

County Down

A Brief History

County Down was the first Ulster county to be colonized by the Normans. The knight John de Courcey took the area around Downpatrick after the Norman invasion. The county was formed around 1300, and later came into the possession of the De Lacys. Most of this county came to be known as the Earldom of Ulster during this period. One of the few Norman families who settled in the county is Savage. The major Gaelic families were O'Neill, McGuinness, McQuillan, McCartan, and MacGilmore.

In 1569, Sir Thomas Smith unsuccessfully attempted to bring English settlers into the Ards Peninsula and County Down. Hugh O'Neill, the major Ulster chieftain, began a general rebellion in Ulster in 1594 (see Co. Tyrone). On the defeat of O'Neill, his lands and those of his allies were confiscated and divided among English and Scottish "adventurers." A well-planned plantation of Ulster began in 1609, involving the introduction to the province of thousands of settlers. These were brought in by adventurers who, in return for title to the land, brought in a specified number of settlers to their estates.

One Scottish adventurer, James Hamilton, brought over ten thousand Scots to northwest Down. Scottish names such as Boyd, Fraser, Johnston, Lindsay, Morrison, Patterson, and Maxwell are consequently common in Down. English adventurers in Down who brought over English families included Annesley, Hill, and Montgomery. These settlers brought the names Wilson, Johnson, Young, Taylor, Walker, Jackson, Watson, Bradshaw, and Bradford to Ulster. The new settlers developed a prosperous linen industry in Down and surrounding counties. The industrial center of Belfast also grew rapidly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The relative proportions of people of Gaelic/Norman, Scottish, and English extraction can, in very general terms, be estimated from the proportions of Catholic, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian (Protestant) in the county. In 1841 the respective proportions were thirty-two, forty-five, and twenty-one percent.

County Down was less badly affected by the Great Famine than many others. One of its effects, however, was a large exodus from the rural areas to the city of Belfast, part of which is in County Down. The population of Down in 1841 was 368,000. In 1851 this had been reduced by approximately eleven percent. Of these, 46,000 died, mainly in the years 1847-50. The level of emigration from the county was among the lowest in Ireland: only six percent of the population, versus a national average of 11.4 percent.

During the remainder of the nineteenth century, the town of Belfast and other towns in the county grew enormously. Some notes on the history of Belfast are included in the history of County Antrim. Belfast's prosperity attracted further immigration of workers from rural Ireland and Scotland to the city and to the outlying towns of the county. In 1921, Down was one of the six counties which remained part of the United Kingdom when an independent Irish state was formed.

Census and Census Substitutes

1631

Muster Roll of Co Down. SLC film 990025.

1642

Muster Roll for Parts of Co. Down. PRONI 7563; SLC film 897012.

No	Denominations	No. of Feet in		Principall Tenants	Tenants in possession	Half year's Rent at May, 1708.		Nature of the Improvements and Observations.
		Front	Depth					
IRISH QUARTER								
1a	Old wall, orchard & garden	184	184	436				
1b	Bowling Green	192	square					
2a	Hutchinson's house & back side	42	38	78	Seneca Hadzor	Do.	5 10 0	This with Prior's Island pays £20 ye ann.
2b	Hutchinson's Garden	184	square					
3	Wast Tent. unbuilt	44	44	78	Wash house			
4	McLeland's 1/2 Tent	30	30	84	Do. S. Hadzor has it for ye present	for building		On it a tite mud wall House, now used as a Barn
5	Wm. Irwyn's Tent.	64	53	90	Jno. McGrady & Do. Rob. McKewn	0 10 0		An ordinary Mudd Wall Cabbin
6	Glencrosses Tent.	52	52	95	Waste unbuilt		1 8 0	A mudd wall Thatchd House, out of repair
7	Margery Cools Tent.	60	34	448	Jno Curry & Jno McKenten		1 3 4	A range of Clay and Stone wall thatchd Houses and 3 back Cabbins
8	Rider's Tenement	82	70	446	Francis Rider	Wm. Peery	1 3 4	A low Stone Wall House, Back House and Spring Well
9	Wm. McCrea's Tent.	42	42	440	Widow McCrea	Do.	0 11 8	A stone wall slated House. 2 1/2 story high, 2 back Houses, & a Wel
10	Russell's Teneml.	40	40	435	Wm. Thompson	Dr. Alex. Mercer	0 14 0	An old low stone wall thatchd House and 2 back houses
11	Widow Dounan's Tents.	44	44	436	Thos. Lautherdale	Do.	0 11 8	A good stone wall house and new back house, all thatchd
12		John Connor	Do.					
13	McKearly's Tent.	48	37	435	Pat Smith	Do.	1 0 0	
14	Widow Eager's Tent.	43	37	435	Thos. Eager	{ Alex McCrery	0 18 4	A strong stone wall thatched House with Malt House and Kiln backward
15						{ John Coghlan		

An extract showing the principal tenants and sub-tenants, and descriptions of their properties, in the Irish Quarter of Downpatrick, 1708. From a "Survey of the Town of Downpatrick," an appendix to *The City of Downe* by R. E. Parkinson (Belfast, 1927).

1659

"Census" of Ireland. Edited by S. Pender. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1939. NLI I6551. SLC film 924648.

1660

Poll Tax abstracts of Co. Down. SLC film 993164; PRONI.

1663

Subsidy Roll. SLC film 1279356; ACM M9; PRONI T307, T1046; NLI 9584/5.

1669

Rent Roll of Downpatrick. Ms. Add. 3822 Cambridge Univ. Library (mf).

1698

Poll Tax Return: Newry and Mourne. PRONI T1046.

1708

"Householders in the Town of Downpatrick." In R.E. Parkinson, *The City of Downe*, pp. 151-62.

