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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **NUGENT OF PORTAFERRY PAPERS**

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# Nugent of Portaferry Papers (D552)

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## Summary

The Nugent of Portaferry papers comprise c.8,650 documents and c.225 volumes, 1568-1962, deriving from the Portaferry House branch of the Anglo-Norman family of Savage of the Ards, Co. Down, which changed its name to Nugent in 1812 following the succession of Andrew Savage of Portaferry to the Dysart estate, baronies of Moyashel and Magheradernon, Co. Westmeath, of his kinsman, John Nugent of Dysart. This change of name gave rise to the famous remark of a disgruntled uncle of Andrew Savage/Nugent that he, for one, would 'rather be an old savage than a new gent'!



## Provenance

More even than most deposits of family and estate material in PRONI, the deposit of the Nugent papers has been confusingly piecemeal. In 1948 the first c.850 documents were received and were catalogued and indexed in the very great detail which was possible in those more leisurely days. A further c.200 papers followed in 1973. The lion's share of the archive came in 1977, but small, subsequent deposits were made in 1984 and 1986. The above quantifications and the description which follows relate to the entire archive.

In 1906 a connection of the family, G F Savage-Armstrong, published in London A Genealogical History of the Savage Family in Ulster ... . This book not only provides a useful introduction to the archive, but also describes and in some cases calendars many documents now forming part of it and then still in family possession in Portaferry House. Readers should study it before venturing upon the originals.



## **The Portaferry estate**

In spite of the Westmeath association, the vast majority of the papers concern the Savage estate in the barony of Ards, Co. Down. By the mid-19th century, this had dwindled to a little over 3,000 statute acres covering the town of Portaferry and the following outlying townlands, alphabetically arranged: Ballybranigan, Ballycarn, Ballyfounder, Ballyhenry, Ballyhoily, Ballymanish, Ballynichol, Ballyphilip, Ballyquinton, Ballyrusley, Ballyweird, Corrog, Craigaroddan, Croft, Derry, Granagh, Killydressy, Kinlagh, Tara, Tullyboard, Tulycarnan, Tuovhilly.



## **The Penal Laws**

In view of the unusual antiquity of the Savage family, it is regrettable that the archive by and large begins in Jacobean and Plantation times. On the other hand, the papers have an unusual and special interest during the first half of the 18th century (the era of the Penal Laws) because some of the Savages and all of their Westmeath Nugent connections were Roman Catholics or crypto-Roman Catholics at a time when the letter of the law, the activities of Protestant 'discoverers' and the greed of Protestant next-of-kin, made it difficult and dangerous for landowners to be so.



## Title Deeds

There are c.300 title deeds, 1568-1916, to Savage lands in Co. Down and Nugent lands in Westmeath, taking the form of grants, patents, wills, marriage settlements, mortgages, head leases to the Savage/Nugent family etc (D552/B/1/1/1-D552/B/1/1/293). The earliest document is a memorandum, 21 May 1568, of an examination held respecting the granting of Ballyfonnoraghe, Downeewly, and Ballywranagan by Great Rowland Savage and Robert Savage to James Oge Savage as amends for the killing of James Savage (D552/B/1/1/1). There is also an original and copy of a confirmation, 1588, of lands on Little Ards, Co. Down, to Patrick, Lord Savage (D552/B/1/1/3-D552/B/1/1/4), and a copy patent, 1606, granting pardon to Rowland Savage, son of Patrick, Lord Savage, for the latter's having conveyed the manor of Portaferry by deed dated 4 November 1590 to William Moore and others without the licence of the Crown (D552/B/1/1/9-D552/B/1/1/10). The earliest Westmeath title deed is a translation of a grant, 1611, of the manor of 'Disert', to Sir Robert Nugent (D552/B/1/1/12).



