



Public Record Office  
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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **ARMSTRONG PAPERS**

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# Armstrong Papers (D3727)

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## **Summary**

The papers of the Armstrong family of Deans Hill (i.e. the former Church of Ireland Deanery, on the outskirts of Armagh City) consist of c.5,000 documents and volumes, almost all of them documents, spanning the period 1823-1960, but principally that between 1850 and 1940.



## Papers and background notes

There is a small quantity of estate material comprising rentals, accounts, receipts, bank books, investment ledgers, deeds, etc, 1823-1825 and c.1850-1960, the rentals relating mainly to Balteagh, Carricklane, Derryhaw, Lisslanly, Killylea, Doogary and Naul, parish of Tynan, Co. Armagh, and to property in Armagh City, but also to Boolabwee and Coolaneqague, Co. Cork, Cloonbearla, Co. Longford ('the Bawn estate'), and town property on Usher's Quay, Dublin. The main component of the archive, however, is correspondence covering the period 1820-1940 and deriving mainly from two generations of the family, William Jones Armstrong of Kippure Park, Blessington, Co. Wicklow, and subsequently of Glенаule, Mount Irwin and Killylea, Co. Armagh (1794-1872), and his two sons, William Fortescue and Henry Bruce.

The papers include (D3727/J) a sub-section on family history, biographies and obituaries of members of the family, etc, some of which provide useful introductory information. Among this material is a draft biographical notice of himself compiled by William Jones Armstrong, [c.1860?], presumably for insertion in some work of reference:

'Armstrong, William Jones, of Killylea, Co. Armagh, eldest son of the late Rev. W.J. Armstrong, Rector of the Union of Termonfeckin, Co. Louth, [who had] married in 1784 Margaret, daughter of Alderman John Tew of Dublin, sister to Helen, wife to the Rev. Sir James M. Stronge, Bt. ...

Alderman John Tew, who died in 1771, had by his wife, Margaret Maxwell of Fellows Hall, Co. Armagh:... Robert Tew, 49[th] Foot, died unmarried ... in 1809; Grace Tew, died in 1840; Elizabeth Tew, married to Gerald Fortescue Esq., Ulster King at Arms and elder brother of Rear-Admiral Sir Chichester Fortescue, R.N., and had issue Thomas, Commissioner at Delhi, and daughter Anne, married to William Hopkyns Northey, [?Tring], Bucks, and secondly to the Rev. Blackhall Vincent; Margaret Tew, widow of the Rev. William Jones Armstrong; and Helen, married firstly to the Rev. Sir J.M. Stronge, Bt, and secondly William Holmes, M.P., Treasurer of H.M. Ordnance. ...

[William Jones Armstrong was] born 1794, succeeded 1825, married 1842 Frances Elizabeth, Lady McCreagh, relict of the late Colonel Sir Michael McCreagh, C.B., K.C.H., etc, and only daughter of Major C. Wilson, 22nd foot; educated at the Royal School of Dungannon and is B.A. and M.A. of the University of Dublin; called to the Irish and English Bar; appointed King's Advocate and Colonel of Militia in 1819 and subsequently A.D.C. to Governor Bentinck, Deputy Colonial Secretary, King's Receiver-General, etc, etc, in the colonies of Demerera and Essequibo, South America, in 1820; has been a magistrate of the county of Wicklow and is a magistrate and Deputy-Lieutenant of Armagh County, of which he was High Sheriff in 1840.

This family is another branch of the ancient Border family of Armstrong, deriving traditionally from a common ancestor with the King's County family, [and] is maternally descended from the second branch of the Maxwells of Farnham ... . William Armstrong

by Jane Garvey, his wife, was father of Edward Armstrong Esq., who married in 1760 Grace Jones, descended traditionally from Colonel Michael Jones, Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary Forces in Leinster and Governor of Dublin, A.D. 1649, an officer much in the confidence of the Protector Cromwell and ancestral [sic] to some of the Jones families settled in Leitrim and Sligo. He had two sons, William Jones and Edward.

The elder, the Rev. William Jones Armstrong, married as above and had issue: William Jones, now of Killylea; second, John Tew, who married Anne, daughter of Ralph Tew of Roddinstown, Co. Meath, and had issue: Maxwell, John, Thomas and Anne; thirdly, Thomas Knox of Fellows Hall, a magistrate of Co. Armagh, who married Catherine Frances, second daughter of Wallop Brabazon of Rath House, Co. Louth, by Jane, his first wife, daughter of Josias Dupre of Milton Park, Bucks, and died in Rome in January 1840, leaving Jane, Rebecca and Diana Lucinda; Helen, married to the Rev. John Kerr; Archibald, Captain 26<sup>th</sup> Madras Fusiliers; and John, also Lieutenant in the 26<sup>th</sup> East India Native Infantry; Anne married to Walter Newton, Womersley Grove, Pontefract, formerly of the 21<sup>st</sup> Light Dragoons, and has issue three sons and four daughters; Diana Jane, died unmarried. ...'

