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INTRODUCTION

ANNESLEY PAPERS

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Annesley Papers (D1503, D1854, MIC538 and T3774)

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Summary

The papers of the Annesley family of Castlewellan, Co. Down, Viscounts Glerawly and Earls Annesley comprise c.165 volumes and c.1,275 documents, divided between and among 2 major deposits of original documents (D1503 and D1854) and a series of photocopies and microfilm copies, and covering the period 1560-1565 and c.1620-1916.



Papers D1854

D1503 is almost entirely an estate archive, so it is convenient to deal first with D1854 and the photocopies and microfilm copies related to it.



Arthur Annesley, 1st Earl of Anglesey



*Sir Francis Annesley,
1st Viscount Valentia*

The earliest document in D/1854 is an isolated volume of accounts, 1560-1565, of Sir William Fitzwilliam as Vice-Treasurer and Receiver-General for Ireland. This presumably comes to be in the archive because Arthur Annesley, 1st Earl of Anglesey, was his successor in these offices during the period 1660-1667. This Arthur Annesley was created Earl of Anglesey in 1661, in recognition of his services in bringing about the Restoration of Charles II. He was born in 1614, and was a son, by the first marriage, of Sir Francis Annesley, 1st Viscount Valentia, who was Clerk of the Signet in Ireland, 1648, and Secretary of State at Dublin under Henry Cromwell. Lord Anglesey was successively Treasurer of the Navy and Lord Privy Seal (1672).

In 1671 he was appointed, with other commissioners, to enquire into the working of the Act of Settlement because, in the words of Sir Bernard Burke (*Analecta Hibernica*, No. 16, p.348, '... It was alleged that various unauthorized differences were to be found between the King's Declaration of 30 November 1660, and the Acts of Settlement, and ... [the] commission [was] to peruse all the papers, orders and writings concerning the settlement of Ireland, from first to last, and to take an abstract thereof in writing, whereby his Majesty might have before him at one view his Majesty's Declaration which was the foundation of the said settlement, the instructions and acts of parliament relating to that affair as they were transmitted from Ireland and amended there, with all Orders of Council and warrants for grants, clauses and provisos, what alterations had been made and how the whole settlement then stood. It would be difficult to give a better description of the contents of these ... volumes [D1854/3], only that there is comprised in them some matters not relating to the settlement of Ireland, as for instance, the papers relating to trade and revenue. ... The Committee of Inspection ... was superseded [in 1674] because of its unpopularity with powerful interests, and it is not improbable that the Earl of Anglesey may have been desirous to efface the memorials of it, and had influence enough to obtain possession of these volumes ...'. Some appear to have been lent or otherwise lost by Lord Anglesey, and those now present are three in number, c.1660-1669, covering such topics as: civil and military lists; Crown rents; Customs and Excise; Petty's Downe Survey; the journals of Parliament; Ormond's 'Propositions' on the government of Ireland, etc.



Arthur, 1st Earl of Anglesey



The Annesley Books of Survey and Distribution

The 23 (now only 22) volumes of a version of the Books of Survey and Distribution (D1854/1) present in the archive may also have been begun – though hardly completed – for the use of the commission of which Lord Anglesey was a member. They seem to ante-date 1678, and perhaps can be dated between 1676 and 1678. Each volume includes an 'alphabet' which is an index of denominations. The text includes a physical description of each barony, with details of woods, bogs, rivers, soil, etc. The information is laid out in tabular form on a barony and parish basis. The details include: 'Proprietors in 1641 by the Civil Survey'; 'Denominations of lands by the Downe Survey'; 'No. of acres distributed'; 'Persons to whom distributed'; 'Rent per annum payable to His Majesty'; 'Observations'. The surviving Survey and Distribution volumes cover the following counties: Kilkenny, Waterford, Kerry, Kildare, Carlow, Wexford, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Tipperary, Monaghan, Armagh, Limerick, Westmeath, Clare, Roscommon, Galway, Cork, Down, Antrim, Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Fermanagh, King's and Queen's Counties, Dublin, Wicklow, Donegal, Londonderry and Tyrone. Co. Meath, once present at Castlewellan, is now missing (but see MIC532/13).



