



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

McPEAKE PAPERS

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McPeake Papers (D3736, T3048, T3071/1-T3071/2)

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Summary.

The McPeake papers were the collection formed by the late B.Y. McPeake, now dispersed but photocopied by PRONI, prior to its dispersal, in 1973. They comprise c.450 documents, 1704-1916, mainly but not exclusively relating to the United Irishmen and the '98 Rebellion, which were Mr McPeake's main area of collecting activity.

The c.400 documents on these latter topics include: letters mainly to and from the Rt Hon. Thomas Conolly and his wife, Lady Louisa Conolly, Castletown, Co. Kildare, and Lady Louisa's sisters, Lady Sarah Napier and Emily, Duchess of Leinster, 1783-1838, relating mostly to the family's financial affairs, British and Irish politics and the '98 Rebellion (these are described, in their proper context, under 'Bunbury papers' in the PRONI website); United Irish letters and papers about the French expeditions to, and landing in, Ireland 1796-1799, which include some copy extracts from Wolfe Tone's journal, 1797-1798, a letter from Tone announcing his embarkation in France for Ireland, 1798, letters and papers about Tone's last days, including some letters from Tone himself just before his execution, 1798, and a report on Captain Bernard McSheehy's mission to Ireland in 1796 to gauge the extent of rebel support in Ireland; papers of Evan Nepean, Secretary to the Admiralty, about United Irish intrigues with France, 1797-1798; letters and papers relating to the mission to France of Edward Joseph Lewins on behalf of the United Irish Executive Committee, 1797-1803; letters from General George Lake, Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, to General Sir William Loftus about disaffection in the King's County militia and about military operations against the rebels, 1798; letters and papers of the Rt Hon. Henry Dundas, Secretary of State for War, and which include the first account of the 'Races of Castlebar', 1798; and miscellaneous letters and papers relating to the '98 Rebellion, the Catholic Question, the Union, the prospect of a French landing in Ireland in 1803, and the state of the Masonic order in the north of Ireland in 1814, correspondents including Thomas Pelham, Henry Grattan and Viscount Castlereagh, 1776-1820. All this material bears reference T3048.



The Colclough papers.

Also bearing that reference, but subsequently acquired by PRONI in the original (D3736), are the Colclough papers, 1773, 1791-1806 and 1832-1840.

Sir Anthony Colclough, an Elizabethan soldier from an old Staffordshire family, came to Ireland in 1543. In 1575 Queen Elizabeth granted him the dissolved monastery of Tintern Abbey, near Clonmines, Co. Wexford, together with all its lands, estates and revenues. Anthony Colclough, one of the family, was a member of the Assembly of the Confederate Catholics which met at Kilkenny in 1646, and in the following Cromwellian forfeitures the Colcloughs' lands were confiscated, as were those of most 'Old English' Catholic families. Under the terms of the Act of Explanation (1665) following the Restoration they regained their Wexford lands, and another member of the family was one of the representatives for Wexford in King James's parliament in Dublin in 1689. On the death of Sir Caesar Colclough, 3rd Bt, in 1687 the estates passed to his sister Margaret, who in 1673 married Robert Leigh, of Rosegarland. Leigh thereupon assumed the surname of Colclough.

The components of the estates at this time were described as 'All the manors, castles, towns and lands of Tinterne, Castle-Issell, Castle-Monogho, Ballygarrett, Miltowne, the Mills of Tinterne, Salt Mills, Kieran, Polandswood, Talagh, BallyHackbegg, St Leonard, Garry Cullane, Kienagh-Yoltonne, Cheristown, Ownduffe and the Mill thereof, Bowley, Ballinroan, BallyGarvine, Rathumny, Garyduffe, Ballylarney, Bally Cullan, Culroe, Coramore, Nash, Clonagh, Rathnegeeragh, DunMaine, the Island of Banow and Ferry of Banow, Brandan, CastleTowne, BallyBought, Bally Crosse, Pullington, and the Islands called the Saltes Islands, and also all and every the Rectorye and Tyths Great and small and Chapells and Gleablands to the above denominations and every of them belonging ..., and likewise [to] the Rectorye, and Tyths, Chapells and Gleablands of the Pa[ri]sh of St Molins, all ... lying and being in the Counties of Wexford and Catherlagh [Carlow] ..., [and also some Staffordshire estates, formerly belonging to Sir Caesar Colclough, Bt.]'

