



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

NUGENT, FARREN CONNELL PAPERS

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Nugent of Farren Connell Papers (D3535)

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Summary

The archive of the Nugent family of Farren Connell, Co. Cavan, comprises a fairly complete record of this major Ulster family, their estates in Cos Cavan and Westmeath, and their careers, mainly in the army (principally that of General Sir Oliver Nugent, who died in 1926), between the 15th and 20th centuries. The family is a cadet branch of the Nugents, Lords Delvin, afterwards Earls of Westmeath, and has been at Farren Connell since the end of the 17th century. Richard Nugent, 12th Baron of Delvin, was Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1528. The Earldom of Westmeath was created in 1621, with Richard Nugent, 15th Baron of Delvin, being first holder of the title.

The archive contains some 80 volumes and 10,000 documents. Everything up to c.1865 had been listed, and in part calendared, by Sir John Ainsworth of the Irish Manuscripts Commission in the 1950s (see National Library of Ireland Report on Private Collections, No. 166, subsequently published in *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 20 [Dublin, 1958]). Extremely important material not covered by Ainsworth consists of the papers of General Sir Oliver Nugent, Commander of the 36th (Ulster) Division during and after the Battle of the Somme (D3835/E). Over 200 of Nugent's letters have been published by the Army Records Society as *Major General Oliver Nugent and the Ulster Division, 1915-18*, edited by Nick Perry (2007).



The Papers

The archive is now arranged according to the following categories:

c.1600 documents and 23 volumes of genealogical and historical writings, c.1775-1890, which pre-date and include the writings of Richard Nugent of London and subsequently of Farren Connell, the family historian, who succeeded his nephew Edmond Robert in 1876 and died in 1891. Included here is Richard Nugent's volume entitled 'Nugent Registry', from which Ainsworth quoted extensively, and which draws heavily on Probate and other Irish Public Records destroyed in 1922. Also included are Richard Nugent's transcriptions of State Papers, Home Office papers, Hatfield House papers etc., together with drafts for essays or books on historical subjects connected with the Nugent family.

c. 300 title deeds, settlements, case papers, wills, leases etc., 1488-1872. The title deeds and case papers comprise miscellaneous, mostly copy, title deeds to the Nugent estates, 1488-17th century; original title deeds, 18th and 19th centuries (including a George III patent to Robert Nugent of Bobs Grove [i.e. Farren Connell] empowering him to hold fairs and markets at Mount Nugent, 1762); three deeds relating to the former Manor of Carrick, Co. Cavan [where Farren Connell is located] and involving the original grantees and mortgagors of the manor, the Lambart family, Earls of Cavan; title deeds to lands in the parish of Kilbride, Co. Cavan near Farren Connell, leased by, and then bought by, the Nugents from the Hart family of Conlin, Co. Cavan, and of London, 1730-1735 and 1750-1766; title deeds and associated case papers etc., relating to the Nugents' part of Kilrue, Co. Meath, 1760-1849; case papers and lease relating to the estates and peerages of the heads of the Nugent family, the Earls of Westmeath, c.1700; case papers in the disputes between the Nugents and others and the Earls of Cavan over the manor of Carrick (*see Analecta Hibernica*, No. 20), 1713-1790; and case papers relating to the quit rent due from the Co. Roscommon estate of Oliver Nugent of Bobs Grove, 1784-1794.

The family settlements and related papers, mainly of the Nugents of Farren Connell, 1703-1837, include: a deed whereby Robert Nugent apparently becomes Protestant trustee of the estate of the Roman Catholic Dease family of Turbotstown, Co. Westmeath, 1751; and draft settlements of the estate of Thomas Nugent, 6th Earl of Westmeath, 1756, and of Robert Nugent (later Earl Nugent), of Gosfield Hall, Essex, 1762.

The c.75 leases, mainly of the Nugent estate in Co. Cavan, include: a copy lease from Queen Elizabeth I to Christopher Nugent, Baron of Delvin, of the monastery of Holy Island in Cos Westmeath and Longford, 1586; a lease from Thomas Nugent, Earl of Westmeath, to Christopher Nugent, Lord Delvin, of all his part in the rectories and impropriate tithes in Co. Cavan, 1716; and an undated but pre-1673 (according to the 'Nugent Registry') memorandum of the Earl of Cavan to the effect that Oliver Nugent has forfeited his lands by rebelling in 1641, and that his sons, Nicholas and Robert, in order to thwart the officers in 1649, had fraudulently conveyed the lands to Walter Pollard of Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath.

The 11 wills, 1648, 1611, 1771-1827, 1842, 1865 and 1891, include an abstract copy of the will of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, Baroness of Delvin, 1611, and a contemporary copy of the will of Thomas Dease, Bishop of Meath, 1648.

In addition, there are c.400 miscellaneous estate papers, 1735-c.1870, including a 1765 survey of Bobsgrrove, maps, valuations, drawings, schedules and inventories, together with rent receipt books, rentals and agents' accounts.

There is also a lawyer's precedent book inscribed O [? V] Nugent, 1829, and a copy of a pass issued in 1623 to Christopher, Lord Delvin, eldest son of Richard, 1st Earl of Westmeath, by the Privy Council in London, which permits him to travel abroad, but not to Rome!

