

## Ireland History -- A Chronological Outline

**Hibernia** is a name derived from Greek records where Pytheas of Massilia called the island *lérnē*, during his exploration of northwest Europe (c. 320 BC) and used by the Romans, although neither occupied the country. Alternatively, *louerniā* was a Greek alteration of the Q-Celtic name \**īweriū* from which eventually arose the Irish names *Ériu* and *Éire*, the Gaelic name for Ireland.

- c. 10,000 B.C. **Earliest settlers** arrived in Ireland, in the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age period. They were mainly hunters and later farmers. Among them were the Partholonians, the Fomhóire, the Nemedians, the Firbolg or Bagmen, and the Tuatha de Danann, the Milesians. **Céide Fields** in County Mayo contains the oldest known stone-walled fields in the world – dating back nearly 6,000 years. Ceide Fields became a farming community with houses about 6 meters in diameter, surrounded by garden walls.
- c. 3000 B.C. **Stone Age settlers construct Irish passage-graves, such as Newgrange**, a 5000 year old temple-tomb in Boyne Valley, famous for Winter Solstice illumination of its passage and chamber.  
See [www.newgrange.com](http://www.newgrange.com)
- c. 350 B.C. **Celtic tribes cross to Ireland** and displace earlier inhabitants.  
Search Internet for *Celtic Tribes Ireland* for historical information.
- c. 100 A.D. **Maebh (Medb) was legendary queen of Connacht** who argues with husband, Ailill, that she has the most wealth and discovers inequality because she lacks a bull. She marches her Army to secure the most-famous brown bull of Cooley from Ulster. She connives to get it. Read *Cattle Raid of Cooley*. Legend says Maebh may be buried in an enormous cairn atop Knocknarea near Sligo town which is 55 meters diameter by 10 meters high.
- b.382, d.405 **Niall Noígíallac** or in English **Niall of the Nine Hostages**. He was a fierce Irish “High King” at Tara, the ancient center of Ireland, from 379 to 405. Niall is legendary ancestor of Uí Néill kindred who dominated Ireland from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the 10th century.
- b.387, d.461 **Bishop (Saint) Patrick arrives in Ireland at Slane**.  
Born 387 possibly in Britain and may be son of Roman Centurion. Taken to Ireland as slave. Escaped. Converted, became priest. Returned to Ireland in 432 as Bishop to convert Irish Druids and pagans. Died at Saul, Downpatrick, Ireland after 40 years of converting Kings, families, entire Kingdoms.
- 5th Century **St Attracta** legend is that she went to St Patrick at Coolavin, Ireland, and made her vows to him. She founded a hospice on Lough Gara and lived at Drum, near Boyle. A well named after her is seen on Sligo Road between Ballaghaderreen and Monasteraden, just past Kilcoleman.
- b. 451, d.525 **(Saint) Brigid (Bridget)** is regarded as Ireland's most holy Saint after Patrick. Converted by Patrick teachings, she founded many convents. **Kildare Abbey** is most famous.
- b.484, d.577 **(Saint) Brendan**, known as the voyager, setup several monasteries in Ardfert, Inishdadhtoum and Clonfert. He sailed along west coast of Ireland and Western Isles of the Scots, Wales, Brittany, the Orkneys and Shetlands, and even the Faroe Islands (420 miles north of Ireland). Folklore has it that on one long voyage of several years Brendan may have reached America.
- 500 to 1000 AD **Raths (ringforts) in Ireland** were built by nobles and "strong farmers" as their dwelling places. Within them were houses with walls of stone and **clay** and roofs of straw or reed thatch. Many Raths contained passages, or souterrains, for storing food, valuables and hiding from raids.
- 795 **First Viking raid** was at Lambay Island off coast of Dublin. Vikings raided Irish monasteries because they had great treasures and monks do not fight back. Monks built round towers to help defend themselves. Vikings raided coastal settlements, then inland along Irish rivers, towns and settlements in the Irish countryside. Viking raiding parties **liked** Ireland's mild winter months and brought their families. Viking towns were established at Dublin, Waterford, Wicklow, Cork and Limerick.

