

leagued against him and he had to fly from Ireland. Mac Murrough sought the help of Edward II of England to reinstate him in his kingdom. This led to the Norman Invasion. When Mac Murrough died his kingdom was left to Strongbow (Richard de Clare - Earl of Pembroke, who came to Ireland in Edward II's place. Strongbow was broke at the time, and needed money.) Diarmid Mac Murrough was handsome, but he was such a pest. His five sons died and his five daughters all married English Earls, among whom Leinster was divided. To Eva, one of the daughters, was given Dunamase. Her daughter Maud, married Roger Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. Mortimer fortified Dunamase, but as he preferred to live in England, he employed Lyseach O'More to look after his possessions in Ireland. In 1325, O'More taking advantage of the absent Mortimer, seized the Castle of Dunamase and recovered for his family all his hereditary possessions between the rivers Barrow and the Nore and westward to the Slieve Bloom Mts., with portions of Kildare and Kilkenny. After Lyseach O'More's death in 1342, Mortimer recovered possession of Dunamase. He made it his chief residence and built many other castles.

Note (Wouldn't you know that this Diarmid (Dermot) Mac Murrough would have to come from our "neck of the woods"?) Too bad he didn't come from Ulster.

In 1404, the O'Mores defeated the English at Ath Dubh (now Blackford), a few miles from Stradbally, and took great spoils. In 1421, they

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defeated the Earl of Ormonde at Old Abbeylis. On the occasion, the defeated English sought sanctuary in the Cistercian Monastery established there in 1183 by Croghan O'More. To avenge this defeat the English invaded Leix to quell the unruly O'Mores. The country was shared between the Irish and the English. The O'Mores were allotted the country beyond the bog, namely the western portion. The Irish were to hold the territory from the Fort of Protector or the Fort of Lavig, afterwards called Maryborough. Each Chief was responsible for his followers. All were subject to English law and the Irish children had to learn and speak English.

Then followed a black period for the people of Leix and the noble and warlike family of O'Mores, whose fierce pride was a continuous and serious challenge to English domination. At one time, Quincy Mac Rery O'More took the field and in short time won back his ancestral estates. In 1496 he demanded a free passage through Stradbally from the Cosbys. They refused, and a battle took place at the Bridge, and Cosby and his son were killed. ~~Quincy~~ Later O'More laid siege to Maryborough, and completely cut off the garrison to the point of starvation. The garrison was relieved by the Earl of Essex with a large force from England. Quincy O'More encountered the Earl at Ath Dubh (Blackford) but withdrew on account of superior numbers. Essex continued southward towards Kilkenny

and was attacked at the Pass of Cashel which was thickly forested with oaks and undergrowth of hazel. The English were thrown into confusion and from the great numbers slain and their plumed helmets left on the battlefield, the Pass has since been called the "Pass of the Plumes."

During a conference at Ballyragget, Ormonde took the Earl of Ormonde prisoner, but released him on payment of £3000. This led to reprisals under Mountjoy, the Lord Deputy, who entered Leix and proceeded with scythes and harrows to destroy the ripe and unripe crops with the aid of subduing the O'Moores by famine. Many of the O'Moores migrated to Kerry and Connaught. In 1610 the Governor and Sheriff of Leix seized the cattle and property of those who remained, and put them to death by hanging.

In 1641 Rory O'Moore, a descendant of the princely Ruler of Dunamase, whose family had settled in Ballina, Kildare organized a rebellion which spread throughout the country. The Confederation of Kilkenny, a Parliament representative of all Catholics interests in Ireland, was formed, and it ruled practically the whole country for the next six years.

In 1642, the fort of Maryborough and the fortress of Dunamase was taken by the Confederate forces, but were retaken by Ormonde. When he had to retreat, Dunamase fell into the hands of General Preston of the Confederate forces.

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In 1646, the famous Owen Roe O'Neill, who commanded the Generals of the Old Irish, made Dunamase his headquarters.

In 1650 Dunamase was taken by CROMWELL'S Generals, Hewson and Reynolds, who dismantled it and blew it to pieces.

Rory O'Moore the noblest scion of a noble race fought in defense of his country till the last fortress fell. He escaped to the mainland and died, an outlaw with a price on his head on the shores of Lough Foyle in 1651.

The last member of the O'Moore family, is Patrick Jessfield, Earl of Lucan, whose mother was Anne O'Moore, daughter of the famous Rory.

The history of Ireland can be studied in the story of Ley, and in the story of the O'Moore can be gleaned all the romance and tragedy of the Irish race.

A few problems remain, one barrier has to be surmounted. The foster mother is reluctant to renounce the wayward chick when her true Mother longs to draw her under her own wings. But St. George and St. Patrick will be coming together one of these days.

Maybe

It was Easter 1916, Rebellion had broken out in Dublin, and no news got through to London until Max Aiken - the future Lord Beaverbrook managed to reach Jim Healey, who was in Dublin, on the telephone.

"Is there a rebellion?" asked Aiken. "There is," said Healey. "When did it break out?" "When Strongbow ¹¹⁷⁰ invaded Ireland," said Healey. "When will it end?" asked Aiken - "When Cromwell gets out of Hell!" said Healey.

