Ireland. The attempt failed, and the rebellion then devolved into a war which pitted an alliance of Catholics, both Gaelic Irish and Old English, against recent English Protestant and Scottish Presbyterian settlers.

At the time, King Charles I was in a greatly weakened position due to his conflict with the English Parliament. This conflict would lead to the English Civil War, as a result of which the monarchy would be overthrown, the King would be executed, and Oliver Cromwell would seize power in England. The main goal of the Confederate Catholics during this chaotic period was to obtain concessions for their co-religionists.

The royalist forces, consisting of 40,000 infantry and 3600 cavalry and commanded by James Butler, 12th Earl of Ormond (later 1st Duke of Ormonde), were unsuccessful in subduing the Confederate Catholic Army. In December 1641, Theobald and his brother Thomas Purcell successfully laid siege to Cashel in Co. Tipperary, and Thomas was described in one account as "one of the chief murderers of the English residents of Cashel" on New Year's Day 1642.¹¹⁴

The Supreme Council of the Irish Confederation, consisting predominantly of members of Old English families and professing loyalty to King Charles I until his execution in 1649 and to King Charles II thereafter, functioned as the *de facto* government of a considerable part of Ireland until ultimately crushed by Cromwell.

¹¹¹ *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1606-1608)*, p. 29. Richard Purcell had begun the study of law because, as a younger son, he was not expected to succeed as Baron of Loughmoe.

¹¹² *Calendar of State Papers – Ireland (1633-1647)*, p. 66.

¹¹³ In a report dated 28 December 1641, the Lord Justices stated that “most of the county of Tipperary are in rebellion, led therein by the Baron of Logmoe (Purcell)…” Dermot F. Gleeson, *The Last Lords of Ormond* (revised edition, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, 2001), p. 78, citing *Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde* (New Series), vol. ii, pp. 48-49.

¹¹⁴ Sir Michael O’ Dwyer, *The O’ Dwyers of Kilnamanagh* (London, 1933), pp. 138, 148-151.

In January 1649, the Parliamentary Government of Cromwell beheaded King Charles I in London and declared a republic, which would last until 1660. In 1649, when Cromwell, at the head of an army, invaded Ireland, the leaders of the Confederate Catholics, including Major General Patrick Purcell, combined forces with Ormond's army to constitute a united royalist force against Cromwell. The royalists were defeated.

As recorded in a 17th century Funeral Entry by Thomas Preston, Ulster King of Arms, Dublin Castle, Theobald Purcell married the Hon. Ellen Butler, daughter of James Butler, 2nd (by patent) and 12th (by summons) Baron Dunboyne by his wife Margaret O'Brien, daughter of Conor, Earl of Thomond.¹¹⁵ Theobald died in 1644 and was succeeded by his son, James.

James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was born in 1622. He married his Roman Catholic kinswoman, Lady Elisabeth Butler (died 6 December 1675), granddaughter of Walter Butler, 11th Earl of Ormond and sister of James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde and 12th Earl of Ormond, K.G., sometime viceroy of Ireland (with patents as Duke of Ormonde in both the English and Irish peerages).¹¹⁶ Lady Elisabeth's parents and siblings were all Roman Catholics, with the exception of her brother, the 1st Duke, who, as was the custom for the head of the Butler family, had been raised an Anglican, in order to protect the family's lordship and lands. James Purcell and Lady Elisabeth were related in several ways, but, through his Dunboyne mother, they were fourth cousins, both of them being fifth in descent from Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond. James Purcell died at age 30 on 13 December 1652 and was succeeded by his son, Nicholas. The cause of his death is unknown, but it occurred during the very bloody Cromwellian devastation of Ireland. The disruption caused by the killings perpetrated by the Cromwellian forces led to plague and famine. Death from disease and exposure was common for gentry who had been dispossessed by Cromwell and exiled to Connaught in the west of Ireland. All land held by Catholics in Ireland was expropriated by Cromwellian statute in 1652. The practice of Catholicism was banned, and Catholic priests were killed upon capture. A 17th century estimate put the total of deaths during the Cromwellian wars in Ireland at 600,000, out of a population of some 1.4 million. A modern calculation estimated it to be 200,000 deaths out of a population of 2 million.

By the 1650s, the distinction between Gaelic and Old English families was effectively replaced by the dismissive and all-encompassing Cromwellian term "Irish papist."

¹¹⁵ "Some Funeral Entries of Ireland," *Journal of Memorials of the Dead of Ireland*, vol. 7 and 8, pp. 49-50. Another Purcell marriage with the Dunboyne Butlers in this period was that of Redmund Purcell, gent., of Co. Kilkenny to Margaret Butler, daughter of Thomas Butler (died 1640) of Widdingstowne, Co. Tipperary by his wife Ellen, daughter of Pierce Butler of Monnphory, Esq. This Thomas Butler was the eldest son of John Butler of Widdingstowne, Co. Tipperary, a son of Edmund Butler, 1st (by patent) and 11th (by summons) Baron Dunboyne. *Ibid.*, vols. 7 and 8, pp. 45-46.

¹¹⁶ *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland* (London, 1754), vol. II, pp. 27-28, 252, 258; Donald Jackson, *Intermarriage in Ireland, 1550-1659* (Ireland, 1970), p. 52.

” This designation, however, was an accurate one. Families like the Purcells of Loughmoe, as Catholics long settled in Ireland and preoccupied with resisting encroachments by recent Protestant settlers from Britain, had come to view themselves as thoroughly Irish.

Nicholas Purcell, the infant Baron of Loughmoe, was born in 1651, the year preceding his father’s death. His Loughmoe estate of 11,500 acres was confiscated, and he, his mother, and his sisters were transplanted to Connaught.¹¹⁷ His childhood was one of deprivation, and he no doubt witnessed horrific events as an impressionable boy deprived of his father and his home. By the time the Cromwellian regime was overthrown and the monarchy was restored in 1660, Nicholas was 9 years old.

All the many Catholic lines of the Purcell family holding landed estates in Ireland lost them in 1652. At the Restoration, Nicholas Purcell was much luckier than most. Due to the fact that his powerful maternal uncle, the 1st Duke of Ormonde (who became viceroy of Ireland in 1662), was named as his guardian, Nicholas Purcell was able to regain virtually his entire Loughmoe estate after 1660.¹¹⁸ The damage to Loughmoe Castle and the destruction of the family archives in the 1650s were extensive, and the castle was described as “destroyed.” Major repairs were necessary, but by 1665 only a portion of the castle had been made habitable, because in that year a tax was paid on only five hearths, although there were many, many more in the castle.¹¹⁹ Nearly every room had a fireplace.

At the death of King Charles II in 1685, the throne passed to his brother, King James II, who had converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism during the exile of the royal family in France in the 1650s. James II was England’s first Catholic monarch since Queen Mary I (elder daughter of Henry VIII), and he would be its last. James II quickly relaxed the laws restricting Catholics from holding certain government positions. Thus, Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, received a cavalry commission in 1686. In 1687, he became a captain of the Duke of Ormonde’s Regiment of Horse. In 1686, he had been sworn of the Irish Privy Council, along

¹¹⁷ Rev. St. John D. Seymour, “Family Papers Belonging to the Purcells of Loughmoe,” *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. III (1914), pp. 128, 191-203, 376-377.

¹¹⁸ Rev. St. John D. Seymour, “Family Papers Belonging to the Purcells of Loughmoe,” *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. III (1914), pp. 128-129, 191-192. There survives an interesting letter dated 5 February 1679 which describes “Purcell” (presumably, Nicholas Purcell) socializing with the Duke of Ormonde (then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) and his younger son the Earl of Arran at Dublin Castle (or perhaps Kilkenny Castle): “Lords Dungan, Clanrickard, Dillon and Netterville, Purcell, Dempsey, Luttrell and many more with Sheldon, an English papist . . . notwithstanding the proclamation for going out of town and not coming into the Castle, are every night with the Duke and Arran at play till 12, 1, 2, 3 in the night and then come through all the gates with their coaches, give the word to the Guards and, if stopped, draw upon them and hector them.” *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic (1679-1680)*, pp. 71-73.

¹¹⁹ *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656 – County of Tipperary*, ed. by Robert C. Simington (Dublin, Stationary Office, 1931), vol. I, p. 69; Rev. St. John D. Seymour, “Family Papers Belonging to the Purcells of Loughmoe,” *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. III (1914), pp. 194-195; Thomas Laffan, *Tipperary’s Families: Hearth Money Rolls for 1665-6-7* (Dublin, 1911), p. 17.

with two Catholic kinsmen, both peers of the Butler family, Viscount Ikerrin and Viscount Galmoy. He also represented Tipperary in the House of Commons of the 1689 Irish Parliament.¹²⁰

King James II, although very unpopular in England as a Catholic, was not immediately viewed as a mortal threat to the Protestant succession. This was because those next in the line of succession to the throne were his two daughters, Mary (who would become Queen Mary II in a joint reign with her husband William III) and Anne (who would become Queen Anne), both of whom were Anglicans. They were his daughters by his first wife, who died in 1671. But in June 1688 King James II's second wife gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward Stuart, Prince of Wales, who was baptized a Catholic and automatically, as a son, became next in the line of succession to his father. This caused an uproar within the Protestant establishment of England, as it presaged the end of the Protestant succession and the future rule of a Catholic dynasty. The English Parliament acted quickly to depose James II in late 1688. James II, his queen, and the infant Prince of Wales fled to France on 23 December 1688. In February 1689, the English Parliament installed his daughter Mary and his son-in-law William of Orange as co-monarchs. The overthrow of James II was met with fury in Catholic Ireland, which viewed him as the legitimate king.

From his exile in France, James II plotted to regain his throne first by taking control of the government in Catholic Ireland and then by using Ireland as a base to launch an invasion of Britain. Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was a committed Jacobite, as the followers of James II were called. As stated earlier, this term derived from the Latin word *Jacobus*, meaning James.

In 1689, Nicholas Purcell raised a regiment of dragoons for the Irish Army of King James II and served as its colonel. It was composed principally of his kinsman and tenants.¹²¹

Purcell's regiment fought in the 1689 siege of Derry, when Nicholas Purcell had his horse shot from under him while riding behind his Jacobite kinsman, Lieutenant

¹²⁰ *Manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormond* (London, Historical Manuscripts Commission), vol. I (1895), p. 413 and vol. 7 (New Series), p. 423; *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic (1687)*, p. 339; John D'Alton, *Illustrations Historical and Genealogical of King James' s Irish Army List (1689)*, 2nd edition (1861), vol. II, p. 274.

¹²¹ For details of Purcell's Dragoons, later Purcell's Horse, see Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on the regiment; John D'Alton, *Illustrations Historical and Genealogical of King James' s Irish Army List, 1689* (2nd ed., 1861), vol. I, pp. 271, 272, 278-281; John T. Gilbert, *Jacobite Narrative of the War in Ireland, 1688-1691* (Barnes & Noble, New York, 1971), pp. 239-240; and Major Hugh Devereux Purcell, *Purcell's Dragoon Regiment* (privately published, The Purcell Foundation, 1981). I am grateful to Dr. Harman Murtagh, Ph.D., President Emeritus of the Military History Society of Ireland, for kindly reviewing my essay and making helpful suggestions and also for sharing portions of his unpublished manuscript pertaining Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment. I also thank him for showing me the Aghrim battlefield in June 2015.

Colonel Edmund Butler (later 6th Viscount Mountgarret).¹²² In July 1689, some 400 dragoons of Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment sailed aboard French frigates from Carrickfergus to Scotland, where they fought dismounted under the Jacobite leader, Viscount Dundee, in the battle of Killiecrankie.¹²³ The historian Dr. Harman Murtagh has written that the regiment's bravery at Killiecrankie was praised and its charge was compared to a herd of wild cattle.¹²⁴ After returning to Ireland, Colonel Purcell converted the remnants of his dragoons into a regiment of horse consisting of six troops.

At the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690, Purcell's Horse formed part of the reserve of which King James II took personal command.¹²⁵ Later that year, during the first siege of Limerick, Colonel Nicholas Purcell, at the head of 150 cavalymen, engaged the Williamite cavalry in a rough and vicious fight in which the enemy commander was killed. One unverifiable account of the events of Limerick reports:

*Whilst the guns and rams were thus engaged day by day bellowing against walls and towers, and showering shells and shot upon the houses, Colonel Nicholas Purcell and his companions made a hazardous sortie by night which so confused the besiegers that they mistook friend for foe, and continued to slaughter each other till the daylight pointed them out their stupid mistake. The havoc thus caused had a depressing effect on [King] William, and subsequently had much to do with inducing him to raise the siege.*¹²⁶

In late 1690, as the Jacobite fortunes continued to ebb, Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was a leading member of a dissident faction of the Irish Army. This faction wanted the distinguished Jacobite officer, Brigadier Patrick Sarsfield (created Earl of Lucan in 1690 or 1691 by King James II), to lead the Irish Army and viewed James II's Irish viceroy, the Duke of Tyrconnell, as, at best, too old and incompetent. They also believed that the authority that James II had given in Ireland to his illegitimate son, the Duke of Berwick, was too broad, in the light of the latter's youth and inexperience. Berwick was only 20 years old.

¹²² Edmund Butler, 6th Viscount Mountgarret was the father-in-law of Anne Purcell, Viscountess Mountgarret, wife of his son the 9th Viscount and daughter of Major Toby Purcell of Ballymartin, Co. Kilkenny. The 6th Viscount's sons were successively the 7th, 8th, and 9th Viscounts.

¹²³ Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on the regiment; Major Hugh Devereux Purcell, *Purcell's Dragoon Regiment* (privately published, The Purcell Foundation, 1981); Diarmuid Murtagh, "The Jacobite Horse," *The Irish Sword*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1952-3), p. 318; J.G. Simms, *Jacobite Ireland 1685-1691* (London, 1969), p. 69; Edward B. Powley, *The Naval Side of King William's War* (London, 1972), p. 242; "Archives Nationales," *Analecta Hibernica*, vol. XXI (Dublin, Stationary Office, 1959), pp. 183, 184; Cecil Davis Milligan, *History of the Siege of Londonderry, 1689* (Belfast, 1951), p. 209; and Patrick Macrory, *The Siege of Derry* (London, 1980), p. 252.

¹²⁴ Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment.

¹²⁵ Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment.

¹²⁶ Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)*, (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 29.

When Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Brigadier Henry Luttrell and others voiced their misgivings to the Duke of Berwick, the Duke proposed that he send a deputation of them to France to discuss the matter with King James. Berwick's true purpose, however, as he wrote in his memoirs, was to have his father, King James II, prevent Purcell and Luttrell from returning to Ireland.

James II received the delegation at St. Germain, his castle near Paris, and they accompanied James II to Versailles, where their King presented them to King Louis XIV. King James declined to remove Tyrconnel and also declined to prevent Purcell and Luttrell from returning to Ireland.¹²⁷

The Duke of Berwick described the entire episode in his memoirs:

Brigadier Luttrell has been one of the principal instigators of this business, and shewed, in the sequel, what he was capable of; for, after the battle of the Boyne, the Duke of Tyrconnel being again become Vice-Roy of Ireland, by the departure of the King, Luttrell was perpetually speaking ill of Tyrconnel, and inflaming every body against him. He contrived to incense the principal people of the nation to such a degree, that one day Sarsfield came to me from them, and after engaging me to secrecy, told me, that being convinced of the treachery of Tyrconnel, they had resolved to put him in arrest; and therefore he was to propose to me from them, that I should take upon me the command of the kingdom. I made him a short answer: that I was astonished they should dare to make such a proposition to me; that acting against the Vice-Roy, in any manner, was high treason; and consequently, if they did not give over their cabals, I should become their enemy, and acquaint the King and Tyrconnel. My speech made an impression upon them, and prevented the execution of their designs. After the departure of Tyrconnel for France, Sarsfield, Simon Luttrell, brother to the Brigadier, and Brigadier Dorrington, came to me at Limerick, from the general assembly of the nation, to tell me, they had reason to suspect, that Tyrconnel would not represent their wants with sufficient force to the court of France; and therefore they begged of me to take measures for the doing of it myself. My answer was, that I was astonished they dared to hold such assemblies without my permission; that I forbid them to hold any for the future, and that the next morning I would acquaint them with my intentions respecting the matter they had spoken to me upon. Accordingly I summoned all the principal Lords, as well of the clergy as laity, and all the military officers, down to the Colonels inclusive, to attend me. I made them a speech nearly to the same purpose as I had done the night before; but to shew how well I was inclined, I said, that to oblige them, I was willing to send such persons as they should approve of, to France, in order to represent their real conditions and necessities. I proposed to them the Bishop of Corke, the two Luttrells, and

¹²⁷ Sir Charles Petrie, Bart., *The Great Tyrconnel: A Chapter in Anglo-Irish Relations* (Dublin, Mercer Press, 1972), pp. 241-241, citing the Duke of Berwick, *Memoirs* (London, 1779), vol. I, pp. 78-83; Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 197.

Colonel Purcell. My choice was unanimously approved; and a few days after I dispatched my deputies; at the same time I sent Brigadier Maxwell, a Scotchman, to explain to the King [James II] my reasons for appointing this deputation, and to beg of him not to suffer either Brigadier Luttrell or Colonel Purcell to return; that they were the two most dangerous incendiaries, and I had chosen them on purpose to get them out of the way. When these gentlemen were got on board, they conceived a suspicion that Maxwell might be charged with some instructions relative to them, for which reason they proposed to throw him overboard; but were prevented by the Bishop and the elder Luttrell. The first was a prelate of distinguished piety; the other was of an obliging disposition, and always appeared to me to be a man of honour. Notwithstanding Maxwell's representations, the King permitted these gentlemen to return to Ireland. Tyrconnel consented to it; but he had reason to repent of it after. As they had apprehensions of being imprisoned, they caused it to be insinuated to the King, that the Irish would retaliate upon me for whatever treatment they might receive; and this consideration determined the King to let them come back to Ireland.¹²⁸

Purcell's Regiment of Horse, 350-strong, fought on the left wing in the Battle of Aughrim in July 1691, the decisive Jacobite defeat in Ireland. The Jacobite Army then retreated to Limerick, which the Williamite Army began to siege.¹²⁹

In September 1691, Patrick Sarfield, Earl of Lucan and Colonel Nicholas Purcell, along with Sir Toby Butler, Solicitor General of Ireland, and Piers Butler, Viscount Galmoy, were among the Jacobite leaders who negotiated the Treaty of Limerick with the victorious Williamites. Purcell generally discouraged his men from migrating to France, although 150 members of his regiment nonetheless sailed to Brest.¹³⁰

In 1691, Colonel Nicholas Purcell was attainted, along with thirteen Purcell kinsmen.¹³¹ He lost his Loughmoe estate. He then applied for and was granted on 25 May 1692 a pardon and restoration of his properties, under the provisions of the Treaty of Limerick, which he had helped to negotiate and which he signed.¹³² By 1693, however, Loughmoe Castle was still occupied by a Williamite garrison, and Nicholas was residing in England with his family. In 1696, he was living in St. James

¹²⁸ *Memoirs of the Marshal Duke of Berwick*, "written by himself," translated from the French, vol. I (London, 1779), pp. 79-83.

¹²⁹ Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment.

¹³⁰ Dr. Harman Murtagh's unpublished research on Colonel Nicholas Purcell's regiment.

¹³¹ John D'Alton, *Illustrations Historical and Genealogical of King James's Irish Army List, 1689* (London, 1861), pp. 243-244.

¹³² Simms, J.G., "Irish Jacobites", *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 22 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1960), p. 101.

's Street, London and received indications that William III might wish to favor him and reverse his attainder.¹³³

On 1 July 1700, still in England but about "to return to Ireland with an indigent, numerous family, and being now deprived of his dwelling house," Colonel Purcell petitioned the King to restore Loughmoe Castle to him, which English soldiers had occupied since 1693: "They have rendered the house uninhabitable and have done more than £2000 worth of damage."¹³⁴ (Loughmoe Castle had been taken away from the Purcells and occupied twice during the 17th century, first by the Cromwellians and then by the Williamites. The destruction which the family archive suffered during these periods can easily be imagined.)

Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe lived his remaining years in very straitened circumstances at Loughmoe Castle, on what remained of the old Loughmoe estate. As a Catholic, he had to petition in 1705 for permission to carry a gun, a case of pistols and a sword.¹³⁵ In 1714, on the rumor of a Jacobite rising, he was obliged to surrender his arms and horses; he was detained at Clonmel Gaol in 1715 at the time of the Jacobite rising in Britain. In a letter to his wife's brother Viscount Kenmare penned from Loughmoe on 16 August 1720, Nicholas wrote of his sore eyes, unkept promises, family matters and racing.¹³⁶

The writer of a surviving state document recommended in 1693 that Nicholas and his brother-in-law Viscount Kenmare be given government pensions on the condition that they keep the government informed of any Jacobite activities. No pension, however, was granted. The letter stated:

···the Irish nobility and gentry···being so extremely poor, and their estates being for the most part waste, which, with other hardships they meet with, render their condition and thoughts desperate···It is thought that if the King [William III] would give some reasonable pensions to Lord Kilmore [sic – it should be Kenmare] and Colonel Nicholas Purcell, nothing could be transacted in the province of Munster to the prejudice of the peace of that kingdom but what they would either prevent or discover.¹³⁷

¹³³ *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1693*, pp. 279-280; *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1694-5*, pp. 438-439; *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1697*, p. 95; *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol. X (1693-6), pp. 1412, 1415 and vol. XI (1696-7); John D'Alton, *Illustrations Historical and Genealogical of King James' s Irish Army List, 1689* (2nd ed., 1861), vol. I, p. 276.

¹³⁴ *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1700-2*, p. 78.

¹³⁵ *Manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormonde*, (London, Historical Manuscripts Commission), vol. II (1899), pp. 476, 480.

¹³⁶ *The Kenmare Manuscripts*, ed. by Edward MacLysaght (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1970), p. 20.

¹³⁷ *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1693*, p. 106.

Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, died in poverty at Loughmoe Castle on 4 March 1722.¹³⁸ His widow Ellis Browne (daughter of Sir Valentine Browne, Bart., who had received a Jacobite peerage from King James II as Viscount Kenmare) was still living in the castle in 1724 and was described as “penniless.”¹³⁹ They had no son, and after Ellis’ s death in 1737 Loughmoe Castle passed out of the Purcell family.

One writer reported that he had first visited Loughmoe Castle circa 1830 and was told that the “lineal descendant of the Baron of Loughmoe was then earning his bread as a common day labourer in the neighbourhood.”¹⁴⁰ Whether the senior heir of the Purcells of Loughmoe was a day laborer in the early 19th century may or may not be correct. What seemed fairly typical in 18th century Ireland, however, was that, when a Catholic gentry family remained in the general vicinity of their holdings after being dispossessed, the local Catholic population, based on oral tradition, would know who the senior heir of the family was for two or more generations, and perhaps even longer, after the dispossession. In respect of the Purcells of Loughmoe, the senior heirs over the generations would have been cousins of Nicholas Purcell, because the latter had no brothers. It is therefore intriguing that in a local newspaper in 1770 notice was given of the death at Athy of James Purcell, commonly called Baron Purcell of Loughmoe. His will specified that “[m]y body should be preceded to the grave by twelve of the best performers on the small pipes which can conveniently be had, to whom I will give one crown each for their trouble in playing my favourite tune of Granuail.”¹⁴¹ Surviving records do not establish who this James Purcell was and what his degree of kinship was with Nicholas Purcell.

Part Three: An account of several junior lines of the Purcells of Loughmoe

The Purcells had their seat at Loughmoe for over 500 years. As might be expected from a family that generation after generation tended to produce many sons, there were numerous offshoots of the Purcells of Loughmoe. An abbreviated history of

¹³⁸ For a fuller treatment of the eventful life of Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, with citations to authority, see Brien Purcell Horan, *The Purcell Family in Ireland, 1185-1985* (written 1983), pp. 25-33.

¹³⁹ *The Kenmare Manuscripts*, edited by Edward MacLysaght (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1970), p. 25. Ellis Browne was Nicholas Purcell’ s second wife. His first wife was Hon. Rose Trevor, daughter of Viscount Dungannon. See T.C.D. Ms. 1216, folio 81, Trinity College, Dublin. A daughter of his first marriage, Frances Purcell, was at the exile court of King James II at St. Germain near Paris in 1693. The baptismal register of St. Germain-en-Laye records that Françoise Pourcell (Frances Purcell), daughter of Nicholas Purcell and Rose Trevor, and Beville Skelton, Comptroller of the Household of the King of England [the exiled James II], stood as sponsors at the baptism of Frances Read in that year. As Jacobites, Beville Skelton, Esq., of Dublin and Mary Skelton, alias O’ Bryan, his wife, had been indicted and outlawed for high treason against William and Mary in Ireland. Simms, J.G., “Irish Jacobites” , *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 22 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1960), p. 65.

¹⁴⁰ John Davis White, *Anthologia Tipperariensis* (Cashel, 1892), p. 130.

¹⁴¹ Kevin Whelan, “An Underground Gentry? Catholic Middlemen in Eighteenth Century Ireland,” *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, vol. 10 (1995), p. 21 and footnote 63.

the Purcell family cannot treat all of the many junior lines. Instead, by way of example, this essay will briefly describe several cadet lines with their seats in or near the Co. Kilkenny barony of Fassadinin. The vast majority of the many Purcell lines held lands in either Co. Tipperary or Co. Kilkenny. The barony of Fassadinin had an especially high concentration of Purcell family seats.

To summarize the genealogy briefly, the Purcells of Loughmoe, the senior line of the family, spawned, among many other junior lines, the Purcells of Ballyfoyle. One of the cadet lines of the Ballyfoyle Purcells was in turn the Purcells of Foulksrath Castle. James Purcell of the Garrans (died 1552) was a younger son of Philip Purcell of Foulksrath Castle. The descendants of James of the Garrans, who had at least nine sons, held numerous estates in the barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny in the 17th century. Among them were the Purcells of Conahy Castle. The head of the Conahy line at the end of the 17th century was Captain John Purcell, gentleman, of Conahy Castle, who was outlawed as a Jacobite after 1691 and lost his properties. He had served as an officer of the regiment of horse commanded by Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe. He died in 1711, leaving five sons.

Each of these branches of the Purcell family will be examined below, with a very short description of the origins of each and of how badly each fared in the 17th century. Much more could be written about each branch. Among the many other junior Purcell lines not discussed in this essay are the Purcells of Lismaine, the Purcells of Esker, the Purcells of Ballymartin, the Purcells of Ballyragget (all of the latter lines having their seats in the barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny), the Purcells of Clone, Co. Kilkenny, the Purcells of Croagh, Co. Limerick and the Purcells of Crumlin, Co. Dublin.¹⁴²

The Purcells of Fennel and Ballyfoyle

The Purcells of Fennel, Co. Kilkenny, later of Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny, were one of the most prominent cadet branches of the Purcells of Loughmoe, Co. Tipperary, and they held extensive lands in the adjoining Kilkenny baronies of Fassadinin and Gowran.

It is clear that the Ballyfoyle Purcells descended from one of the Barons of Loughmoe, but from which particular baron is unclear. A pedigree in Ms. 23 D 17 (790), a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin and compiled from the ancient annals by the annalist O'Clery (Cú Choigríche O Cléirigh), one of the Four Masters, states that the Purcells of Ballyfoyle descended from Walter Purcell, a descendant of Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe (died 1240) and a younger brother of Philip Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe; according to the O'Clery manuscript, Walter of Ballyfoyle paid annual rent for Ballyfoyle in the amount of half a mark to

¹⁴² These Purcell lines are treated in Brien Purcell Horan, *The Purcell Family in Ireland, 1185-1985* (written 1983).

his brother Philip of Loughmoe.¹⁴³ Similarly, a 1637 Funeral Certificate prepared by the Ulster King of Arms and pertaining to Robnet Purcell of Foulksrath, head of a cadet line of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle, described his ancestor Geoffrey Purcell as a second son of the Baron of Loughmoe.¹⁴⁴ Finally, the historian Eric St. John Brooks, a formidable expert of the period, was of the view that the Purcells of Ballyfoyle descended from a younger son of Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe.¹⁴⁵ This younger son, who was named Hugh, would thus have been a brother of Sir John Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (alive in 1270).

Which of these three descents is the accurate one is unknown. It is indeed possible that all three are accurate. There was constant intermarriage between various lines of the Purcell family over the centuries, as a result of which these branches often remained more closely related to each other in actual fact than a consideration of strict patrilineal descent would indicate.

Simon Purcell of Fennel held one knight's fee in Fennel, of the Butler barony of Gowran, in 1306.¹⁴⁶ He is the first Purcell of Fennel of whom records survive. In circa 1404, Thomas Purcell of Fennel, son of Maurice Purcell of Fennel, son of Walter Purcell obtained the castle and lands of Clogharinka.¹⁴⁷ The Purcells of Fennel, later of Ballyfoyle, then had their seat at Clogharinka Castle in the barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny for many years and would hold that castle through the 17th century. Later their principal seat became Ballyfoyle Castle in the barony of Gowran, Co. Kilkenny, with Clogharinka Castle likely serving as the dower house.

Philip Purcell of Ballyfoyle succeeded to the Ballyfoyle estates prior to 1586 and held Clogharinka *in capite* from the Crown in return for knight's service.¹⁴⁸ He

¹⁴³ Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin and containing a pedigree of the Purcells of Loughmoe, is reproduced in "The O' Clery Book of Genealogies," Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85.

¹⁴⁴ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

¹⁴⁵ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny, 13th-15th Century* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 183 (Footnote 12) and 262-264.

¹⁴⁶ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny, 13th-15th Century* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), p. 263; *The Red Book of Ormond*, ed. by Newport B. White (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932), p. 37.

¹⁴⁷ *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery, Ireland*, vol. I, p. 114; Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), p. 455; Brien Purcell Horan, *The Purcell Family in Ireland, 1185-1985* (written 1983), pp. 36-37.

¹⁴⁸ Clogharinka would logically have been held by the Purcells from the Earls of Ormond. When and how the Purcells managed to change their status to that of holding Clogharinka directly from the King in return for knight's service are unclear. This tenure *in capite* explains why the head of the Ballyfoyle line of the Purcells was sometimes referred to as the Baron of Ballyfoyle. Those holding directly from the King in return for knight's service often claimed the status of feudal barons. Rev. William Healy theorized that the Purcells of Ballyfoyle may have accomplished this change in tenure during the chaos of the War of the Roses. The Earls of Ormond, who were for the most part absent from Ireland during this period, backed the Lancastrian side, whilst the

married Elizabeth Cantwell. He died in 1601, leaving a 17 year old son, Edmund.¹⁴⁹ Edmund Purcell of Ballyfoyle was educated at Trinity College, Dublin.¹⁵⁰ Because he was such a large landowner in Co. Kilkenny, provision was made for Edmund's education in "the English religion and habits." Edmund, however, refused to conform and remained Roman Catholic. His name was one of the first on the 1610/1611 list of "relievers and maintainers of Priests, Commissaries, Friars and Jesuits" forwarded to the Government from the County and City of Kilkenny.¹⁵¹ During his tenure, the Ballyfoyle estates became heavily mortgaged. Edmund married Margaret Cantwell. He was decapitated in 1625 by a Blanchville (Blanchfield) sword during a quarrel with Sir Edmund Blanchville.¹⁵²

Following their deaths, Edmund Purcell of Ballyfoyle (died 1625) and Thomas Butler, Viscount Thurles (died 1619),¹⁵³ son and heir of the 11th Earl of Ormond, were named as principals in an alleged Spanish plot to rebel against King James I. According to the allegations, Viscount Thurles was to command 1500 men, which included 400 men at Kilkenny Castle under the command of Edmund Purcell.¹⁵⁴

Edmund's son and successor, Philip Purcell (b. circa 1607) of Ballyfoyle Castle, head of the Ballyfoyle line in the mid-17th century, became a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Confederation in the 1640s.¹⁵⁵ He married the Hon. Ellen Butler, daughter of Richard Butler, 3rd Viscount Mountgarret, who was the president of the Supreme Council. Ellen's maternal grandfather was the celebrated Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone.¹⁵⁶ (As stated earlier, the Viscounts Mountgarret descended from a younger son of Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond. At the time of writing in 2020 Piers Butler, the 18th and current Viscount Mountgarret, is generally considered the rightful heir to the 1328 Earldom of Ormond as well as to the 1528 Earldom of Ossory, but he has not yet made his claim.)

administration of Ireland was in the hands of Yorkists who likely deemed the Lords Ormond as traitors and might have been amenable to changes in tenure of this kind. Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), pp. 175-176, 178, 179-180.

¹⁴⁹ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by E. Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-1943), vol. V, pp. 117-118; Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), p. 468.

¹⁵⁰ *Alumni Dublinensis*, ed. by George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir (Dublin, 1935), p. 685.

¹⁵¹ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), p. 468.

¹⁵² Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 468-470.

¹⁵³ The title of Viscount Thurles was the courtesy title used by the eldest son and heir of the Earls of Ormond in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thomas Butler, Viscount Thurles, never succeeded to the earldom, because during the lifetime of his father he drowned at sea in 1619 on a voyage from Ireland to England. A Roman Catholic, he was the father of the Protestant James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde and 12th Earl of Ormond, and he was the father-in-law of the Catholic James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe. Once the head of the Butler family had been elevated to the rank of Duke or Marquess of Ormonde, his son and heir used the courtesy title of Earl of Ossory.

¹⁵⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland (1625-1632)*, pp. 389-390, 506.

¹⁵⁵ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 471-472.

¹⁵⁶ *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* (1970 ed.), p. 107; *Lodge's Peerage of Ireland* (1789), vol. II, p. 260 (note); Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 471-472.

Cromwell confiscated the enormous Ballyfoyle estates and in 1653 transplanted Philip, as well as 120 of his kinsmen and dependents, to Connaught. At the restoration of Charles II, Philip Purcell only managed to regain a small portion (some 3000 acres) of his estate. Ballyfoyle Castle was not restored, and he had to live instead at Clogharinka Castle.¹⁵⁷

Philip's son and successor Edward Purcell, the last of the line, was said to have been driven to madness and to drink by the loss of his patrimony. He frequently confronted the family of the English Protestant grantee of Ballyfoyle Castle and after assaulting and wounding the grantee's eldest son, Edward had to flee Ireland to London. Edward's maternal first cousin was Richard Bellings, private secretary to King Charles II's consort, Queen Catherine.¹⁵⁸ It is not known if Edward sought Bellings' assistance in London. As the grandson of a Butler viscount, Edward did seek assistance in vain from the head of the Butler family, the 1st Duke of Ormonde, to fund a lawsuit to regain the full Purcell estates. In 1671, in London, he lodged a petition to King Charles II, begging return of the estate which "his predecessors enjoyed for 500 years" and threatening to kill the Duke of Ormonde with his own hands "by sword or pistol." This followed his sudden appearance at Clarendon House, residence of the Duke, where he fought with the porter when denied admission and frightened the Duchess. Within four days, he was confined in the Tower of London and thence a year later in Bethlehem Hospital on being adjudged insane and finally in Newgate. In 1675, upon Purcell's promise to leave the British Isles, a merciful Duke of Ormonde secured his release from Newgate and purchased his cousin a place among the *gens d'armes* of France. He is thought to have died in France before November 1680. Thus ended the long tenure of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle.¹⁵⁹

There was, however, an interesting postscript. Edward Purcell's sister Margaret Purcell, wife of Captain John Powell, managed to obtain possession of Clogharinka Castle sometime after 1669. She had two granddaughters, Alice and Ellen Tirwhit. Ellen Tirwhit married Barnaby Purcell of Kilmurray, Co. Kilkenny. Alice Tirwhit married Major Toby Purcell of Ballymartin, Co. Kilkenny and brought Clogharinka into the possession of the Ballymartin Purcells. Anne Purcell, daughter of Major Toby Purcell and Alice Tirwhit, married Edmund Butler, 9th Viscount Mountgarret, a

¹⁵⁷ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 471-472; Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. IV, pp. 474, 475.

¹⁵⁸ *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* (1963 edition), p. 1745. Bellings' mother, the Hon. Margaret Butler, was, like Edward Purcell of Ballyfoyle's mother, a daughter of the 3rd Viscount Mountgarret.

¹⁵⁹ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 472-474; Thomas Carte, *Life of James Duke of Ormond* (Oxford University Press, 1851), vol. IV, pp. 474-476; *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1671*, p. 422, 425; *Calendar of State Papers – Domestic – 1672-3*, p. 137; *Manuscripts of Marquis of Ormonde* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1904), vol. III, p. 447; Lady Burghclere, *The Life of James First Duke of Ormonde* (London, 1912), vol. II, pp. 210-212.

former Roman Catholic who had conformed to the Church of Ireland in 1736.¹⁶⁰ From Edmund Butler and Anne Purcell descended the subsequent Lords Mountgarret, including the current one.

The Purcells of Foulksrath

A cadet line of the Purcells of Fennel, later of Ballyfoyle, were the Purcells of Foulksrath, barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny, where for many generations they occupied Foulksrath Castle (which still stands and was until recently a youth hostel).

The historian Eric St. John Brooks identified the Foulksrath Purcells as a junior line of the Fennel Purcells in his study, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny, 13th-15th Century*.¹⁶¹ He traced how Foulksrath and Coolcraheen in the barony of Fassadinin had originally been held by the Purcells of Fennel, who by the 15th century had enfeoffed a younger son of Coolcraheen, and from him descended the Purcells of Foulksrath. Dr. Brooks' s conclusion also tallies with the Stearne Ms. No. F.14.18, long held at Trinity College, Dublin, which refers to “*Jefry Purcell de Fokeray, Co. Kilkenny, gen. e familia de Pilton, com. Praedict.*” , which translates as "Geoffrey Purcell of Foulksrath, Co. Kilkenny, gentleman, from the family of Ballyfoyle in the said county."¹⁶²

Foulksrath Castle appears to date from the early 16th century. It is a rectangular keep of five storeys, 44 feet by 32 feet, and contains an impressive spiral staircase.¹⁶³

The penultimate Purcell of Foulksrath to hold the lands and castle was Robnet Purcell, who was born circa 1571, married his cousin Ellenor Purcell (daughter of Pierce Purcell of Lismaine Castle, Co. Kilkenny), erected the Purcell family tomb at Coolcraheen church and fathered a numerous family (including at least 5 sons),

¹⁶⁰ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. III (1905), pp. 455, 474-475; *Lodge' s Peerage of Ireland* (1789), vol. IV, p. 74.

¹⁶¹ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny, 13th-15th Century* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 186 (and Footnote 4) and 188.

¹⁶² Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 197-198, citing the Stearne Manuscript. The word Pilton used in the Stearne Manuscript is an incorrect attempt to translate Ballyfoyle into English. The Irish name for Piltown, Co. Kilkenny (which was never the site of a Purcell family seat) is Baile an Phoill, or Ballypoyle, which means town of the blood. This refers to the battle that was fought there between Lancastrians and Yorkists during the War of the Roses. Ballypoyle has nothing to do with Ballyfoyle. Ballyfoyle, a different location in Co. Kilkenny, was translated from Irish into English as Ballyfoyle.

¹⁶³ William Ball Wright, “On Foulksrath Castle and Loughmoe,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. VII (4th Series, 1885-6), pp. 436, 438-439; J.S. Gibb, “Foulksrath Castle,” *Old Kilkenny Review*, no. 1 (1946-1947), pp. 52-53. Foulksrath Castle was saved from destruction in the 1920s by the highly gifted writer and essayist, the late Hubert Butler (1900-1991), of Maidenhall, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny. The castle was at that time occupied by two sisters named Butler. Hubert Butler, a descendant of the Barons Dunboyne, was the co-founder and chairman of The Butler Society.

before dying at Foulksrath Castle, aged 65 in circa 1635 or 1636.¹⁶⁴ His Funeral Entry dated 1637, in the records of the Ulster King of Arms, described him as Robnet Purcell of “Foulkes Rath,” Co. Kilkenny, descended from Geoffrey Purcell, second son of Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe and as bearing the same coat of arms as the Baron of Loughmoe.¹⁶⁵ Robnet’s daughter Katherine Purcell married James Butler, gentleman, of the Butlers of Neigham, Co. Kilkenny, descendants of Theobald Butler, brother of Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond.

Robnet was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas. Thomas was born in 1596 and would be the last holder of the Purcell estate of Foulksrath. Cromwell confiscated his 554 acres of castles and cabins, and Purcell did not regain these lands at the restoration of Charles II in 1660. One writer speculated that he may have been allowed to remain on a portion of the lands as a tenant and may have been the ancestor of the family of small farmers named Purcell who lived in the bawn of Foulksrath when the Wright family took possession of Foulksrath Castle in 1777.¹⁶⁶

The Purcells of the Garrans

A figure of no small importance in Co. Kilkenny in the first half of the 16th century was James Purcell of the Garrans, Co. Kilkenny.