- 1014 **Vikings are defeated** by Brian Boru, King of Munster, at Battle of Clontarf outside Dublin. However, Brian Boru was killed. Nevertheless, over time the majority of Viking settlers had converted to Christianity, intermarried with the Irish and became part of Irish society.
- 1169 **Anglo-Norman invasion** was a two-stage process when Norman knights landed in Co. Wexford at request of the ousted King of Leinster who wished to regain his kingdom.
- 1170 **Barony of Costello:** Costello's Anglo-Norman ancestors had name variations that Anglicized as Costello. They were called *De Nangle* in Meath and ejected from there by the English. Jocelyn and Costilo Costello were with those who entered the Ballaghaderreen area in 1235 and displaced the O'Gara's. Costello's conquered surrounding areas and established the Barony of Costello in eastern Mayo and western Roscommon. Costello heirs built several castles, an abbey, and the current Bishop of Achonry's house in Edmondstown in 1864. After several hundred years the Costello's wealth and power were lost to the Dillons.
- 1315 to 1318 **Scots Invasion:** Scots Edward Bruce, with support of O'Neills of Tyrone and minor kings, tried to drive out English colonies from Ireland and win support of Irish leaders. The Great Famine of 1315 to 1317 impeded all military action. Edward controlled eastern parts of Ireland, but Irish kings managed to hold on to the centre and west. Edward Bruce was killed in battle at Faughart, and by end of 1318 the Scots were gone.
- 1348 **Black Death** arrived in Ireland in 1348. It hit English and Norman inhabitants of Ireland living in towns and villages far harder than native Irish who lived in dispersed rural settlements.
- 1556 **English plantation begins** whereby Irish landowners were removed by the English Crown. Colonists ("planters") from England and Scottish lowlands were granted Irish land during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries, principally in Munster and Ulster. Final official plantations took place under Cromwell during the 1650s, when thousands of English soldiers were settled in Ireland. Planter descendants who denied Catholics of civil rights were strongest in northern Ireland.
- 1649 **Cromwell arrives in Ireland** and increases land confiscation and massacres of Catholics. Cromwell's campaigns were in eastern, northern and southern Ireland in 1649 & 1650 and his successor Commander, Henry Ireton, until 1657. Irish Catholics were forced to move to western Ireland, including Co Roscommon and Co Mayo. Cromwell died in Whitehall, London in 1658.
- 1690 **Battle of the Boyne:** William III of Orange (Dutch Protestant) defeats Catholic Jacobite Army near Drogheda. Flight of the Wild Geese begins soon thereafter.
- 1691 to 1745 **Flight of the Wild Geese:** The Irish Jacobite army, including dependents, left Ireland to become the Irish Brigade in France, Spain, Holland and Austria. Up to a half million military minded Irish joined them. Irish continued their tradition of ferocious close-order combat in Flanders and other areas.
- 1691 **Penal Codes:** The Irish Parliament made up of Protestant landowners, controlled from England, enacted the Penal Laws that deprived Catholics of land ownership, seats in the Irish Parliament (1692) and voting rights (1727). Bishops, priests and Catholic services were banished or suppressed. Catholics could not hold public office, practice law, teach their children or send them abroad and could not make a profit greater than a third of their land rent. Catholics were tried without juries, and bounties were given to informers against them.
- 1700s **Four Altars** is a stone edifice where Catholics attended Mass during forbidden times, on a hill near Edmondstown with altars facing N, S, E, W. Priests said Mass at altar that provided best protection from rain and wind. Approaching soldiers could be seen so Catholics escaped in opposite direction. **Priests Rock** in Attiantagart townland is another edifice where Mass was celebrated in same era. Other outdoor altars are in Cregane and St Attracta's well at Clogher, Ballaghaderreen.