Correspondence, 1762-1890, includes: c.80 letters, 1774-1812, of Oliver Nugent, who died in 1813; c.80 letters of Mrs Sophia A.M. Nugent, 1807-1850, which include a manuscript catalogue of family letters, 1819-1850; c.70 letters, 1806-1848, of Christopher Edward John Nugent, who died in 1853; correspondence and commissions, 1842-1883, of General St George Mervyn Nugent, son and ultimate successor (in 1891) of Christopher Edmond; and correspondence of Richard Nugent who died in 1891, brother and predecessor of General St George Mervyn Nugent, mainly about the National Club in London, and Church of Ireland matters.

The records of greatest general interest are undoubtedly those of Major-General Sir Oliver Nugent and his wife and children, 1884-1926.

Sir Oliver Nugent was the only surviving son of General St George Mervyn Nugent of Farren Connell (himself an eminent soldier) and of Emily Frances, daughter of the Rt Hon. Edward Litton of Altimore, Co. Tyrone, who represented the borough of Coleraine at Westminster for many years. Sir Oliver was born on 9 November 1860. He was educated at Harrow, and entered the Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1882, transferring to the King's Royal Rifle Corps in the following year. Early in his army career he saw active service on the Indian North-West Frontier, taking part as a captain in the Hazara Expedition in 1891. During the following year he was involved in operations against the Isazai tribes, and in 1895 he served with the Chitral Relief Force.

His military career begins to be reflected in the archive with his posting to Natal and participation at Talana Hill, the first action of the 2nd Boer War. Sir Oliver and his wife, Catherine Percy Lees, carried on a prodigious correspondence from 1899 in which they discussed, as far as censorship allowed, the progress of the campaign, and his severe wounding and convalescence in a prisoner-of-war camp in Pretoria. The correspondence continues after the end of hostilities, and follows Nugent's career in England, Ireland and India until the outbreak of the First World War. There are some 600 letters from Sir Oliver, then Commander-in-Chief of the 36th (Ulster) Division, to his wife and children, written from the Western Front, between May 1915 and April 1918 and including c.30 letters covering the period of the Somme offensive in July 1916. These letters are remarkable for their volume and regularity, which provide a daily account of life in the trenches. Sir Oliver Nugent's last command was in India, where he commanded the Meerut Division in the Afghan War of 1919. Again, this period is covered in letters to Lady Nugent.

Among the more 'official' documents relating to his career in the 36th (Ulster) Division are: instructions about UVF members joining the British Army on the outbreak of War; rough notes of an address given by Nugent to his soldiers when he took command of the Division; c.1200 Routine orders and Divisional, Daily and Weekly Summaries, including an almost complete run of Routine Orders, Oct. 1915-May 1918, and Divisional Daily Summary Sheets, Feb. 1916-June 1917 and Sept. 1917-May 1918; narratives of the part taken by the 36th (Ulster) Division at the Somme and the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge Campaign; and instructions for the Ypres Offensive, 1917 etc.

This section also includes a few papers relating to the Co. Cavan regiment of the UVF, March-June, 1914. They include a copy of the Cavan Volunteer Force Defence Scheme, camp orders, diary of work, list of costs and list of quotations for supplies related to a Camp of Instruction held in March 1914, a memorandum on training and an order regarding the holding of day parades.

Sir Oliver retired from the Army and died in 1926. Apart from material relating to his military career, the archive also reflects his personal and leisure interests. There are his diaries, 1884-1925 including his shooting diary, which gives details of shoots in India and Africa during the late 1880s and early 1890s, and a game book kept by him, giving details of where and with whom the shoot took place and the number of game killed, 1900-1911.

Lady Nugent's correspondence includes c.300 letters of sympathy which she received after Sir Oliver's death in 1926, some of them suggesting possible memorials. Among these are four letters of 1928-1929 from William Conor about the portrait of Sir Oliver which the Ulster Division Association commissioned him to paint for Belfast City Hall, and which is reproduced on the cover of this *Report*.

There are also c.1000 loose newspaper cuttings, c.1895-1943, relating to Sir Oliver Nugent, the 2nd Boer War, the First World War, 36th (Ulster) Division casualties, honours lists, promotions and appointments, the conscription question in Ireland, life at the Front, the Somme offensive, Unionism, etc. There are a number of printed obituaries of Sir Oliver and details of Nugent family events.

Photographic and pictorial material comprises: c.80 important and rare Boer War photographs including some of bombed bridges, an armoured train, Boer dugouts, trenches and battlelines, Canadian troops in action, Bristol aircraft fighters at Sarwekei aerodrome, views of Ladysmith, 1899, Pretoria, 1900, and Bloemfontein, c.1900, and a photograph of a prisoner of war camp in Pretoria; c.45 First World War photographs of trenches, shelled towns and officers etc.; c.200 photographs of various locations and events in Ireland, India, Oxford and Bermuda; photographs of various Nugent family members at Farren Connell etc; and photographs of Sir Oliver Nugent dedicating a war memorial, of the fifth annual dinner of the 36th (Ulster) Division officers, and of regimental football teams.

