

CHAPTER 1

ESTATE RECORDS AND THE MAKING OF THE IRISH LANDSCAPE: AN EXAMPLE FROM COUNTY TIPPERARY

WILLIAM J. SMYTH

First published in *Irish Geography* (1976), 9(1), 29-49.

Introduction

Some of the better estate maps of 18th-century Ireland – especially those produced by the French school of land-surveyors – have recently received welcome attention from a number of Irish geographers.¹ There are extensive areas of 18th and of early 19th-century Ireland, however, which are either not covered, or only poorly served, in relation to such rich cartographic source-materials. As Andrews has noted 'most Irish land-surveyors of the pre-Ordnance period concentrated on simple outline maps of tenement boundaries and were both niggardly and arbitrary in their choice of interior detail.'² Since maps do constitute the most important single body of evidence for the historical geographer, his task is further frustrated in the Irish context by the loss of quite a number of estate map collections which seem to have disappeared without trace. The objective of this paper, therefore, is simply to draw geographers' attention to the diverse range of estate documentary material – other than estate maps – which can either provide important clues towards the explanation of territorial patterns illustrated on contemporary estate atlases or which – as in this example – can be used in the absence of such maps to build up at least a general picture of the evolution of the rural landscape.

The most important elements in a good collection of such estate records include account books, rentals, estate correspondence (especially between landlord and agent), valuation surveys, deeds and leases. As yet there is insufficient information available to indicate how widespread such source materials are for the country as a whole; the picture is further complicated by the high mortality rate suffered by these records over this century. A quick survey of the estates sections of *Hayes's Manuscript sources for the study of the history of Irish civilisation*,³ reports on materials in private collections,⁴ and work by a number of economic historians⁵, however,

¹ See especially J. H. Andrews, 'The French school of Dublin land surveyors', *Ir. Geogr.*, 5 (4), 1967, 275-292; A.A. Horner, 'Cartouches and vignettes on the Kildare estate maps of John Rocque' *Quart. Bull. Irish Georgian Soc.*, 14 (4), 57-76.

² J. H. Andrews, 'Changes in the rural landscape of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland: an example from County Waterford', a paper presented at the I.B.G. conference, Belfast, 1970. See *Area*, I, 1970, 55-56 for a summary of the text.

³ R. J. Hayes, *Manuscript sources for the study of the history of Irish civilisation*, 11 volumes, Boston, 1965.

⁴ *National Library reports on private collections*, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

gives some suggestion of the range of materials available. However varied, uneven and fragmentary – and despite the temporal and distributional gaps – there is little doubt but that a sufficient body of estate materials has survived to provide the geographer with valuable insights into the forces which have shaped the cultural landscapes of different regions in the landlord era. As a tentative generalisation, one could suggest that the larger estates (and not necessarily those of resident proprietors only) which maintained a fair degree of continuity over time and space should have preserved a fuller range of estate source-materials. Indeed, for such large landholding entities as the Lismore Devonshire estate,⁶ the Coolattin Fitzwilliam lands⁷ and the Hillsborough Downshire estates,⁸ a great deal of material has survived. On the other hand, Dickson and Donnelly⁹ have highlighted the rich yet uneven (and sometimes inaccessible) range of materials that have survived at the county level – in this instance for 18th and 19th-century Cork. The actual survival of a very good collection of estate papers, however, may indicate superior estate administration; such sources may therefore not always provide a representative picture of conditions over a wider region. Even the best estate records are also limited in that they detail the needs, perceptions and activities of a ruling elite. They provide a view of the landscape from the windows of the Big House – yet such a perspective may provide a useful antidote to an over-emphasis on 'the little tradition' of the ordinary countryman.

The sample area

The area under consideration comprises the modern parish of Clogheen-Burncourt – practically coterminous with the old civil parish of Shanrahan – in south-western Tipperary. Located between the Galtee and Knockmealdown ranges to the north and south respectively, the parish can be described as comprising 'lowland' townlands with richer limestone soils and generally poorer 'mountain' townlands located upon or bordering on the Old Red Sandstone areas. As Figure 1 suggests, there appears to have been a striking stability in the distribution and size of estates in this part of Co. Tipperary between the mid-17th and the mid-19th century. The Cahir Butler and Fenton (later Kingston) estates did remain for the most part intact but there was no such direct continuity between the early 17th century-created Everard estate and that of Viscount Lismore (O'Callaghan) of the Shanbally estate. The expansion of the O'Callaghan lands to incorporate the greater part of the original

⁵ See in particular, J. S. Donnelly, 'The land and people of nineteenth century Cork,' *Studies in Irish history*, second series, Vol. 9, London, 1975; ; W. H. Crawford, 'Landlord-tenant relations in Ulster 1609-1820', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 2, 1975, 5-21.

⁶ Andrews, *op. cit.*, 1970, 3.

⁷ See, for example, MSS. 4946, 6001-6051, 6064-6067 and 8815 in National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

⁸ W. A. Maguire, *The Downshire estates in Ireland 1801-45*, Oxford, 1972; W. A. Maguire (ed), *Letters of a great Irish landlord, 1809-45*, Belfast, H.M.S.O., 1974.

⁹ D. Dickson, 'County Cork: two research experiences. I. The eighteenth century' and J. S. Donnelly, 'II. The nineteenth century', *Irish Archives Bulletin*, 2 (1), 1972, 58-66.

Everard estate was, as Fig. 2 indicates, a protracted affair. Legal astuteness, lucrative marriages, mercantile acumen and parliamentary representation (the latter based on the old Everard borough of Fethard) during the first half of the 18th century, combined with later strategic marital alliances with leading national families such as the Ponsonbys and Ormonde Butlers, led to the O'Callaghans becoming one of the leading landowners in Co. Tipperary by the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁰

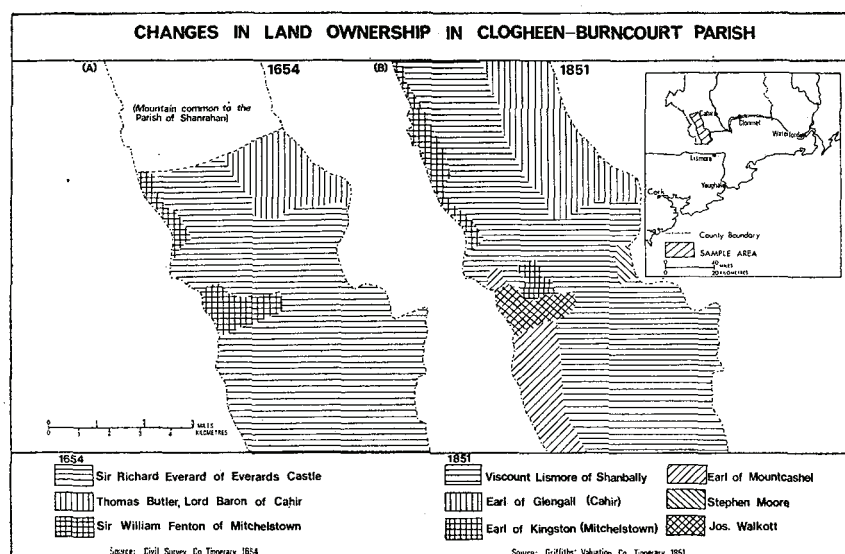
Only a few rentals and deeds of the Kingston estate are at present readily available, and the vast Cahir estate records have not as yet been made accessible to the research student, if indeed they still survive. Consequently the main thrust of this paper will focus on the fragmentary remains of the Shanbally estate papers. When the Land Commission purchased Shanbally demesne in the 1950s some estate records were destroyed *in situ*, while much of the remainder apparently ended up in a waste-paper factory. A local historian salvaged two trunks of manuscript materials¹¹. This is all that now appears to have survived of the vast corpus of O'Callaghan estate records, despite the fact that in a description of Shanbally estate office papers in the late 1940s, Ainsworth refers to rentals and accounts stretching back to 1736 and a book of estate maps compiled in 1801-2.¹² Included in the residue today are: i) a number of eighteenth century account books for 1761-74, 1775-81, 1786-98 and an almost complete set of 19th-century account books from 1825; ii) rentals for 1761-66, 1779-84, 1813 and a complete record from 1818 onwards; iii) a small number of 18th-century, and a very comprehensive number of 19th-century, tenant leases; iv) landlord letters to the agent for 1827-28 and 1834-39 and summaries of the agents' correspondence for 1811-39, 1850-61 and 1884-91; and v) other miscellaneous material including a few mid-18th-century townland map surveys, wage books, tithe applotment books and timber, sheep and cattle accounts.