He was a younger son of Philip Purcell (alive in 1491) of Foulksrath Castle, head of the Foulksrath line of the Purcells. As a younger son, he would not succeed to Foulksrath Castle and had to make his own way. Foulksrath Castle in fact was inherited by Thomas Purcell of Foulksrath (died circa 1526), elder brother of James Purcell of the Garrans.

James Purcell of the Garrans acquired extensive lands in Kilkenny. He obtained his seat, the Garrans, from the lands of the Abbey of Jerpoint, which Henry VIII had dissolved. James also held castles, manors and lands in both Co. Tipperary and Co.

¹⁶⁴ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 195, 198; William Ball Wright, “On Foulksrath Castle and Loughmoe,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. VII (4th Series, 1885-6), p. 435; *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. III (1854-5), p. 214 and vol. II (New Series, 1858-9), p. 155.

¹⁶⁵ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

¹⁶⁶ William Nolan, *Fassadinin: Land Settlement and Society in Southeast Ireland 1600-1850* (Dublin, 1979), p. 68; William Ball Wright, “On Foulksrath Castle and Loughmoe,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. VII (4th Series, 1885-6), pp. 434-435. He is called Thomas Purcell by Canon Carrigan in his *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* (vol. II, p. 198) and by the *Manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormonde*, vol. II (1899), p. 156. But William Ball Wright calls him Philip in his article “On Foulksrath Castle and Loughmoe.” Before the Wright family took possession of Foulksrath Castle in 1777, the castle had been leased from 1747 to 1777 from its Protestant owner by Mr. Thomas Grene, whose mother Anstace Purcell, a Catholic, was the daughter of John Purcell, gentleman, of Lismaine Castle, a descendant of James Purcell of the Garrans, younger son of Philip Purcell, gentleman, of Foulksrath Castle (alive in 1491). Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 198-199; William Ball Wright, “On Foulksrath Castle and Loughmoe,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. VII (4th Series, 1885-6), pp. 432, 437.

Kilkenny, including Lismaine and Clone, Co. Kilkenny. He married Johanna Shortall, daughter of James Shortall of Ballylorcan, “captain of his nation” (that is, head of the Shortall family), and had numerous children, including at least nine sons.

James died on 11 October 1552 and was buried in St. Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny, where his grave monument, with raised old English lettering and bearing the carved coat of arms of the Purcells, is still to be seen. There survives among the Ormond Deeds a fascinating description of life at the Garrans in 1542, including the activities of James’s grooms and porters and sleeping arrangements in the “great house.”

167

The Purcells of Conahy

James Purcell of the Garrans, with extensive land holdings and some nine sons, became the ancestor of numerous Purcell lines among the landed gentry of Co. Kilkenny in the 17th century. These included the Purcells of Lismaine, the Purcells of Clone and the Purcells of Conahy. Lismaine and Clone in fact were among the actual holdings of James Purcell of the Garrans. Lismaine, which guarded the passage of the River Nore, had been occupied by various Purcells since at least 1382.¹⁶⁸ The townland of Conahy (today 1519 acres) borders the townlands of Lismaine (today 316 acres) and Foulksrath (today 355 acres). Foulksrath, Lismaine and Conahy are all in the barony of Fassadinin.

Conahy Castle was “in repayre” at the time of the mid-17th century Down Survey, but nothing remains of it today.¹⁶⁹

In 1620, Richard Purcell (son of Thomas Purcell, son of Pierce Purcell) and James Shortall (of the same family as the wife of James Purcell of the Garrans) held Conahy, Oldtown, Grangemacomb and Garran as tenants of the Earl of Ormond.¹⁷⁰ Like the Garrans, the seat of James Purcell of the Garrans, these four properties had been lands formerly held by the dissolved Abbey of Jerpoint.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Sources on James Purcell of the Garrans: *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-1943), vol. IV, pp. 52, 76, 108, 120, 126, 152, 155, 216, 225-229, 255, 266; Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 199-200, 323-325; *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery, Ireland*, vol. I, p. 201; *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. LXXX (1950), p. 27. The description of life at the Garrans is in *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, vol. IV, pp. 225-229.

¹⁶⁸ William Nolan, *Fassadinin: Land Settlement and Society in Southeast Ireland 1600-1850* (Dublin, 1979), p. 48.

¹⁶⁹ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 194; William Nolan, *Fassadinin: Land Settlement and Society in Southeast Ireland 1600-1850* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 244-245.

¹⁷⁰ *Irish Monastic and Episcopal Deeds*, ed. by Newport B. White (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1936), p. 281. The present writer does not know whether this Garran is the same as the Garrans, the seat of James Purcell of the Garrans (died 1552).

¹⁷¹ See Deed 3638 (26 March 1620), Deed 3698 (20 March 1627), Deed 3760 (20 March 1629), Deed 4090 (22 June 1638), Deed 4537 (2 February 1663), Deed 4753 (19 August 1670), and Deed 4797 (27 October 1672), of the Ormond Deeds, all pertaining to Conahy, Oldtown, and/or Grangemacomb, and also sometimes to Garran or

One of the Co. Kilkenny properties held by James Purcell of the Garrans was called Kilcolman.¹⁷² Kilcolman also passed to the Purcells of Conahy, because the same Richard Purcell of Oldtown, Co. Kilkenny, gentleman, held Conahy, Ballingarran, and Kilcolman under a 1627 lease from Walter Butler, 11th Earl of Ormond, Sir Pierce Butler of Lismalin, Co. Tipperary and one other.¹⁷³ There is today no Kilcolman in Co. Kilkenny. Kilcolman likely refers to Kilcollan, a townland in the barony of Fassadinin. Kilcollan today borders the townlands of Esker and Shanganny.

Richard Purcell of Oldtown was described in a 1620 deed as a “yeoman.”¹⁷⁴ This suggests that Richard was then a relatively small farmer who may have farmed his own land; the Down Survey of c. 1654 states that Oldtown consisted of a thatched house, presumably Richard’s residence, and some cabins.¹⁷⁵ In later Ormond Deeds, however, Richard of Oldtown was described as a gentleman (1627 and 1629).¹⁷⁶ In 1638, he was referred to as Richard Purcell of Conahy (“Connegie”), gentleman¹⁷⁷; it

Shangrange or Ballingarran, all in Co. Kilkenny. Deed 3760 identifies Conahy, Grangemacomb and Oldtown as being lands which, like the Garrans, were formerly owned by the dissolved Abbey of Jerpoint. These are from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler’s unpublished compilation, in the collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

¹⁷² Sources on James Purcell of the Garrans: *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1932-1943), vol. IV, pp. 52, 76, 108, 120, 126, 152, 155, 216, 225-229, 255, 266; Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 199-200, 323-325; *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery, Ireland*, vol. I, p. 201; *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. LXXX (1950), p. 27.

¹⁷³ Deed 3698 (20 March 1627), from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler’s unpublished compilation, in the collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission. One of the properties held by James Purcell of the Garrans was “Synganaghe.” This appears to have been Shanganny, a townland in the barony of Fassadinin. In Ormond Deed 3670, dated 20 March 1629, the 11th Earl of Ormond granted to Richard Purcell, gentleman, of Oldtown a leasehold in Conahy, Oldtown, Grangemacomb and “Shangrange” (again, presumably Shanganny – there is today no Shangrange in that region of Kilkenny). The townland of Shanganny today borders the Fassadinin townlands of Conahy, Foulksrath and Esker, all three of which contained the seats of separate branches of the Purcell family in the 17th century.

¹⁷⁴ Ormond Deed 3638, dated 26 March 1620, from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler’s unpublished compilation, in the collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

¹⁷⁵ William Nolan, Ph.D., *Fassadinin: Land Settlement and Society in Southeast Ireland 1600-1850* (Dublin, 1979), p. 244-245.

¹⁷⁶ Ormond Deeds 2698 (20 March 1627) and 3760 (20 March 1629). These are from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler’s unpublished compilation, in the collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission. In the 1627 deed, Lord Ormond granted a lease of the castles and townlands of Conahy, “Ballingarran” and “Kilcollman” to “Richard Purcell, gent., of Old Town, co. Kilkenny.” In the 1629 deed, Lord Ormond granted him a 21 year lease of Conahy, Oldtown, Grangemacomb and “Shangrange.”

¹⁷⁷ Ormond Deed 4090 (22 June 1638), from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler’s unpublished compilation, in the

appears that, by this time, Conahy Castle (leased from the Earl of Ormond) had become his principal residence.

By 1670, the Purcells of Conahy held some 895 acres in Conahy. This was a relatively small holding compared to the estate of the head of the Purcell family in the late 1640s, James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, consisting of 11,500 acres.

Richard's grandson was John Purcell of Conahy Castle, gentleman. He held some 1327 acres in Conahy and Grangemacomb and 340 acres in Oldtown.¹⁷⁸ At the overthrow of King James II, John Purcell of Conahy became an active Jacobite. He was commissioned as a captain in the regiment of dragoons (later regiment of horse) commanded by the head of the Purcell family, Colonel Nicholas Purcell, last Baron of Loughmoe.

Although Captain John Purcell's descent from a younger son of the Loughmoe line was quite distant, his desire to serve in this regiment is easily explicable. In order to strengthen family solidarity, there were, as stated above, innumerable intermarriages between various Purcell lines. Thus, although due to a paucity of records we do not know who the wives of his father and grandfather were, it is quite possible that Captain John Purcell of Conahy was much more closely related to the senior line of Loughmoe through the female line than his actual patrilineal descent might suggest. (We do know that there were Purcell intermarriages in his own immediate family: his daughter married a John Purcell and his grandson Nicholas married Mary Purcell, daughter of William Purcell, Esq. of Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny.¹⁷⁹ Captain John Purcell's wife Ellen seems herself to have been a Purcell.¹⁸⁰) In addition, the Purcells in their many branches thought of themselves as a single tribe. It is unsurprising that Captain Purcell would want to serve under the command of the head of the House of Purcell.

Captain John Purcell of Conahy commanded a troop of the regiment, consisting of Lieutenant Theobald Purcell of Moyarde, Cornet Hugh Purcell, Quartermaster James

collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

¹⁷⁸ Deed 5203 (25 March 1693), from the Ormond Deeds (Deeds 3579 to Deed 5573, 1614-1714) compiled in a manuscript by Theobald Blake Butler. Theobald Blake Butler's unpublished compilation, in the collection of the National Library, Ireland, summarizes Ormond Deeds not included in the six volume *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

¹⁷⁹ Sir William Betham's Abstracts of the Prerogative Wills of Ireland, p. 101, entry 236, in the Public Record Office, Dublin; Sir Arthur Vicars, ed., *Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland, 1536-1810* (Dublin, 1897), p. 387.

¹⁸⁰ The original 1710 will of Captain John Purcell of Conahy was destroyed in the 1922 fire of the Public Record Office (P.R.O.) in Dublin. There survives an abstract of the genealogical information in the will transcribed by Sir William Betham (d. 1853). Betham gives the name of Captain Purcell's wife as Ellen, without mentioning a surname. Wills usually mentioned the full name of the testator's wife, and Betham usually transcribed the maiden name. The fact that he did not transcribe Ellen's maiden name might mean that the will referred to her as Ellen Purcell, suggesting that her maiden name was likely Purcell.

Wale and twenty-one enlisted soldiers.¹⁸¹ In December 1698, he was named executor of the will of an officer of his old regiment, Lieutenant Theobald Butler of Culecullenduff.¹⁸²

One historian wrote this of the Jacobite cavalry in the 1689-1691 war in Ireland:

*Why were they so good? There were a number of reasons, some moral, some physical. They were to some extent the inheritors of a tradition. The fame subsequently achieved by Cromwell's New Model Army has tended to obscure the fact that the whirlwind charge was an innovation of Stuart cavalry...Story claims that the Irish cavalry were of Anglo-Norman stock...This meant that their tradition of riding involved the use of stirrups and a crupper. They were used to the English seat, as distinct from the Irish one. Furthermore, their tradition included that love of fox-hunting and cross-country riding that made them at home in the saddle...The troopers [that is, the enlisted soldiers] themselves were recruited from a superior social class. The system of recruitment provided that the trooper presented himself with his mount. This meant that he was a man of some substance...*¹⁸³

A royal proclamation issued by King William III early in 1689 called upon the adherents of James II in Ireland to surrender, failing which they would suffer forfeiture of their estates.¹⁸⁴ After the Jacobite defeat in 1691, John Purcell, gent., of “Conyhey” was on the list of persons “who stand indicted and outlawed in the court of the King’s Bench Ireland for high treason by them severally committed against their Majesties King William and Queen Mary in the Kingdom of Ireland since their happy accession to the crown.”¹⁸⁵ According to the historian John D’

¹⁸¹ Major Hugh Devereux Purcell, *Purcell's Dragoon Regiment* (privately published, The Purcell Foundation, 1981).

¹⁸² *The Testamentary Records of the Butler Families in Ireland*, ed. by Rev. Wallace Clare (privately printed, 1932), Record No. 105, p. 19; Major Hugh Devereux Purcell, *Purcell's Dragoon Regiment* (privately published, The Purcell Foundation, 1981), p. 4. Culecullenduff was probably Coolcullen in the barony of Fassadinin.

¹⁸³ Diarmuid Murtagh, “The Jacobite Horse,” *The Irish Sword* (vol. 1, no. 4) (1952-3), p. 321.

¹⁸⁴ Simms, J.G., “Irish Jacobites”, *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 22 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1960), p. 13.

¹⁸⁵ Simms, J.G., “Irish Jacobites”, *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 22 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1960), p. 22. This article (which is at pp. 11-230) reproduces the Irish Jacobite lists in T.C.D. Ms. N.1.13, a manuscript held by Trinity College, Dublin. The reference to the outlawry of John Purcell, gentleman, of “Conyhey,” Co. Kilkenny is at p. 44. Ms. N.1.13 also lists some nine other Jacobite Purcells in Ireland who were outlawed for high treason against William and Mary, including Theobald Purcell of Clone, Co. Kilkenny (of the Purcells of Clone) and Tobias Purcell of “Moyad” (Moyarde), Queens County. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 38, 43, 44, and 61. The manuscript separately mentions two Purcells (including --- Purcell, gent., of Lissmayne [Lismaine], Co. Kilkenny, son of John Purcell of the Purcells of Lismaine) who were indicted and outlawed for high treason against William and Mary “committed in parts beyond the seas,” suggesting that they had fled to the continent. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 85. Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe is not included on the lists of outlaws in Ms. N.1.13, because Tipperary (which had its own palatinate court and did not send in a return to Dublin) is the only county missing from the lists. *Ibid.*, p. 15. Some fifteen Jacobite Purcells applied for and received pardons (and the concomitant right to have their estates restored) under the provisions of the Treaty of Limerick or Treaty of Galway, including John Nicholas Purcell of Loughmoe (adjudicated 25 May 1692), Colonel Robert Purcell of Limerick, Captain John Purcell of Kilkenny (as stated in the main text, this was presumably John Purcell of Conahy), Captain Edmund Purcell of Brownstowne, Co. Tipperary, Captain Patrick Purcell of Dovea, Co. Tipperary, Captain Thomas Purcell

Alton, Captain John Purcell of Conahy and thirteen of his Purcell kinsmen, including Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, were attainted in 1691.¹⁸⁶ Captain Purcell applied for a pardon under the provisions of the Treaty of Limerick, and it was adjudicated and allowed on 22 April 1692.¹⁸⁷

John Purcell died in 1711, because the will of “Purcell, Captn. John of Conihy, co. Kilkenny, Gent.” (to use Sir William Betham’s description of it) was dated 31 December 1710 and probated on 15 May 1711. He left five sons.

It is unclear exactly when Captain John Purcell or his eldest son lost the Conahy lands, which the family leased from James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde, who in the 1690s was a Williamite and anti-Jacobite. (The Duke did not become a Jacobite until 1715.¹⁸⁸) What is clear is that even those former Jacobites who were pardoned and allowed to keep their land typically had very bleak prospects. They were often desperately poor, having spent savings and incurred debt to equip and support themselves, and sometimes their men, during the Jacobite war. Being ostracized as former “traitors” in an increasingly Whig and Protestant society and being barred from the military and the professions, they and their children had few means to better their financial situation, aside from selling crops grown inefficiently on their lands.

The final collapse of the Purcells

of Dovea, Co. Tipperary, and Lieutenant John Purcell of Crumlin, Co. Dublin. *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101, 118, and 128. In addition, Ignatius Purcell, Esq., of Cromlyn [Crumlin], Co. Dublin received somewhat unique treatment in 1692, having his outlawry reversed by special warrant and being pardoned for treason by favor of King William III. *Ibid.*, 131, 134.

¹⁸⁶ John D’ Alton, *Illustrations Historical and Genealogical of King James’ s Irish Army List, 1689* (London, 1861), pp. 243-244.

¹⁸⁷ Simms, J.G., “Irish Jacobites” , *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 22 (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1960), p. 101. The entry mentions Captain John Purcell of Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny, but this presumably refers to John Purcell of Conahy, Co. Kilkenny, who appears to have been the only Jacobite Captain John Purcell in the vicinity.

¹⁸⁸ James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde and 13th Earl of Ormond, K.G., head of the Butler family and a first cousin once removed of Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, had fought in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 as a Williamite colonel, commanding the Queen’s Troop of Horse Guards. Under Queen Anne, he was captain-general and commander-in-chief of Her Majesty’s armed forces in Great Britain and Ireland and viceroy of Ireland. Upon the death of Queen Anne in 1714 and the accession of the House of Hanover, however, he lost his position as captain-general and was eventually accused of treason. He fled to the Continent and became a committed Jacobite. (During the reign of Queen Anne, Ormonde had remained in contact with his exiled Jacobite cousin, Piers Butler, 3rd Viscount Galmoy, whom the dethroned King James II in 1692 had created Earl of Newcastle. Galmoy had commanded a Jacobite regiment of horse at the battles of the Boyne and Aughrim.) Marquis de Ruvigny and Raineval, *The Jacobite Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1904), pp. 128-129. Ormonde became a close and trusted advisor of James II’s son, the Jacobite King James III. In 1730, James III named Ormonde as regent during a period of the Jacobite King’s absence from his court in exile. Marquis de Ruvigny and Raineval, *The Jacobite Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1904), p. 248. In his secret journey from Rome to France in order to lead an invasion of Scotland in 1745, James III’s son Prince Charles Edward, the Jacobite Prince of Wales (“Bonnie Prince Charlie”), in disguise, stayed with Ormonde at the latter’s residence in Avignon, shortly before the latter’s death. James Lees-Milne, *The Last Stuarts* (London, 1983), p. 57.

In a very real sense, the Jacobite defeat in 1691, coming as it did less than half a century after the brutal upheavals of the Cromwellian period, had a cataclysmic effect on the fortunes of Ireland's ancient Catholic aristocracy and gentry, both Old English and Gaelic. It marked the end of an old and deeply rooted culture and way of life. With the exception of a few junior Purcell lines who at the time were Anglican and anti-Jacobite, or who would soon become Anglican, the dozen or two branches of the Purcell family living as Catholic landed gentry in Tipperary, Kilkenny and elsewhere were stripped of their lands. A few managed eventually to regain a very small portion of their former properties, often as simple tenants rather than owners.

The area with perhaps the greatest concentration of separate Purcell landed estates in the 17th century was the barony of Fassadinin in Co. Kilkenny. Sir Walter Purcell, the first Purcell to set foot in Ireland, held Kilmenan in the barony of Fassadinin before 1205.¹⁸⁹ Within Fassadinin during the 17th century lived the Purcells of Foulksrath, the Purcells of Lismaine, the Purcells of Conahy, the Purcells of Esker, and others. And when after the Cromwellian period the Purcells of Ballyfoyle lost Ballyfoyle Castle in the neighboring barony of Gowran, they resumed the use of Clogharinka Castle in the barony of Fassadinin as their principal seat.