## Wills

The pre-1858 wills are particularly numerous, as follows: original of the will of Rowland Savage, pre-1619; extracts from the will, 1636, of Hugh Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery; copy of part of the Prerogative will, 1640, of Rowland Savage of Ballygalget; copy of the Prerogative will, 1644, of Patrick Savage of Portaferry; will, 1664, of John Swords, alias Croly, of Co. Down; original and copies of the will of 1682, of John Savage of Ballyvarley; memorial of the will, 1711, of John Savage of Dublin; original and copy of the will, 1713 of Patrick Savage of Portaferry; copies of the will, 1724, of Patrick Savage of Portaferry; original and copy of the Prerogative will, 1725, of Rowland Savage of Portaferry; will, 1726, of Edward Savage of Portaferry; copy of the will, 1733, of James Savage of Portaferry; copy of the Prerogative will, 1734, of Nicholas Price of Hollymount, Downpatrick; original and copies of the Prerogative will, 1736, of John Savage of Portaferry; will and Prerogative grant, 1736, of Edward Savage of Portaferry; copies of the wills, 1742-1943, of Hugh and Francis of Drumaroad; Prerogative will, 1754, of James Savage of Portaferry; copy of the Prerogative will, 1749, of James Savage of Ballymanish; copy of the Prerogative will, 1752, of Edward Savage of Portaferry; Prerogative grant of administration, 1774, to the goods of Andrew Savage; Prerogative will, 1776, of High Savage of Drumaroad; Prerogative will, 1780, of Lucy Crolly of Ballykilbeg; copy of the will, 1786 of William Cowan; Prerogative will, 1794, of Edward Hall of Dover, Kent; copy of the will and codicil, 1797, of Patrick Savage; copy of the will, 1801, of John Maxwell; Prerogative will, 1804, of Philip Savage; will, 1805, of Edward Savage of Tieveshilly; Prerogative will, 1806, of Savage Hall; probate, 1810, of Richard Aynsworth of Strangford; copy of the will and codicil, 1811, of John Nugent, Governor of Tortola and the Virgin Islands; copy of the will of Elizabeth Hall of Dover; copy of the will, 1817?, of Dorcas Sophia Savage; will, 1835, of William McKerry of Bellsquarter; will, 1836, of James Hall of Dublin; will, 1838, of Hannah Lennon of Corrog; will, 1840, and probate, 1850, of Thomas Arthur Forde of Dublin; probate, 1845, of the will of Richard Crangle; and probate, 1846, of the will of Selina Nugent of Portaferry (D552/B/1/1/1-D552/B/1/1/293).



## Estate records

There are over 350 individual leases, plus two volumes recording memorials of leases, which between them detail leases of lands in Co. Down granted by the Savage/Nugent family, c.1615-1821, 1840-1842 and 1870-1959 (D552/B/1/2/1-D552/B/1/2/367). The Co. Westmeath leases are only c.20 in number covering the period 1793-1845 (D552/B/1/3/1-D552/B/1/3/19). There are 225 legal case papers, c.1610-1825, deriving for the most part from the title deeds and leases already described, and during the period of the Penal Laws including some instances of the latter in operation - for example a number of case papers of the mid-1720s and thereafter which hinge on the conformity, or otherwise, of Edward, James and John Savage (D552/B/2/1/1-D552/B/2/1/225).

There are almost c.200 volumes (many of them in long, virtually unbroken series) and documents, 1641-1646, 1718-1759 and 1770-1952, giving rental information about the Portaferry estate. There are also Westmeath estate rentals for 1815, 1824, 1899 and 1901, together with apparently 'stray' rentals for other properties, more particularly in Co. Down (D552/B/3/2/1- D552/B/3/2/198). Estate, farm, garden, household, harbour, building, etc, account books and accounts, receipts, vouchers, inventories, etc., are similarly voluminous and derive from the 1630s and the whole period 1676-1965. They include Portaferry harbour accounts, 1846 and 1863-1960, and half a dozen furniture and silver inventories for Portaferry House, c.1850-1909 and 1939 (D552/B/3/1/1 - D552/B/3/1/184).



## **Maps and Drawings**

Maps, surveys, architectural drawings and other pictorial material are a strongpoint of the archive. There are well over 100 maps, surveys and valuations, 1672, 1717-1753, 1775-1789, 1802 and 1810-1953; these include complete surveys of the Co. Down estate by Pat O'Hare of Newry, 1799, and by Hugh Hanna of Belfast, 1858 and 1860, with reports and valuations of 1681 (D552/B/3/3/1-D552/B/3/3/115). The architectural drawings, etc., number almost 50, 1789-1899. They include a ground plan and elevations for Portaferry House, 1789-1790, by Charles Lilly, similar plans and elevations, some of them unexecuted, by William Farrell, 1814-1821, and later plans for other structures and gadgets in Portaferry, including the church, c.1820?, and, apparently, the courthouse (by Frederick Darley Junior of Dublin), c.1830-1850. (D552/B/3/4/1- D552/B/3/4/47).