¹⁰ The history of the growth of this estate can be traced by analysis of material in the Registry of Deeds, Dublin. For a general survey of the importance of this institution as a source area for Irish studies see P. B. Phair, 'Guide to the Registry of Deeds', *Analecta Hibernica*, 23, 1966, 257-76.

¹¹ These materials are now held by Mr Tim Looney, Pearse St, Cahir, Co. Tipperary. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to developments on the Shanbally estate are from this residual collection, recently catalogued by the Irish Manuscripts Commission. My very sincere thanks to Mr Looney for preserving this material, for allowing me to inspect it over a lengthy period and also for his (and his wife's) many helpful comments in interpreting specific passages. My thanks also to Mr John Fleming, Clogheen for his assistance in this sphere.

¹² J. F. Ainsworth, 'Report on the Shanbally estate office papers, Clogheen, Co. Tipperary', *National Library report on private collections*, No. 343. One item was acquired for the National Library: *Rent ledger, Shanbally, Co. Tipperary* MS. 5670.

Figure 1.

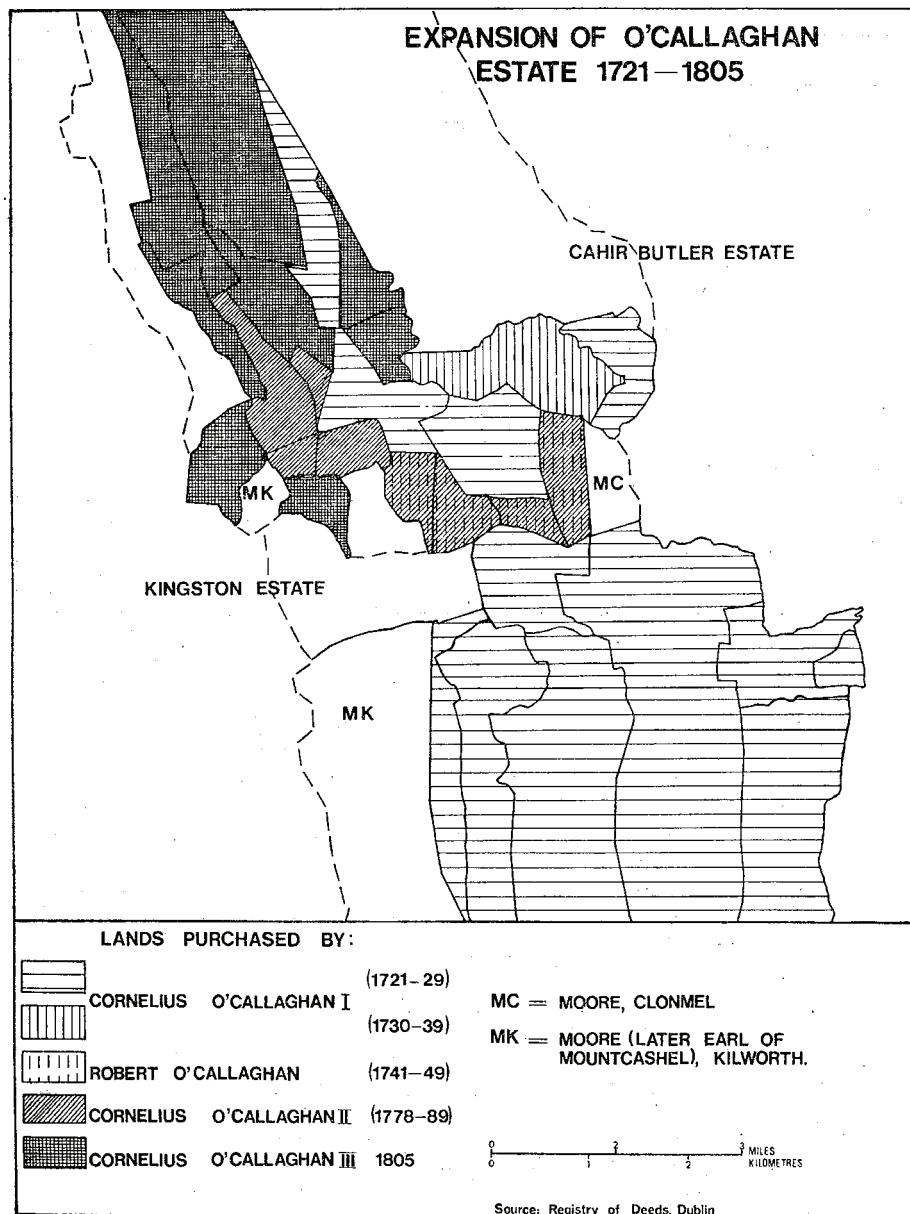


In many ways the account books and the small collection of estate correspondence are by far the most valuable and most interesting documentary sources. The account books generally comprise a day-by-day, or at least a week-by-week, record of estate income and expenditure, ranging from details of the pennies paid to the women weeding the cornfields in the 1780s to the annual rental income of £25,000 in the 1820s. The account books include payments of a series of crown rents and church tithes, monetary exchanges with other landowners in relation to the purchase, mortgaging and renting of lands, wages paid and tasks performed by both regular and temporary workers in addition to the activities of specialist employees such as master-builders and land-surveyors. Details of incoming rents being paid in cash, in kind or work days on or for the demesne (or combinations thereof) are carefully noted. The account books also reveal the surviving feudal duties of tenants, details of the demesne farm economy, costs of materials for new buildings, enclosures, plantations and urban development and contracts with local, regional, national, and cross-channel merchants - in short, as full a description of most aspects of the estate economy and society from the mid-eighteenth century onwards as one might wish for.

The estate agents' letters are especially valuable in high-lighting the character and activities of the estate administration. Changing marketing conditions are regularly noted as is the need for different strategies in the management and development of the demesne, the estate and its tenantry, thus providing a host of anecdotes about the continuous battle-of-wits between the countryman and an agent intimately aware of most goings-on on the estate. The landlord's letters often reinforce the agent's perspectives on local matters, demonstrating in this sample an uncanny awareness of both the estate and demesne economies. The landlord

frequently provides detailed instructions both about marketing timber and cattle, and about problems of estate development and leasing. These letters provide rich insights into the reactions of the ruling elite to changing political and economic conditions at both national and imperial levels as well as many details of family problems and expenses. In addition, rentals, valuations, leases and deeds are rich sources of data for the analysis of changing patterns of landholdings, settlements, terms of tenure and rent movements.

Figure 2.



For the historical geographer with adequate patience (and eyesight) to wade through the details, such records raise a host of questions relating to the evolution of townland and other landholding units, the nature of the estate and demesne economies, the social and spatial structure of the occupying tenantry, and the associated evolution of rural settlement and farmholdings. These sources also provide a greater understanding of changing patterns of trade and communications, processes of urban growth, the geography of the land-market, the mean-information field of the estate bureaucracy, related processes of agricultural innovation and the consequences of changing relationships between the estate and local and central government. And unlike the static cross-sectional view that some other sources provide, here one encounters a moving film of events, providing a dynamic perspective on many landscape changes. Given the wealth of detail, the analysis of such sources – especially of the better account-books – raises important questions of methodology. New techniques such as content analysis may be relevant here, but for the purpose of this study, emphasis is placed on what appeared from a general inspection of the data sources to be most important.

