

Conolly Papers

(D2094, D1062/1, D663, T2825 and MIC435)

Summary

The Conolly papers derive from the Conolly (note the single 'n') family of Castletown, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, which was founded by William Conolly (1662-1729), Speaker of the Irish House of Commons from 1715 to 1729. They cover (unevenly) the period c.1600-c.1900, and are now scattered over a variety of locations, mainly Irish archival institutions. In 1965, Castletown was sold by the 6th Lord Carew, who had inherited it from his maternal uncle, Major E.M. Conolly. Just prior to this, all or some of the papers there had been the subject of a 'National Library of Ireland Report on Private Collections' (No. 314); and in the following year, Lord Carew distributed them as follows:

1. The 18th century political and personal correspondence (but including much estate correspondence, 1683-1900, and also Castletown account books, 1763-1893) to Trinity College, Dublin (MSS 3931-84: microfilms in PRONI, MIC435).
2. The 18th century estate papers (rentals, accounts, etc) for the Conolly estates in Co. Londonderry to PRONI (D2094).
3. The same in respect of the Ballyshannon estate, Co. Donegal, and other estates in the now Republic of Ireland, to the National Archives, Dublin (M.6917).

These three categories overlap at almost all points due to shortcomings in the original 'sort' made in 1966.

However, the more serious shortcoming in this well-intentioned plan (apart from the doubtful principle of making a division in the first place) was that c.1,000 papers formed no part of it, having been accidentally left behind in the house. There they were found at some point subsequent to the Hon. Desmond Guinness's purchase of Castletown in 1967. By his permission they were microfilmed by N.L.I., on its own behalf and that of PRONI. The N.L.I. microfilm reference number is p.6951; PRONI's, MIC244; and PRONI's print-outs are T2825. The arrangement of T2825 does not correspond to that of the originals or the microfilms. This fourth section of the archive has been given the name 'Castletown papers' and comprises:

4. Deeds and other papers mainly relating to or deriving from Speaker Conolly, c.1600-1849.

In addition to the Conolly papers which were at Castletown in the mid-1960s, there is a certain amount of surviving Conolly material of different provenances, as follows:

5. A solicitor's collection of Bellaghy, Co. Londonderry, estate papers, 1734-1900, in PRONI (D1062/1).
6. Some isolated Conolly correspondence, lease-books, maps, etc, in N.L.I. (MSS 5751, 17302, 15550 and 22005).
7. The Newtownlimavady corporation records, 1659-1806, in PRONI (D663).
8. A bundle of political letters to Thomas Conolly, 1796-1800, in PRONI's Register of Irish Archives (Pakenham Papers, G/2/20).
9. Letters and papers, 1817-1820, of Richard Staples as agent for the Bellaghy estate, in PRONI (D1567/F/11 and 2/11 and 17).
10. Some further Bellaghy estate papers, 1817-1842, copied by PRONI (T3110).
11. A survey of the Grocers' Proportion in Co. Londonderry, c.1760, in private possession in Co. Londonderry.

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