In his highly interesting analysis, *Fassadinin: Land, Settlement & Society in South-East Ireland, 1600-1850*, Dr. William Nolan, Ph.D., later a professor at University College Dublin, chose the barony of Fassadinin as the focus of his scholarship. He used the Purcells and the Butlers to analyze the extent of the dispossession of the Old English or Anglo-Norman families of Fassadinin in the 18th century:

Much of the material fabric which characterised the medieval world in which the Anglo-Normans were dominant had disappeared by 1850. Apart from the few who were commemorated in townland names such as Clintstown, Foulksrath, Ballyragget and Suttonsrath, the majority of the early medieval family names had vanished without a trace. The occupiers in 1850 [note: that is, small farmers who were tenants, not landowners] whose surnames denoted their Anglo-Norman ancestry were invariably representative of seventeenth century landowning families such as Purcell and Butler ... The complete absence from the barony of the surnames Blanchville and Archer and the scarcity of occupiers with surnames such as Purcell and Butler adequately reflect the demise of the Anglo-Norman in Fassadinin. The Purcells in 1640 owned approximately one seventh of the barony [of Fassadinin]. [Note: The barony of Fassadinin has an area of 106.6 square miles. Therefore, one seventh of the barony equated to about 15.23 square miles.] In 1850 they

¹⁸⁹ Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 183-184. Later, Mabel Purcell, presumably Sir Walter Purcell's daughter, seems to have received Kilmenan as a marriage portion, for it then passed into the family of her husband, Geoffrey de la Freyne. In the 14th century, some of the extensive de la Freyne lands in Fassadinin were transferred to the Purcells of Fennel, later of Ballyfoyle. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-188.

were not even landowners and only thirty-eight occupiers with this surname were listed in the General Valuation of Rateable property. These held a combined area of 684 acres, and the largest farm held by a Purcell consisted of 84 acres in the hill townland of Coolcullen. The Purcells circa 1640 were predominantly associated with the fertile and attractive lowlands of Fassadinin. They are not found here in 1850. The Valuation Book returns them as occupiers in the Wandesford estate, in the bleak hill country in the east of the barony and in the townland of Knockmajor in south-east Fassadinin. They were completely absent from their ancestral townland of Ballyragget and the sites of long ruined Purcell castles were the only traces of their historical presence here. The distribution of the Butlers, which was the family name of the Ormondes and Mountgarrets, the two most influential landowning families in seventeenth century Fassadinin, reveals a similar pattern.¹⁹⁰

Former Catholic gentry families like the Purcells who remained in Ireland were, in a way, trebly impeded in the 18th century. First, they were deemed to be of rebellious stock, due to various uprisings in Tudor times and to the Confederate Catholic and Jacobite wars of the 17th century. Second, the authorities considered them treasonously disloyal to the reigning King and the House of Hanover and loyal instead to a Stuart pretender “over the water” on the continent. Third, their Catholicism tainted them as being in league with the Pope, who was generally viewed by the authorities as committed to undermining the established Anglican religion of England and Ireland. From 1701 to 1766, as stated earlier, the papacy recognized King James II’s exiled son as James III, rightful King of Great Britain and Ireland, and Catholics in Ireland for the most part accepted this recognition. The anti-Catholic Penal Laws which the Irish government enacted beginning in 1693 sought to prevent these gentry families from ever causing trouble again. The laws barred a Catholic from holding public office, marrying a Protestant, owning firearms or a horse worth more than 5 pounds, serving in the army, being elected to the Irish Parliament, entering the legal profession, leasing land for more than 31 years, or being a teacher. If a Catholic converted to the Anglican Church of Ireland, however, all these restrictions disappeared. The ban on firearms and horses of value was to prevent these dispossessed gentlemen from fomenting another uprising. (The men of these gentry families had for generations been taught to ride, shoot and fence and, as needed, to use these skills as military officers.) When a Catholic died, his lands had to be divided equally among his sons, in order to break up any remaining Catholic estates. But if the eldest son conformed to the Church of Ireland, he could inherit the entire property.

The result was that many Purcells left Ireland to seek their living as officers in the armies of various Catholic kings on the continent, especially in France, Spain and the

¹⁹⁰ William Nolan, Ph.D., *Fassadinin: Land, Settlement & Society in South-East Ireland, 1600-1850* (Geography Publications, Dublin, 1979), pp. 187, 188-189.

Holy Roman Empire. Those Catholic Purcells who remained in Ireland “sunk into obscurity” , a term used to denote the fall from gentleman to small farmer.

A good illustration is provided by a branch of the Purcell family containing both Anglicans¹⁹¹ and Catholics. Colonel Tobias (Toby) Purcell, a prominent anti-Jacobite and a descendant of the Purcells of Rorestown, Co. Tipperary, near Loughmoe, fought as a Williamite officer and prospered after the Jacobite defeat of 1691. He had conformed to the Anglican communion during the reign of King Charles II, if not earlier.¹⁹² Immediately after the Battle of Aughrim in 1691, the decisive defeat of King James II, in which Toby had fought as a lieutenant colonel and executive officer of his infantry regiment, King William III promoted Toby to full colonel and placed him in command of the regiment (the 23rd Regiment of Foot, which became the Royal Welch Fusiliers). He was later the Williamite Governor of Cork. As an Anglican and Williamite, all doors were open to him. But this was not true of his Catholic relations. Toby’s nephew, Major Theobald (Toby) Purcell of Ballymartin Castle, Co. Kilkenny, was the father of John Edmund Purcell, a Catholic, and Anne Purcell, wife of the Hon. Edmund Butler, younger brother of the 8th Viscount Mountgarret. In order to pursue a military career typical of the Purcells, John Edmund Purcell had to leave Ireland and settle in Catholic Austria, where he was accepted as being of gentle birth based on his Purcell ancestry and became a captain in the army of the Holy Roman Emperor by 1757. He married a daughter of General Count Hugh O’ Donnel of the Austrian military. Anne Purcell’s brother-in-law, the 8th Viscount Mountgarret, a Catholic, also had to leave Ireland to pursue a military career; he too served as an Austrian officer and later died without sons. (Anne Purcell’s husband Edmund Butler then succeeded as 9th Viscount Mountgarret in 1742. Originally a Catholic, as stated above, he had conformed to the Anglican communion in 1736.)

Very few Purcells remaining in Ireland conformed to the Anglican communion. The Catholic Purcells of 18th century Ireland had no chance of a traditional military career in Ireland or England. The customary occupations of a gentleman were denied to them. As the 18th century progressed, they tried to navigate life in a new Ireland, where they had been stripped of their ancient lands and position, were exhausted by military defeat and the deaths of loved ones, and were nursing deep grudges against the victors responsible for their humiliation. The Irish author and

¹⁹¹ Anglicans in Ireland were members of the established Church of Ireland.

¹⁹² In 1678, the head of the Butler family, James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde and 12th Earl of Ormond, K.G., wrote of Toby Purcell to his son and heir, Thomas Butler, Earl of Ossory, K.G.: “I believe I shall shortly send you over one Toby Purcell, but as a very valuable present, for he is as honest a creature as lives, very brave and well experienced. I wish him near you on all occasions···I am confident he would make an excellent captain, major or adjutant; he has something of all the languages there in use, and is a Protestant by conviction and not for interest.” *Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde – Historical Manuscripts Commission* (London, HM Stationary Office, 1906), vol. IV (New Series), pp. 172-173. In 1678, Lord Ossory was in command of British forces of the allied army in the Netherlands, where he distinguished himself at the battle of Mons. He died in 1680 at age 46, in the lifetime of his father.

literary critic Seán O' Faoláin described Ireland in the century following the Jacobite surrender after the siege of Limerick in 1691 in very evocative terms:

*It was, just the same, the end. For while Limerick emptied, whether to France or to the woods, Ireland was draining her jugular into the past. It might have been better for her if she had died outright. Instead, she kept it up for a hundred years, the awful slow withering-away of the eighteenth century. Limb by limb she began to rot. Every single historian of that century has spoken of her in terms of some disease, and the best phrase of all says that she was like a body dragging itself about with one half already dead. That dead half was her past, alive only in memory, and rotting even there.*¹⁹³

The Purcells' view of themselves as a single tribe, or, in Irish parlance, a sept, with its deeply rooted ecosystem of frequent intermarriage among various Purcell lines scattered throughout Tipperary and Kilkenny as well in other counties, did not survive the first half of the 18th century.

After the death in 1737 of the widow of the last head of the Purcell family, Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, Loughmoe and Loughmoe Castle passed out of the hands of the family. Because Nicholas was survived only by daughters, the title of Baron of Loughmoe could not pass to or through them. To the extent this feudal title could survive at all apart from ownership of Loughmoe, it would pass within the Purcell family by male primogeniture. But who was the senior male after Nicholas? It is known, for example, that Nicholas Purcell's grandfather, Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, had a younger brother, Thomas. Nicholas Purcell's great-grandfather, Richard Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, also had at least two younger brothers. Who are their descendants? This is an extremely difficult question to answer, due to the frustrating incompleteness of the records of 18th century Catholics.¹⁹⁴ Detailed information on their descendants is lacking. In addition, because the Loughmoe title was not a peerage, there was no need to keep detailed and complete genealogies, because whoever succeeded to the lands and castle of Loughmoe at any given time would become the baron, and his closest relatives at the time all would have known their own place within the pecking order.

By the 19th century, the Purcell family's loss of position in Ireland was complete. According to Griffith's Valuation of Ireland, there were, in circa 1853, 176 heads of

¹⁹³ Sean O' Faolain, *A Life of Daniel O' Connell* (New York, Viking Press, 1938), p. 14.

¹⁹⁴ In the modern era, the late Major Hugh Devereux Purcell (1915-1993) of California, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II, used the title of Baron of Loughmoe in an effort to keep it going, but he would have stepped aside if a more senior descendant were to appear. Major Purcell was a great-grandson of the Irish jurist, Judge Theobald Andrew Purcell (1818-1894), B.A. and M.A. (Trinity College, Dublin, in 1839 and 1866, respectively), Q.C. (1865), J.P., of 71, Harcourt Street, Dublin, who was a County Court judge for Limerick (1874-1894) and whose son John Gervaise Purcell settled in California in the late 19th century. Judge Purcell was a member of the Church of Ireland. See *Thom's Directory of Ireland* (1883 edition); Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography* (1897), vol. II, p.1671; and *Alumni Dublinensis*, edited by George Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir (London, 1924).

household named Purcell in Co. Tipperary and 209 heads of household named Purcell in Co. Kilkenny. This proliferation of descendants is not surprising, when one considers that the Purcells had then been resident in those two counties for more than 600 years. The overwhelming majority of these heads of household held small farms. In Co. Tipperary, there were 45 Purcell heads of household in the barony of Eliogarty, in which Loughmoe, Templemore and Thurles are located. In Co. Kilkenny, the barony with the greatest number of Purcell heads of household (53 in total) was, as might be expected, Fassadinin.¹⁹⁵ Professor William Nolan, Ph.D., the historian of Fassadinin, as quoted previously, wrote that “[t]he occupiers in 1850 whose surnames denoted their Anglo-Norman ancestry were invariably representative of seventeenth century landowning families such as Purcell and Butler.”¹⁹⁶ In the 1850s, as we have seen, these Purcells were tenants, not landowners, and the largest Purcell holding in Fassadinin was a farm of 87 acres.¹⁹⁷

There is little doubt that many members of these numerous Purcell households emigrated during the 19th century, to North America, Britain, Australia and other destinations. The best known Purcell in the United States during the 19th century was the powerful Roman Catholic prelate, Archbishop John Baptist Purcell (1800-1883). Born in Mallow, Co. Cork, he immigrated to Baltimore, Maryland as a teenager seeking an education. After seminary studies in Maryland and France, he was ordained a priest in Paris in 1826 and became Bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio in 1833. Pope Pius IX later made him Archbishop of Cincinnati and in 1851 created him a count. “Though of conspicuous family,” runs his entry in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, “his parents were in poor circumstances.”¹⁹⁸

Purcells who were members of the Church of Ireland

The very few Purcell lines conforming to the Church of Ireland did manage to maintain both lands and position.

The most prominent of these was the family of Lieutenant Colonel John Purcell (died in 1852), who was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and was called to the Irish bar. His wife, Mary Frances FitzGerald, was the heiress to two vast fortunes, which placed her husband and her among the wealthiest residents of the United Kingdom.

¹⁹⁵ See generally *Index of Surnames of Householders in Griffith's Primary Valuation and Tithe Applotment Books* (National Library of Ireland, 1961). As stated above, many lines of the Purcell family had their seats in Fassadinin, including the Purcells of Foulksrath, of Lismaine, of Conahy, of Esker, of Ballymartin, and of Ballyragget. Clogharinka Castle, owned by the Purcells of Ballyfoyle, was also in Fassadinin. After Fassadinin, the Kilkenny baronies with the greatest number of Purcell heads of household in the 1850s were Gowran (37 in total) and Galmoy (28 in total). *Ibid.* Ballyfoyle Castle, seat of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle, was in the barony of Gowran, which borders Fassadinin.

¹⁹⁶ William Nolan, Ph.D., *Fassadinin: Land, Settlement & Society in South-East Ireland, 1600-1850* (Geography Publications, Dublin, 1979), pp. 187, 188-189.

¹⁹⁷ William Nolan, Ph.D., *Fassadinin: Land, Settlement & Society in South-East Ireland, 1600-1850* (Geography Publications, Dublin, 1979), pp. 187, 188-189.

¹⁹⁸ *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. by Dumas Malone (New York, 1935), vol. XV, pp. 266-267.

In 1818, he assumed by royal licence the name and arms of FitzGerald. As John FitzGerald, he was a Member of Parliament at Westminster and High Sheriff of Suffolk. Their family seats included Boulge Hall in Suffolk and the Little Island in Co. Waterford. In 1858, his elder son John reassumed the name and arms of Purcell, and members of the family then used the surname of Purcell-FitzGerald and bore the Purcell arms quarterly with those of FitzGerald. The castle and lands of the Little Island were held by the FitzGeralds and then the Purcell-FitzGeralds for almost eight centuries, from the late 1100s until being sold in 1966 by the then owner, Mary Augusta de Lisle Purcell-FitzGerald (1908-1968), who was married to Don Ferdinando d' Ardia Caracciolo dei Principi di Corsi (son of Don Giovanni d' Ardia Caracciolo, 12th Prince of Corsi.) The enlargement of the main castle keep of the Little Island and the addition of stone wings in the second half of the 19th century made the castle somewhat resemble Loughmoe Castle. It is now called the Waterford Castle Hotel, but the carved marble arms of Purcell quartering FitzGerald above the fireplace of the great hall are still to be seen.¹⁹⁹

The most famous member of this line was the eccentric poet and writer Edward FitzGerald (1809-1853). Edward was the younger son of Lieutenant Colonel John Purcell alias FitzGerald. He was known as Edward Purcell until his father changed the family surname in 1818. He had died by the time his elder brother took the surname Purcell-FitzGerald. Edward FitzGerald, while a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, met Tennyson, who became his close friend. FitzGerald's acclaimed 1859 translation from Persian to English of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* is considered one of the finest translations in English literature.

Another Anglican line was that of Sir John Samuel Purcell (1839-1924), of Glebe Lodge, Blackheath, Kent, created a Knight Commander of the Bath by Queen Victoria in 1900. His long career in the British Civil Service began in 1856 at age 17. Sir John was the son of Dr. John F. Purcell, M.D., of Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary, a Commissioner of Irish Poor Laws. He served as a Major, London Irish Rifle

¹⁹⁹ For details of the Purcell-FitzGeralds, see *Burke's Irish Family Records* (Burke's Peerage, 1976), pp. 425-426. This line claimed descent from the Purcells of Ballyfoyle. Mary-Augusta de Lisle Purcell-FitzGerald was one of several children of Gerald Purcell-FitzGerald (1865-1946) of the Little Island (educated at Eton and Jesus College, Cambridge; sometime Lieutenant, 3rd Battalion, Leicester Regiment), a great-grandson of John Purcell, later FitzGerald (d. 1852). Edward Maurice Purcell-FitzGerald (born 1900), a son of Gerald by his second wife Lida Nicolls of Uniontown, Pennsylvania (later the wife of Prince Viktor of Thurn und Taxis), was also educated at Eton and Jesus College, Cambridge. Formerly a Lieutenant in the Irish Guards, he served during World War II in the U.S. Army and retired from the U.S. Army Reserve in 1963. His younger brother Patrick Purcell-FitzGerald (1922-1943) was killed in action at sea during World War II.

Volunteers.²⁰⁰ His son, John Poyntz Purcell (1876-1963), had a long career as a barrister in England, having been called to the bar (Gray' s Inn) in 1900.²⁰¹

John Purcell of Pulleen, Co. Cork, alive circa 1650, is thought to be a descendant of the Purcells of Croagh, Co. Limerick,²⁰² descended in turn from the House of Loughmoe. He was the ancestor of two Purcell lines conforming to the Church of Ireland: the Purcells of Burton Park (Churchtown, Buttevant, Co. Cork) and the Purcells of Altamira (Buttevant, Co. Cork). His great-grandson, Sir John Purcell of Highfort, Co. Cork, was knighted in 1811 by the Prince Regent for his bravery in defending himself with a knife from a gang of robbers. The last male of the Purcells of Burton Park was Major Raymond John Purcell (1885-1928), D.S.O, who was educated at Christ Church College, Oxford and served in France during World War I in the King' s Royal Rifle Corps, the same regiment in which Lieutenant Charles Butler, M.B.E. (1899-1997), later 7th and last Marquess of Ormonde and 25th Earl of Ormond, also served during the same war. Major Purcell succeeded to Burton Park in 1904 but took his life in 1928 as a tragic result of the wounds and trauma he suffered during the Great War. At Burton Park, a mansion completed in the 18th century and occupied by the Purcells since the early 19th century is now owned by the descendants of Major Purcell' s sister, Anita Purcell (Mrs. Ryan). They have the surname Ryan-Purcell and bear the Purcell arms quarterly with those of Ryan. Rev. Mathew Purcell of Burton Park (died in 1845), the son of Sir John Purcell of Highfort and great-grandfather of Major John Raymond Purcell, was the Church of Ireland rector of Churchtown. In later generations, however, the Purcells of Burton Park became Roman Catholics. The castellated entrance gate to Burton Park bears the carved coat of arms of the Purcells.²⁰³

Purcells as Catholic officers on the European continent

As mentioned earlier, many Purcells, wishing traditional careers as military officers, left Ireland for the continent in the years and decades after the Jacobite defeat of 1691. The tradition of leaving Ireland to serve in the regiments of Catholic monarchs in Europe was already well established. In 1616, John Purcell ("Juan Pursel") was serving in Spanish Flanders in the Spanish regiment of Colonel the Earl of Tyrone and contributed alms for the construction of a chapel for Irish Franciscan friars at the University of Louvain. In 1632, Philip Purcell ("Philip

²⁰⁰ *Dod' s Peerage, Baronage and Knightage of Great Britain and Ireland* (1907 ed.), p. 793; *Thom' s Irish Who' s Who* (Dublin, 1923), p. 212. Sir John was Comptroller of Stamps and Stores and Registrar of Joint Stock Companies for the Inland Revenue Department. He played a leading role in the selection of postage stamps commemorating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. *Ibid.*; Wm. A. Shaw, Litt.D., *The Knights of England* (reprinted by Genealogical Publishing Co., 1970), vol. I, p. 298. His descendant, the late Major (John) Denis Purcell, of London, who received a royal appointment as a metropolitan stipendiary magistrate in 1963, owned a number of Purcell family portraits.

²⁰¹ *The Solicitors' Journal*, vol. 45 (1900), p. 63.

²⁰² *Burke' s General Armory* (1883), p. 829.

²⁰³ *Burke' s Irish Family Records* (London, Burke' s Peerage Ltd., 1976), p. 974; *Burke' s Landed Gentry of Ireland* (1958 edition), p. 589.

Porcel”), serving in Brussels as an ensign in the Spanish regiment of Colonel the Earl of Tyrconnel, was promoted to captain and sent to Ireland to recruit a company of infantry for his regiment for service in Flanders. Captain Philip Purcell later commanded a company in the regiment of Colonel Eugenio O’ Neill, son of the Earl of Tyrone. In 1634, Captain Hugh “Purzel” was in command of a company in Brussels. And in 1660, Captain Peter Purcell, Captain Edward Butler and Captain Peter Butler were among the company commanders in the regiment of Colonel James Dempsey in Brussels.²⁰⁴

(There were several links between the Purcells and the O’ Neill earls of Tyrone. Hugh O’ Neill, 2nd Earl of Tyrone (died in 1616), who viewed King Philip II of Spain as the rightful King of Ireland, had led an unsuccessful rebellion in Ireland against Queen Elizabeth I. It will be recalled that in 1598, Ralph Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, as well as the Butler Viscount Mountgarret, supported Tyrone’ s uprising.²⁰⁵ A truce was eventually negotiated, but in 1607 Tyrone, fearing arrest, fled to the Spanish Netherlands, never to return to Ireland. Accompanying Tyrone was his brother-in-law Rory O’ Donnell, 2nd Earl of Tyrconnel. This event is referred to in Irish history as the Flight of the Earls. One of Tyrone’ s daughters married Richard Butler, 3rd Viscount Mountgarret, and their daughter Ellen Butler married Philip Purcell of Ballyfoyle Castle, head of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle. Between 1700 and 1759, eight Purcells served as officers or cadets in the Spanish infantry regiment “Ultonia” (Ulster).)²⁰⁶

Lieutenant Colonel Martin Purcell served in France in the early 1700s, as an officer in the regiment of the Jacobite Colonel Sir Daniel O’ Carroll.

