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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **VERNER/WINGFIELD**

# **PAPERS**

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# Verner/Wingfield Papers (D2538)

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## Summary

The Verner/Wingfield papers comprise of c.2000 documents. In order to have any hope of understanding the archive, a knowledge of complicated family history, and of the confluence of different families and estates, is required.



*Sir William Verner, Bt*

The pivotal figure in the archive is Colonel the Hon. Edward Wingfield (1772-1859), of Corke Abbey, on the Co. Dublin side of Bray, Co. Wicklow, third son of the 3rd Viscount Powerscourt of nearby Powerscourt, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow. In 1797, Wingfield married Harriet Westenra, sister of the 2nd Lord Rossmore and granddaughter of the previous possessor of Corke Abbey. They had one child, another Harriet, who in 1819 married Sir William Verner, 1st Bt, of Churchill, Co. Armagh. On Colonel Edward Wingfield's death in 1859, his Co. Dublin estates passed to the Verners and merged with their estates in Cos Armagh and Tyrone, while his other estates (of Wingfield provenance) reverted to the Wingfields.

The material relating to the estates (and political activities) of the Verner family consists of title deeds, leases, receipts, correspondence, etc, 1641-1907. The Verner estate in Cos Armagh and Tyrone included the lands of Aghory, Annasamry, Clonmain, Copney, Derryane, Derrylee and Tullyroan, Co. Armagh, and Foremass, Lurganboy, Moghan and Tullyvannon, Co. Tyrone. The Verner papers also include a general account book and other accounts, for electoral expenses incurred during the 1880 general election for Co. Armagh by Sir William Verner, 3rd Bt.



## Corke Abbey

The estate of Colonel Edward Wingfield and his wife, Harriet (née Westenra), of Corke Abbey, etc, Co. Dublin, came into their possession in a complicated and roundabout way, via Harriet Westenra's complicated ancestry. The first member of her family to live at Corke Abbey was her widowed grandmother, Mary Cairnes, Lady Blayney, who presumably acquired a long lease of the property, and who died in 1790. She left it either among her daughters or to her daughters in succession, with a stipulation that in its future descent preference was to be given to a granddaughter over a grandson. One of her daughters, Anne, was married to the Rt Hon. Theophilus Jones, and another, Elizabeth, to the 1st Lord Rossmore; this is why the Joneses and Lady Rossmore feature as parties to c.1800 deeds relating to Corke Abbey. Rt Hon. Theophilus Jones, disgusted at loss of Co. Leitrim election, sold Corke Abbey to Edward Wingfield in August 1802. Edward Wingfield was married to this Jones's niece (although they were still paying rent to the owner of the estate, the 2nd Lord Castle Coote). The Wingfield/Westenra estate material comprises title deeds, leases, a few maps, etc, 1711-1934, relating to Corke Abbey and the rest of the estate which went with it or was built up round it. This comprised the lands of Aske, Ballybrack, Ballyedmonduff, Corkagh [the townland name for Corke Abbey], Kilgobbin, Little Bray, Newtown, Sisson's Park [Stepaside], etc, Co. Dublin, and Ballybawn and Cooleneskeagh, which overspilt into Co. Wicklow, together with premises in Kevin Street, Dublin City.



## **The Wingfield Estate**

The history of the Wingfield family and estates is no more straightforward. Colonel Edward Wingfield had inherited from his father, Lord Powerscourt (who died in 1788), the Scurmore estate, Barony of Tireragh, Co. Sligo, and the Ellaghbegg estate, Barony of Gallen, Co. Mayo (these were the estates which reverted to the Wingfield family at his death, because he had no son). At the same time, his elder brother and twin, Colonel John Wingfield, inherited the Wingfield estates of Robertstown, Co. Limerick, and Wingfield Lodge, Ennistimon, Co. Clare. The brothers were clearly on the closest terms, as many of their letters are dated from each other's houses; and Colonel Edward Wingfield at various times administered his brother's estates under a power of attorney granted him for that purpose. His brother died in 1850, and Colonel Edward Wingfield was probably his executor. It was presumably for this reason that he retained in his possession numerous papers documenting estates which either were not his own or did not pass at his death in 1859 to the Verners.



