



Public Record Office  
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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **ADAIR OF LOUGHANMORE PAPERS**

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# Adair of Loughanmore Papers (D3860 and MIC553)

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## Summary

[Originals closed, please use MIC553]

c.650 documents, c.75 photographs and two volumes, 1606-1928, deriving from the Adair family of Loughanmore, Donegore, Co. Antrim and, more particularly, from the related families of Clements of Clements Hill, Straid, Co. Antrim, Ellis of Prospect, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, and Crymble of Ballygallagh, Ballyclare, Co. Antrim, to whose estates the Adairs fell heir in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.



## The estate

In 1655, one Captain James Adair entered into bonds to the Presbytery for the maintenance of the minister of Donegore Church built about 1625. It is recorded in the archive that Adair was a ship's captain of Belfast and there is little doubt that he hailed from Galloway in Scotland and that there was a connection with the branch of the family of which Sir Robert Adair of Kinhilt and Ballymena was the head. James Adair in his will dated 9 March 1685 describes himself as of 'Dunagore'. The description of the lands left to his wife fixes the house and farm as being on or near the foundations of buildings still to be seen at the back of the cottage, retained on the sale of the property in June 1920, for the purpose of being let to the select vestry of Donegore as a sexton's residence. Other lands bequeathed to James's sons were in the contiguous townlands of Tobergill, Drumagorgan, Rathmore and Rathbeg, and comprised over 1,650 acres. There is no record of when these lands passed out of Adair hands, nor of what became of James's sons, Alexander, William and Thomas, who held them. It is not clear whether James, who died in 1686, held Loughanmore, but the earliest deed extant, dated 1687, describes another son Benjamin as being in possession when he then leased it from the Earl of Chichester. These Loughanmore lands were probably about 140 acres as now shown in the townland of 'Loughermore' in the Ordnance Survey map.

The papers also record the births and deaths of many children of Benjamin Adair including Henry who was for many years a member of Carrickfergus Corporation. Another son, Charles, was a member of the Donegore Yeomanry and Infantry which was raised and drilled on what was then called 'The Parade' on the west side of the house. During the Rebellion of 1798 he was held up by the rebels. On 14 January 1799, Charles Adair, although he lived until 1810, gave his life interest in most of his properties to his son, Thomas Benjamin, born in 1776. It was after this that Loughanmore was laid out in its present form and the house either built or the old one added to. Thomas Benjamin died in 1855 and was followed by his brother Henry, who carried out major improvements to the buildings and grounds and also restored Donegore Church, long a ruin. He became High Sheriff for Co. Antrim in 1871 and, interestingly, was a principal in what is believed to be the last duel fought in Ireland on 9 February 1840, near Belfast.



## The papers

The papers consist mainly of title deeds, deeds of settlement, wills and leases relating to: property in Carrickfergus and at Ahoghill, Portglenone, Ballyclare, Belfast, Bruslee, Coggrey, Donegore and 'Kneel', Co. Antrim; property at Ballygowan, Dromore, Edenderry, etc, Co. Down; property in Lurgan and in other places in Co. Armagh and also at Killymaddy, Co. Tyrone. There are a number of very early wills such as that of Edward Clements of Straid, Co. Antrim, 1627 and the will and probate (both 1672) of Thomas Lea of His Majesty's Council Chamber, Dublin. For the eighteenth century there is: copy will of Edmond Francis Stafford of Brownstown, Co. Meath, 1722; copy will of Francis Hutchinson, Bishop of Down and Connor, 1736; copy will of Alderman Henry Gill of Carrickfergus, 1761; probate of the will of Thomas Benjamin Adair of Loughanmore, Co. Antrim, 1765.

The collection also includes some municipal material, 1609 and 1659-1833, relating to the county borough of Carrickfergus, of which members of this family connection were frequently mayors. Other items of particular interest are: a Cromwellian patent appointing Thomas Lea and Richard Warburton to the office of Transcripitor and Foreign Apposer in the Irish Court of Exchequer, 1658; orders signed by numerous trustees of the turnpike road from Armagh to Lisburn to their treasurer authorising him to pay interest of 6% to Arthur Dobbs of Lisburn, 1736; map of the estate of the late Francis Clements in and near Carrickfergus by William Hoy, 1751; and letter from Henry Ellis to the Bishop of Kilmore about the management or mismanagement of Alderman Henry Gill's Charity in Carrickfergus, 1788.