Alternative versions

Other versions of the Books of Survey and Distribution exist (as is discussed in *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 16, pp.349-354): the additional information furnished by the Annesley set consists in the provision of barony boundary descriptions and of details of the Quit and other rents reserved to the Crown. The former preface the particulars assembled in tabular form, as indicated, for the respective baronies; the latter appear, throughout the text, against the grantees names and lands in an adjoining column. The descriptions given of the barony boundaries could have been adopted from either of two sources – the Civil Survey of 1654-1656, or the 'Books of Reference' to the Down Survey maps. Many specimens of both have been compared with the barony descriptions in the Annesley text, and it was found that the Civil Survey was the source of origin. This means that, in addition to what is known to have survived of the Civil Survey, there are now available excerpts from that text for the boundary descriptions of most of the baronies forming the following counties: Down and Antrim, Carlow (including 'A brief description of the Countie Carlow'), Westmeath, King's and Queen's Counties, Wicklow, Longford and Louth, Monaghan and Armagh, Cork, Cavan and Fermanagh, Leitrim and Sligo.

The second distinguishing and unusual feature characterising the Annesley set is the specification, against individual lands and their owners, of the Quit and other rents reserved to the Crown under letters patent issued to the grantees named. The column provided for this return is captioned 'Rent payable to his Majesty'. Additional information evidencing close and extensive research, is afforded as to the history of each rent, for example: 'Col. John FitzPatrick Restored, Proviso pages 55 & 56 Act of Explanation: Quit Rent discharged by Letters Patent ... Crown Rent charged' (Queen's Co. vol. p.76): 'Luke Hussey, £1 8 6 Quit Rent not in charge' (same vol. p.59): 'Commons not sett out, liable to no rent' (Saggart Parish, Dublin, vol., p.42): 'Thomas Coote, £2 1 9 Quit Rent reduced' (Killinkeare parish, Cavan vol): Duke of Buckingham, Innocent Protestant by Decree, Crown Rent charged folio 81' (Queen's Co. vol. p.92): 'Lord Barnwell Crown Rent, Court of Grace' (Swords – Dublin, vol.).



Obligations to the Crown

Clearly, in one respect, this set of Books of Survey and Distribution was designed to express the result of a microscopic investigation into the liability, or otherwise, of each denomination of land to one or other of the various rents payable to the King, as well as into each man's title from the Crown. For this the closest scrutiny was involved of individual items contained in a great series of documents concerned with the disposition of millions of acres under the Cromwellian and Restoration Acts of Settlement - the Civil Survey, Down Survey, Letters Patent, Decrees, Rent Rolls, Quit Rent Reducement Rolls – to mention but a few. It would not be unreasonable to assume that these books were designed in pursuance of the possible requirements of the Committee of Inspection of which Lord Anglesey was a member; but definite conclusions as to their particular origin cannot be easily reached.



Francis Annesley

The next member of the Annesley family who is conspicuously represented in D1854 is Francis Annesley, M.P., of Thorganby, Yorkshire, and Castlewellan, Co. Down, a nephew of Lord Anglesey, a member of both the English and Irish Parliaments, one of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Forfeited Estates in Ireland (1699) and one of the Trustees for the Sale of the Forfeited Estates (1700-1703). According to J.G. Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation in Ireland, 1690-1703* (London, 1956), pp.98-99, the seven Commissioners 'formed an ill-assorted team' elected by ballot in the English House of Commons. Francis Annesley headed the ballot, and was one of the majority of four among the Commissioners who '... neglected no opportunity to discredit the government's administration of the forfeitures and to paint a lurid picture of neglect, corruption, favouritism and partiality to Papists ...'; following which, an English Act of Resumption was passed in 1700, whereby all King William III's grants of forfeited Irish lands were vested in 13 Trustees, with Annesley again heading the ballot. It is probably indicative of Annesley's position of prominence among the Commissioners/Trustees that he went off with the bulk of their archive, comprising c.50 volumes of minutes, reports, petitions, tithe details, correspondence, accounts, etc, 1699-1703. It also seems probable that, in connection with the work of the Commissioners/Trustees, he borrowed from his kinsman, the 3rd Earl of Anglesey (the 1st Earl having died in 1686) the Annesley set of the Books of Survey and Distribution, the other Restoration Settlement volumes and the (irrelevant) Vice-Treasurer's accounts of 1560-1565, and did not return any of them. The 3rd Earl of Anglesey died in 1702 and Francis Annesley at that date would still have had a use for the books.