## Photographs

The other pictorial material principally consists of nine photograph albums and numerous photographs, c.1855-c.1920, some of them deriving from General Andrew Nugent of Portaferry, and including mainly commercial photographs, of the Crimean War, c.1854-1856, the Afghan War, 1878-1879, scenes in Ceylon, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, California, Canada and the West Indies, 1880-1884, and scenes in Egypt, 1884, including a regimental group of which 'General Hicks Pasha' is a member (D552/B/3/5/1- D552/B/3/5/15).



## **17th Century Correspondence**

Correspondence, 1609 and 1629-1963, constitutes the great bulk of the archive, beginning with copies of orders, August-September 1609, from the Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, to the Lieutenant-Governor of Carrickfergus (D552/A/1/4/1). Significant among the 17th century material is a letter from James Hamilton, 1st Viscount Clancuboye, 1629, about the Strangford-Portaferry ferry (D552/A/1/1/1)., and a letter from Owen Roe O'Neale to Colonel Warren, 1647, about an exchange of O'Neale's prisoners, Viscount Montgomery and Colonel Theophilus Jones, for the Earl of Westmeath and General 'Birne' (D552/A/1/3/1).



## **18th Century Correspondence**

The 18th century correspondence, to 1770, derives from Patrick Savage of Portaferry (1641-1724) and his nephews and eventual successors, John and Andrew; it includes letters of the late 1720s from Richard Malone (of Baronston, Co. Westmeath), about warding off 'discoverers' under the Penal Laws, and correspondence, 1739-1752, between Andrew and Margaret Savage on the one hand, and her family, the Nugents, Earls of Westmeath, on the other, in which the Penal Laws are a frequent topic, either overtly or by implication. (D552/A/2/1-D552/A/2/10). Correspondence of Patrick Savage of Portaferry (1739-1797), son and successor of Andrew and Margaret, runs with gaps from 1765 to 1797, and includes - in addition to estate and business correspondence - some material about the local Volunteers, 1780-1783 (D552/A/4/1- D552/A/4/4).



## **Andrew Savage/Nugent**

The correspondence of Patrick's son and successor, Andrew (1770-1846), who in 1812 changed his name to Nugent, is much more extensive. His correspondence with other members of his own family, 1797-1843, is extensive in itself, and includes material about naval and military patronage and about family finances (D552/A/5/1-D552/A/5/15). Another section of his correspondence is devoted to Portaferry and Co. Down estate and local affairs, 1797-1845, and includes, among many other things, Andrew Nugent's letters and papers as a JP, Deputy-Governor and Deputy Lieutenant of Co. Down and a major in the North Down Militia, 1797-1836, and his letters and papers about Co. Down politics and elections, 1816-1836. (D552/A/6/1-D552/A/6/11). In addition, there is his correspondence about Dysart and his Co. Westmeath inheritance, 1812-1843 (D552/A/7/1-D552/A/7/8), and a miscellaneous business correspondence, 1799-1834, of which the most significant section consists of letters and papers, 1800-1831, relating to his claim to the medieval barony of Delvin, including his correspondence with Lord Castlereagh and other well-known figures on the subject, genealogies, résumés by Ulster King-at-Arms, Sir William Betham, sundry legal opinions, printed House of Lords and other papers relating to agnate Irish and Scottish peerage cases, etc. (D552/A/8/1-D552/A/8/7).



## **Patrick John Nugent and descendants**

The correspondence, 1825-1860, of Patrick John Nugent (1806-1857), eldest son and successor of Andrew, runs from 1825 to 1857, and continues the themes of his father's correspondence including the Delvin peerage claim, which Patrick John Nugent pursued in the period 1842-1843. In addition, there is correspondence of 1845 about Puseyite influences on the ritual observed in Portaferry Church (D552/A/9/1- D552/A/9/18).

The correspondence of Nugent's wife, Catherine, daughter of the 2nd Viscount de Vesci, is sufficiently extensive to warrant a section of its own, and consists of family and personal letters to Mrs Nugent, 1812-1877, including a very matter-of-fact account of the Charge of the Light Brigade (D552/A/10/1- D552/A/10/11).