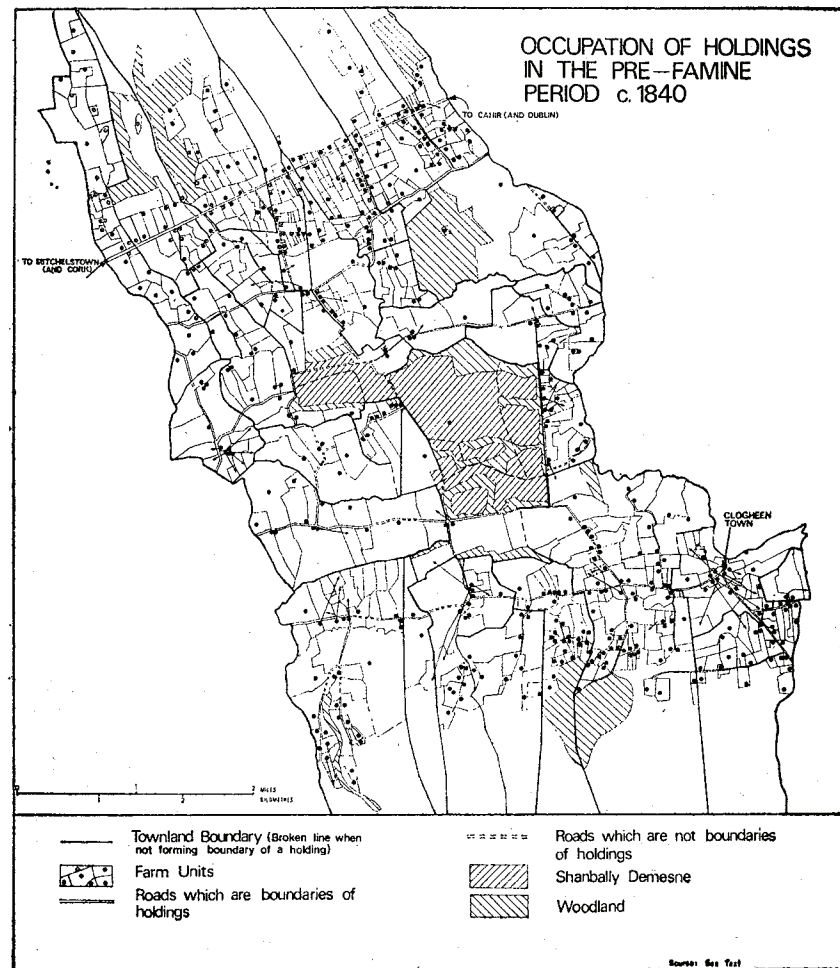
Figure 3 provides us with a useful benchmark from which to explore the estate records for clues to an understanding of some of the major processes which shaped this mid-nineteenth-century landscape. This map represents a composite picture of the pre-Famine landscape, using the 1835 Tithe Applotment books, the 1839-41 Ordnance Survey six-inch map, and the earliest of Griffith's valuation surveys for 1847. It needs to be stressed that the 1841 O.S. map must be seen as portraying the culmination of a phenomenal expansion in the population over the previous half-century. As Andrews has emphasised, one needs to try and clear away some of the debris of this demographic explosion so as to reveal the effects of earlier and perhaps more stable landscapemaking processes.¹³ The estate records are obviously a crucial source in such an endeavour. They should also be of assistance in assessing the degree to which the landlord and his administrators were able effectively to control the making of the landscape against the background of other powerful economic and demographic pressures.

Scrutiny of estate records not only points out their value as sources *per se*, but also illustrates the need for the geographer to be sensitive to both short-term and long-term periodicities in the evolution of the landscape. Given the source-material available for this study area, one can distinguish three broad phases between c. 1730 and the Famine era. The first period up to c.1775. can be interpreted as a critical formative phase in the making of the modern landscape in this area. From the perspective of the Big House, we may term this phase as one of *initiation*, while from the perspective of the ordinary peasantry it may be seen as one of reorganisation and displacement. A second, relatively brief phase, but one

¹³ Andrews, *op. cit.*, 1970, I.

with enormous demographic and landscape consequence, is represented by the economic boom period between c.1775 and 1815. From the landlord's point of view this is a phase of *elaboration* and direct involvement in landscape change, while beyond the walls and hedges of the demesne it is a period of intensification of land use, rapid increases in the number of farm holdings and cottier settlements, and a related demographic explosion. From 1815 onwards, we note a transition phase – one of *reorientation* and farm amalgamation on the part of the landlord, and one of increasing competition between proliferating tenant-farmers for that basic resource, land. This final phase thus set in motion processes of landscape reorganisation which the crisis of the Famine was to accelerate rather than initiate.

Figure 3.



The initiation phase c. 1730-c.1775

One can begin the story of landscape development in the study area about 1730 for a number of reasons. As Cullen has demonstrated, the 1730s witnessed the beginning of a very significant expansion in the

pastoral sector of the economy¹⁴. The demand for wool and beef, bacon and butter provisions increased enormously, thus ushering in a greater emphasis on extensive pastoralist farming. This general date also marked the end of the passing of a series of Acts of Parliament over the period 1716 to 1732 dealing with regulations relating to enclosure and land reclamation¹⁵. Finally, for the survey area, the 1730s represent the beginning of full-time residence on the part of the O'Callaghan landlord family.

Given their wealth, extensive county and national connections, and the related ability to respond to new ideas and fashions, it is perhaps not surprising that one of the first major impacts of this family on the landscape involved the building of a new mansion and the creation of a small demesne of c.600 st. acres. Today the shadowy foundations of the 820 sq. ft. mansion – comprising a central block linked to twin pavilions and built not later than 1735-41 (possibly using Castletown House as a prototype) – only surfaces under dry summer conditions. Early accounts, however, testify to its scale and elegance and there are regular annual entries relating to the cleaning of 26 chimneys. Vallancey's military map for 1782 pinpoints its location, fronting a number of straight tree-lined avenues.¹⁶ The shape and character of the demesne is suggested in Figure 4 with its regular geometric pattern of fields, avenues and roads, ignoring, as had the early Carton demesne, the contours of the landscape.¹⁷ The natural environment was thus subjugated to the art of the designer, so typical of the fashion of this period.

The specific location of the house and demesne is also worth noting. While the O'Callaghans were to purchase the truncated Everard estate (re-granted to the latter family after the Restoration), they failed initially to purchase the old Everard base at modern Burncourt. The new demesne was located in the contiguous townland of Shanbally – on the site of a probable late medieval village which may have focused on a church, mill and forge.¹⁸ The wide approaching avenue to the south led

¹⁴ L. M. Cullen, *An economic history of Ireland since 1660*, London, 1972, 50-99.

¹⁵ Viscount Mountnorres, *Impartial Reflections on the Present Crisis; Comprised in Four Essays*, London, 1796. See *Irish Statutes* for reign of Anne, George I and II, especially Vol. 4, Ch. 5, 1721, 21-26, in 'an Act to oblige proprietors and tenants of neighbouring lands to make fences between their several lands and holdings', and Ch. 9, 1731, 512-515, 'An Act to encourage the improvement of barren and waste land and bogs and planting of timber trees and orchards'. See also other earlier acts of 1703, 1708, and 1712 'for encouraging and preserving trees' and later acts about treeplanting and fencing for 1735, 1766, 1771-2 and 1783-4.