The work of the Trustees

Simms writes (pp.99, 121 and 164-165): '... A considerable part of what we know about the transactions of the Inquiry Commissioners and, in a much greater degree, of the Trustees under the Act of Resumption is derived from the Annesley manuscripts They include a book of the depositions taken by the Inquiry Commissioners in 1699 and a book of letters written and received by them in the same year. ... In the Annesley manuscripts we have first-hand evidence of the day-to-day work of the Trustees [between June 1700 and June 1703]. There are eleven volumes of minutes of various kinds, which between then cover most of the period during which the trust was in operation. These are supplemented by a number of reports on petitions and claims. There are very elaborate financial records, which include complete rent-rolls and lists of sales. The journal of accounts for the three years runs to 824 years. The chief impression created is of the enormous labour involved in administering and selling the forfeited estates, and of the assiduity with which the Trustees appear to have conducted their business. All the Trustees present in Dublin seem to have attended the meetings, which were held almost daily and began at eight in the morning. In addition ... to statistical material, [the volumes] contain correspondence of the Inquiry Commissioners and minutes of the Trustees' proceedings. They also contain a number of private acts of parliament, the text of which is not otherwise available. ...'



Richard Annesley, 2nd Earl Annesley

Francis Annesley died in 1750. His sixth son, William Annesley of Castlewellan, was created Baron Glerawly and died in 1770. His eldest son, Francis Charles, was created 1st Earl Annesley and died, probably without legitimate children, in 1802. His younger brother, Richard, succeeded as 2nd Earl. In his youth, Richard Annesley had read for the Bar, and his papers in D/1854 include notebooks which he kept as a law student in the Inner Temple, London, and in Dublin, c.1768-1771. His reports, often retrospective, include the following cases: a privateer at Waterford and Kinsale; the estate of Sir Edward Crofton of Moate, Co. Roscommon; the definition of mountain land in ejectments; the validity of Protestant-Catholic marriages; Lord Midleton's estates; the estate of Owen McSwiney, Co. Middlesex; the trial of a Whiteboy; the Cope family estates in Co. Armagh; Lord Castlestewart's estate in Co. Tyrone; a number of disputes concerning the purchase of land by 'Papists' and the operation and interpretation of the Penal Laws generally; and Lord Ely's estate in Co. Fermanagh (the cause celebre of Loftus -v- Hume).



The Irish Revenue Board

Richard, 2nd Earl Annesley, was a Commissioner of the Revenue, 1785-1806, and became Chief Commissioner of the newly separated Board of Excise, 1806-1810. His papers in these connections include: details of statistics, disputes, orders, etc, relating to Customs and Excise questions in Ireland from c.1673; late 18th-century 'Excise regulations and orders'; a precedent book of the Commissioners of Customs, c.1803; notes on the machinery of Customs administration, c.1805; and a volume containing Lord Annesley's fairly deranged 'Minutes and Observations of Board's Orders and Proceedings', January-April 1810. At this time, Annesley was at loggerheads with his fellow Commissioners, with the Secretary to the Board, Edward Hardman, and with the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, John Foster. Hardman complained to Foster that Annesley did nothing but keep a book in which he recited all his grievances and which he intended for the perusal of the government. This must be the book in question, and it gives strong evidence of the persecution mania and general mental disturbance which led to his compulsory retirement in May.



William Richard Annesley, 3rd Earl Annesley

Richard, 2nd Earl Annesley, died in 1824, and was succeeded by his eldest son, William Richard, 3rd Earl Annesley, who died in 1838. It appears that his representation in the archive is confined to a letter-book and accounts of the Castlewellan Yeomanry, 1810-1819. Another small and isolated component dating from this period is a set of printed 'official documents' relating to one James Annesley of the Madras medical establishment, 1812-1824.