Ancient Septs (Clans) of Leix

Leix Reta (Under O'More, the chief ruler of Leix - also Maryborough West and part of Maryborough East) These were ruled from Dunamase.

Kinel Criffan -- Maryborough East
O'Duff

Tuath Tiodbhuidhe -- Cullnagh.
O'Deevy - McEvoy

Magh Druchtain - Stradbally - O'Kelly
Gallen - Cullnagh - O'Kelly

Crioch O'Muighe - along River Barrow
O'Keeley

Crioch O'm Bartha - Slieve (Mt.) Margy
O'Gorann (could be O'Gorman)

Famous Duns (forts) of Laois
Clopoke -- Luggacorran -- Dunamase

Notes from Canon O'Hanlon's
History of Laois

Story of Abbeyleix

(15)

(On a rainy day -- sit down -- and read this)

From remotest times the princely family of the O'Moores were the central figures in the history of Leix, and the story of Abbeyleix could never have been written without them. From their eagle's nest on the Rock of Dunamass, they sallied out bravely to defend their people from the menace of successive invaders, and there is hardly an acre of woodland or hill, moorland or field, not dyed with the blood of these warlike chieftains and their loyal followers. In the protection of their chieftains, Christianity was introduced, the early monasteries were established, churches were built, learning was spread, and the people grounded in the Christian faith, that would never be rooted out, through all the centuries of oppression and persecution.

It was under the auspices of the O'Moores about 600 A.D. the first religious house was established at Clonkeen, near Clonenagh, near Abbeyleix. There is a Clonkeen townland in the present parish of Abbeyleix, and the ruins of a mediæval church are still to be seen there, which probably gave it the name of Clonkeen before it obtained the name of Abbeyleix. The name of Clonkeen is derived from Cluin Cúin

or Clonagheen), i.e., an ancient monastery of Clonkeon. The most well known is St. Fintan, who was probably born in the district, and of whom there are many old stories. Ancient records state that Fintan Chief of the monks of Eriu, resembled Benedictus, head of the monks of Europe, in his manner and holy life of abstinence. This holy anchorite died in 860 A.D. and his feast is celebrated on the 11th May.

During the Danish invasion from 838 A.D. onwards, many ancient monasteries were plundered and destroyed and many of the holy abbots were put to death. The monastery at Clonkeon must have suffered the same fate.

It is recorded that in 1183 A.D. some forty years after St. Malachy had introduced the Cistercian Order into Ireland. Croghan or Connor O'Moore founded a Cistercian Abbey at Clonkeon, called De Lege Dei, in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and peopled it with monks from the Abbey of Ballinlass. The monastery maintained a high reputation for many centuries and a flourishing town sprang up around it, which took its name from the Abbey. (Abbeyleix)

In 1447 A.D. the Chief of the O'Moores rebuilt and re-endowed the monastery in honor of St. Francis, and selected a burial

place within it for himself and his (17)
descendants. No portion of the bidding
now remains but close to the locality
of the former Abbey was the burial place
of the O'Moores, and two box tombs still
remain. One has a full size recumbent
effigy in armour with an inscription
in Gothic lettering, "Malachy O'More Prince
of Leix. May he rest in peace. Amen 1486."

The other tomb has a floreated cross on
top and a similar inscription: "Here
lieth John O'More. Inno Domini 1502 to
whose soul may the Lord be merciful. Amen.
An ancient quern of granite, circular in
form, was found beside the tombs. An
extensive burial ground must have been
here as evidenced by the large number
of human bones that were found in it,
including on one occasion the complete
skeleton of a man measuring seven feet.

In 1552 during the reign of King Edward
VI the Abbot of Abbeyleix was deprived of a
considerable tract of land and property
which included 300 acres of moor and
marsh in the townland of Abbeyleix.
In 1563, Queen Elizabeth granted the
Abbey and lands, estimated at 820 acres,
to Thomas Earl of Ormonde. During this
period, the monks were killed or driven
from their monasteries, and the people

fled in great numbers to the Slieve Bloom and other mountainous districts, from which they resorted to a desperate guerrilla warfare, plundering and harassing the new owners of the lands under leader John, the Earl of Desmond. From his retreat in Ballaghmore, and close to the present road from Mountesth to Roscrea, Desmond proceeded to plunder the Butlers and Ossory, burn and plunder Abbeyleix, the seat of the Earl of Ormonde. He ventured on one occasion to attack Portlaoise after slaying some of the guards. Later in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the town of Abbeyleix was the scene of the martyrdom of three Franciscan priests.

Linking the past with the present is the demesne of Viscount De Vesce, to whose family were granted in 1700 the former estates of the Earl of Ormonde, who had died in 1634 without male issue. Though no trace of the old Cistercian Abbey now remains tradition has it that the Abbey was within the grounds of the De Vesce estate. The mansion was built in 1774. In recent times pavements that might have formed part of a charter have been found to the north-west beneath part of the kitchen garden. Between this and the house lie the large and beautiful gardens in which at one time were the O'Moore's tombs. They