1720

List of Landed Gentry in Co. Down and Antrim. RIA ms. 24 K 19.

1740

List of Protestants in Parishes of Kilbroney and Seapatrick. NLI ms. 4173.

1761

Militia List Cos. . . . Down, etc. GO Ms 680.

1766

Householders of Parishes of Kilbroney and Seapatrick. RCB Library ms. 23; NLI ms. 4173; SLC film 1279330.

Householders of Lurgan, part of Parish of Shankill. Transcript with names of householders is at NAI M2476 and RCB Ms 23.

1796

See Co. Mayo 1796 ("List of Catholics").
Spinning Wheel Premium List (see introduction).

1796-1811

List of Freeholders in Barony of Upper Iveagh. SLC film 258701.

1798

List of Persons Who Suffered Losses in '98 Rebellion. NLI JLB 94107 (approximately 180 names, addresses, and occupations).

1813-24

List of Freeholders in the County. SLC film 258701.

1817

Rental of the Estate of Chichester Fortescue in Barony of Lr. Iveagh, Co. Down. Lists 189 tenants in townlands of Tonaghmore, Ballykelly, Ballygunaghan, Drumnavaddy, and Ballycross. NAI M3610.

1821-51

Extracts from the Government Censuses (1821, 1831, 1841, and 1851) for the Parish of Anahilt, Mainly Referring to the Name "Hanna." SLC film 258608; PRONI.

1823-37

Tithe Applotment Survey (see introduction).

1832

List of Freeholders on the Marquis of Londonderry's Estate. SLC film 258713.

1832-36

"Names of Holders of, and Applicants for, Licences to Sell Liquor in Downpatrick and Newry" (names and addresses). *Parl. Papers* 1837/38, 13 (2): Appendix 10.

1837

"Occupants of Newry, Arranged in 2 Lists" (valuations over and under £5 by street). *Parl. Papers* 1837 11 (1): Appendix G, 225-39.

1838

"Lists of Marksmen [illiterate voters] of Downpatrick and Newry" (names, occupations, and residences). *Parl. Papers* 1837 11 (1): Appendix A3; 1837/38, 13 (2): Appendix 4.

1839

List of Persons who obtained Game Certificates in Ulster. PRONI T 688.

1842

Voters List. NAI 1842/113.

1843

List of the Ballycopeland Presbyterian Congregation (Parish of Donaghadee). In *Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church*, pp. 117-21.

1851

List of all inhabitants in parish of Scarva, with their ages (also lists of Church of Ireland members in 1858, 1860, 1861). RCB Library Ms. 65.

Rental of the estates of David S. Ker, Esq. for year ending Nov. 1851. Lists tenant names and holdings in thirty-one townlands. SEELB (see Library Sources at end of chapter).

1851/61

Census of Presbyterian Parishoners in Loughlinisland Parish (names, addresses, relationships, and some comments). *Family Links* 1 (5) (1982): 5-11; 1 (7) (1983): 9-14.

1852/57

Two Poll-Books for Co. Down. (1) for baronies of Dufferin, Kiniarty, Lecale, Mourne, Newry and Upper Iveagh. (2) for Lower Iveagh, Upper Castlereagh, Lower Castlereagh and Ards. Lists voters by townland, religion. Freeholders are recorded separately. PRONI (Downshire papers, D 671/02/5.6 and 7.8). SLC film 993158.

1856

"Tenants on Anglesey Estate" (parish of Newry; Townlands of Sheeptown, Derrylacka, Crobane, Dysert). *Louth Arch. J.* 12 (2) (1950): 151-53.

1857

Poll Book of electors of Co. Down. PRONI; SLC film 993159.

1858/60/61

Scarva C of I members (see 1851).

1863-64

Griffith's Valuation (see introduction).

1868

An alphabetically arranged list of electors who voted, and those who did not, at an election held in Newry on 20th November 1868. Gives names, addresses, and religious denominations of voters. Newry: Newry Telegraph Office, 1868. PRONI.

1891-99

Register of the inhabitants of Killyleagh. Copy held by SEELB (see Library Sources at end of chapter).

1901

Government Census. NAI (see introduction). SLC (mf).

1911

Government Census. NAI.

1914

Rental of the estate of Col. J.V. Nugent, Portaferry. Tenant names and holdings for seventeen townlands and

large area of town of Portaferry. SEELB mf. (see Library Sources at end of chapter).

Church Records**Church of Ireland**

See the introduction for a description of Church of Ireland records and their major repositories. Many C of I records were lost in the PRO fire of 1922. These are indicated as "Lost." However, as Church of Ireland records were effectively state records, the records of marriage (from 1845) are also in the General Registrar's Office. Many are still in local custody (LC), while others are in one of a variety of other archives (e.g., RCBL or NAI). The parish registers of this county are being indexed by the Ulster Historical Foundation (see Research Services at the end of the chapter). A search of the index will be conducted by the foundation for a fee. Marriage records from a range of parishes in the county were abstracted and published (nd) by Zara Mettam and are available on SLC film 824282.

Aghaderry (Loughbrickland)

Earliest Records: b. 1816; m. 1814; d. 1816
Status: LC

Annaduff

Status: Lost

Annahilt

Status: Lost

Annalong (Castlewellan)

Earliest Records: b. 1857; d. 1857
Status: LC

Ardglass

Status: Lost

Ardkeen

Earliest Records: b. 1746; m. 1746; d. 1746
Status: LC

Ardquin

Status: Lost

Ballee (Downpatrick)

Earliest Records: b. 1792; m. 1792; d. 1792
Status: LC

Ballyculter

Earliest Records: b. 1777; m. 1812; d. 1812
Status: LC

Ballyhalbert

Earliest Records: b. 1852; d. 1852
Status: LC