



Public Record Office
of Northern Ireland

INTRODUCTION

HIGGINSON PAPERS

November 2007

Higginson Papers (D3590)

Table of Contents

Summary2

The Papers3

Summary

The Higginson Papers consist of c.1750 papers and items, 1737-1964, concerning the Higginson family of Nappan, Springmount and Rockport, Co. Antrim, and Connelmore, Co. Kildare, and the Skrine family of Ballyrankin, Co. Wexford.



The Papers

The estate and legal papers present in the archive include title deeds, leases, wills, settlements and legal papers relating to the properties of Nappan, near Glenarm, and Springmount, near Glarryford, 1757-1851 (in which latter year Nappan was sold to the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, who lived at nearby Garron Tower).

The 19th-century correspondence includes: letters and papers of Major John Higginson of Nappan, 1803-1840, concerning the affairs of the Co. Antrim Militia (of which he was Major), estate, business and patronage matters, etc; a number of letters and papers, 1838-1860, from or relating to his cousin, Sir James Macaulay Higginson, successively Governor of the Leeward Islands and of Mauritius; letters and papers of Charles Henry Higginson of Springmount, later of Rockport, Cushendun, Co. Antrim, son of Major John Higginson of Nappan and husband of Mary Higginson, daughter of Sir James Macaulay Higginson, c.1850-1894, relating to his career in the Mauritius Civil Service, his estate and business interests, etc; a large number of letters to Mrs C.H. Higginson, 1855-1898, relating to personal and family affairs, mainly the military careers and everyday lives of her children, one of whom, Archibald James Macaulay Higginson, died of wounds received on the Tochi expeditionary force on the Punjab Frontier of India in 1897, and another of whom, Agnes Shakespeare Higginson, the wife of Walter Clarmont Skrine, ranched in Alberta with her husband and wrote poetry under the pseudonym 'Moira O'Neill'.

Moira O'Neill's *Songs of the Glens of Antrim* (Edinburgh, 1916) is, locally, one of the most popular and best loved works of Irish verse from the first years of the 20th century. Her literary mantle fell on her daughter, Molly Keane, the recently deceased, best-selling novelist, who is famed for her bitter-sweet evocations of the 'Big house' in the first half of the 20th century. The literary achievements of both mother and daughter are, unfortunately, not much represented in the archive. There are, however, letters to Moira O'Neill/Mrs Skrine, then living at Ballyrankin, Ferns, Co. Wexford, from her sons, Charles John, Walter Henry and Godfrey Higginson, when serving in the Second World War. There are also diaries and draft histories written by Walter Henry Skrine, 1940-1950, the latter including a draft history of the Berkshire Yeomanry and a draft account of Marshal Ney's part in the Battle of Waterloo.