Patrick John Nugent's younger brother, Thomas Vesey Nugent (1807-1890), whose son, E.H.S Nugent, eventually succeeded to the Portaferry estate, was a Dublin barrister. His surviving letters and papers, c. 1825-1890, record a mixture of Nugent and other family business. They include: correspondence about the financial affairs of Mrs Letitia Forde, 1841 and 1862-1865; a journal and correspondence recording the naval service of T.V. Nugent's son, Andrew Robert, RN, 1848-1854, and letters of condolence on A.R. Nugent's death, 1856-1857; letters and papers about James Brownlow's marriage settlement, 1853-1865 and 1870-1879; correspondence between T.V. Nugent and his nephew, General Miller, the agent, 1863; testamentary accounts for the estate of the Rt Hon. Abraham Brewster, 1874-1878; correspondence about the financial affairs of Sir Allen and Lady Harriet Walsh, of Ballykilcaven, Co. Leix, 1867-1868, 1878, 1882, 1885 and 1890; and letters and papers about Viscountess de Vesci's trust, 1880s (D552/A/11/1- D552/A/11/14).

The correspondence of General Andrew Nugent of Portaferry (1834-1905), elder son and successor of Patrick John Nugent, runs from c.1845 to 1905, and include: military commissions and other formal documents, 1853-1892; correspondence about erecting a beacon on Pladdy Lug Rock, Strangford, 1858-1873 and 1884; Westmeath estate correspondence, 1860-1863; and damp-press out-letter book of the Portaferry agent, Charles Brownlow, 1896-1916 (D552/A/13/1- D552/A/13/8).

General Nugent's younger brother and successor, Colonel John Vesey Nugent (1837-1914), is represented in the archive by: military commissions, freemasonry certificates and other formal documents, 1858-1906; letters to J.V. Nugent from his father and other members of the family, 1850s; J.V. Nugent's 'Kandahar diary', 1878-1879; estate correspondence, 1882-1912; and letters and papers about Portaferry Orange Hall, local Church of Ireland, Unionist and UVF organisations, etc, 1908-1913 (D552/A/14/1- D552/A/14/5).

Colonel J.V. Nugent was succeeded in 1914 by his cousin, Edmond Henry Stuart Nugent, whose correspondence, c.1870-1929, includes: letters and papers about the Whitepark estate, Co. Westmeath, and the affairs of the late Thomas Murray, c.1870-1890; letters and papers about the administration of the will of Selina, Lady Stronge,

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c.1904; letters and papers about Viscountess de Vesci's trust, 1907-1908 and 1924-1927; and Portaferry estate correspondence, 1908-1919 (D552/A/15/1-D552/A/15/17)



## **Sir Roland Nugent**

The letters and papers of E H S Nugent's son and successor, Sir Roland Nugent, Bt (1886-1962), do not do justice to his significant role in Northern Ireland public life. He entered the diplomatic service in 1910 and served with the Grenadier Guards in 1918 and again in 1940-1943. A Director of the Federation of British Industries, 1916-1917 and 1919-1932, he was knighted in 1929. In 1944 he entered Northern Ireland politics, serving as Leader of the Senate, 1944-1950, Minister without Portfolio in the Northern Ireland Government, 1944-1945, Minister of Commerce, 1945-1949, Minister in the Senate, 1949, and Speaker of the Senate, 1950-1961. On his retirement from that post, he was created a baronet, and he died in the following year. His papers, which run from 1912 to 1919 and from 1937 to 1961, include: formal documents; papers about public life, particularly duplicated papers concerning road and rail transport in Northern Ireland, 1937-1938 and 1945-1949; correspondence concerning Portaferry Harbour; and voluminous estate and business correspondence, all for the period 1938-1961 (D552/A/16- D552/A/17).

One further section of the Nugent papers which is particularly noteworthy is devoted to family and local history, 1684-1913, and includes several manuscripts by William Montgomery of Rosemount, Co. Down.