- 1790s **Society of United Irishmen** sought Parliamentary reform from Britain's penal laws, but evolved into a revolutionary organisation. It launched the **Irish Rebellion of 1798** to end British monarchical rule over Ireland but was defeated and marked by British massacre of captured and wounded Irishmen.
- 1790s **Battle of the Diamond:** In 1790s, Protestants known as 'Peep o'Day Boys' looted and destroyed Catholic homes, especially in Armagh. Many Catholics fled for their lives particularly to Sligo, Mayo and Roscommon. At *Battle of the Diamond* in 1795 about 30 Catholics were killed. Some Protestants then formed the *Orange Order* as a secret society, with lodges spreading throughout Ireland, Great Britain and its dominions.
- 1801 **The Act of Union 1800** officially merged Ireland and Great Britain to form the *United Kingdom of Ireland and Great Britain*. Irish strongly opposed the Union during the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 1800 to 1829 **Catholic civil rights** that were removed after siege of Limerick in 1691 are partly restored. Then in 1828 Daniel O'Connell, the "Irish Liberator" gained a seat in the House of Commons (permitted by repeal of the Test Act), and fostered the *Catholic Emancipation Act*, terminating all penal laws.
- 1600s to 1800s **The Viscount Dillons:** After Ireland was lost to Cromwell, Irish landholders who became Protestant were granted huge tracts of land to strengthen their loyalty to England. In 1622 Theobald Dillon of Connaught, became the Viscount of Loughglynn in Roscommon and surrounding areas. Dillons were ruthless absentee landlords who forcibly evicted Irish Catholic landowners.
- 1812 to 1986 **The Dillons of Ballaghaderreen:** These are not the same family as Viscount Dillon's, the Landlords.
- 1812 **Luke Dillon** moved his family to Ballaghaderreen from his farm in Lissine when he could not pay his rent. He also built the original Dillon House on Market Square. Luke died in 1814.
- Thomas Dillon**, second son of Luke, set up a small grocery in Ballaghaderreen town centre then later purchased and expanded it to the adjoining house. He left them to his widowed sister Mrs. Monica Duff who later registered it as *Monica Duff & Co. Ltd.* Monica left the business to her widowed daughter, Mrs. Ann Deane. It became one of the biggest commercial concerns in western Ireland.
- b.1816, d.1866 **John Blake Dillon** was born in Dillon House in Ballaghaderreen in 1816, buried in Dublin in 1866.
- b.1851, d.1927 His son **John Dillon**, born in Dublin in 1851, buried in Dublin in 1927.
- b.1902, d.1986 Grandson **James Mathew Dillon** was born in Dublin in 1902, buried in Ballaghaderreen in 1986.
- All three were Irish activists and politicians who advocated Irish Nationalism and aided tenant farmers as needed in their era. John Blake and son John were elected to the British Parliament whereas James Mathew was a member of the Ireland Dáil. Both John Dillon and James Dillon had visited the United States. Upon retirement, both John Dillon and James Dillon returned to Ballaghaderreen to manage the family business, *Monica Duff & Co., Ltd.*, which closed in 1986.
- b.1800, d.1850 **Charles Strickland**, was the local agent and town planner in County Mayo for Viscount Charles Henry Dillon. He founded *Newtown Dillon* settlement where Mayo farmers could sell their produce within a short walk to its market. The first houses were completed in 1846. It was renamed Charlestown in Charles Strickland's honor. During the potato starvation, Strickland personally labored to get food to tenants on Lord Dillon's estate. He worked with local relief committees to have the Government set up relief depots in East Mayo.
- 1845 to 1852 **Great Potato Starvation.** It was caused when potato blight ravaged Ireland and Europe. The Irish were forced to export of grain and cattle to pay exorbitant rents to absentee landlords in England while Irish went starving. Because of this English mis-rule one third of Ireland population was entirely dependent on the potato for food when blight hit. About 1 million people died and a million more emigrated from Ireland, causing the population to fall about 20% to 25% or more.
- 1855 **The Cathedral Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Nathy** in Ballaghaderreen was commissioned. It is the Catholic cathedral for the *Diocese of Achonry*. St Nathy

was born at Luighne, Sligo and became a disciple of St. Finnian of Clonnard (470 - 549), who made him a bishop. He was founder-abbot of a monastery.