The estate letter-books of the 4th Earl Annesley

The 3rd Earl's eldest son, who succeeded as 4th Earl in 1838, was another William Richard, and was a minor of only eight years of age at the time of his father's death. During the minority, the management of the estate was carried out by John Robert Moore, brother of the 3rd Earl's widow and co-trustee and executor of the 3rd Earl's estate. It is because of his role as a trustee, that he features prominently in the earlier volumes of estate out-letter books which survive for the period 1838-1850 and 1875-1887 (D1854/6). These are 8 in number and relate, not only to the Annesley estates at Castlewellan and Newcastle, Co. Down, but in Cos Cavan and Meath and in Queen's County as well (where Moore's brother, William A. Moore, seems to have been the agent). They cover the following topics: the problem of dispossessing pauper tenants in 1839; the offer of granite from the Annesley quarries for the new Houses of Parliament in 1839; the duties of the estate agent at Castlewellan in 1839; the pier at Newcastle in 1840; subscriptions for the 'Protestant Church' at Castlewellan in 1840; the employment of an 'agriculturalist' in 1846; the possible employment of unemployed and starving poor on public works, 1846-1847; repairing leases for dilapidated property in Castlewellan, etc, c.1875; the crisis over rent collecting and the possible eviction of tenants in 1881; comment on the Land Act of 1881; Land League agitation in 1884 and the pressure for a further Catholic magistrate 'on the Castlewellan Bench', etc, etc.



The Crimea, Africa and India



William Richard, 4th Earl Annesley, died unmarried at the age of 44 in 1874. He was succeeded by his next brother, Hugh, a professional soldier who became Colonel of the Scots Fusilier Guards in 1860. He had served and been wounded in the Kaffir War in South Africa, 1851-1853, and in the Crimean War, where his jaw was shattered at the battle of the Alma in 1854. He is the major correspondent in the later estate letter-books. His Kaffir and Crimean War diaries will be found at MIC538: in D1854 he is

represented by a number of diaries which he kept on a hunting trip in Canada, 1861-1862, and on a series of Mediterranean cruises, 1866-1867, 1879 and 1883 (in the first of which he gives a very detailed account of an interview with Garibaldi at Caprera in February 1867). His younger brother, Robert John Annesley, a lieutenant in the 11th Hussars, was another diarist and recorded his voyage to the Crimea in the summer of 1854, preparations for landing, etc (he died in September). The 4th Earl's first wife, Mabel, likewise kept a diary in which she recorded the events of a voyage to India in 1886 and described visits to Bombay, Cawnpore and Lucknow in the following year. Lady Mabel Annesley (as she then was, her husband having not yet succeeded to the earldom) was also something of an artist and has left in the archive sketches of, among other things, Garibaldi's house on Caprera (February 1867).



A pioneering photographer

Hugh, 5th Earl Annesley's, principal claim to fame, however, is as a pioneering amateur photographer. Most of the 35 albums of photographs in the archive (D1854/5) reflect these activities (although some of them contain 'commercial' photographs and some derive from other members of the family). The wet collodion process was a challenge to technically-minded amateurs, prominent among whom, in the north of Ireland as elsewhere, were young army officers whose military careers entailed a good deal of travel. The earliest photographs in the Annesley albums date from the early 1850s, when the young Hugh Annesley served in the Kaffir War. Whether such curiosities as the photographs of Kaffir's skull, an ivory necklace and an assegai were his own work or that of some fellow officer is impossible to say with certainty, but they may well have been his first essays in an activity that was to interest him for the rest of his life. At any rate they were included in his first album, which is dated March 1855.



From the Crimea to Castlewellan

The first nine albums in D1854/5 (others are in the hands of a descendant in Scotland but have been properly processed by the Ulster Museum, with rough copies in PRONI - T3774) consist mostly of Annesley's own photographs of army life and friends and of the Castlewellan area and his Irish friends and relations, taken between the mid-1850s and the end of the 1870s. Those not his own are in most cases clearly identified as the work of his friends or of known professionals such as Cundall (who took a series of Crimean War soldiers for the Queen) or Howlett (some striking views of the ship Leviathan, later re-named Great Eastern, and its designer Brunel). There are also Crimean war photographs by Annesley himself, though he was not in the Crimea for long before being wounded and sent home; his haggard features, with a black patch covering the wound to his face and jaw, appears subsequently among the contents of the albums. Other out-of-the-ordinary photographs include coverage of a visit to Japan, c.1872.