D3727/J also contains a newspaper report of Senator H.B. Armstrong's retirement from one of his county offices, in 1931, which makes incidental mention of a number of other position in public life which he filled:

'Senator H.B. Armstrong ..., H.M.L., has retired from the chairmanship of the County Armagh Regional Education Committee, a position he has held since the committee was formed under the Education Act of 1923. Senator Armstrong devoted a great deal of time to educational matters throughout the county, and he led the committee to undertaken the erection of many fine new schools ... . He is now 87 years of age, and in 1873 he became a member of the grand jury of Co. Armagh. He was an original member of the County Council when it was formed in 1899 [and Chairman of its Finance Committee, 1899-1920], and he remained a member until 1920. From 1906 till 1909 he was Vice-Chairman, and Chairman from 1909 till his retirement. In 1875 Senator Armstrong was High Sheriff of Co. Armagh and in 1894 he filled the same office in Longford. In 1920 he became a member of the Senate of Queen's University [Belfast], and in 1921 was returned unopposed to represent Mid-Armagh in the Imperial Parliament. For a quarter of a century [actually, 1897-1921] he has been a member of the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland. In his earlier days he travelled extensively in the East and Far East. Just this week he has been appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors of Armagh Royal School.'

These biographical, genealogical and official details are important to an understanding of the connections subsisting between the Armstrongs and their correspondents and of the various public offices which the correspondence reflects.



## Correspondence

The correspondence of William Jones Armstrong (1794-1872) runs from 1820 to 1872 and relates initially to Guyana, where he held office in the 1820s as King's Advocate in Berbice and Deputy Colonial Secretary in Demerera and Essequibo. Thereafter, it relates to Armagh estate business and to landlord-tenant relations generally, to the situation of those who, like Armstrong, were chief tenants of Trinity College, Dublin, to railway development in Ulster, to the affairs of Armstrong's family and friends (notably Thomas Fortescue of Suffolk Hall, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire), and to Armstrong's quarrel in 1865 with his younger brother and solicitor, John Tew Armstrong of Dominick Street, Dublin.

The few letters and papers, 1860-1871, of Armstrong's elder son, Lieutenant William Fortescue Armstrong (b.1843; d.1871), are mainly about business, social events and his short-lived career in the 7th Hussars in India.

The numerous letters and papers, 1868-1943, of Armstrong's younger son and successor, Senator the Rt Hon. Henry Bruce Armstrong, H.M.L., of Killylea and Deans Hill, Co. Armagh (1844-1943), concern family, estate and financial affairs, the situation of the tenants of T.C.D. under the successive Land Acts, Land Purchase generally, Armstrong's youthful career at the Inner Temple and the London Bar and youthful travels in North America, India, China and Japan, the financial and Co. Wexford estate affairs of Thomas Fortescue (his mother's first cousin), which occupied Armstrong as an executor from Fortescue's death in 1872 until 1902, Co. Armagh local politics and administration (from 1873, when Armstrong first served on the grand jury to 1939, when he retired as H.M.L. for the county), the Co. Longford shrievalty (which he held in 1894), the Irish Convention, 1917-1918 (of which he was a member), his service as a Unionist M.P. for Mid-Armagh at Westminster, 1921-1922, and as a Senator, Privy Councillor and Lord Justice (in the absence of the Governor) of Northern Ireland, 1921-1938, the affairs of the Church of Ireland, in the archdiocese of Armagh and generally, and architectural operations or projects involving Armagh Cathedral and Infirmary, Deans Hill, Killymoon Castle (Cookstown, Co. Tyrone), Killylea Church and the Usher's Quay property in Dublin. (Armstrong bought Deans Hill from the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland in 1888, and moved in as soon as alterations and refurbishments permitted.)

Among Armstrong's noteworthy correspondents are: J.T. Agg-Gardner, M.P. for Cheltenham, 1874-1880, 1885-1892 and 1900-1906, and other members of his family, 1877-1921; William Alexander, Archbishop of Armagh, 1896-1911 (the letters cover roughly the same period); Frederick A. Butler, a Dublin-based architect, who attended to the Usher's Quay property of H.B. Armstrong as well as being concerned with various architectural commissions in Armagh (the cathedral and infirmary, Killylea Church, etc), 1869-1890; Sir John B. Lonsdale, Bt, H.M.L for the county, 1910-1924; the Hon. Albert D. Ryder, a friend of Armstrong's at Trinity College, Cambridge, and his companion on some of his foreign travels, c.1870-1881; Charles Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry, Leader of the Northern Ireland Senate and Northern Ireland Minister of Education, 1927-1931; and H.D. Traill of The St James's Gazette, c.1875-1885.

In addition, there are diaries and correspondence, c.1910-1950, of Armstrong's daughter, Miss Margaret Armstrong, a few letters and papers, 1949-1953, of his grandson and successor, Capt. Michael H. Armstrong, M.B.D., D.L. (1924-1982), and sundry newspapers, newspaper cuttings, photographs and printed matter, c.1860-c.1940, mainly bearing on Co. Armagh and local Unionist politics.