¹⁶ C. Vallancey, *A military survey of the south part of Ireland, Part 2*, 1782, in British Library, Map Library Division, M.51, 31-2. See also accompanying report, p. 8. For a general survey of Vallancey's mapping activities in Ireland, see J.H. Andrews, 'Charles Vallancey and the map of Ireland', *Geogr. J.*, 132, 1966, 48-61.

¹⁷ A.A. Horner, 'Carton, Co. Kildare - a case study of the making of an Irish demesne', *Quart. Bull. Irish Georgian Soc.*, 18 (2 & 3), 1975, 45-103.

¹⁸ R.C. Simington (ed), *The Civil Survey A. D. 1654-56 for County Tipperary*, Dublin, 1931, 1, 373-74.

into an extensive area called 'the Park' -probably the early 17th-century deer-park granted to, and created by, the Fenton family.¹⁹ The latter area was occupied by a branch of the Everard family in the early 18th century, but was let in the 1760s to an extensive grazier farmer. An earlier 1741 lease mentions the building of a park wall around what was probably part of the old deer-park. In this age of improvement it is likewise not surprising to find a 1752 survey of part of the demesne farm itself, confirming that 5200 barrels of roche lime had been spread on an area of 140 st. acres in one year in fields which ranged in size from 33 to 7 st. acres. One workman spent 230 days in 1761-2 clipping and shearing hedges on this demesne, while a mason spent 134 days in the same year repairing the walls of 'the paddock' in an adjoining townland.

Both these workmen belong to an interesting group of small-holders from a townland directly north of the landlord's demesne (and also contiguous to the old Everard mansion at Burncourt). Other members of this group were receiving payments for 500-600 days work on the demesne over a two-year period in the 1760s. The tenants of this townland are always classified in a distinctive fashion in the account books: their rent was computed collectively; accounts of rental arrears on the estate are always exclusive of this group, while other special allowances are made to what were sometimes termed 'the tradesmen and labourers of Toorbeg' or 'Ballybocht' as the townland was sometimes called. We may well have in this example the survival of a serflike group living in a specific townland and rendering heavy labour services to the demesne. It is only in the early 19th century, when two cottier settlements for estate employees were established around the new demesne, that the account books become silent about this specific townland group.

This example, however, of what appears to be a late medieval survival, may have been a relatively rare phenomenon by 1760. There is certainly no evidence to support the view that the three or four small nucleated 'villages,' which are suggested in the mid-17th-century Civil Survey – and which appear to have been centred on castles and/or churches and mills – had survived.²⁰ The destruction of the older landowning patterns, the dominance of a commercialised pastoral economy, and the related need for farm reorganisation and enclosure, had all made redundant the functions of these old settlement foci. The dominance of sheep and black cattle on the bigger farm entities of the area can possibly be inferred from the demesne farm accounts which show 500-700 fleeces of wool being sold to a Clogheen town woolcomber in the 1750s, while a Quaker woollen manufacturer in the same town received 115 stone of wool from the demesne farm in 1772. The development of the pastoral sector of the economy at this period is above all epitomised by the granting of three

¹⁹ *Index to Calendar Patent Rolls James I*, Pat.14 & 16, 309, 361-63.

²⁰ Simington, *op. cit.*, 1931, 373-74.

new annual fairs to the landlord in 1745²¹ on a site to the east of the demesne. In 1758 two additional annual fairs were granted to the two already existing in Clogheen town since its early 17th-century foundation. Travellers' descriptions in 1748 also note the expansion and development of this small O'Callaghan-owned town. Clogheen is then described as a neat town 'with a very pretty market place not quite finished'.²² In his intended history of Co. Tipperary for the 1750s, Charles Smith was also impressed with Clogheen, its church, stone bridge and two good inns, and he observed that it was 'of late much improved by its landlord Counsellor Callaghan who has encouraged artificers particularly manufacturers of friezes and rateens to settle there'.²³ Apart from its two wool-combing establishments, the account books showed that Clogheen town also certainly contained at least one tannery in the mid-18th century. It also seems significant that the tenant of the manor grain mill received compensation from the landlord in the early 1760s for introducing new factory wheels from Dublin. The fragmentary evidence available thus points to the direct involvement and encouragement by the landlord of both farm production for a market and of industrial developments fuelled by pastoral concerns.

Leases and deeds of the head-tenants during this period also point to the initiation – or more likely the continuation – of processes aimed at the establishment of large compact grazier farm units. Deeds from the adjoining Kingston estate for the early decades of the 18th century were requiring new head-tenants 'to fence in, as the Acts of Parliament directed and required, all outbounds on the premises',²⁴ and to build within seven to ten years rather large dwelling houses one-and-a half stories high, complete with stone chimneys. Three English acres of land were to be enclosed contiguous to these houses with a double ditch set with whitethorn; this land was to be planted with good fruit trees. A 1727 deed requires the tenant 'to quicksett all the ditches that shall be made or raised thereon during the said term'.²⁵ Similarly, on the O'Callaghan estate in the late 1730s, and more especially in the 1740s, a significant number of leases were granted to a number of headtenants (or middlemen, as they came to be known). This group thus came to occupy one or more townlands under tenancies of three lives or three lives renewable. Such leases required the incoming head tenant – in one example on a unit of 640 st. acres – to build a double ditch well-quickened and planted with ash on the outbounds. On the adjoining townland, at the foot of the Knockmealdown Mountains, rent allowances were to be granted in consideration of 'the laying out the same yearly by improving and

²¹ 'Fairs and markets 1338-1773', *Records of the Rolls*, 14, 139, Public Record Office, Dublin.

²² 'A tour through Ireland by two English Gentlemen', J. *Waterford and South East of Ireland Archaeological Soc*, 7, 1901, 41, (originally published, Dublin 1748).

²³ C. Smith, *A history of counties Limerick, Clare and Tipperary*, MSS 24-G-9, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 278.

²⁴ *Registry of Deeds*, 1724, Book 54, 35. See also 1719, Book 45, 67-71.

²⁵ *Registry of Deeds*, 1727, Book 54, 384.

bringing in the said lands²⁶. A penal rent of double the rate (then 6/-per Irish or plantation acre) was to be imposed if these conditions – and others forbidding subletting without the landlord's permission – were not fulfilled. Large dwelling houses surrounded by 3 to 5 acre orchards together with malt houses, barns and stables were also required to be built. The legacy of these rules has survived in a number of instances today for some substantial two-storey farm houses of a distinctive architectural style can still be found in a small number of townlands and these were occupied by some local middlemen in the 18th century. Many of these farms also survived to form the cores of the largest farm holdings both in the mid-nineteenth century and at the present day. It is also perhaps worth noting that the landlord in this formative period is often attracting in a new group of Protestant head-tenants to develop certain townlands. This new group, often with mercantile connections in Clonmel and elsewhere, displaced what appear from early 18th-century deeds to be predominantly native Catholic middlemen – the latter possibly descendants of a late medieval system of estate administration. There is also a uniquely high conversion rate by 15 couples, mainly farmers, to the Established Church in Clogheen in 1747 which suggests that specific local economic and institutional factors are operative.²⁷ On the other hand it should also be noted that quite a number of substantial Catholic tenant farms were to survive right through the 18th century.

A number of surviving townland surveys from the estate also emphasise the importance of the period 1730 to 1760 in the development of the rural landscape. A 1740 map survey illustrates three clearly defined and bounded farm-units – averaging 64 st. acres in size – 'formerly in the possession of Bourk, Doyle and Davoren' (three local family names) – now held by two incoming middlemen/farmers. In this case it is not clear if the compact units were already in existence or actually created c. 1740. This example also suggests that reorganisation might involve the break-up of existing landholding arrangements, and often the displacement of both substantial and smaller farmers. Already in 1717/18 three smallholders are accused of driving the cattle of the descendant of a Cromwellian grantee from a former townland common. That enclosure was already proceeding apace onto formerly unenclosed mountain lands has already been indicated. A fragment of a letter which survives from the early 1750s reinforces this view. 'Due to the violence of the weather' two surveyor brothers, snug in the Globe Inn at Clogheen, direct a letter to the landlord requesting further instructions on how to lay out certain lands. Already certain farms have been sub-divided into ^{3/4} Irish or plantation acres, but 227 Irish acres of 'Anglesey's Mountain' were still to be laid out and divided. This latter townland, now known as Mountanglesby, was leased in 1754 to a Protestant middleman whose

²⁶ *Registry of Deeds*, 1747, Book 100, 541.