From a local point of view the most interesting photographs are those of Castlewellan, Newcastle and the Mourne. These include pictures of the building of the new Castlewellan Castle, begun in 1856 and finished two years later, and of Donard Lodge on the slopes of Slieve Donard; also some portraits of employees of the estate. Annesley's 'photographic tent' (used for preparing and developing his outdoor photographs) and his friend Lord Kilmorey's 'photographic cab' are both illustrated. He later took advantage of the much more convenient, and reliable, dry-plate process to record journeys abroad - including Mediterranean cruise in 1881-1882 and tiger-hunting in India with views of Bombay, Nepal, etc, in 1885-1887 – and the progress of his gardening improvements at Castlewellan (he created the now-famous arboretum and published an account of it in 1903, illustrated by his own photographs). However, his best work as a photographer was done when he was younger, as a skilled manipulator of the wet-collodion process.

The Annesley collection in D1854/5 is undoubtedly the largest and most important collection of early photographs in the north of Ireland. PRONI owns and preserves the archive originals, and also holds a set of rough copies for consultation purposes. The Ulster Museum has fully processed the material, and prints should be ordered via its Local History Library. Most of the text of the previous three paragraphs was contributed by Dr W.A. Maguire, Head of Human History at UM.



Naval and travel journals

Another photographer, and diarist, whose presence in the archive requires some explanation, is Midshipman, later Lieutenant, Gerald Sowerby. He married Lady Mabel Annesley in 1904. Following the death of her only brother, Francis, 6th Earl Annesley, in 1914 and the title's reversion to a kinsman, she resumed the name Annesley, and her son, the late Gerald Sowerby/Annesley, ultimately succeeded to Castelwellan. It was he who sold the Castle and D1854 in 1962. The photographs and diaries of his father, Gerald Sowerby, R.N., consist of 3 albums of photographs of the Suez Canal, Samoa, Norfolk Island, Tonga, Solomon Islands, etc., 1894-1896, and of the British and American fleets at Annapolis in 1903-1904; and log books, etc, whilst serving in the Pacific, etc, 1894-1899.

Francis, Viscount Glerawly, later 6th Earl Annesley, is represented by a diary which he kept on a round-the-world cruise in the 'Mauretania' and 'a big windjammer', 1908 (see also MIC538) and, probably (since its authorship is uncertain) by a diary of a visit to Constantinople and the lines at Chatalja during the Turco-Bulgarian war in 1913, which includes the comment: 'all the doctors who were in the South African war say ... that it was child's play to this job'.



Miscellaneous estate papers

Most of the Annesley of Castlewellan estate records will be found at D1503. D1854 includes an early patent of 1609 from James I granting to Patrick O'Hanlon in perpetuity various towns and lands near Mountnorris, Co. Armagh; the Mountnorris estate shortly afterwards became the property of the founding Annesley in Ireland, Francis Annesley, 1st Viscount Valentia. Also present are: annual accounts of 'the family expenses', 1761-1767; rent accounts for Manor Annesley at Oritor, Co. Tyrone, 1769, and for the Close estate at Bannfield, Co. Down, 1765; kitchen accounts for the house at Castlewellan, 1813-1830; catalogue of the library 'in the Old Cottage at Castlewellan' (probably the name applied by the family to the pre-Castle house), c.1830; volume recording copies and abstracts of deeds and agreements entered into by J.R. Moore, 1838-1844; and lists of hardy annuals in the gardens at Castlewellan Castle, 1890-1900.



Mainly Co. Kildare

The main estate component of D1854, however, consists of estate papers, 1641-1879, deriving from the distant cousins of the Annesleys of Castlewellan, the Annesleys of Bletchington, Oxfordshire (and until 1785 of Clough, near Castlewellan), who succeeded in 1844 to the oldest family title, the Viscounty of Valentia. These papers include some documentation of estates in Cos Meath, Tyrone and Wexford, but otherwise they relate entirely to the Annesley estate in Co. Kildare, consisting of the townlands of Ballysax, Capanargid, Cloncurry, Drinnanstown, Garrycahir, Glenaree, Lullybegg and Lullymore. They consist of title deeds, leases, maps, rentals, valuations and correspondence.