Major General Johann Baptist Purcell, later Baron Purcell von Rorestown, a descendant of the Purcells of Rorestown, Co. Tipperary, was born in Kilkenny in 1721, was commissioned in the army of the Holy Roman Emperor at age 21, was awarded the Order of Maria Theresa for heroism, and died in 1779. He was recognized as being of baronial rank by the Emperor, and all of his descendants in the male line therefore bore the title of baron. During the Napoleonic Wars, his son, Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown (1771-1829), then a Major of Infantry, commanded a Hungarian battalion, the Imperial and Royal Battalion Purcell.

Elizabeth Purcell (Mrs. Matthew Wall), daughter of Patrick Purcell of Cloghala, Co. Kilkenny, was the mother of Lieutenant General Count Patrick Wall (1722-1809), who left Ireland as a young man and fought in Scotland during the ‘Forty-Five at Falkirk, Inverness (wounded) and Culloden as a Jacobite captain in Prince Charles

²⁰⁴ *Wild Geese in Spanish Flanders 1582-1700*, edited by Brendan Jennings (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1964), pp. 261, 262, 276, 277, 422, and 486.

²⁰⁵ *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. by John O’ Donovan (Dublin, 1851), vol. VI, p. 2083; *Calendar of State Papers – Carew Mss.*, vol. III (1589-1600), p. 299.

²⁰⁶ John O’ Hart, *Irish Pedigrees* (Dublin, 1892), vol. II, p. 671.

Edward's Own Regiment of Horse Guards. After the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie, Wall achieved high military rank and a noble title in the French service and accompanied the brothers of Louis XVI into exile in Germany during the French Revolution.²⁰⁷

Purcell military service in Ireland, Britain and the New World

Various Purcells also carried on the military tradition of the tribe in Ireland, Britain and the New World.

Rear Admiral Edward Purcell (1792-1869) joined the Royal Navy in 1804, and, like many admirals on half pay after long careers, he retired to Bath, where he died. He served on HMS Niobe, HMS Impétueux, HMS Dragon and other vessels during the Napoleonic wars, participating in actions off Spain and Portugal and in the English Channel. He was the youngest son of Captain Tobias Purcell, 1st Fencible Light Dragoons, of Timogue Castle, Queen's County (now Co. Laois), whose line in turn were descendants of the Purcells of Esker in the barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny. Admiral Purcell's sons included Colonel Edward Tobias Willoughby Purcell, Royal Artillery (who served in the Royal Army from 1847 to 1890), Rev. Handfield-Noel Purcell, Anglican vicar of Fowey, and Colonel Matthew Henry Purcell, Royal Engineers. As discussed below, one of his grandsons was the highest ranking Purcell in the Royal Army to be killed in action in World War I.²⁰⁸

Private John Purcell (1814-1857) of the 9th Lancers, who was born near Oughterard, Co. Galway, was one of the first soldiers to receive the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for military valor, first awarded in 1857. On 19 June 1857 at Delhi, during the Indian Mutiny, Private Purcell and a fellow 9th Lancer, Private Thomas Hancock, while under fire, saved the life of Brigadier James Hope Grant, C.B. (later General Sir J.H. Grant, K.C.B.), then a cavalry brigade commander, whose horse had been shot from under him and who found himself surrounded by mutineers. During the engagement, Hancock lost an arm, and Purcell had his own horse shot from under him. Purcell and Hancock stayed with the brigadier and protected him until he could be dragged off the field by a horse. Grant wrote of their "signal gallantry in the fight." Private Purcell was badly wounded during the siege of Delhi a couple of months later and died of his wounds. Brigadier Grant, who visited him shortly

²⁰⁷ *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol. XXIX (1714-1715), p. 276; Charles E. Lart, *Pedigrees and Papers of James Terry, Athlone Herald at the Court of James II in France (1690-1725)* (Exeter, 1938), pp. 50-51, 58-59, 188; and Hubert Gallwey, *The Wall Family in Ireland 1170-1970* (Naas, Leinster Leader Ltd., 1970), pp. 77-81. For details on the family of the Barons Purcell von Rorestown in Austria and Hungary, see Appendix I of this essay, below.

²⁰⁸ Frederic Boase, *Modern English Biography* (1897), vol. II, p.1671; Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), pp. 199-200; William Richard O'Byrne, *A Naval Biographical Dictionary* (1849); and John O'Hart, *Irish Pedigrees* (New York, 1923), vol. 2, p. 346. See also: Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* (1905), vol. II, p. 202; William Nolan, Ph.D., *Fassadinin: Land, Settlement & Society in South-East Ireland, 1600-1850* (Geography Publications, Dublin, 1979), pp. 68, 243; John O'Hart, *Irish and Anglo-Irish Gentry* (Shannon, 1969), pp. 58-60, 166-168; and *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. VI, p. 72.

before his death, provided this account: “*I took the cavalry back to camp and then visited all the wounded men in hospital. Among them was poor Purcell, who as my orderly had behaved so gallantly on the 19 June when in the darkness of the night I was almost alone and riderless in the midst of the rebels. He had been shot through the chest and could scarcely speak, but was full of hope. He died a few days later on 19 September 1857.*” The VC was awarded posthumously on 15 January 1858 and was presented to his brother James Purcell, also of the 9th Lancers. Private Hancock survived his wounds, and Queen Victoria personally presented his Victoria Cross to him in England.²⁰⁹

The 20th century, with two world wars, provides too many examples of Purcell military service to enumerate. The gallant service of Major John Raymond Purcell, D.S.O., King’ s Royal Rifle Corps (of the Purcells of Burton Park, Co. Cork) on the western front during the Great War has been mentioned previously. His younger brother, Lieutenant Charles Purcell, Irish Guards, was killed in action at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Lieutenant Purcell (1891-1916) had befriended at Oxford Prince Serge Obolensky (1890-1978), with whom he shared digs when both were undergraduates. Charles Purcell was called Carlo by his Oxford friends. Obolensky described him in his memoirs:

Carlo Purcell, an Irishman, also studying law, was another character. Perfectly level-headed and with both feet planted firmly on the ground, he had a fey streak of the Irish mystic about him. For instance, he read palms. He read mine so accurately that even today I sometimes start and say, ‘My God! Carlo was right again.’ He made a thorough study of it. It was an uncomfortable feeling and very scary. I’ ve never allowed my palms to be read since. Carlo was a great Irish patriot and claimed to belong to the Sinn Fein, and when he told his own fortune he said it was simple: soon there was going to be a revolution in Ireland, and it was obvious to him what was going to happen – he was going to be killed. This gloomy prospect did not reduce his high spirits in the slightest. He died all right, and he died in the Irish Guards, but fighting against Germany.²¹⁰

One person who was indeed killed fighting for an Irish republic during the Irish War of Independence was a Tipperary Purcell, Lieutenant Martin Purcell, an officer in the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, Irish Volunteers. In a 1956 interview conducted by the Irish Government’ s Bureau of Military History, Martin Purcell’ s battalion commandant described what happened:

²⁰⁹ No. 22083, *The London Gazette*, 15 January 1858, p. 178; Brian Best, *The Victoria Crosses That Saved An Empire: The Story of the VCs of the Indian Mutiny* (2016). Queen Victoria awarded the first Victoria Cross on 26 June 1857.

²¹⁰ Serge Obolensky, *One Man In His Time* (New York, 1958), pp. 92-93. Colonel Obolensky once reminisced about his friend Carlo Purcell in a conversation with the present writer.

Again in April, 1921, five members of 'A' Company, viz. W.B. O' Dwyer, the Company Captain, Michael Davern, Martin Purcell, P. Maher and J. Crowe were surprised whilst crossing a road at Ballymore by two lorry loads of British military. The military opened fire and badly wounded and captured O' Dwyer. They also captured Purcell and Maher, but Davern and Crowe succeeded in making good their escape. Martin Purcell was shot dead by the British military in Tipperary military barracks a few days later.²¹¹

At the time of his arrest, Martin Purcell's unit was assigned to destroy key bridges in the area between Dundrum and Tipperary town. His brigade concluded that he had been murdered while in custody.²¹² According to another book, Martin Purcell and a fellow prisoner tried to overpower their guards in an attempt to escape and were shot in the struggle.²¹³ Martin Purcell grew up in Dundrum, Co. Tipperary, 18 miles from Loughmoe.

Colonel Launcelot Purcell (born 1878), of California, and Colonel John Purcell (born 1880), of Connecticut, whose fathers had immigrated to the United States from Ireland, served as U.S. Army officers in World War I. The first was a grandson of Judge Theobald Andrew Purcell, Q.C., of Dublin. The second traced his descent from the Purcells of Conahy, Co. Kilkenny.²¹⁴ Both had enlisted in the infantry as privates in 1899 (Launcelot Purcell in the regular army, John Purcell in the National Guard) and had been commissioned as Second Lieutenants of Infantry in 1901. John Purcell left his position as minority leader of the Connecticut State Senate in 1916 to command an infantry battalion on the Mexican border, when President Wilson mobilized his regiment during the Mexican Border Campaign.²¹⁵ Mounted on horseback, he led his battalion on patrol along the Mexican border and crossed into Mexico on several occasions. During the Great War, among other assignments, John Purcell, as a major, commanded a battalion of the 58th Pioneer Infantry, and Launcelot Purcell, serving first as a major and then a lieutenant colonel, transferred

²¹¹ Bureau of Military History [Irish Government], 1913-21, Document No. W.S. 1356, Statement of Witness (Tadhg Dwyer, Grovestown, Dundrum, Commandant, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Tipperary Brigade), 23 February 1956, pp. 23-24 [Typewritten signed and witnessed statement, on line at www.militaryarchives.ie]; *The Last Post – Details and Stories of the Republican Dead*, published by National Graves Association (Dublin, 1976), p. 88.

²¹² John Reynolds, Ph.D., *46 Men Dead: The Royal Irish Constabulary in County Tipperary 1919-22* (Gill & MacMillan Ltd., 2016).

²¹³ Tim Horgan, *Dying for a Cause: Kerry's Republican Dead* (Mercier Press Ltd., 2015).

²¹⁴ Colonel John Purcell's grandfather, John Purcell, was the bridegroom's witness at the family wedding in Co. Waterford in February 1846 of Michael Purcell to Bridget Butler, a descendant of the Butlers of Ballyknavin, parish of Mothel, Co. Waterford, who in turn descended from James Galda Butler, son of James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond. For details of Bridget Butler Purcell's descent from the Butlers of Ballyknavin, see letter dated 2 July 1982 from Patrick Butler, 28th Baron Dunboyne to the present writer.

²¹⁵ In early 1916, during the period of the Mexican Revolution, revolutionary leader Pancho Villa took 16 American citizens from a train in Chihuahua and executed them. Weeks later, he attacked a border town in New Mexico and murdered 10 civilians. President Wilson sent troops to Arizona and New Mexico to secure the border and to cross into Mexico to pursue and arrest Villa.

from the infantry to the quartermaster corps in France, where he had significant responsibility for overseeing the supply of the American forces.²¹⁶

The same Colonel John Purcell, who was 61 years old at the time of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, was recalled from the retired list and served in the U.S. Army until the end of World War II. His son Joseph Purcell (who was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for service during the Battle of the Bulge) also served during World War II in the U.S. Army, as did Colonel Launcelot Purcell's nephew Hugh Devereux Purcell (later Major, Reserve of Officers, U.S. Army).

During World War I, 108 Purcells lost their lives serving in the Royal Army or Royal Navy of the United Kingdom, 35 Purcells died in the colonial militaries of the British Empire (24 from Australia, 5 from New Zealand, 5 from Canada, and 1 from South Africa), and 18 Purcells died in the U.S. Army or U.S. Navy. That constitutes a total of 161 Purcell deaths in the Great War. The highest ranking Royal Army casualty was Major Richard Guy Purcell, M.C., Royal Garrison Artillery, who was mortally wounded at age 30 near Tilloy Wood in France on 28 March 1918 while commanding the 31st Heavy Battery during the defense of Arras. He was the son of Colonel Matthew H. Purcell, late Royal Engineers, of White House, Ferring, Worthing, who in 1898 had been appointed Assistant Commandant of the Royal Army's School of Military Engineering at Chatham.²¹⁷ (Colonel Matthew Henry Purcell was a son of Rear Admiral Edward Purcell, mentioned above as a descendant of the Purcells of Timogue Castle, Queen's County and through them of the Purcells of Esker, Co. Kilkenny.) The vast majority of these Purcell casualties, however, were not officers but enlisted soldiers. It is unknown how many of these war dead descended from the Irish Purcells. Because the surname tends more often than not to belong to people of Irish origin, however, it is likely that a large number of these casualties were either Irish or of Irish descent. The number of Purcell deaths in the Second World War was likely also high.

Loughmoe Castle, the epicenter of Purcell planning of so many military engagements over the centuries, stands today in ruins. Directly across the field from Loughmoe Castle is an old churchyard. A mid-19th century visitor wrote:

Lying at a distance of about a quarter of a mile toward the northwest are the ruins of Loughmoe church. It cannot have been remarkable at any time, and its

²¹⁶ National Guard records of the Historical Section, Connecticut Military Department, Hartford, Connecticut; Francis R. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Government Printing Office, 1903), vol. I, p. 809; *Official Army Register – January 1, 1922* (Government Printing Office, 1922), p. 43. The two Colonels Purcell of the U.S. Army never served together, although surviving records establish that each served with officers who had served with the other. In 1936, Colonel John Purcell and Corporal (later Major) Hugh Devereux Purcell, then aged 20 and 21 and, as stated elsewhere, a nephew of Colonel Launcelot Purcell, began an extended and friendly correspondence about the history of the Purcell family.

²¹⁷ For the names of the Purcell war dead of the Great War, see: www.theworldremembers.org. For the reference to Colonel M.H. Purcell, see *London Gazette* of 26 July 1898 (p. 4509) and John O' Hart, *Irish Pedigrees* (New York, 1923), vol. 2, p. 346.

date is unknown. Archdall does not mention it in his "Monasticon." Probably it was a private chapel belonging to the castle. The principal portion now remaining is a stone-roofed chamber or vault, which, in all likelihood, served as a strong room for the preservation of the plate and other valuables of the house. It is long since the voice of the pastor uttered prayers for the living within these walls. Like most of the ruined temples of worship in Ireland, it has been a favourite resting place for the descendants of those whose piety served to erect it. Among the numerous tombs with which the area is strewn, is one wherein is deposited all that earth receives of the Purcells – the lords of the neighbouring castle.²¹⁸

The chancel of the chapel, where the Barons of Loughmoe, including Nicholas Purcell, the last baron, and their closest relations were interred, has long been without a roof and exposed to the elements. The carvings on the floor slabs were long ago worn away by the beating rain. There are several indecipherable slabs where one can read the word "PVRCELL" or detect a portion of the Purcell coat of arms. The floor slab to Nicholas Purcell, when fully legible, used to read:

HERE:LYETH:THE:BODY:OF/ N:PVRCELL:BARON:OF/
LOVGHMORE:WHO:DYED/ THE:4:MARCH:1722/
AGED:71:YEARS:THIS:MONV/MENT:WAS:ERECTED:
BY:HIS:WIFE:ELLIS:BROWNE/ ²¹⁹

Within the nave of the chapel are also monuments to more recent Purcells, including to the Rev. John Purcell (died at Thurles in 1834 at age 30), a Catholic priest; Philip Purcell of Drom (died in 1818 at age 90); and Michael Purcell (died in 1857 at age 59) and his daughter Margaret Purcell, who died in America. Within the chapel but outside the nave is a monument to Patrick Purcell of Loughmore²²⁰ (died there in 1905 at age 75) and his daughter Mary Purcell who died in America.

The Loughmoe churchyard is also the site of the local parish church. Until the 1970s, the parish church was a spare dignified stone structure typical of Roman Catholic churches built in the middle of the 19th century. It was torn down and replaced in 1977 by a new and much bigger church, round in shape and modern in style. The churchyard, situated on land which Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe, obtained circa 1220, continues to be a place of burial for Purcells of the modern period. One of the youngest descendants of the Purcells to be interred in

²¹⁸ *The Dublin University Magazine*, No. CCXLVIII, Vol. XLII, p. 210 (August 1853).

²¹⁹ Lord Walter FitzGerald, "Parish of Loughmore, or Loughmoe, Churchyard," *Journal for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead of Ireland*, vol. 5 (1901-03), no. 2, part 2, pp. 260, 263. Nicholas Purcell's tombstone was not visible for many years but was dug up in 1981, having been submerged two feet below the earth of the chancel. *Tipperary Star* (newspaper), 5 September 1981.

²²⁰ Today the name of the village is spelled Loughmore, and the name of the civil parish and of the castle is spelled Loughmoe.

the Loughmoe churchyard is Martin Purcell of the Curragh and Loughmore, whose gravestone bears the sad explanation that he died on 1 October 1975 at age 2 and ½ years following an accident.

The goal of this essay, as stated in its title, was to provide an abbreviated rather than comprehensive treatment of the Purcell family in Ireland, with support identified in footnotes. As a general rule, facts recited in this essay that do not have footnoted support may for the most part be found, with footnoted sources, in the following 1983 text by the present writer: *The Purcell Family in Ireland, 1185-1985*.²²¹ Copies of the latter text may be examined in the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland, Dublin, and in the library of the Irish Genealogical Research Society, London. As stated earlier, this essay is subject to revision. The writer has relied on both primary and secondary sources in recounting in summary fashion a long and complicated story. Primary sources often reflect bias, and secondary sources can contain mistakes. As errors are identified, corrections will be made.

²²¹ Unlike the 1983 text, the present text seeks to present the saga of the Purcells as a narrative and includes much more detailed information on the Purcells of Catteshall, Co. Surrey and on the life of Sir Walter Purcell as gleaned from the Norman French poem on the life of William Marshal, 1st Earl of Pembroke. It also corrects some errors found in the 1983 text. For its part, the 1983 text is more detailed and more heavily footnoted in respect of the Purcells of Loughmoe. It also treats many more cadet lines of the Purcells of Loughmoe and in more detail. The late head of the Butler family of Ireland, Charles Butler, 7th and last Marquess of Ormonde, 25th Earl of Ormond and 31st Hereditary Chief Butler of Ireland, kindly provided an introduction to the 1983 text. Lord Ormonde, a man of exceptional dignity and great kindness, was born in 1899 and grew up in England. After Sandhurst, he served as a British Army officer in World War I and was wounded by poison gas in the trenches. He emigrated to the United States in the late 1920s, became an American citizen, and lived some 70 years in the Chicago area. He inherited the Ormonde titles at age 71 in 1971, upon the death of his first cousin. Charles Ormonde died at age 98 in 1997. His introduction, dated September 2, 1983, to *The Purcell Family in Ireland, 1185-1985* reads: “Brien Horan has covered in great detail the history of the Purcell family and it is interesting to note that it also incorporates history of the Butler family. The author notes in a letter to me that ‘the name Butler appears on just about every page.’ The noted genealogist of the Butler Society – Lord Dunboyne – refers to Brien’s accomplishment as ‘your magnum opus.’ It is so essential that family history be recorded not only for present but future generations. To that end, recently a Butler Society was formed, so that Butlers – wherever located in the world – could relate to the family. Anyone with the name of Butler, or anyone interested in the Butler family were welcomed to become members. As a result, there are now branches of the Society in the U.S.A. and Canada, [and] Australia, with Headquarters in Ireland. It is hoped that this Purcell history will be a forerunner of things to come and a record for all to enjoy and benefit. Charles Ormonde” Further to what the late Lord Ormonde wrote, Purcells and those interested in the history of the Purcell family should view the website of The Butler Society (<https://butlersociety.org>) and consider joining that organization. The scholarly *Journal of the Butler Society* is of high quality and contains many articles that should be of interest to Purcells.

APPENDIX I: THE TITLES OF BARON HELD BY THE PURCELLS²²²

Purcell of Catteshall, Baron by tenure: It is not known whether the Purcells left Normandy and settled in England at the time of the Norman Conquest of 1066 or in the years or decades thereafter. Oyn Purcell, progenitor of all the Purcell lines treated in this analysis, first appears in surviving English records during the reign of King Henry I of England, son of William the Conqueror. Oyn Purcell held the English manor of Catteshall (sometimes spelled Catteshill and Catteshull) in County Surrey directly of the King.²²³ This tenure was in return for serjeanty service as Usher of the King's Chamber.²²⁴ (Grand serjeanty was a form of tenure in English law in which land was held *in capite*²²⁵ in return for personal and honorable services to the King.) In England at this time, a man who held a manor directly of the King was deemed a baron, and his manor a barony.²²⁶ Oyn Purcell was thus an English baron by tenure. His descendant, Ranulf Purcell alias Ranulf de Broc, the fourth and last Purcell to hold the manor of Catteshall in return for service as usher to the king, was still a baron by tenure, because in the reign of King Henry II Catteshall was referred to in legal documents as Ranulf's barony.²²⁷ After Ranulf's death, Catteshall passed out of the Purcell family and was held by Ranulf's son-in-law.