²⁷ 'Certificates of Conformity, 1701-1782.' *Lodge MSS.*, Public Record Office, Dublin. My thanks to Professor L. M. Cullen for drawing my attention to this source.

corn was to be burnt and fences levelled in the Whiteboy disturbances some years later.²⁸

These famous agrarian disturbances, which may have originated from this specific zone, may thus represent the co-ordinated reaction both of displaced substantial native farmers (and native middlemen?) and more especially smaller holders, now deprived of access to a wide range of former communally-held resources either within townlands or on the former common grazing lands on the mountain edges which were now being enclosed. Feuding is also characteristic between adjoining landlords at this period, as the value of the mountain commons are enhanced in this pastoralist phase. Such conflicts call into play the evidence of the Irish-speaking monoglots, consulted in settling disputes about old townland boundaries on the mountains and about the associated rights to turbary, grazing and water resources. Such conflicts were to be resumed in the later 18th and early 19th century as the landlord's timber plantations started creeping up the mountain sides and as the exploding rural population spilled over into the marginal moorland areas.

In summary then by the 1770s the skeletal framework of the modern landscape of compact enclosed individual farms, with still large fields geared to pastoral pursuits, was generally established. Vallancey's stylistic depiction of the field system for the area supports this view.²⁹ However, it is also clear from the amount of oats coming into the demesne in part-payment for rent, that a tillage tradition was still characteristic, especially amongst the surviving small holding subtenants. There is also evidence for the existence of a number of partnership farms in the lowlands, and more especially in certain peripheral townlands. While we have few clues to the settlement forms associated with such landholding arrangements, two surviving townland maps of partnership farms in the early 19th century demonstrate that such an arrangement need not involve a clustered settlement. It is also clear that the mainly long-established townland boundaries – now and again fragmented by very regular north-south Cromwellian land-divisions – acted as the frames within which the farm and field system was created. In no instance, even at the peak of population in the mid-nineteenth century, did farm boundaries cross these basic divides. It should also be noted that whereas this area to-day contains 40 townlands, a 1639 patent describes over 300 landholding parcels of various kinds of land for this same area.³⁰ It is possible that many of these sub-townland units of pre-Cromwellian date were also adapted and absorbed into the enclosure pattern associated with the elaboration of the farm and field structures. One might also speculate on other underlying patterns which helped shape the 18th-century landscape, but further analysis is severely hampered by the absence of documentary material relating to the activities of the 8/9 resident middlemen who effectively controlled the majority of townlands for the greater part of

²⁸ W. P. Burke, *History of Clonmel*, Waterford, 1907, 368-70.

²⁹ Vallancey, *op. cit.*

³⁰ *Calendar of Patent Rolls Charles I*, Vol. 6.

the 18th century. The specific contributions of this group, in addition to the role of other substantial tenant farmers, needs to be researched before a more complete picture of this formative phase can be written.

The phase of elaboration c. 1775-c.1815

The Hearth Money Records for Co. Tipperary in 1665-1667 suggest that the population of the parish of Shanrahan was then about 1800.³¹ By 1766 the parish is estimated to have contained 23 Protestant and 428 Catholic families, suggesting a population in the region of 2400.³² The greater commercialisation of agriculture and some in-migration thus resulted in a population increase of about 33% over this hundred years. In comparison with this second phase, however, the stabilising role of a more extensive pastoral economy, more akin to the present day economic regime, made for relative stability in population numbers. The account books for 1761-1774 still retain the flavour of a more leisurely age with the shadows of the later Middle Ages now and again falling across the documents. By 1775, however, a second wave of transformation seems to roll across the landscape. Again the entry of new blood with the next generation of the landlord family taking over (after intermarrying with the prestigious Ponsonby family) coincides with the spread of a more intensive tillage economy in what still remained a mixed farming zone. While the demesne economy (and presumably that of surrounding larger farms) still retained its share of sheep, milch cows and fat cattle, the first large-scale dealing in grain production emerges in 1777, with 1407 stone of wheat being delivered to Moore's mill at Marlfield near Clonmel. Grain production on the demesne had doubled by 1786 when large-scale grain milling came to Clogheen town, and the wool-combers began to fade from the scene. The dairying tradition was also intensified as casks of butter are regularly transported to Clonmel, and pigs become more conspicuous in sales and markets.

Thus began this relatively brief but intensive dairying/tillage boom which had such immense landscape and demographic consequences. The wealth accumulated by the landlord at this time is symbolised in the landscape both by the creation of a new much enlarged demesne and a new mansion. The rentals show that the landlord town of Clogheen was to expand rapidly in the 1780s and 1790s; a new group of millers and

³¹ T. Laffan, *Tipperary's families: being the Hearth Money Records for 1665-6-7*, Dublin 1911. The population was estimated by assuming that Hearth Money records were defective by 50% to 1785 and by using a multiplier of 5.5 on the enumerated 233 households. See K. H. Connell, 'The population of Ireland in the 18th century.' *Economic History Rev.*, 16, 1946, 111-124 for a detailed analysis of household sizes for this period.

³² W.H. Rennison, *Succession list of the bishops, cathedral and parochial clergy of the dioceses of Waterford and Lismore*, Waterford, 1920. For a number of parishes (but not that of Shanrahan) this survey enumerates both households and total population; on this basis, it was computed that the mean size of the Catholic household was 4.8 and that of the Protestant, 3.3. This would give a total parish population of c. 2130 but it was felt that it would be more realistic to utilise K. H. Connell's nationally based multiplier of 5.5 for this period.

shopkeepers emerges; new houses are built, the streets enlarged and newly paved; a new market house is built; detached Georgian houses and plantations come to surround the town; the bridges are improved and lanes are extended to house the expanding labourer section in the town. The buoyancy of this period is also reflected in the emergence of a really powerful estate bureaucracy – and a much more efficiently managed estate economy. Nurserymen, foresters, a huntsman, masterbuilders, land-surveyors and literally dozens of artisans dominated by masons, stonecutters, quarrymen, brickburners, slaters, carpenters and others loom large in the account books. There is a noticeable expansion in the number of hired labourers (living on 'potato ground' along road edges) who now supplement the much enlarged permanent labour force on the demesne. Such increases reflect both the intensification of the agricultural economy and the labour inputs needed to implement the wide ranging material changes in both the landscapes of town and countryside. A number of small farmers' wives also emerge in the accounts, some of them still spinning wool (a long established tradition in the area) while others assist the men in the tillage fields. These men were also busy at lime-burning, road-making and turf-cutting. On the mountain edges, woodkeepers, shepherds, herdsmen and gamekeepers add to the teeming diversity of the estate culture.