## William Montgomery's manuscripts

William Montgomery (1633-1707) was a grandson of Hugh, the 1st Viscount Montgomery of the Ards, who had acquired extensive estates in Ulster in the early 17th century. After spending most of his youth and early manhood abroad during the 'War of the Three Kingdoms', William inherited the Montgomery estate at Rosemount, near Greyabbey, Co. Down. Although he wrote extensively on historical, religious and philosophical subjects, he published nothing during his own life time, apart from two essays published at Leyden in 1652. Sections of his history of the Montgomery family appeared in the Belfast Newsletter between the 1785 and 1822. These were later published in book form as *The Montgomery Manuscripts* in 1830 and in a revised edition, edited by George Hill, in 1869. The *Montgomery Manuscripts*, contain the histories of Hugh Montgomery, the 1st Viscount Montgomery of the Great Ards, and his descendants the Earls of Mount-Alexander, as well as those of collateral branches of the family, down to c1700. They describe the settlement of eastern Ulster by Scots families in the early 17th century and also contain an interesting account of the 1641 rising and the subsequent civil wars. Hill's heavily annotated edition has been widely used by historians of the 17th century settlement of Ulster and by genealogists.

In the years 1700-1 William Montgomery sent his cousin and friend Patrick Savage of Portaferry copies of some of his writings. He had the manuscripts copied by the local schoolmaster and then checked and initialled each page before forwarding them to Savage. The manuscripts have since been bound into three volumes, with one stray page. The most significant of these documents are two related accounts of the history of Ards and of the Savage family. The manuscript of the Description of the Barony called the Ards is dedicated to Patrick Savage Esq. of Portaferry and dated 1701. It was however originally written in 1683, at the suggestion of William Molyneux of Dublin, for incorporation in the Irish section of a proposed atlas of Britain, to be published by Moses Pitt, a London publisher. Although the Irish section of the atlas was never published, several descriptions of Irish counties were produced, based on a set of 'Queries' composed by Molyneux. The text of the Description has been published in *Irish Booklore* (Volume 2, No. 1, 1972), edited by D. B. Quinn. This edition was based on an earlier manuscript version, possibly the one that was forwarded to Molyneux and which may then have passed to Sir William Petty (D552/B/4/1/3A)

The Incidental remembrances of the two ancient families of the Savages in the lower half Barony called the Little Ards... was 'collected out' of the accounts of the Montgomery family, for the benefit of Patrick Savage by William Montgomery. The text was published in the 1830 edition of *The Montgomery Manuscripts* edited by James McKnight. George Hill also intended to include it as the final chapter of the 1869 edition, but the publisher decided to issue the volume without this chapter. (At least part of this missing chapter was printed and a few copies have survived see D618/249.) Montgomery filled out the manuscript of the Incidental remembrances with some verses on religious themes and a discourse on the need to make timely preparation for death - contemplating his own mortality appears to have been a

favourite occupation of Montgomery's. These additions were also printed by McKnight (D552/B/4/1/2/5A)

A third bound volume of manuscripts contains a selection of essays by Montgomery that indicate the breadth of his interests. They include: a discourse concerning the uses of watermarks on paper; some notes on the history and legal system of the Isle of Man; and a treatise that seeks to prove that tombs and other memorials in churches and church yards were the property of those who had made them, rather than the church. Of most interest is a catalogue, running to 6 double column pages, of Montgomery's writings, which he had collected into a number of volumes entitled *Opera Juvenilia, Virilia et Senilia*. The first page of this list was printed in McKnight's edition of *The Montgomery Manuscripts*, however the other manuscripts do not appear to have been published (D552/B/4/1/4)

The original manuscripts on which *The Montgomery Manuscripts* were based have largely disappeared. The manuscripts used by McKnight in the 1830 edition had been in the possession of the Delacherois family, descendants of the Earls of Mount Alexander, but these were not available to George Hill in 1869. Hill was told that the manuscripts had been taken to Australia by members of the family. (An early manuscript of one section has survived - see T2652/5.) It would appear that McKnight did have access to at least some of the manuscripts in the possession of the Nugent family. The material published as an appendix to the 1830 edition corresponds to the early 19th century transcripts preserved with the original papers (D552/B/4/1/3B, D552/B/4/1/5B). George Hill does not appear to have seen these manuscripts. He does not mention of the Nugent family in his acknowledgements and Hill was usually punctilious about this. The edition of the *Incidental remembrances*, which he planned to add to *The Montgomery Manuscripts*, was probably taken from the 1830 edition, like the rest of the text. The Nugent texts appear to have escaped the notice of modern scholars who have relied on McKnight and Hill's texts. Given the importance of William Montgomery's history this is a surprising omission.