²²² Each of these appendices is intended to stand on its own and therefore must necessarily repeat information contained in the main text.

²²³ *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State* by J.H. Round (London, 1911), pp. 98-99, citing a court judgment of 1212 in *Testa de Nevill* (p. 225): "Henricus Rex senior dedit Cateshull Dyvo [Oyno] Porcell patri Radulfi de Broc et Henricus Rex (II) pater domini Regis fecit cartam suam Radulfo de Broc tenere de eo per serjanciam hostiarum de camera domini Regis ut de R[ege?] et post mortem ejusdem Stephanus de Turneham habuit predictam villam cum filia ipsius Randulfi per predictum servitium." This court judgment states that King Henry I gave Catteshall to Oyn Purcell and that King Henry II signed a charter to Ranulf de Broc to hold it from him for serjeanty service as Usher of the King's Chamber. In addition to *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State* by J.H. Round, further analysis of the Purcells of Catteshall may be found in E. St. John Brooks, "Catteshill and another usher serjeanty in the Purcel family", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. X (1932-3), pp. 161-168. Dr. Brooks, an expert on the Purcells in Ireland during the 12th to 14th centuries, wrote this scholarly article in order to explain his disagreement with various comments about the Purcells' Catteshall serjeanty in *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State*, pp. 98-108. Round lived from 1854 to 1928.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ Tenancy *in capite* or tenancy in chief refers to holding land directly of the King.

²²⁶ "Every lord of a manor held immediately of the crown, was during the first century after the Conquest, deemed a baron, and his manor a barony." William Cruise, *A Treatise on the Origin and Nature of Dignities, or Titles of Honor* (London, 1823), chapter 2, § 14, p. 26. (By the reigns of King John and King Henry III, however, lords of manors held *in capite* were no longer necessarily deemed barons. *Ibid.*)

²²⁷ During the reign of King Henry II, when Oyn Purcell's descendant Ranulf Purcell alias Ranulf de Broc held Catteshall from circa 1156, it was described both as a manor and as a barony. *The King's Serjeants and Officers of State* by J.H. Round (London, 1911), p. 105, citing the Pipe Rolls: "Ranulphus de Broke tenuit de rege in capite manerium de Catteshulle in com. Surr. per serjantium custodiendi hostium Camerae Regis..." ["Ranulf de Broc held from the King in capite the manor of Catteshall in co. Surrey for serjeanty service as Usher of the King's Chamber..."] *Testa de Nevill* (p. 124) refers to this land as the barony of Ranulf de Broc ("unam hidam per serjant de baronia Randulfi de Broc"), cited in *The King's Household and Officers of State* by J.H. Round, p. 101.

Purcell of Loughmoe, feudal Baron of Loughmoe: Sir Walter Purcell was a descendant of the Purcells of Catteshall. According to the Irish annals, he arrived in Ireland in 1185 as one of the 300 knights in the retinue of Prince John of England (later King John), son of Henry II. His son was Sir Hugh Purcell (d. 1240). The Irish annals describe Sir Hugh's mother as a daughter of King Henry II and a sister of King John.²²⁸ This is unproven, but, if true, she would have been a natural daughter of the King. Sir Hugh Purcell married circa 1220 Beatrix Butler, daughter of Theobald, 1st Chief Butler of Ireland and progenitor of the House of Butler of Ormond. On his marriage, Sir Hugh received as many as 25 knights' fees, including Loughmoe (now in the parish of Loughmoe West, barony of Eliogarty, Co. Tipperary). As historians such as Goddard Henry Orpen and Eric St. John Brooks have written, Hugh became the Baron of Loughmoe.²²⁹ This did not mean that he was a peer. Instead, it reflected his tenure of a feudal barony. The Purcells held Loughmoe until 1722.

Purcell of Loughmoe, Baron by summons – A later Sir Hugh Purcell, feudal Baron of Loughmoe, was a grandson of Sir Hugh, first Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1240). The second Sir Hugh, as a member of the English nobility of Ireland, was called to England by King Edward I and fought from 1296 to 1298 in that King's wars in France, Flanders and Scotland. He was Sheriff of Tipperary in 1295. As "Hugo de Purcel", he was summoned to sit as a baron in the Irish Parliament held in 1295, but he did not thereby become a peer of the realm but instead remained a feudal baron. Although in England in 1295 a writ of summons to Parliament created an hereditary peerage in the person summoned and his heirs, this was not yet true of Ireland.²³⁰ The early Parliaments in England and Ireland were composed of key representatives of the feudal baronage: that is, of knights who held their lands directly from the King in return for military service.

²²⁸ This is from Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin and reproduced in "The O'Clery Book of Genealogies", ed. by Seamas Porter, *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), No. 18, p. 192; for an English translation of the Purcell pedigree in O'Clery, see Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond", *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85. In another pedigree found among several early sixteenth century manuscripts unearthed in Co. Tipperary and now in the British Museum (British Museum Add. Ms. 33993), Sir Hugh Purcell is described as the son of a "sister of King John with whom he came to Ireland." But unless Hugh (who would likely have been quite young in 1185) accompanied his father, it would have been Sir Walter who came to Ireland with John of England.

²²⁹ Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911), vol. II, p. 95, fn. 1; Eric St. John Brooks, *Knights' Fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny (13th-15th Century)* (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1950), pp. 80, 117-118, 183 & n., 184. The latter work provides an excellent treatment of the early generations of Purcells in Ireland.

²³⁰ Sir Bernard Burke, *Burke's Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire* (London, 1883), pp. 627-632. Thus, the writ issued by John Wogan, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and summoning in the King's name "Hugo de Purcel" to the 1295 Irish Parliament as a baron did not create Sir Hugh Purcell an hereditary baron in the peerage of Ireland. *Ibid.*

Purcell of Loughmoe, Baron of Loughmoe in the palatine of Tipperary: John Purcell was feudal Baron of Loughmoe in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.²³¹ John was formally confirmed in the title of Baron of Loughmoe, circa 1328-1337, by the Lord of the Palatinate of Tipperary, his kinsman James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond,²³² 7th Chief Butler of Ireland and head of the Butler family of Ireland. (As stated above, the 1st Earl of Ormond was made Lord Palatine of Tipperary by King Edward III in consequence of Ormond's marriage to the King's first cousin, Lady Eleanor de Bohun, daughter of Elizabeth Plantagenet and granddaughter of King Edward I.) Among his prerogatives as a count palatine, Ormond enjoyed the privilege of designating and did in fact name several barons, who were known as barons within the palatinate of Tipperary but were not Peers of Parliament. In a certificate dated 17 May 1776, William Hawkins, Ulster King of Arms, Dublin Castle, explained that the 1st Earl of Ormond, by virtue of the grant of the Palatine Court of Tipperary, "enjoyed the privilege of creating Barons Palatine, among whom...Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe."²³³ Two later Irish kings of arms gave very similar accounts of the origin of the title. Sir Bernard Burke, who became Ulster King of Arms in 1853, wrote: "Purcell (Baron of Loughmoe; so created by the Earl of Ormonde, as Palatine of Tipperary),..."²³⁴ Dr. Edmund MacLysaght, Chief Herald of Ireland from 1943 to 1954 and Chairman of the Irish Manuscripts Commission from 1956 to 1973, recounted this in his book, *Irish Families*: "The picturesque ruined castle of Loughmoe, the seat of the head of the family, is a well-known landmark...He was known as Baron of Loughmoe, a title conferred by the First Earl of Ormond as Lord of the Palatinate, but this title was not officially recognized by the Crown."²³⁵ The last Baron of Loughmoe was Colonel Nicholas

²³¹ *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. I, p. 860. In this Ormond document, dated at some point between 1328 and 1337, John Purcell, lord of Corketeny, witnessed a deed to James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond and 7th Butler of Ireland.

²³² James Butler, 7th Butler of Ireland, was created Earl of Ormond in 1328 by King Edward III. See *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage, and Knightage* (1963 ed.), pp. 1872, 1874; *Chronicon Angliae*, ed. by Edward Maude Thompson (London, 1874), p. 1.

²³³ Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *The O'Dwyers of Kilnamanagh* (London, 1933), Appendix I.

²³⁴ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

²³⁵ Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Families* (New York, 1972), p. 248. Further references to the origin of the title of Baron of Loughmoe: Genealogical Office Ms. 50, pp. 61 and 119 (Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland); John D'Alton, *Illustrations of King James's Irish Army List (1689)* (2nd ed., 1861), vol. I, p. 272 ("In the reign of Edward the Third, James, the first Earl of Ormonde, having obtained a grant of Tipperary to him as a Palatinate, did, by virtue of the prerogative thereby invested in him, constitute the chief of this [Purcell] family, Baron of Loughmoe, a locality therein, with an extensive territory annexed."). *Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts*, vol. vi, pp. 316-317 (London, 1873) reprints an English document of 1615 in which an English writer tried to make sense of various men in Ireland who were called barons but were not lord barons, that is, peers in the Irish House of Lords: "...divers gentlemen who had the appellations of Barons as of ancient date as the Baron of Slane pretendeth himself to be a Lord, and yet never was any of them Lord Baron or ever summoned to any Parliament, whose posterity to this day have their denominations Barons, as for insample: divers of the Husseys were called Barons of Galtrim...; Hugh Fitz Owen Baron of Birr...; divers of the Fipoes Barons of Skrine...Nagles Barons of the Navane...Hugh Terrell Baron of Castel Cnocke...Roger fitz Melo Baron of Auverck...Thomas St. Leger, Baron of Bargie...Thomas Daniel Baron of Rathwire...To whom may be added these ensuing gent. who daily are called Barons and yet no Lords, Barons by appellation, and not Lds. Barons at all, viz. - Fitz Gerald Baron of Burchurch; Fitz Gerald Baron of Brownsford; **Purcell Baron of Loughmoe**; Power Baron of Donail and Rathcormacke; Butler Baron of Balynoa, with many others. Yea and in England the Baron of Burford, the Baron of Kinderton with

Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, who died at Loughmoe Castle in 1722, leaving daughters but no son. After his death and that of his wife, Loughmoe Castle and its surrounding lands passed out of the Purcell family, and no Purcell bothered to come forward to claim to be head of the Purcell family. Due to the absence of records, and the extended family's loss of land and position in the 18th century, it would be difficult today to determine who the senior descendant is. It is known that Nicholas Purcell's grandfather, Theobald Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, had a younger brother, Thomas. His Purcell descendants, if alive today, would likely be the senior line, but documentation on his life and descendants, if any, is completely lacking. Nicholas Purcell's great-grandfather, Richard Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, also had at least two younger brothers, but detailed information on them and any descendants is similarly lacking.

Purcell of Loughmoe, Lord Baron Loughmoe in the Jacobite peerage of Ireland:

King James II, the last Catholic monarch of England, Scotland and Ireland, was dethroned in 1688 and died in exile in France in 1701. During his exile and in his capacity of Head of the Royal House of Stuart, he created a number of peerages, a custom continued by his son and successor (*de jure* King James III, to the Jacobites) and his grandson (Charles Edward, Prince of Wales, also known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, and later as *de jure* King Charles III, to the Jacobites). These were called Jacobite peerages and were not recognized by the *de facto* monarchs actually in possession of the throne of Great Britain. According to G.E.C.'s *The Complete Peerage* (vol. I, pp. 480-483 and vol. VIII, p. 169) and the Marquis of Ruvigny's *The Jacobite Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1904 – pp. xi, xviii, and 81), it is said, although not proven, that James II created Nicholas Purcell, last palatine Baron of Loughmoe, as Baron Loughmoe in the Jacobite peerage of Ireland. Ruvigny wrote that the title was “said to have been created by···King James” but that the evidence for its creation was “extremely slender.” If Colonel Purcell did in fact ever receive this unrecognized title, he did not use it, and in any event it would have become extinct at his death in 1722, as he had no surviving son. Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, was sworn of the Irish Privy Council of King James II (1686), was a member of the House of Commons of the Irish Parliament (1688) and fought as a colonel in command of a regiment of horse in the Irish Army of King James II.

Purcell of Rorestown, Baron Purcell von Rorestown (or Roreston) in the Holy Roman Empire and in the Kingdom of Hungary - Rorardstown, also sometimes called Rorestown, Roreston, or Roestown, is a townland in the civil barony of Eliogarty, County Tipperary. It is not far from Loughmoe Castle, also in the barony of Eliogarty. Among the some two dozen townlands (11,489 acres) within the estate owned in 1664 by Colonel Nicholas Purcell, last Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1722), was

divers in Cheshire, all of which in their common appellations charters and evidences are called Barons yet not Lords.” (bold print added).

Rorardstown, where there was a castle.²³⁶ The Purcells of Rorardstown, or Rorestown, were descendants of a younger son of the senior line of the House of Loughmoe and leased the castle and adjoining lands from the Baron of Loughmoe. According to a pedigree in the Genealogical Office, Dublin²³⁷, Major Theobald (Toby) Purcell of Ballymartin, barony of Fassadinin, County Kilkenny (d. 1747) was seven generations in descent from Sir Hugh Purcell of Rorestown, County Tipperary, younger son of a Baron of Loughmoe. Major Toby Purcell of Ballymartin was the son of Richard Purcell, who, according to the same pedigree, was a brother of the anti-Jacobite Colonel Tobias (Toby) Purcell, 23rd Regiment of Foot (later Royal Welch Fusiliers), whose regiment fought for King William III against James II at the Boyne and Aughrim. In his autobiography, *Good-bye to All That*, the poet Robert Graves, who was severely wounded as an officer of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in the First World War, reminisced about the regimental annual St. David's Night dinner, in which the officers proposed a toast to Toby Purcell, and his spurs, worn at the Boyne, preserved by the regiment, and lost when the regiment was in Canada in the 1840s.²³⁸ The tradition of this officers' toast, to "Toby Purcell, His Spurs, and St. David" continued until 2006, when the Royal Welch Fusiliers were merged into another regiment. William III promoted Toby Purcell to colonel commanding the 23rd Foot on 13 July 1691, the day after his predecessor, Colonel Charles Herbert, was killed in action at Aughrim. Colonel Toby Purcell, who, unlike other members of his immediate family, was a member of the Church of Ireland, was later the Williamite governor of Cork, Kinsale, Waterford and Duncannon. Among the children of Major Toby Purcell of Ballymartin Castle (d. 1747), a descendant of the Purcells of Rorestown, County Tipperary and a nephew of Colonel Toby Purcell, 23rd Foot, were a daughter, Anne, and a son, John Edmond. The daughter, Anne Purcell (d. 1773), married Edmund Butler, 9th Viscount Mountgarret, head of a junior line of the Butlers of Ormond. (Lord Mountgarret was a Roman Catholic who converted to the Church of Ireland in 1736. The 9th Viscount succeeded to the title in 1742 upon the death of his Catholic older brother, the 8th Viscount, who had left Ireland to serve as an army officer in the Austrian service of the Holy Roman Emperor.) The son, Captain John Edmond Purcell, was also an officer in the Austrian service. In 1757, he received from Ulster King of Arms, Office of Arms, Dublin, a confirmation of his right to bear the arms of Purcell.²³⁹ On the Continent, official proof of one's inherited right to Irish armorial bearings was the common means by which men of

²³⁶ Rev. St. John D. Seymour, "Family papers belonging to the Purcells of Loughmoe, Co. Tipperary," *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, vol. 3, p. 192 (1914).

²³⁷ Genealogical Office Ms. 162, pp. 104-105, National Library, Dublin (pedigree of Purcells of Rorestown, Co. Tipperary and of Ballymartin, Co. Kilkenny, c. 1680-1757).

²³⁸ Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All That* (New York, Doubleday, 1957), pp. 86-87. Toby Purcell was second in command of the regiment at the Battle of the Boyne, and the spurs he wore in that battle were handed down to successive seconds in command of the Royal Welch Fusiliers until the spurs were lost in Canada in 1842. Purcell was in the fact the first officer to serve as second in command of the regiment. The toast to Toby Purcell and his spurs was typically the fourth toast of the regiment's annual St. David dinner, after toasts to St. David, the King (or Queen), and to Shenkin ap Morgan. Michael Glover and Jonathan Riley, *That Astonishing Infantry: The History of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, 1689-2006* (2008), pp. 280-281.

²³⁹ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

Irish descent furnished the evidence of noble status required to serve as officers in certain foreign regiments. Captain John Edmond Purcell married Countess Susanna O' Donnell, daughter of General Count Hugh O' Donnell, also an officer of the Austrian service. Due to a loss of records, the relationship between Captain John Edmond Purcell, originally of Kilkenny, and John Baptist Purcell, also originally of Kilkenny, later called Johann Baptist Purcell, is unclear. Johann Baptist Purcell was likely a son, nephew or cousin of Captain John Edward Purcell. It is even possible, although unlikely, that they were the same person.²⁴⁰ Johann Baptist Purcell was born in Kilkenny in 1721 and entered the Austrian service at age 21. After fighting at Prague, the siege of Schweidnitz and the battles of Breslau and Leuthen, he was, as a Captain of Cavalry (Rittmeister), made a Knight of the Imperial Military Order of Maria Theresa in circa 1759. In 1760, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and in 1775 to Colonel and commander of a cavalry regiment, the Cuirassier Regiment Voghera. On 25 June 1779, four months before his death, he was advanced to the rank of Major General and placed on the retired list.²⁴¹ Johann Baptist Purcell's official name in Austria was General-Major Freiherr Johann Baptist Purcell von Rorestown (Major General Baron Johann Baptist Purcell von Rorestown). Some reference books give the spelling of the name as Purcell von Rorestown and others as Purcell von Roreston. He married Baroness Leopoldine von Wipplar und Uschitz and had children.²⁴² The origin of his baronial title is uncertain. The title of Freiherr normally referred to a Baron of the Holy Roman Empire but could refer to barons in German-speaking territories generally. After the last Holy Roman Emperor became Emperor of Austria in 1804, the title of Freiherr continued to be used within the Austrian empire to refer to a baron. When the dual monarchy was established in 1867, with the kingdom of Hungary gaining co-equal status with the Austrian empire, Freiherr was thereafter used for barons in Austria, and Baron was used for barons in Hungary. Johann Baptist Purcell von Rorestown had become a Knight of the Order of Maria Theresa as a junior officer. This order, founded by Empress Maria Theresa in 1757, was a very important one, awarded to officers whose valorous actions in battle, taken on their own initiative, had a successful impact on the outcome of a military campaign. A recipient of the order had the right to petition to be created an hereditary baron of the empire.²⁴³ But an Austrian

²⁴⁰ Johann Baptist Purcell, officer in the imperial service, is not to be confused with Dr. John Baptist Purcell, who was born in Mallow, County Cork in 1800, emigrated to the United States, and became the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cincinnati. He was mentioned in the main text, above. Pope Pius IX, who held him in great esteem, created Archbishop Purcell a Count in 1851. That is, Pius IX bestowed on Archbishop Purcell in 1851 the position of Assistant at the Pontifical Throne. See, Richard H. Clarke, LL.D., *Lives of the Deceased Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States* (New York, 1888) (Article "Most Reverend John Baptist Purcell, D.D."), volume II, page 204. A bishop appointed as an Assistant at the Pontifical Throne was *ipso facto* created a papal count (Count of the Apostolic Palace) by the Pope. See, *Catholic Encyclopedia* (article entitled "Assistant at the Pontifical Throne").

²⁴¹ Lieutenant Colonel Cavenagh, "Irish Knights of the Imperial Military Order of Maria Theresa," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, series 6, volume 16, pp. 98-99 (1929). See also, Dr. Antonio Schmidt-Brentano, *Kaiserliche und k.k. Generale (1618-1815)* (Austrian State Archives, 2009), page 79 (for a reference to Purcell's 1779 retirement as a major general).

²⁴² *Genealogisches Taschenbuch der freiherrlichen Häuser*, vol. 2 (1849), pp. 361-363.

