

HISTORY & LORE

John Montgomery of Croghan and his Descendants

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The eldest son of Alexander Montgomery Prebend of Doe and Margaret Conyngham was John known as John of Croghan. Croghan is the name of a large hill near Lifford on the banks of the River Finn.

When the Rebellion of 1641 broke out John joined the army of his kinsman Hugh the 3rd Viscount of the Ardes where he was promoted to Major. This army was opposed by the Parliamentary army of Coote and Venables who after taking the main Ulster towns from their Royalist garrisons routed the Royalists at Lisnastrain near Lisburn, County Down.

We don't know the surname of John's wife Dorcas but we learn the names of the other family members from his will proved in August 1679. He wished to be buried at Lifford Church. To his eldest son John he gave his lands at Carran and Carrickshandrum in Raphoe Barony and the Quarter of land of Cashelogy in Banagh. Cashelogy belonged to the Murray Broughton Estate originally but when a dispute arose between claimants to the estate on the death of James Murray in 1658 much of the land had to be sold to pay for the costly lawsuits. In this way John Montgomery, the Conynghams of Mountcharles and others got land in Inver Parish in the Barony of Banagh.

To his second son Alexander he gave £140. Alexander had married Elizabeth Cole the heiress to the Cole Estate in Ballyleck, County Monaghan and lived near Monaghan Town. This Alexander was the ancestor of the Montgomerys of Ballyleck, Convoy, Beaulieu and the Montgomery-Moores.

To his third son Robert known in history as Robert of Anarea he gave £100. Robert had married Isabel daughter of James Leslie and is the ancestor of the Bessamount and Drumbortagh branches of the family.

He also left legacies to his daughters Kathleen, Nichola, Rebecca, Margaret, Mary, Elizabeth and Anne.

The Williamite Wars

John the eldest son married firstly Catherine daughter of Rev. Auchinleck of Clones. He is described in the Montgomery Manuscripts as a "tall proper person; as comely with all as one shall see in a summer's day." When the War of the Two Kings (James II and William III) began in Ireland Sir Albert Conyngham raised a regiment of dragoons who fought at the Boyne. John's father was Sir Albert's cousin. John became a Major in the dragoons. When Sir Albert was killed in a skirmish near Sligo Col. Robert Echlin became leader of the Dragoons. Both John's brothers were in the regiment as well -- Alexander of Ballyleck became a Captain and Robert of Anarea a Cornet. Shortly before his death he married Lady Moore relict of Sir William Moore of Roscarbery, County Cork who had a great fortune.

We know the names of three of John's children. Of John the eldest nothing is known. I have seen genealogies of several families who claim descent from him but there is as yet no documentary proof.

The second son Colonel Alexander inherited Croghan, Convoy (which the Montgomerys bought from the Nesbitts of Tullydonnell) and Ballyconnel County Cavan. He was married to a daughter of Henry Percy of Seeskin County Wicklow but they had no family. According to his will dated 1729 she had predeceased him and was buried in Dublin. He willed his estates in Donegal to his cousin Tom eldest son of Alexander of Ballyleck but in a codicil he passed over Tom

and left his property to Tom's eldest son Alexander John. Later Alexander John -- known as Old Sandy -- became M.P. for County Donegal and was brother of General Richard Montgomery killed at Quebec New Years Eve 1775.

Colonel Alexander also stipulated in his will that the same person couldn't inherit the Donegal and Cavan estates.

Colonel Alexander had a sister Margaret who was married to Rev. George Leslie of Clonreish. To their son George, Colonel Alexander willed his property in Cavan and Fermanagh provided he take the name Montgomery and again stressed that the Donegal and Cavan properties must be held by different persons. Margaret's son George took the Montgomery name. He built Ballyconnel House and was M.P. for Cavan County for many years. He married Hannah Clements sister of Robert Lord Leitrim. They had three daughters and one son George who was insane and thus unable to inherit.

Colonel Alexander of Convoy's will also shows that he had property in Arbor Hill and Dolphin's Barn in Dublin. He granted legacies to several relatives including £100 per year to his cousin Tom's wife -- formerly Mary Franklin.

The parents of Tom, Alexander and Elizabeth of Ballyleck and their descendants deserve an article of their own.