The power and prestige of the O'Callaghan landlord family was now approaching its peak (Cornelius O'Callaghan was created a baron in 1785 and his son was made a Viscount in 1806) and this is epitomised by the creation of a new demesne of 1,200 acres, much of which was to envelop the old deer park area. This development took place in two stages. As Horner also discovered for the Carton demesne,³³ the development and enlarging of the new Shanbally demesne was hampered and delayed by tenurial restrictions. From 1774-79 the northern half of the new demesne was gradually embellished in the naturalistic fashion of the period. It was not until after 1779 that expansion could occur in the area to the south and east – when either leases ended or land was re-purchased from the previous landlord's widow. Former compact farm units in these areas were re-occupied; one large tenant farmer was resettled on a large farm elsewhere on the estate while other small holders were partially compensated and/or resettled in some peripheral townlands. Displacement, however, resulted in some prosecutions relating to the levelling of walls and encroachment on the new demesne plantations. The account books detail this thorough-going reorganisation of the reconstituted core of the estate; cabins are knocked, old ditches levelled, while digging and trenching for new fences, walls, orchards, woodlands, windbreaks, gardens and a nursery became a characteristic feature for at least two decades. Again as in Carton,³⁴ the move from the old demesne is away from a slightly lower and more flat elevation to a rolling

³³ A.A. Horner, 'Land transactions and the making of Carton demesne', *Kildare Archaeological Soc*, 15 (4), 1974, 387-96.

³⁴ Horner, *op. cit.*, 1975, 62-64.

landscape with magnificent views of the mountains to the north and the south. New farmyard buildings were completed with the granary occupying the central position in the complex. Finally in the 1790s the neo-classical house, later known as Shanbally Castle, is built. The old demesne is then advertised for letting. The overall design of the new demesne, ignoring the older land-holding divisions along much of its boundaries, thus symbolises the immense significance of the landlord as an agent of landscape change (Fig. 4).

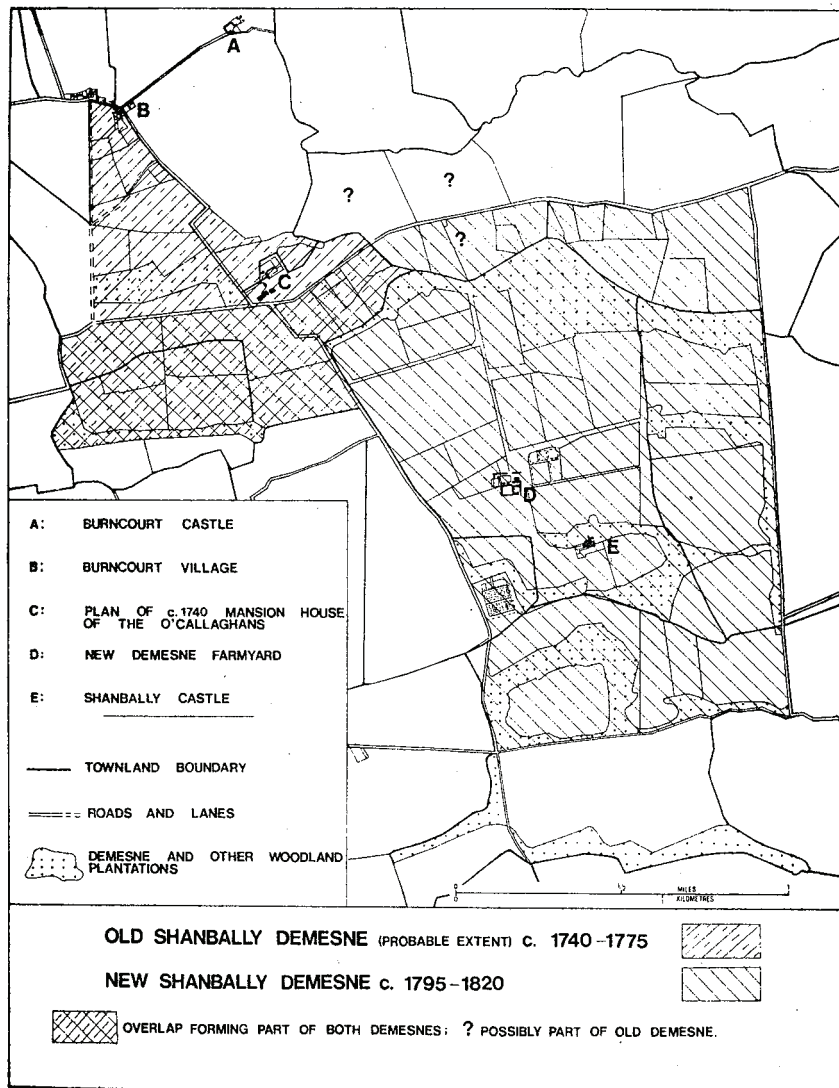
This large-scale reorganisation, apart from welding the O'Callaghan lands into a more compact unit, also made its impact on settlement and communication patterns which reverberated even onto the edges of the settled areas of the estate. The road network around much of the new demesne was created between 1791 and 1795. New roads, lanes and bridges were established to link up with the older east to west roads to the north and south, while an older road, which ran through the southern part of the newly-created demesne, was obliterated. The Clogheen to Lismore road was improved in 1794 while similar contemporary developments in Mitchelstown and Cahir led to the cutting of a magnificent new main road through the extreme northern part of the parish. There are numerous references to tenants' duties in ditching newly established roads. A 1785 deed requires one head-tenant 'to keep the Dublin turnpike road well and sufficiently gravelled and to plant and preserve the road ditches with ash or other timber planted at ten feet distances'³⁵. Frequent references to the renting of 'potato-ground' suggest the proliferation of cottier and small-holdings along road edges. It is also clear that quite a number of estate officials - including the land steward, rent-warner, head-mason, gardener and cattleman - came to occupy some of the better farms along the roads encircling the demesne, a feature also characteristic of the older demesne area in the previous era.

The account books of the 1780s and 1790s detail the activities of the land surveyors not only on the new demesne, but also over the now enlarged estate as a whole – a practice which was to continue right up to the 1830s and beyond. Between 1779 and 1811 was a time of rapidly rising prices and rents, and this was especially true between 1791 and 1805 when additional land was again acquired by the estate (Fig. 2), the landlord gradually eliminating the long-established mainly Protestant head-tenants. None of this group show up, even as ordinary tenant farmers, in the 1813 rental, while for the first time the smallest tenant farmers – shadowy and almost completely neglected figures in earlier accounts – emerge as real people. Such widespread changes obviously stimulated the need for up-to-date surveys and it is no coincidence that a book of estate maps was compiled in 1801-02. New leases proliferate, exhibiting a growing tendency towards the granting of shorter tenancies and tenancies-at-will. The latter were by no means dominant, however; in 1796, such leases

³⁵ *Registry of Deeds*, 1785, Book 387, 339.

only accounted for 28% of the total, but they do hint at acceleration in the process of small-farm proliferation.

Figure 4.