²⁴³ See Professor Jan Županič, "Re-ennoblement and nobility issues at the dawn of the Austro-Hungarian Empire", *Przegląd Historyczny* 100/1, 1-13 (2009).

reference book states, with respect to “Maria Anna Purcell von Rorestown” (daughter of “Major General Johann Baptist Purcell von Rorestown” and wife of Baron Johann Nepomucen Franz Xaver Freiherr Řikowsky von Dobrřic) that “the rank of Baron [‘Freiherrnstand’] for the Purcell family is not authenticated, although the father of the latter [Maria Anna Purcell], as a Major General and Knight of the Order of Maria Theresa, appears officially listed with the baronial (‘freiherrlichen’) title.”²⁴⁴ It thus appears clear that Major General Purcell did not petition to be created and was not formally created a baron of the Holy Roman Empire. If so, one must draw the inference that the Emperor simply recognized these Purcells as being of baronial rank, based upon their descent from the Barons of Loughmoe, even though the latter designation was never a peerage title. He perhaps did so after Johann Baptist Purcell became a Knight of the Order of Maria Theresa. Once they were so recognized, all the Purcells of this branch, and their descendants in the male line, would have been allowed to use the title of baron. Unlike in Ireland, Austrian and Hungarian titles were borne not just by the head of a family but by all descendants in the male line.²⁴⁵ If these Purcells in the Holy Roman Empire obtained recognition of their baronial rank based upon the ancient foreign title of Baron of Loughmoe, such recognition would have had the advantage of assimilating them into the old nobility of the empire.²⁴⁶ A baronial creation based upon an award of the Order of Maria Theresa circa 1757, however, would have only effected a new title, with precedence only among the recently ennobled. Johann Baptist Purcell’s son, Oberst Freiherr Johann Purcell von Rorestown (Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown), was from 1817 until his death in 1829 the colonel commanding the 2nd Szekler Border Guard Infantry Regiment No. 15 in Hungary.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ *Monatsblatt der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft “Adler”* (Vienna, July 1905), volume 5, number 55, page 391 (“ein Freiherrnstand für die Familie Purcell ist nicht nachzuweisen, obwohl der Vater der Letzterin als Generalmajor und Ritter des Maria Theresia-Ordens offiziell mit dem freiherrlichen Titel aufgeführt erscheint”). The baronial title for Johann Baptist Purcell and his descendants appears in numerous official documents, such as the official Army history, *Geschichte der k. und. K. Wehrmacht*, edited by Alphons Freiherr von Wrede (Vienna, 1898), vol. I, p. 152, which lists “Purcell von Roreston, Johann Baron von, Colonel” [“Purcell von Roreston, Johann Freiherr von, Oberst”] as colonel of the National Border Infantry Regiment from 1817.

²⁴⁵ In a similar way, a junior branch of the O’ Donnell family were recognized in the 18th century by the Holy Roman Emperor as being of countly rank, based on the Irish title of Earl of Tyrconnell which had been bestowed by King James I on the head of the O’ Donnell family in Ireland. This earldom had an existence of less than a dozen years, as it was created in 1603 and forfeited by attainder in 1614. Once the Emperor recognized this branch of the O’ Donnell family as being of countly rank, however, all members of this Austrian line of the O’ Donnells, spelled as O’ Donell in Austria, bore the title of count. Captain John Edmond Purcell, the officer in the service of the service of the Holy Roman Emperor mentioned above, married Countess Susanna O’ Donell of this family. Several other Irish families acquired the right to bear titles within the Holy Roman Empire in a similar manner.

²⁴⁶ The confirmation of arms which Captain John Edmond Purcell of the Austrian service obtained in 1757 from Ulster King of Arms may well have been the proof which the Purcells submitted to the Holy Roman Emperor for recognition of their baronial rank. The patent, confirming their right to bear the Purcell arms, no doubt made reference to their descent from the house headed by the Barons of Loughmoe. See Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

²⁴⁷ *Monatsblatt der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft “Adler”* (Vienna, October 1901), volume 5, number 10, page 68, citing *Militär Schematismus des Österreichischen Kaiserthumes* (Vienna, 1829), page 248. The city of Szekler Neumarkt (called Kézdivásárhely in Hungarian) was within the Kingdom of Hungary in the 19th century but is now in Romania and called Târgu Secuiesc. Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown (who was born in Vukovář, Croatia on 16 October 1771) was buried in Târgu Secuiesc, where a street named after him (Strada

In 1807, during the Napoleonic Wars, he commanded, with the rank of Major of Infantry (Infantry Regiment No. 51), a Hungarian battalion, the Imperial and Royal Battalion Purcell, recruited in Transylvania and central Hungary. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, descendants of this family were living in Hungary and using the title of Baron Purcell. Two of them, Andreas and Béla, were grandsons of Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown. Andreas, Baron Purcell (1845-1915) (Dr. jur. Baron Andreas Purcell) was a lawyer in Budapest in the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian empire.²⁴⁸ Béla, Baron Purcell (1844-1898) was a senior postal official in Pécs, a large city in Hungary, in 1886 and in Brassó, Hungary (now a city in Romania) in 1897.²⁴⁹ Adalbert, Baron Purcell was a civil servant of the Royal Hungarian Postal Service in Budapest in 1881.²⁵⁰ Emil, Baron Purcell von Rorestown, a Hungarian from Budapest, arrived in New York as a young man in 1902 and, after some escapades in the Yorkville section of Manhattan, which were reported in the American press, married Juliette Lukacs, also from Hungary, in a civil ceremony in New York in August 1903.²⁵¹ Male line descendants of this branch of the Purcell family still survive.²⁵²

Purcel János) still exists. A 2017 article in a Hungarian magazine described the efforts of one of his descendants to organize the renovation of his tomb, which was crumbling in decay. He entered the Theresianische Militärakademie (Theresian Military Academy) in Wiener Neustadt on 4 July 1778 at age 7 and remained on active duty until his death at age 57 on 13 June 1829, while still in command of his regiment. Johann Svoboda, editor, *Die Theresianische Militär-Akademie zu Wiener Neustadt und Ihre Zöglinge* (Vienna, 1894), vol. I, p. 220. When he entered the military academy in 1778, his registration noted that he was the son of a colonel. Ibid. His father, Major General Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown, was still a colonel in 1778 and was not promoted to major general until 1779.

²⁴⁸ *Monatsblatt der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft "Adler"* (Vienna, October 1901), volume 5, number 10, page 68, citing *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1880), page 855. He had a long career at the bar, because the *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie* lists him as a member of the Budapest bar in its editions of 1877 (p. 756), 1880 (p. 855), 1892 (p. 1865), and 1907 (p. 967). Depending on the year, his name is entered sometimes as Baron Andreas Purcell and sometimes as Andreas, Freiherr von Purcell, or Purcel.

²⁴⁹ *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie*, 1886 edition (p. 656, as Baron Béla Purcell) and 1897 edition (as Béla Freiherr von Purcel).

²⁵⁰ *Monatsblatt der Kais. Kön. Heraldischen Gesellschaft "Adler"* (Vienna, October 1901), volume 5, number 10, page 68, citing *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1881 edition), Section II, page 601. In 1892, Adalbert, Baron von Purcell ("Andreas, Freiherr von Purcell") was the senior postal official in Arad, Hungary (a city now in Romania). *Hof- und Staats-Handbuch der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie*, 1892 edition (p. 809). Baron Adalbert Purcell was still alive in 1905 and active in the National Association of Hungarian Amateur Photographers. *The Photographic Times* (New York), vol. XXXVII (1905), p. 330.

²⁵¹ *The Wilkes-Barre Record* (newspaper of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), 31 July 1903 (front page) and *The Winnipeg Tribune* (newspaper of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada), 22 August 1903 (front page). The article in the former newspaper reported him as saying he had been an officer in the Hungarian army, had left the army for a position in the post office and had arrived in the United States with limited funds. His calling card used the "Rorestown" spelling.

²⁵² The present writer is grateful to Ronald Purcell, of Arizona, U.S.A., for information on the three sons and the living descendants of his grandfather, Baron Emil Purcell von Rorestown (1876-1935). Emil and his wife eventually settled in San Francisco. Emil was a son of Baron Béla Purcell, sometimes spelled Purcel in official directories of the period, and was a great-grandson of Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown (died 1829). The writer is also grateful to László Bottka of Budapest for providing a detailed family tree of the Purcells of Hungary. Mr. Bottka's wife Júlia is a great-granddaughter of Baroness Gizella Purcell (1877-1967), who in turn was a granddaughter of Colonel Baron Johann Purcell von Rorestown. Baroness Gizella Purcell married Béla Lászlóffy, a royal prosecutor in Hungary. As far as the Bottkas are aware, there are no more Purcells living in Hungary today, although there are numerous female line descendants still located there.

APPENDIX II: CHIEF SEATS OF SEVERAL BRANCHES OF THE PURCELL FAMILY

Purcell of Catteshall: Their seat was Catteshall Manor (sometimes rendered Catteshull or Catteshill), near Godalming, Co. Surrey, England. This manor was held directly of the King by four successive members of the Purcell family in return for service at the royal court as usher to the King. The first Purcell lord of the manor of Catteshall of whom records survive was, as stated above, Oyn Purcell, a Norman who held the rank of baron in England and was usher to King Henry I, son of William the Conqueror. He held Catteshall from circa 1100. The last Purcell lord of the manor of Catteshall was Oyn's descendant Ranulf Purcell alias Ranulf de Broc, an English baron and usher to King Henry II. At Ranulf's death without sons circa 1179, the manor passed to the husband of his daughter Edelina Purcell alias de Broc, Stephen de Turnham, who served as High Sheriff, successively, of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Lancashire.

Another Purcell of the Catteshall line, Ralf Purcell the younger (son of Ralf Purcell, King's Usher and Lord of the Manor of Catteshall, son of Geoffrey Purcell, King's Usher and Lord of the Manor of Catteshall, son of Oyn Purcell, King's Usher and first Purcell Lord of the Manor of Catteshall), was granted circa 1156 a separate usher serjeanty by King Henry II. In return for service as usher to King Henry II and later King John, Ralf Purcell the younger held an estate eventually known as Newton Purcell in Oxfordshire. (The small village of Newton Purcell still exists, on the border of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. "On the east side of the main village street a mound and three sections of a moat mark the site of the medieval manor-house of the Purcells."²⁵³) His descendants continued as ushers to the King until at least the reign of King Henry III, and they were lords of the manor of Newton Purcell until circa 1521.²⁵⁴

Sir Walter Purcell, the English knight who settled in Ireland in the late 12th century, was a cadet of the Catteshall Purcells.

²⁵³ "Parishes: Newton Purcell", in Mary D. Lobel, editor, *A History of the County of Oxford* (1959), vol. 6, pp. 262-267.

²⁵⁴ "Parishes: Newton Purcell", in Mary D. Lobel, editor, *A History of the County of Oxford* (1959), vol. 6, pp. 262-267. Ralf Purcell the younger (great-grandson of Oyn Purcell), who received the separate usher serjeanty circa 1156, was still alive circa 1180. The Ralf Purcell who held the manor of Newton Purcell in 1198 was thought to be his son. The latter's son Robert Purcell (usher to the King) held the manor by 1213. Robert Purcell, still alive in 1243, was succeeded by his brother Henry Purcell, who in turn was succeeded circa 1247 by Otwell Purcell, probably Henry's son. Otwell was succeeded circa 1279 or 1280 by his son, Otwell Purcell the younger, who became Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1317-1318. Thomas Purcell was lord of the manor in 1332, John Purcell in 1375, and another John Purcell in 1425. There is a record of a Thomas Purcell of Newton, alive in 1475, "and in 1521 payment of the annual rent to Oseney Abbey [by the lord of the manor of Newton Purcell] was made by the guardian of the Purcell heir." The manor had passed out of the Purcell family by 1523. *Ibid.*

Purcell of Loughmoe: Their seat was Loughmoe Castle, near Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Sir Hugh Purcell, first feudal Baron of Loughmoe, acquired perhaps as many as 25 knights' fees in Ireland, including Loughmoe, Co. Tipperary, upon his marriage circa 1220 to Beatrix Butler. The last Baron of Loughmoe, Colonel Nicholas Purcell, died in poverty at Loughmoe Castle in 1722, and, after five centuries, the lands of Loughmoe, along with the castle, passed out of the Purcell family. The ruins of Loughmoe Castle still stand.

The oldest surviving portion of the castle (the south tower) was built between 1444 and 1494.²⁵⁵ (A prior fortified residence, whether of stone or of the motte and bailey variety, would have stood on or near the spot of the present castle ruins).²⁵⁶ The south tower is 70 feet high, 52 feet wide from east to west, and 37 feet wide from north to south. The walls are 10 feet thick at the base, to protect them from the siege engines of the period. The angles of the outside walls are rounded, to make detachment of rocks more difficult and to deflect missiles. In the ceiling above the ground floor is a murdering hole: an opening through which the occupants of the castle could hurl spears, rocks and boiling oil on intruders or attackers below. The spiral staircase from the ground floor leads to the first floor, which contains among other rooms the great hall, with its distinctive fireplace, 5 feet high by 7 feet 3 inches wide.

The spiral stair ends at the fourth story . . . and at its top are some defensive arrangements to enable the garrison to make a last stand if driven back this far. The archway is small and could take a very thick and solid door, while the bolt-holes in the wall show that a strong bar could be fixed across it. A separate stair gives access to the battlements and the attic storey, and where this crosses the archway at the top of the lower stair, there is a small hole to enable the defenders to stab with a spear anyone attacking the door; and as this hole slopes away from the stairs, the assailants could not thrust a spear into it.²⁵⁷

One of the unusual features of the south tower is that its dungeon is located on the fourth storey:

In the upper storey there is to be seen a small pointed door-way, the bottom of which is about five and a half feet off the ground. On climbing up the wall and entering this, the floor that is reached will be found suddenly to drop sheer

²⁵⁵ Rory Sherlock, "Using New Techniques to Date Old Castles," *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 19-23.

²⁵⁶ Harold Leask, the authority on Irish castles, who also dated the south tower of Loughmoe Castle as being of 15th century construction, wrote that the great period of stone castle construction, the age in which the island was "reduced by incastellation," lasted from about 1180 to 1310. Harold Leask, *Irish Castles* (Dundalk, Ireland, reprinted 1977), pp. 25-26, 132-133. Leask was president of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and Inspector of National Monuments in Ireland.

²⁵⁷ Henry S. Crawford, "The Ruins of Loughmoe Castle," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XXIX, part 3, pp. 239.

*down to a ledge about four and a half feet beneath the observer. At the far end of this ledge is a square hole, so constructed that a heavy trap-door could be fitted upon it. This is the actual entrance to the prison, the floor of which lies some ten feet deeper.*²⁵⁸

In addition to its south tower, Loughmoe Castle also consists of considerably newer central and north wings, resembling a Tudor manor more than a fortress. They stand five storeys high, with numerous bedrooms, each with fireplace. The formal extensive gardens were situated on the north side of the castle. They were laid out in the stiff French and Dutch style of landscaping.²⁵⁹

Purcell of Ballyfoyle: Their seats were first Clogharinka Castle (parish of Muckalee, barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny) and later Ballyfoyle Castle (parish of Kilmadum, barony of Gowran, Co. Kilkenny). The Purcells of Fennel, later of Ballyfoyle, were a prominent cadet branch of the Purcells of Loughmoe. Nothing remains of Clogharinka Castle. Later, Ballyfoyle Castle, of which a partial ruin remains, became their seat, and Clogharinka Castle was likely used as a dower house. The Cromwellians confiscated Ballyfoyle and surrounding lands.

Ballyfoyle Castle was rectangular in shape. The entry hall was about 16 feet long and 6 or 7 feet wide. The walls were 7 feet thick at the base. It was three storeys high. One source opined that it was built prior to the accession of Henry VII (1485).²⁶⁰

Purcell of Foulksrath: Their seat was Foulksrath Castle (parish of Coolcraheen, barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny). This castle still stands and in the 1990s was a youth hostel. Robnet Purcell of Foulksrath Castle died at the castle in 1635. His son, the last Purcell to hold Foulksrath Castle, lost his property as a result of the Cromwellian confiscations of the 1650s and did not regain it following the restoration of King Charles II in 1660. One book described the castle as follows:

The walls are nine feet thick from foundation to top. The first floor, or ground floor, measures clear on the inside twenty-four feet by seventeen feet in width. At the entrance to this room a spiral stone stairs ascends to a second, third and fourth floor . . . The stair itself consists of 61 steps, each eight inches high. From within the fourth floor a second stairs of 19 steps leads to the passage round

²⁵⁸ Rev. St. John D. Seymour, "The Ruins of Loughmoe Castle and Its Legends," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XXIX, part 1, p. 70.

²⁵⁹ Sources for Loughmoe Castle: Henry S. Crawford, "The Ruins of Loughmoe Castle," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XXIX, part 3, pp. 234-241 (1909); Rory Sherlock, "Using New Techniques to Date Old Castles," *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 19-23; Harold G. Leask, *Irish Castles* (Dundalk, Ireland, 1977), pp. 25-26, 125, 132-133; *Dublin University Magazine* (August 1853), pp. 209-210; and Rev. St. John D. Seymour, "The Ruins of Loughmoe Castle and Its Legends," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. XXIX, part 1, p. 70.

²⁶⁰ Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), pp. 175-176, 178, 179-180.

*the roof, protected by a battlement or parapet, and from which may be obtained a magnificent and charming view of the surrounding country, and of distant mountains in towering grandeur.*²⁶¹

Purcell of the Garrans: James Purcell, gentleman, of the Garrans, Co. Kilkenny was the younger son of Philip fitzWilfred Purcell of Foulksrath Castle (fl. 1491) and the younger brother of Thomas Purcell of Foulksrath Castle (d. circa 1526). His principal residence was the Garrans, formerly belonging to the dissolved Abbey of Jerpoint. There appears to be no surviving description of the “great house” at the Garrans. Among his many descendants were the Purcells of Conahy.

Purcell of Conahy: Captain John Purcell, gentleman (d. 1711), commanded a troop in Purcell’s Horse, a cavalry regiment under the command of Colonel Nicholas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe, and forming part of the Irish Army of King James II. At the time of the Jacobite defeat in 1691, he held Conahy Castle (parish of Grangemacomb, barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny), which he leased from James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormonde. He and his family lost Conahy following the Jacobite defeat. Nothing remains of the castle.

APPENDIX III: COATS OF ARMS OF VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE PURCELL FAMILY

Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe: Shield: *Or, a saltire between four boars’ heads coupé sable.* In simple terms, this means a gold shield displaying a black saltire (or St. Andrew’s cross) between four black boars’ heads. Crest: *A cubit arm erect proper habited azure cuffed argent grasping a sword also proper pommel and hilt or, piercing through the jaw a boar’s head coupé sable, vulned and distilling drops of blood.* Motto: *Aut vincam aut periam.* (Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales*, London, 1884, p. 829). The Latin motto means,

“Either I shall conquer or die.” Junior lines often added to the arms a mark for difference, such as a crescent or a bordure.

Purcell of Ballyfoyle: Same arms as the Purcells of Loughmoe. The base of the way-side cross erected as a memorial to Edmund Purcell of Ballyfoyle, head of the Ballyfoyle line (on 16 August 1625 in a quarrel with Sir Edmund Blanchville) bore a carved shield depicting a saltire between four boars’ heads coupé and a crest depicting a hand erect holding a sword, point upwards.²⁶²

Purcell of Foulksrath: Same arms as the Purcells of Loughmoe, with appropriate difference. (Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England*,

²⁶¹ Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 170.

²⁶² Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 177.

Scotland, Ireland and Wales, London, 1884, p. 829). The Purcells of Conahy were a cadet branch of the Purcells of Foulksrath. The Purcells of Foulksrath were in turn a cadet branch of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle.

The Purcell coats of arms in general:

It is unknown when the coat of arms *Or, a saltire between four boars' heads couped sable*, sometimes called the *Loughmoe arms*, was first used by the Purcells. The fact that these arms were displayed not only by Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (d. 1599) but also in the early decades of the 17th century by the Purcells of Ballyfoyle and the Purcells of Foulksrath, both distant offshoots of the Loughmoe Purcells, suggests that the arms were quite ancient.²⁶³

In St. Mary Collegiate Church, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny, there is a Purcell grave slab depicting a shield with four boars' heads but no saltire. The Latin inscription identifies it as the grave monument of Patrick Purcell (died 1549), Constable of Gowran Castle. (Gowran Castle was a Butler fortress built by James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond in the late 14th century. The collegiate church also contains the tombs of several unidentified Butler knights, with life-size effigies of each in full armor reclining on his tomb, feet resting on his loyal dog.)