Papers D1503, etc

The Annesley estate archive proper, D1503, comprises c.1,000 documents, c.1650-c.1900, relating to the various estates of the Annesley family. For the most part, the papers consist of title deeds, leases, legal papers, etc, and relate to the Castlewellan, Newcastle, Bannfield and Dunlady estates in Co. Down (the last of which was acquired via the marriage of the Hon. Richard Annesley, later 2nd Earl Annesley, in 1771 to the heiress of the Lambert family of Dunlady, near Dundonald), the Cavan, Ballyconnell and Clonervy estates, Co. Cavan, the Tankardstown estate, Queen's County, and the Killallon estate, Co. Meath.



The Co. Down estate

The Castlewellan estate comprised the following townland: Backaderry, Ballymagreehan [and Ballymaginaghy?], Benraw, Castlewellan, Clarkill (alias Clarehill), Legananny, Leitrim, Magheramoyo (mentioned in early documents but not in a rental of 1816), Slievenaboley and Slievenisky (mentioned in 1816 but not in the early documents). The Newcastle estate comprised: [Ballaghbeg?], Black Stairs, 'Craignagar', Crasbone and Dundrinne Mountains, Donard, 'Drinabilly', Kinida, Millstone, Murlough, Namaduay, Newcastle, 'The Park', Shan, Thomas, and Tullymore. The Bannfield estate (near Rathfriland) comprised: Annahunshigo, Ballydoo, Ballygorian beg, Ballygorian more, Cross, Lisnamulligan, Lisnisk, Moneygore, Moyad, Slievenaman, Tirygory, and Tullyree. ('Slievemeelbeg' and 'Slievenakilly', may also be townlands in the Bannfield estate. The Dunlady estate comprised: Ballyhenry, Churchquarter, Cullintraw, Dunlady, Loughmoney, and 'Tullycavey' (near Greyabbey, and possibly part of the townland of Tullykevin. Four other townlands - 'Ballyoran' [Ballydoran?], Castle Espie, Islandreagh and part of Tullynakill, are mentioned in the marriage settlement of 1771, but do not recur.



The Co. Cavan estate

The estates in Co. Cavan were divided up as follows. The Ballyconnell estate comprised: Carrowmore, Gortoorlan, Moher, Mullanacre, and Snugborough. The Clonervy estate comprised: Corfeehone, Clonervy, Latt, and Pottle. The Cavan estate was larger and more complex. It comprised premises in the town of Cavan and Ardlushin, Ardonan, 'Ballynecarrig', 'Bealbally', Bleancup, 'Carmaflinn', 'Carradabegg', 'Carmaclean', 'Caravad', 'Cariva', 'Caramaught', Cavanarainy, Clonloskan, Coppanaghbane, Coppanaghmore, 'Cordaggan', Corraweelis, Corlea, Crea, 'Decassun', Derries, Derrintinny, Derrynananta, Derrygeeraghan, Derryvehill, 'Derindiff', 'Derrinannan', Derrylahan, 'Donakiever', 'Dromaora' [Dromore?], 'Dromanagh', Drumcon, Drumaraw, Drumhillagh, Garvalt, 'Glinsky', Gowlat, 'Gortneleckin' [Gortnaleck?], 'Greaghahollea' [Greagh], Kilnacranagh, 'Knockmullelagh', 'Latvon ', Legnaderk, Legnagrow, Legatraghta, Lisclone, Lislea, Lisnamandra, Moneensauran, Milltown, Slanore, 'Terryowna', Trinity Island, Tullytiernan, Tully, and 'Urreran'.



Estates elsewhere

The Tankardstown estate, Queen's County, comprised Clompierce, Coolbally, Skehanagh, and Tankardstown. The Killallon estate, Co. Meath, comprised: Boherard, Loughanbreen, Monennican, Newtown, Rathbrack, and Stirrupstown. 'Gibbstown' [Gibbonstown], Co. Meath, was also part of the Annesley's estate at one time, and may have been part of the Killallon estate in that county.