In spite of these Catholic and Jacobite associations, and of the fact that Robert and Margaret Colclough died without an heir, the estates passed to a Colclough kinsman, and were preserved to the family. The Colcloughs lived in the Abbey until 1958, when Miss Lucy Colclough presented it to the Irish government.



The McPeake section.

The McPeake section of the Colclough papers includes many references to estates and estate matters, but it was acquired by Mr McPeake because it includes correspondence (originals with some near-contemporary copies) between John Colclough, who writes from Tintern Abbey, from Fethard, Co. Wexford, and from Dublin, and his brother Caesar, writing mainly from London and the continent, 1773 and 1791-1806, and from Caesar Colclough, now back in Ireland, to his Dublin lawyers, about estate, financial and political affairs, 1832-1840. The letters were kept because of, and produced as evidence in the course of, a lawsuit in the 1840s over properties called Duffry, alias Duffy, Hall and Ballycross, Co. Wexford. They contain references to: the '98 Rebellion and the part played in it by the Colcloughs' uncle, Cornelius Grogan of Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford, the nominal leader of the Wexford rebels, who was hanged for his enforced involvement; Co. Wexford politics and elections, 1797-1806; the management and sale of the Colcloughs' family borough of Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, 1795-1800; and negotiations for support by the Irish administration during the crisis over the passing of the Act of Union, 1798-1800. During the period 1791-1806 Caesar Colclough was in France, initially as a voluntary visitor sympathetic to the French Revolution, later as an internee, and John Colclough was looking after his affairs in his absence. In 1806, John Colclough was killed in a celebrated Co. Wexford election duel.

Other, later Irish material (T3071) comprises 15 documents, 1912-1916, mainly consisting of letters from Sir Roger Casement, writing from Denham, Buckinghamshire, Cloghaneely and Falcarragh, Co. Donegal, and London, to Lady Constance Emmott, 1912, in which he refers, for example, to his support for Irish-language schools, his deteriorating health, and the Roman Catholic mission to Putumayo, Peru. There is also a letter from Casement to his friend, Richard Morten, concerning the Home Rule question, 1914, an account describing the scene in the prison chapel before Casement's execution, 1916, and a letter of 1916 from James McCarroll, Holloway, London, describing Casement's last moments.



Non-Irish material.

The largely non-Irish material among the papers (T3701) comprises one volume and c.50 documents, 1704-1789. These are Townshend/Sydney papers, and include: a list of payments for civil and military affairs in Ireland, 1704; letters to the 2nd Viscount Townshend, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, and to his son, the Hon. Thomas Townshend, from Stephen Poyntz and Horatio Walpole, 1724-1730, mainly about diplomatic matters, including the dispute between Great Britain and Russia in 1729 and the conclusion of the Treaty of Seville, 1729; letters to the 1st Lord King, Lord Chancellor of England, from Josiah Hort, Bishop of Ferns, Thomas Wyndham, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and the 2nd Lord Carteret, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, commenting on Irish parliamentary affairs, 1725-1728; letters to Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, from the 1st Lord Harrington, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Horatio Walpole, British Envoy and Minister of Plenipotentiary to Holland, and the 2nd Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, about British foreign policy during the War of the Polish Succession, Newcastle's difficulties in reconciling George II and Queen Caroline to the foreign policy of their ministers, etc, 1734; and letters to Henry Pelham, Paymaster of the Forces and later Prime Minister, from Horatio Walpole and Robert Trevor, Walpole's successor at The Hague, George Townshend, General Honynood and General Sir John Mordaunt, mainly about the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748.



Other papers.

The last small section of these Townshend/Sydney papers is very largely related to Ireland, which presumably explains why they all came to be in the McPeake Collection. These are letters and papers, 1782-1789, of Thomas Townshend, 1st Viscount Sydney, Home Secretary from 1782 to 1789, which include details about the dispute with Portugal over the recognition of Irish woollens as British under the terms of the Methuen Treaty, 1783, and an address of compliment from the committee of correspondence appointed by the delegates of 45 Volunteer corps assembled at Lisburn and 'held at Belfast ...', 1783, with a copy of Sydney's reply.