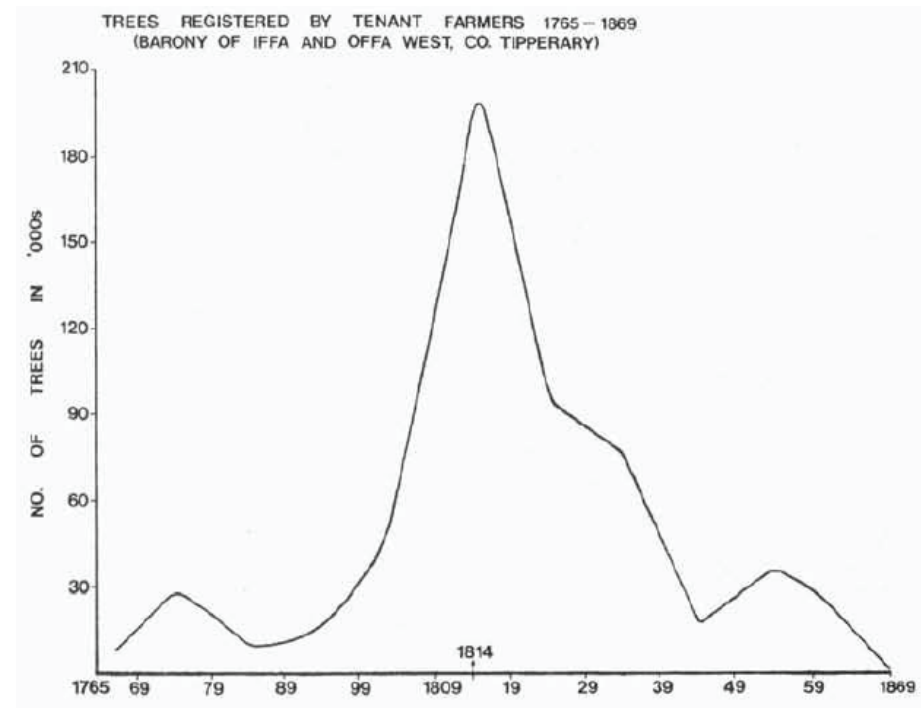


From 1785 onwards, especially on the bigger farms, strict rules in relation to 'no sub-division' emerge; whether such regulations were maintained is another question. These farm leases require that trees and quicks be planted on farms and farmers were to be recompensated for ditching; slated houses and slated outbuildings are to be erected; elm and fir trees to be planted inside road walls and crab and whitethorn quicks to be planted on any new ditches which would be erected on these farms. In the townland of Shanrahan, recently acquired from a middleman, leases for 1806 require the planting of one-acre orchards (also a feature of other townland leases at this time) on farms which appear to have been re-

organised along a new road. The entries for some newly purchased townlands suggest some re-organisation; in one townland old ditches are levelled and a highly regulated group of farms emerge on this townland map survey for 1790. Unlike earlier leases, there is now a specific emphasis on liming with regular quotas prescribed per acre, while the account books also detail the spread of the limekilns throughout the lowland area of the estate.

From the 1770s onwards there are also regular orders to nurserymen in Clonmel, Cork, Dublin, Bristol, and even in Scotland, for hundreds of thousands of Scotch fir, larch, oak, ash, and beech seedlings, while the landlord's brother in the Indian army helps to add greater variety to the early 19th-century plantations begun along the lower slopes of the Galtees and the Knockmealdown Mountains. The intensification of enclosure and quicksetting in this prosperous farming phase is also noticeable. We have no detailed figures for quicksetting ratios per acre. However, central state records help to indicate the scale and timing of tree planting on the part of larger tenant farmers in the barony of Iffa and Offa West from 1763 (Fig. 5). There is a rapid acceleration in tree planting in the late 18th century and especially over the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. The general embellishment of the rural landscape was to continue, if at a regularly reduced rate, over the remainder of the first half of the 19th century. Presumably, these figures also provide some clues to the timing of the completion of the enclosure patterns in the area as a whole.

Figure 5.



It is also striking that 1814-15 marks a critical peak in landscape investments. This brief phase, 1775-1815, was thus crucial in the elaboration of this rural landscape. The creation of a new demesne; the transformation of the functions and population of Clogheen town; the impressive expansion of the communication network; the emergence of a large number of new woodland plantations; and, above all, the intensification of enclosure on existing farms and the emergence of many new farm units; these all illustrate the importance of this era. Up to 1815, however, the estate records still reveal little of the growing problems of destitution and poverty in the countryside. The foundation of the Clogheen fever hospital and a Clogheen poor fund in 1811 are simply straws in the wind of the approaching storms.

The Phase of Reorientation c. 1815-1850

'Due to the unprecedented depreciation of agricultural produce of every kind and the very great depression in the value of lands, I need not tell you the difficulty of making up rents at this time'. This statement taken from the Shanbally estate agent's letters in 1822 pinpoints the transformation in the estate's fortunes between the unprecedented boom conditions of the 1790-1815 phase especially and the collapse of the market for agricultural products in the years following the ending of the European Wars. Between 1817 and 1830 the landlord – still retaining the life style and family encumbrances of previous decades – was to mortgage portions of his lands for amounts totalling over £100,000. As Maguire noted on the Downshire estates,³⁶ severe financial pressures often fostered better estate management and the Shanbally estate administration exhibited a similar tendency. In landlord-agent communications in the 1820s there are frequent references to the need to curtail both estate and family expenses. Better management was seen to involve the rationalisation of farm structures, especially on the richer lowland townlands. Between 1817 and 1822, 35 small-holders were evicted on the estate, while in the following two decades a smaller but still significant number of evictions or 'giving up' of farms occurred. Rural conflicts once again erupt; Clogheen town acquired a new police house and a new bridewell in the 1820s, and a new courthouse in 1832 when the estate agent's windows were fronted with iron bars. The period 1815 to 1845 was thus one of transition and reorientation as a battle was waged, and a kind of balance struck, between powerful demographic pressures on the land leading to further fragmentation and sub-division on the one part, and deliberate estate policy, reinforced by the interests of bigger tenant-farmers, aimed at the maintenance of viable farm-holdings on the other.

The population of the parish had almost certainly doubled between 1766 and 1821 when the population was 4,462³⁷ and it was to increase again by

³⁶ Maguire, *op. cit.*, 1972, 89-92.

³⁷ *Census of Ireland*, Dublin 1821, 206

almost two-thirds by 1841.³⁸ Although the estate records do not reveal the whole picture, it was obviously a landscape of extremes. Approximately one-third of the total number of rural householders were landless cottiers in 1821, when 63% of all farm holdings on the estate were under 15 acres. It should also be noted, however, that the smaller number of larger farms were still dominant in the better lowland townlands, a feature that became more pronounced in the decades both before and after the Famine. The perpetuation of such a pattern was a product of both the vested interests of the landlord and the stronger tenant-farmers. 'I am convinced of the necessity of increasing the size of farms from 25 to 100 Irish acres – the occupiers of such farms would certainly be without want in *all* seasons and having interests would be less likely to combine and at all events we would have less numbers'. Thus wrote the landlord to his agent in 1827, and in 1828 he confides to his trusted ally that he shall keep his mind to himself but that he intends to let the leases of a certain townland run out and then increase the size of farms.

This attempt to consolidate and stabilise farm structures emerges from all estate record items. Any partnership farms which had survived in the lowlands had been reorganised by the early 19th century. By 1820 there is much evidence from the leases to support the view that well-to-do and progressive Catholic tenant-farmers were being attracted into the estate from other parts of southern Tipperary particularly and also from eastern Co. Limerick (where the same landlord owned a number of smaller properties). The new leases now place strict emphasis on the specific allocation of a much smaller proportion of land to tillage; rotations are specified; clover and grass are then to be laid down, thus converting former arable land into good pasture land. Again, many of the bigger farm houses which still survive belong to this phase, while stables, cowhouses and piggeries also become characteristic in this era. Slated buildings, stone-wall fencing, clover seed cultivation all involved direct landlord subsidies. For example five contiguous farm units of 60-80 acres in a part of Shanrahan townland known as Curraghkeal are required in 1830 to build new slated dwelling houses with a chimney at each end, and the alignment of these farms and the associated field patterns in 1841 suggest some re-organisation here in the decade. Even as late as 1838, the landlord and agent are still attentive to rotations and to improving farm units. With reference to the letting of a specific farm, the landlord writes that 'we must make it look nice – a little avenue up to the houses from the road; good offices and good fences – I wish it was as well enclosed as the farms at Curraghkeal'. Given the more powerful demographic pressures on land resources, the relative success of landlord and bigger tenant farmer in maintaining the status quo (or improving upon it) is suggested by the relatively small increase (14%) in the total number of holdings in lowland townlands over the period 1821 to 1835. In sharp

³⁸ *Census of Ireland*, Dublin 1841.

contrast, there was an increase of 27% in the number of holdings on the mountain townlands over the same period.

