



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

McCANCE PAPERS

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McCance Papers (D272)

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Summary

c.150 documents, 1689-1799, comprising the records of the McCance family, donated to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland by Capt. S. McCance, London in June 1928.



The Papers

This body of original documents and transcripts has strong military associations with the originals relating mostly to the 1798 period in Ulster. It includes a remarkable register called 'The Black Book of the North of Ireland' which contains some 200 names of local leaders of the United Irish Party, often with particulars of their appearances and their careers in the Society. Many notable names appear in this collection, including Luke Teeling and the Rev. Mr Porter of Greyabbey, but there are also some notable omissions, indicating that the information of the authorities was not complete. There are many lists of prisoners in northern jails such as those confined at Belfast and Carrickfergus and on board the 'Postlethwaite' Prison Ship in Belfast Lough. There is a copy of a petition from the Belfast prisoners, a contemporary sketch of the ground over which the Battle of Ballynahinch was fought and an actual letter from a rebel in arms, named John Patton to his father, William Patton of Greyabbey. This letter is worth quoting from as original letters from the rank and file were rare: 'I am afraid you will be troubled about me We marched to Conlig and then to Scraba [sic]... . Our army is about 5000 commanded by General Munro. A part of the men went to Ballynahinch today and the soldiers ran before ours got near them. We are well treated here and the men in good heart. There was 18 yeomen and soldiers killed here Saturday and 9 of the other'.



Transcripts

The transcripts in the collection are copies made in PRONI from the military records of the years 1689 to 1719 with special references to Brigadier Richard Ingoldsby, Colonel Herbert and the regimes associated with those officers as well as the Purcell and Sabine regiments. The most remarkable feature of this period is a very long set of lists of persons having claims on regiments such as Herbert's for goods supplied or for accommodation. These often relate to various districts of Co. Down, particularly Ballynahinch, Kilwarlin, Lisburn and Bangor. In some cases, where the troops were billeted in small towns the lists of claimants seem to have included all the householders. A special note distinguishes Quaker creditors as they were not required to attest the amount of their debts by oath.

The transcripts also include some interesting extracts from the Nugent Manuscripts in the Royal United Service Institution, London. A letter in this section, 2 December 1796, gives a complete list of the troops then stationed in the Northern District of Ireland, consisting of three regiments of regular cavalry, nine fencible corps and seven militia - about 8500 men in all. There is also a list of the Yeomanry Corps for the province of Ulster with their commanders and their strength.

A letter of 3 March 1797, gives elaborate instructions to General Lake for disarming the North of Ireland. A document dated 6 August 1798, is a very interesting resolution passed at a meeting of several masters and other members of the Orange Association assembled at Blaris Barracks. The meeting had been called because of broils between the militia and the yeomanry in this camp due to religious differences and it was resolved that all masters were to expel any of their lodge members who were found acting contrary to the spirit of the resolutions. The papers also contain some correspondence of note including a letter from Lord Castlereagh to Major Gen. Nugent, Armagh, 3 March 1799 initiating martial law in the Northern District.