## The Stratfords

In 1802, Colonel John Wingfield inherited further estates, this time not from the Wingfield side of the family, but from his mother's brother, Edward Stratford, 2nd Earl of Aldborough, who had died in the previous year. Lord Aldborough, a grandiose and quarrelsome eccentric (see The Aldborough Papers, T3300/13), was at loggerheads with most of his own family, particularly his brother, John Stratford, who succeeded in 1801 as 3rd Earl of Aldborough. He therefore willed away from the Stratfords everything he possibly could: specifically, a large proportion of the Stratford estate in Co. Wicklow, situated in and around Baltinglass and the 'new town' of Stratford-upon-Slaney, which had been brought within his disposing power by a deed of settlement of 1761; his half-completed attempt at property development in London, consisting of Stratford House and Stratford Place (an enclave off Oxford Street more-or-less intact to this day); his small share of the estate of the Paul family (his maternal grandmother had been a Paul) in Cos Carlow and Kildare and in Dublin City and County; some other property in Co. Dublin; and some property in Queen's County as well. (What it was not in his power to leave his nephew, Colonel John Wingfield, was the rest of the Stratford estate in Co. Wicklow and the family seat and estate at Belan, Co. Kildare.) Following this inheritance, Colonel John Wingfield assumed in 1802 the additional name of Stratford, and became Colonel John Wingfield-Stratford. His correspondents sometimes addressed him as Colonel Stratford, but occasionally called him Colonel Wingfield, leading to inevitable confusion with his younger brother of that name.



*Edward, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of  
Aldborough*



## Aldborough House

Of the papers documenting the estates inherited by Colonel John Wingfield-Stratford from his uncle, the 2nd Earl of Aldborough, the most interesting relate to Aldborough House, Amiens Street, Dublin (Amiens was the subsidiary Viscounty of the Stratford family). This was part of the North Strand estate of the Paul family of Ballyraggon, Co. Kildare, who also owned estates in that county and at Rathvilly, Co. Carlow. Lord Aldborough's maternal grandmother was a Paul and the co-heiress of that family, and the North Strand estate was part of the inheritance which had fallen to his share (and which he had augmented by acquiring long leases from the other co-heirs). On it, between 1793 and 1798, he built his palatial Aldborough House, still surviving, but destined almost immediately to become a white elephant, partly because of the general decline in Dublin house prices after the Union, and partly because it was located on the north side of the city, far from the centre of gravity of such fashionable society as post-Union Dublin retained. The papers about Aldborough House are of special interest because they document, in extraordinary detail, the work of individual stone-masons, joiners, stuccodores, etc, during the period of construction, 1793-1798. These last include the architect, Jason Harris of Dublin, James Hendricks, bricklayer, Matthew and Arthur Cogan or Coogan (mainly the former), stuccodores, Thomas Baker, stone-cutter, and John Meares, disgruntled mural and ceiling painter.

In addition to these estates and properties, the Verner/Wingfield papers also document the Addington Place, Kent, estate of Colonel John Wingfield-Stratford's wife, and some less explicable property in various counties of Ireland and in Australia.



## A fragmented archive

Because a very large number of different estates and properties, some of them small, and located all over the place, are documented in the archive, an unusually large number of pre-1858 wills crop up as part of the title to some of them. These include: copy will of Francis Annesley of Ballyshonon, Co. Kildare, nephew of Mrs Elizabeth Paul of Ballyraggon, Co. Kildare, 1707; original of the will of the Rev. Benjamin Neale, Archdeacon of Leighlin, 1716; three copies of the will of Jeffry Paul of Ballyraggon, Co. Kildare, husband of Elizabeth Paul, 1720; copy will of Francis Neville of Belturbet, Co. Cavan, Collector of the Revenue in the district of Cavan, 1726; copy will and probate of Henry Clarke of Annasamry, Co. Armagh, 1728; copy will of Jean Trapaud of Dublin, 1733; will of George Bond of 'Syra', Co. Armagh, 1747; copy will, probate and letters of administration of George Ker of Tullydraw, Co. Tyrone, 1749-1750; copy will of Thomas Clarke of Ardress, Co. Armagh, 1751; copy will of Edward Dawson of Newtowncorry, Co. Monaghan, 1754; original and two copies of the will of Hannah Neale, otherwise Paul, widow of Archdeacon Neale and mother of Martha, Countess of Aldborough, 1764; copy will of Henry Clarke of Summer Island [Annasamry], Co. Armagh, 1769; copy will of Samuel Dawson of Rockcorry, Co. Monaghan, 1776; and will of Thomas Verner of Church Hill, Co. Armagh, 1786.

For further information about family history, particularly as regards the Stratfords, Earls of Aldborough, c.1690-1800 (which is highly relevant to the present archive), and to the part played by Sir William Verner, 1st Bt, in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo (which is not), see E.M. Richardson, *Long-Forgotten Days Leading to Waterloo* (London, 1928). This is a rather excitable family history, but it has the great merit of printing a large number of family letters and extracts from family diaries. The originals of the c.300 papers on which it is based, and many of which it quotes, are now in the National Library of Ireland. Another section of the personal and political papers of the Stratford family, mainly the 2nd Earl of Aldborough, remains in private possession, but has been copied and calendared by PRONI (ref T3300/13).