The Meath and Queen's County estates appear to have descended to the Castlewellan branch of the family from the senior branch, the Annesleys of Camolin Park, Co. Wexford, Earls of Anglesey; which would explain why the title deeds also include documents, c.1650-c.1770, relating to all the estates of the Earls of Anglesey, and particularly to those in Cos Clare, Kerry, Tyrone and Wexford which did not descent to the Annesley of Castlewellan. There are also some legal case papers involving the Earls of Anglesey and their fairly sensational succession disputes and peerage claims, particularly of the mid-1740s. These include a printed transcript of the evidence given in a test case of 1743, the trial of Campbell Craig, a lessee of James Annesley ejected from his property in the parishes of Colp and Kilsharvan, Co. Meath, by Richard, 6th Earl of Anglesey, who was in dispute with James as to which of them was the rightful heir to and owner of all the Anglesey estates (D2784). Present, too, are some legal case papers relating to the Grove family of Ballyhimmock, Co. Cork (whose heiress married the 1st Earl Annesley of Castlewellan in 1766), and their estates in Cos Cork and Waterford, principally the future 'Annesgrove', Co. Cork, 1667-1766.



The bigamous and morganatic marriage

The most important set of legal case papers, however, runs from 1794 to 1819 and concerns the succession to the Annesley earldom and estate. In November 1795, the 1st Earl Annesley, then a childless widower of fifty-five, came to dine with his brother and heir presumptive, Richard Annesley, later 2nd Earl Annesley. On the way up the drive he was 'much struck with the appearance' of one Sophia Connor, the wife of his brother's gardener, and '... remained for some time in conversation with her ...', in the short time that such conversation lasted, the said Sophia was so dazzled by the rank and splendour of the said Earl ... that, in violation of her marriage vow, he consented to elope from your suppliant [as the gardener was termed in a subsequent legal case paper] with the said Earl on his return to Dublin that evening, which promise she accordingly fulfilled, and was on the evening of the said day taken off by the said Earl in his phaeton to Dublin.' Two years later, in 1797, Lord Annesley married Sophia Connor – illegally, in view of her previous marriage to the gardener. Subsequent to his marriage, Lord Annesley went to great trouble to fabricate a story that Sophia Connor was a gentlewoman with a fortune of £2,000 and paying it to himself. The thinking behind all this must have been that possession of a marriage portion distinguished the honest from the kept woman.



The Annesley peerage case

Although his brother offered '... to concur in any act that might meet the wishes to Lord A. to make a provision for the woman he co-habited with and for any children he might have by her ...', Sophia said she 'would not agree to it, but would take her chance'. She took her chance, after Lord Annesley's death in 1802, by endeavouring (unsuccessfully) to prove the legitimacy of her son by him, and her son's consequent right to the Annesley earldom and the family estate of nearly £5,500 a year. The ensuing litigation lasted until 1819, when Sophia settled for an annuity of £400. She nevertheless had the effrontery to complain that this was insufficient to enable her to '... resume her splendid appearance in Paris, where she had ... [previously] kept her barouche and servants in green and gold liveries, with her box at the opera, and moved in the first circles'. She died, at a Rue de Rivoli address, in 1850.



More Co. Down estate papers

Less sensationally, D1503 also includes: plans, correspondence, etc, relating to improvements at Newcastle harbour, c.1840-1902; the building contract for Castlewellan Castle, 1856; and an award, etc, relating to the Castlewellan Extension of the Great Northern Railway, 1900-1903. In addition, PRONI holds photocopies (T1972, T2088, T2209 and T2215) of the following maps: 3 volumes of maps, etc, of Arthur Magenis's estate at Castlewellan, 1727; map, etc, of Edward Mathews' estate at Newcastle, 1737; a map of Earl Annesley's Castlewellan demesne, surveyed by James Forsyth, 1810; maps of Earl Annesley's estate in the Ballyward area, Co. Down, 1814-1816; a volume of maps of turf bogs on the Annesley estates in the Castlewellan and Newcastle areas, 1832; and 3 maps of the Newcastle estate, c.1850.