It was therefore the poorer peripheral mountain townlands which appear to have borne the brunt of population pressures over the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. As on the Devonshire Lismore estate,³⁹ the policy of attempting to maintain or increase farm sizes in the lowlands sometimes resulted in the deflection of former smaller holders or labourers onto the formerly uncolonised moorland edges. Some of the farms along the drift-coated lower slopes of the Knockmealdowns, however, may have been much earlier creations. On the other hand that settlement was relatively recent along the northern flanks of the Galtees is quite clear from: i) large discrepancies between the area of occupied land in the mid-17th century Civil Survey and that of the mid-19th century (partly related to the clearance of two extensive woodland/scrubland areas); ii) the emergence of new townlands with toponymic names; iii) the greater diversity in the origins and names of farm families revealed in the rentals; and iv) the surviving folklore of the residual communities here today. The regular, often geometric arrangement of many of these farms suggests some rationalisation at a later stage – the specific impact of the late 18th-century Cahir-Mitchelstown road in this zone is obviously an important if undocumented one. Subdivision in the mountain townlands was also far more characteristic. One indirect measure of the scale of sub-division may be inferred when contiguous holdings of equal size, and with the same family name, occur in a single townland. Whereas there are no such examples in over half of the lowland townlands by 1835,⁴⁰ there are at least four examples in each of nine mountain townlands. That the greatest density of dwarf and subdivided farms is in the townlands owned by the Cahir Butler estate (still leased to middlemen), and the more remote Kilworth-based Mountcashel estate, is obviously instructive here. As always, the varying policies (and locations) of different estate administrations are central in attempting to understand varying landscape patterns.

The final phases in moorland colonisation are documented in the early 19th-century estate records. As we have seen from earlier leases, the enclosure of marginal mountain lands seems to have accelerated by 1750, although the description of boundaries of farms in 1780 leases would suggest that the mountain commonage still covered areas well-settled by 1835. The first direct reference to colonisation on the mountain proper dates from 1811, while the main 'colonial' phase seems to stretch from 1813-1814 into the early 1840s. Much of this activity is concentrated on the more flat moorland areas between 400 and 800 feet, known as 'reas' (Irish 'rèidh': 'level surface'). Small holders, some only occupying 1 to 5

³⁹ Andrews, *op. cit.*, 1970, 11.

⁴⁰ *Tithe Applotment Books for Co. Tipperary*, (Parishes of Shanrahan and Templetenny, 1835), Public Record Office, Dublin.

acres, but others holding much larger entities, are required to enclose the land, sometimes with stone walls, and to cultivate the lands to the satisfaction of the landlord. Penal rents are prescribed if these and other regulations in relation to liming are not observed, but encouragement is given by the granting of staggered rent reductions over a ten year period. Now one notices the spread of the limekilns onto the mountain edges. The greater elaboration of lanes, bridges and roads (including the new Clogheen-Lismore-Cappoquin road built by 1834) in the mountain areas was especially relevant to this process, as also was the related expansion of the cultivated area. Subsidies were granted for digging up mountain land, for the building of new dwelling houses (even with thatched roofs, a practice frowned on in the lowlands) and for building the limekilns in these harsh colonial situations⁴¹.

Investment on the mountains also took other forms; a hunting lodge, ornamental gardens and an extensive woodland plantation were begun along the middle slopes of the Galtees in 1828 and completed in 1834. The administration also continued to invest in demesne ornamentation, fencing and other woodland plantations; timber sales became an important if still subsidiary element in the demesne economy. Orders for rye grass, red and white clover, Swedish turnips and mangels also became more frequent in the account books. There is an obvious swing away from tillage and from grain production in particular, and there are more cattle sales, although butter remains as important as ever. It is now noticeable that farmers' journals, societies, newspapers and influential clubs act as important sources of new information about a range of agricultural investments and innovations. The signs of modernisation are everywhere. The Clogheen brewery has now supplemented the traditional demesne brewings for the sheep shearers and the harvest workers; new agricultural equipment including Scottish ploughs, turnip-seed sowing machines and a threshing machine appears; while the planning of new drains and watercourses on the demesne begins in 1836.

The estate town of Clogheen continued to expand: it was to enlarge and retain its milling and marketing functions until after the Famine; it acquired a new Catholic church and a new market house, while its service functions (and especially its shopkeeping population) continued to increase. The poverty of many in town and countryside, however, is highlighted both by increases of 32, 48 and 52% in the number of houses in Chapel, Pound and Cockpit Lane in Clogheen town between 1821 and 1847, and by the laying out of its Poorhouse site on 14 October 1839. In the countryside at this time, and more especially throughout the 1840s, the account books record compensations of £1 for persons throwing down their houses and giving up their holdings. A small minority of this group were to receive subsidies to emigrate. The land-surveyor is busy

⁴¹ See K. H. Connell. 'The colonisation of waste land in Ireland 1780-1845', *Economic History Rev.*, 3 (1), 44-71 for a discussion of this process on the national scale.

once again in re-surveying vacated lands, prior to their re-allocation and consolidation. Over eighty farms were to disappear between 1845 and 1850. Many of these deserted holdings were along the mountain edges – one generation farms with weak roots in acidic soils, disappearing without trace to be enveloped by the expanding woodland plantations.

On the demesne the encircling walls are built higher, the mansion is redecorated and a 'Bullock House' is built in the farmyard. The wheel has come full circle in the story as the economy gradually reverts to an extensive pastoralist regime, somewhat similar to the kind of economy prevailing over much of the 18th century. The processes of amalgamation, consolidation, displacement and depopulation accelerate. During the crisis of the Famine, it is striking that the more substantial tenant farmers of the lowlands remained for the most part unaffected by the often catastrophic changes occurring in quite a number of mountain townlands. Stability and durability are the keynotes to the character of these larger farms. They thus emerged unscathed from the crisis of the late 1840s to wax stronger in the agricultural boom of the 1850s and 1860s, frequently enveloping smaller farms as they moved into the growing power vacuum, helping to pave the way for the final phase of an estate system which had ironically fostered this section for its own interests.

Conclusions

The value of estate records as source materials for the historical geographer working in Ireland has been suggested in this sample study. At the very least, these records help to fill in the background details to already well-documented national patterns⁴². At their best, such sources – especially if accompanied by contemporary estate maps – can be of the utmost importance in understanding the timing and nature of the processes (and the motivations of the actors involved) which have shaped the landscapes of colonial Ireland in the 18th and 19th centuries. As Maguire⁴³ and Andrews⁴⁴ have both noted, such records also illustrate the only partial success of the landlord and the estate administration in controlling the development of the landscape. Other very powerful and often independent economic and demographic forces were also responsible for processes making for landscape change or stability, thus either reinforcing or cutting across the aspirations of the ruling landed elite. This study also highlights the fact that over much of the 18th century, as both the economy and population growth gathered momentum, middlemen effectively controlled a majority of townlands in the study area. The specific role of this varied group needs urgent attention. Their importance in this study area, however, also raises the problematic questions of how realistic a picture one can expect to gain from such estate records and how representative is the sample area to

⁴² T.J. Hughes, 'Society and settlement in 19th century Ireland', *Ir. Geogr.*, 5 (2), 1965, 79-96.

⁴³ Maguire, *op. cit.*, 1972, ch. 4 & 5.

⁴⁴ Andrews, *op. cit.*, 1970, II.

begin with. The estate records tell us little of the heritage of previous eras and of the life of the ordinary country people. Yet in the 1600s this area was already characterised by a highly complex social structure with varied landholding and landscape expressions. The processes shaping the evolution of the modern landscape owe much to early 17th century economic developments. There is also no doubt but that the ghosts of earlier centuries lingered on into the 18th century to provide the skeletal framework into which the estate system poured its rich, yet conflict-laden heritage.

Acknowledgements My thanks to Professor T. Jones Hughes, University College Dublin, and Dr. J.H. Andrews, Trinity College Dublin, for critically evaluating earlier versions of this paper.