- 1862 **Railway Service** actually began in Ireland during the 1830s, but the *Midland Great Western Railway* that ran from Dublin to Sligo began in 1862.
- 1874 to 1963 A branch line operated from Ballaghaderreen to Kilfree with connections to Dublin and Sligo. This MGWR Branch line was delayed until 1874 for financing.
- 1879 to 1903 **The Land War:** A large conflict erupted when tenant-farmers in Mayo sought to overthrow land control and ownership by absentee landlords. The *Land League* was formed and sought full abolition of landlordism in Ireland. After 3 years of skirmishes, land control by major rural landlords was coming to end. Struggles over rural land rights would continue, however, until the *Land (Purchase) Act 1903* allowed Irish tenant farmers to buy their land with UK government loans.
- 1898 A **Co Mayo sector** including Ballaghaderreen and a 5 mile sector east and west of it was transferred to Co Roscommon by the British.
- 1908 **Electric Power** extended to Ballaghaderreen. By 1965 80% of rural Ireland was connected to the grid.
- 1914 **World War I:** Most Irish served in Irish Brigades in British Expeditionary Forces that fought in France and also in Gallipoli, Salonika and Macedonia campaigns. These Brigades had dreadful casualties, about 49,400 Irish died during the battles. 37 Victoria crosses were awarded to Irish soldiers.
- 1916 **The Easter Rising** was an Ireland insurrection during Easter Week, 1916. Conflicts were primarily in Dublin and Co Meath. 1,800 were sent to British Internment camps and 70 leaders were sentenced to death and 15 executed over a two week period. This caused extreme public reaction and great sympathy to Irish rebels and their families. Less than two years later, the Irish *Sinn Féin* (rebel) party won 73 seats in English Parliament in 1918.
- 1919-1921 **Irish War of Independence:** Elected members of *Sinn Féin* established the Irish Republic. The British government refused to accept its legitimacy. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) fought the British forces in Ireland. Both sides agreed to a "truce" in July 1921 and a "treaty" in December 1921. Twenty six counties became the *Irish Free State*, but 6 northern counties remained in the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland.
- September 1920 **Ballaghaderreen** experienced a sacking by the Black and Tans in September 1920, most notably the burning down of Flannery's Bar. It was a reprisal for an ambush by the IRA on a RIC patrol at Ratra Crossroads the night before. Around the same time they burned to the ground the town of Ballinagar 10 miles from Ballaghaderreen. The Black and Tans totaled 5,000 hardened English WWI soldiers sent to Ireland by Winston Churchill to fight the IRA.
- 1922-1923 **Irish Civil War:** The Treaty of 1921 held the *Irish Free State* as an autonomous dominion of Britain, similar to Canada and Australia. Irish Nationalists who supported the *Irish Free State* fought against Irish Republicans who believed the Treaty represented betrayal of an Irish Republic. It was so vicious and bitter that the civil war may have claimed more lives than the War of Independence. In May 1923 the civil war ended when new Republican leaders called for a laying down of arms.
- 1937 **A New constitution** was passed by the *Irish Free State* whereby the Oath of Allegiance to Britain was removed.
- 1938 to 1945 **Dr Douglas Hyde** served as first President of Ireland. He was an Irish scholar and Irish language activist who founded the Gaelic League, a most-influential cultural organisation in Ireland. Hyde was born in Frenchpark in County Roscommon in 1860 and died in Dublin in 1949, age 89. Dr Hyde was

already well renowned for preservation of Irish culture, music, dances, and language when he visited Ballaghaderreen in 1906 and in 1912.

- 1939 to 1945 **In World War II:** Prime Minister deValera as leader of Irish government decided Ireland would be Friendly Neutral. Yet 70,000 Ireland citizens joined the British Armed Forces and 200,000 migrated to England to help in the war economy. Irish soldiers won about 780 decorations including 8 Victoria Crosses.
- 1948 **Republic of Ireland:** An act was passed in the Dáil in November 1948 that declared ‘The State that exists under the 1937 Constitution is a Republic...’
- 1968 **The Troubles in Northern Ireland** began during Catholic civil rights marches in Tyrone and Derry when they were viciously attacked by Police and Loyalists. The *National Ireland Civil Rights Association*, which supported the Catholic minority, started marches, pickets, sit-ins and protests to pressure the Government of Northern Ireland to grant demands for these civil rights. The Roman Catholic minority community had long suffered from discrimination in jobs, housing and politics under the Ulster Unionist Party and the Protestants.
- 1972 **Bloody Sunday** occurred during a *Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association* march in Derry, Northern Ireland. Twenty seven unarmed civil rights protesters and bystanders were shot (14 killed) (5 shot in the back) by soldiers of the British Army. Two were injured when run down by Army vehicles.
- 1974 **Dublin and Monaghan bombings:** *The Troubles* in Northern Ireland involving Protestants and Catholics, and British security forces, extended to Ireland when the Ulster Volunteer Force exploded three bombs in Dublin and one in Monaghan, killing 33 civilians and wounding 300.
- 1981 **Hunger Strikers:** Twenty three Irish republican prisoners in Northern Ireland participated in a hunger strike at varying times between March 1 and October 3, 1981. Ten prisoners died from starvation. The strike was called off when five demands by prisoners were met by the British Government. Protests began 5 years earlier when the British Government withdrew special category status for convicted paramilitary prisoners.
- 1998 **Good Friday Agreement** in Belfast was signed by the Governments and some political parties in Northern Ireland, Britain and Ireland. It recognized that majority of people of Northern Ireland wished to remain part of the United Kingdom, and both British and Irish governments must implement that choice. Constitutional amendments were made as needed. A North-South council and an Irish-British council were established to consult, co-operate and take action on issues of mutual interest. Most issues surrounding *The Troubles* were resolved by negotiation.
- 1973 **Ireland Joined the European Union.** The EU made a major contribution to Ireland’s economic and social development since joining the common market in 1973. Ireland (Éire) experienced an historic transformation of its economy, its infrastructure and phenomenal jobs growth. The factors contributing to this include increased investment and trade. Ireland transformed itself from an agricultural society into a modern, technologically advanced Celtic Tiger economy.
- 2002 **Euro** notes and coins replaced the Punt (Irish pound).