Several branches of the Purcells preferred the following coat of arms: *Argent, a boar passant gules tusked, hoofed and bristled or, langued azure on a chief of the last three plates*. In simple terms, this means a silver shield showing a red boar standing, whose tusks, hooves and bristles are gold and whose tongue is blue, with a blue horizontal band at the top of the shield displaying three plates. Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, recorded that these arms (which, for convenience, we will call the *red boar arms*) were used by Nicholas Purcell, Sheriff of Dublin (Funeral Entry, 1616) and by Pierce Purcell of Croagh, Co. Limerick (Funeral Entry, 1638).²⁶⁴ The Purcells of Croagh were cadets of the Purcells of Loughmoe, and Burke indicates that the Purcells of Crumlin, Co. Dublin were cadets of the Purcells of Croagh. There survives among the Ormond Deeds at the National Library, Ireland a green wax heraldic seal affixed to a deed in November 1362 by Geoffrey Purcell of Loughmoe. The seal is similar to the red boar arms. It displays a boar passant (standing) and three plates. But the 1362 seal has the boar passant in the upper half of the shield,

²⁶³ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829; Rev. William Healy, *History and Antiquities of Kilkenny (County and City)* (Kilkenny, 1893), p. 177. The record of Funeral Entries, held in Dublin by the Ulster King of Arms and later by the Chief Herald of Ireland, contain drawings of the Loughmoe arms as used by Ellen Purcell, wife of Pierce Butler of Nodstown, Co. Tipperary (died 1626) and daughter of Thomas Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe and as used by Thomas Purcell of Borrisoleigh, Co. Tipperary (died 1629). See "Coats of Arms From the Funeral Entries," *Journal of Memorials of the Dead of Ireland*, vols. 7 and 8, pp. 55, 60, 73, 81 (figure 616), 147 and 205.

²⁶⁴ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

with the three plates depicted in the lower half of the shield.²⁶⁵ To the knowledge of the present writer, this 1362 seal is the earliest surviving Purcell coat of arms with a boar theme. (Due to an engraving error, the 1362 boar is standing and facing in the wrong direction.)

Still other branches of the Purcell family in Ireland bore this coat of arms: *Barry wavy of six argent and gules on a bend sable three boars' heads of the first*. In simple terms, this means a shield patterned with six undulating horizontal stripes of silver and red, with a black band running from the upper left corner of the shield (as one faces it) to the lower right corner of the shield. On the black band are three silver boars' heads. Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, identified this coat of arms as being used by the Purcells of Temple-Mary, the Purcells of Altamira and sometimes the Purcells of Burton Park and Highfort, all in Co. Cork. These were lines of the Purcell family who conformed to the Church of Ireland and managed to retain their lands in the 18th century. Burke identified them as descendants of the Purcells of Croagh, Co. Limerick.²⁶⁶ It is intriguing that these are the same arms as those apparently used by the family of the great Baroque composer, Henry Purcell

²⁶⁵ Deed 1069 dated November 1362 of the Ormond Deeds (National Library, Dublin). The deed was executed by two closely related Geoffrey Purcells: Geoffrey Roth Purcell and Geoffrey, son of John More Purcell. It is not known to which Geoffrey the seal pertains. As explained earlier in this essay, the lordship of Loughmoe and Corketeny was the subject of a succession dispute in the 1350s, when the bubonic plague, called the Black Death, ravaged Tipperary and Kilkenny, and it was unclear which Purcells were still alive. See *Calendar of Ormond Deeds*, ed. by Edmund Curtis (Irish Manuscripts Commission), vol. I, p. 826. The lordship was still vacant in 1356, because in that year Geoffrey Roth Purcell and “O’ Kathyll”, with their subjects, submitted themselves to James Butler, 2nd Earl of Ormond, “until the coming of a certain true heir of the Purcells, lord of Corketeni,” and bound themselves to render to the Earl the rents and services due to him from Corketeny. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 38. Geoffrey’s rival Hugh Purcell then managed to hold Corketeny for a time, but by 1362 it had been forfeited to the Crown. On 3 October 1362, King Edward III granted to the 2nd Earl of Ormond, his first cousin once removed, “the manors of Corketen, Loghmy [Loughmoe] and Okyryn [Ikerrin] in county Tipperary, which have escheated to us by reason of the forfeiture of Hugh Purcell.” *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 89. In November 1362, the 2nd Earl of Ormond granted “the manor of Corketenne and Okurryn” for life to Geoffrey Roth Purcell and to Geoffrey son of John More Purcell, requiring the two grantees to “make suit at the Earl’s court of Thurles from fortnight to fortnight just as any lord of Corketenne in the time of Edmund le Botiller [Edmund Butler, 6th Chief Butler of Ireland, grandfather of James Butler, 2nd Earl of Ormond], grand-sire of James, or in the time of any of his ancestors, was wont to do.” *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 90. The Gaelic elegy to James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe (alive in 1465) proudly proclaimed his descent from Geoffrey Roth Purcell. See Anne O’ Sullivan’s unpublished English translation of the Gaelic elegy *In Obitum Jacobi Pursell Baronis de Lughma*, British Museum Add. Ms. 33993. This is the fourth verse: “O bed-fellow of your poet, steadfast scion of Geoffrey Rothe / musicians now keen you, star of knowledge of Gael and Gall.” The thirteenth verse reads: “Your hope for the nobles of Ireland, o valiant descendant / of Geoffrey, was that you would unite Gael and Gall / but your hope vanished suddenly.” The term “Gall” refers in Irish to foreigners, that is, Anglo-Norman families like Purcell and Butler.

²⁶⁶ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829. The Purcells of Burton Park, Co. Cork, however, mainly used the Loughmoe coat, undifferenced. See Certificate of Arms by the Chief Herald of Ireland to Anita Mary Purcell, daughter and co-heiress of Matthew John Purcell of Burton Park and widow of John Joseph Ryan (vol. T, folio 61, dated 9 April 1970) and Confirmation of Arms by the Chief Herald of Ireland to John Raymond Richard Ryan-Purcell of Burton Park, son of John Joseph Ryan and Anita Mary Purcell (vol. S, folio 84, dated 20 July 1965) (Purcell of Loughmoe quartering Ryan). The arms of Anita Purcell and John Ryan-Purcell use the motto “To Conquer or Die,” an English version of the Latin motto of the Loughmoe Purcells, *Aut vincam aut periam*.

(c. 1659-1695).²⁶⁷ Little is known of Henry Purcell's antecedents, but one researcher theorized that he was a descendant of the Purcells of Ireland.²⁶⁸

These various Purcell coats of arms were of great antiquity and may well have been virtually interchangeable to some extent.

The coat of arms on the funeral monument of Robnet Purcell of Foulksrath Castle (d. 1635), still to be seen early in the 20th century in the Coolcraheen churchyard (barony of Fassadinin, Co. Kilkenny), depicted a shield with a chevron (an inverted V) between three boars' heads, with two boars' heads above the chevron and one below.²⁶⁹ This is interesting, because, according to Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, Robnet's funeral entry in the records of the office of the Ulster King of Arms states that he used the same arms as the Barons of Loughmoe, that is, the Loughmoe coat: *Or, a saltire between four boars' heads coupé sable*.²⁷⁰ On the floor of St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, the grave slab of James Purcell of the Garrans, Co. Kilkenny (died 11 October 1552), a younger son of Philip Purcell of Foulksrath, still visible today, displays a shield with three boars' heads, two in the upper half of the shield and one in the lower half, but no chevron. It may be noted that gentry families in rural areas were at the mercy of the skills and precision of local stone carvers, who often made errors in carving funeral monuments. In 1919, the Office of Ulster King of Arms issued a confirmation of the following arms to Thomas Patrick Purcell of Albert House, Dalkey, Co. Dublin: *Or, a chevron between three boars' heads sable, coupé armed and langued proper, a crescent of the first*.²⁷¹ In simple terms, this means a gold shield with a black chevron between three black boars' heads, two above the chevron and one below it, with a gold crescent on the chevron for difference. This 1919 coat of arms is quite similar to and was perhaps based upon the arms carved on the 1635 Coolcraheen funeral monument.

An intriguing mystery swirls around the question of what coat of arms Sir Hugh Purcell, first Baron of Loughmoe (died 1240) might have used. As mentioned above, two Irish manuscripts, reducing ancient oral tradition to written form, state that Sir Hugh's mother was a daughter of King Henry II. In Ms. 23 D 17 (790), a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, transcribed by O'Clery, the 17th

²⁶⁷ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

²⁶⁸ W.H. Grattan Flood, "Irish Ancestry of Garland, Dowland, Campion and Purcell," *Music and Letters*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 1922), pp. 59-65.

²⁶⁹ Very Rev. Canon William Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. II (1905), pp. 195. Carrigan includes a photograph of the coat of arms.

²⁷⁰ Sir Bernard Burke, Ulster King of Arms, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales* (London, 1884), p. 829.

²⁷¹ Confirmation of arms by Deputy Ulster King of Arms to Thomas Patrick Purcell of Albert House, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, great-great-grandson of Pierce Purcell of Jordantown, Co. Kilkenny, a descendant of the Purcells of Ballyfoyle (vol. L, folio 80, dated 2 October 1919). These arms use the same motto as the Loughmoe Purcells: *Aut vincam aut periam*.

century annalist, it is stated that Sir Hugh's mother was a daughter of King Henry II and a sister of King John.²⁷² In a pedigree found among several early 16th century manuscripts unearthed in Co. Tipperary and now in the British Museum (British Museum Add. Ms. 33993), Sir Hugh Purcell is described as the son of a "sister of King John." This royal descent cannot be proven, and if true, as stated above, Sir Hugh's mother would have been an illegitimate daughter of Henry II. Sir Hugh founded a Franciscan friary in Waterford and was buried there in 1240. Based on surviving information, however, his tomb may well have borne the Plantagenet shield of three lions passant guardant in pale ("the arms of England") and was still to be seen there five hundred years later in the 1740s.²⁷³

APPENDIX IV: FOUR ANCIENT PEDIGREES OF THE BARONS OF LOUGHMOE

There is no complete and authoritative listing of all the Barons of Loughmoe. As stated earlier, this feudal designation was not a peerage title, and therefore there was no need for the family or for the Irish Parliament to keep detailed records of all descendants who might be in the line of succession.

There are four surviving ancient pedigrees of the Barons of Loughmoe. It is interesting that for the most part they are remarkably similar, which is perhaps an indication of a degree of accuracy.

The first is a pedigree recorded by the scribe, historian and genealogist Dubhaltach mac Firbhisigh, or Mac Firbis, who died in 1671, well past his eightieth year, according to one account. The second is a pedigree evidently recorded by the annalist, historian and genealogist Cú Choigríche Ó Cléirigh, or O' Clery, one of the Four Masters, who died circa 1664. The third is a pedigree in Stearne Manuscript F.14.18 (page 20), Trinity College, Dublin. The fourth and last is a pedigree in British Museum Add. Manuscript 33993, which also contains the early 16th century Irish language elegy to James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe ("*In obitum Jacobi Purcell*

²⁷² Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin and containing a pedigree of the Purcells of Loughmoe, is reproduced in "The O' Clery Book of Genealogies," Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, "The Geraldines of Desmond," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85.

²⁷³ *Annals of the Four Masters*, ed. by John O'Donovan (Dublin, 1851), vol. III, p. 299; Rev. Brendan Jennings, OFM, "Brussels Ms. 3947: Donatus Moneyus, De Provincia Hiberniae S. Francisci," *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 6 (Nov. 1934), p. 81; John D'Alton, *Illustrations of King James's Irish Army List (1689)*, 2nd ed. (1861), vol. I, p. 272, citing Mervyn Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum* (1786), p. 704. In the mid-18th century, C. Smith, visiting this friary (today known in Waterford as "the French Church"), observed the tomb of a man in armor with a shield bearing three lions passant guardant in pale, the arms of the Plantagenets. This was thought to be the tomb of Sir Hugh Purcell 50 years later by R.H. Rylands, but he could not find it. "The Present Condition of the gravestones in the French Church of Waterford, A.D. 1972", *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 103, p. 65, 71, 73 (1973), citing C. Smith, *Present State of the City and County of Waterford* (1746), pp. 180-183, R.H. Rylands, *History of Waterford* (1824), p. 157, and P.M. Egan, *History of the County and City of Waterford* (1894), p. 492.

Baronis de Lughma”). The latter pedigree is of a later date than and in a different hand from the Purcell elegy.

The Mac Firbis pedigree, as reprinted by John O’ Hart, is the following:²⁷⁴

- (1) Charlemagne (Serlus Mór), King of France and Emperor of the West, A.D. 800
- (2) Roebeard (Robert), his son
- (3) Sir Hugh, his son
- (4) Risdard (Richard), his son
- (5) Pilip (Philip), his son
- (6) Risdard, his son
- (7) Eumon (Edmund), his son
- (8) Roibin, his son
- (9) Reumunn (Redmund or Raymond), his son
- (10) Tomas (Thomas), his son
- (11) Bened, his son
- (12) Seaan (John or Shane), his son
- (13) Seumas (James), his son
- (14) Seunfionn, his son
- (15) Seumas, his son
- (16) Uilliam (William), his son
- (17) Eumon, his son
- (18) Piarus (Piers or Peter), his son
- (19) Tomas, his son
- (20) Seumas, his son
- (21) Tomas, his son.

This is the O’ Clery pedigree:²⁷⁵

- (1) Charlemagne, King of the Franks
- (2) Robert, his son
- (3) Sir Hugo Purcell, his son, whose mother was a sister of John, King of England and a daughter of Henry II
- (4) Piers, son of Sir Hugo
- (5) Richard, son of Piers. Richard had three sons: Philip, Baron of Luachra [Loughmoe]; Walter of Baile an Phuill [meant to refer to Ballyfoyle, Co. Kilkenny]; and Piers of Croch [meant to refer to Croagh, Co. Limerick]

²⁷⁴ John O’ Hart, *Irish Pedigrees* (New York, 1923), vol. 2, pp. 345-346. The Mac Firbis pedigree is entitled “Genealogy of the Barons of Loughmoe” (“Geinealach Baruin Luachma”). Ibid., vol. 2, p. 345.

²⁷⁵ Ms. 23 D 17 (790), an Irish language manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. The Purcell pedigree in this manuscript is reproduced in “The O’ Clery Book of Genealogies,” Seamas Porter, ed., *Analecta Hibernica* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951), no. 18, p. 192; an English translation of the Purcell pedigree is in Rev. Canon Hayman, “The Geraldines of Desmond,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), pp. 83-85.

- (6) Walter, his son [Perhaps here O' Clery mistakenly wrote Walter instead of his brother Philip of Loughmoe]
- (7) Richard
- (8) Edmund
- (9) Robnett
- (10) Raymond
- (11) Thomas
- (12) Binett
- (13) John
- (14) James
- (15) Sir Hugh the Red
- (16) James
- (17) William
- (18) Edmund
- (19) Piers
- (20) Thomas
- (21) James
- (22) John
- (23) Thomas
- (24) James
- (25) Thomas
- (26) James
- (27) Thomas
- (28) James
- (29) Thomas

The Stearne Manuscript pedigree, as reprinted by William Ball Wright, seems to commence with the Richard Purcell who was No. 5 in the O' Clery pedigree:²⁷⁶

- (1) Richard Purcell has three sons: (a) Pierce of Croagh, Co. Limerick who married Katherine, daughter of Sir John Hannon, Knt., of Croagh; (b) Walter of Ballinaquile [probably a mangled rendering of Ballyfoyle, in the light of the O' Clery pedigree]; and (c) Philip
- (2) Walter, son of Richard
- (3) William
- (4) Edw.
- (5) Rob.
- (6) Redmund
- (7) Tho.
- (8) Bened
- (9) Joanes (John)
- (10) Jac. (James)

²⁷⁶ William Ball Wright, "On Foulksrath Castle and Loghmoe," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 7 (4th Series, 1885-1886), p. 432.

- (11) Hugh Roe, miles (Sir Hugh the Red)
- (12) Jo. (John)
- (13) Wm.
- (14) Edm.
- (15) Petrus (Piers or Peter)
- (16) Tho.
- (17) Jac.
- (18) Jo.
- (19) Jac.
- (20) Tho.
- (21) Jac.
- (22) Tho.
- (23) Jac.
- (24) Tho.
- (25) Jac.
- (26) Thos. Purcell of Loughmoe.

The final pedigree, from British Museum Add. Manuscript 33993, agrees with the O' Clery pedigree, except that in the British Museum pedigree Sir Hugh Purcell (whom the British Museum pedigree describes as the son of a "sister of King John with whom he came to Ireland") begot Piers who begot Philip who begot Richard, who (unlike in the O' Clery pedigree) had only two sons, Walter of Baile an Puil and Piers of Croagh.²⁷⁷ Also Richard's grandson in the British Museum pedigree was William, which agrees with the Stearne Manuscript pedigree.

One can identify various errors with these pedigrees. This is not surprising. The custom was that these long pedigrees were committed to memory and handed down by oral tradition, until they were finally written down. Once they were written down, additional copies of a pedigree might be made for other branches of a family. In the 17th century, annalists like O' Clery would copy them again as part of a compilation of the pedigrees of many families. To the extent a pedigree was accurate to begin with, there was always a risk of errors being introduced each time it was passed down by oral tradition and each time a written copy was made. Considering only the beginning portions of three of the pedigrees, for example, we know that the first Purcell in Ireland was Sir Walter, not his son Sir Hugh. Thus, it would have been Sir Walter who accompanied the future King John to Ireland, not Sir Hugh, unless both were in the royal retinue. We also know that the first Sir Hugh's son and heir was John Purcell, not Risdard or Piers. The reference to Charlemagne, who lived in the 8th and 9th centuries, is meant to assert a descent

²⁷⁷ British Museum Add. Ms. 33993. The present writer is grateful to the late William O' Sullivan, then Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College, Dublin (and husband of Anne O' Sullivan, who translated from Irish into English the elegy to James Purcell, Baron of Loughmoe in this manuscript), for kindly comparing the Irish-language Purcell pedigree in this manuscript to the Mac Firbis, O' Clery and Stearne Manuscript pedigrees.

from this emperor and not to claim that he was literally the grandfather of Sir Hugh Purcell. It is indeed accurate that there was an alternation of Jameses and Thomases in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Here is a side-by-side comparison:

MAC FIRBIS

O' CLERY

STEARNE

<u>Emperor Charlemagne</u>	<u>Emperor Charlemagne</u>	
<u>Roebeard, his son</u>	<u>Robert, his son (married a dau. of King Henry II)</u>	
<u>Sir Hugh, his son</u>	<u>Sir Hugh Purcell, his son</u>	
<u>-</u>	<u>Piers, his son</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>Risdeard, his son</u>	<u>Richard, his son²⁷⁸</u>	<u>Richard²⁷⁹</u>
<u>Pilip, his son</u>	<u>Walter (sic), his son</u>	<u>Walter (sic)</u>
<u>Risdeard, his son</u>	<u>Richard, his son</u>	<u>William</u>
<u>Eumon, his son</u>	<u>Edmund, his son</u>	<u>Edw.</u>
<u>Roibin, his son</u>	<u>Robnett, his son</u>	<u>Rob.</u>
<u>Reumunn, his son</u>	<u>Raymond, his son</u>	<u>Redmund</u>
<u>Tomas, his son</u>	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>Tho.</u>
<u>Bened, his son</u>	<u>Binett, his son</u>	<u>Bened</u>
<u>Seann, his son</u>	<u>John, his son</u>	<u>Joanes</u>
<u>Seumas, his son</u>	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jac.</u>
<u>Seunfionn, his son</u>	<u>Sir Hugh the Red, his son</u>	<u>Sir Hugh Roe</u>
<u>Seumas, his son</u>	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jo. (sic)</u>
<u>Uilliam, his son</u>	<u>William his son</u>	<u>Wm.</u>
<u>Eumon, his son</u>	<u>Edmund, his son</u>	<u>Edm.</u>
<u>Piarus, his son</u>	<u>Piers, his son</u>	<u>Petrus</u>
<u>Tomas, his son</u>	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>Tho.</u>
<u>Seumas, his son</u>	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jac.</u>
<u>-</u>	<u>John, his son</u>	<u>Jo.</u>
<u>Tomas, his son</u>	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jac.</u>
	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>Thos.</u>
	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jac.</u>
	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>Tho.</u>
	<u>James, his son</u>	<u>Jac.</u>
	<u>Thomas, his son</u>	<u>Thos.</u>
		<u>Jac.</u>
		<u>Tho.</u>

²⁷⁸ The O' Clery pedigree states that Richard was the father of Philip of Loughmoe, Walter of Baile an Phuill and Piers of Croch.

²⁷⁹ The Stearne pedigree states that Richard was the father of Philip, Walter of Ballinaquile (sic) and Piers of Croagh, Co. Limerick.