

**THE
SIMONDS-FITZGERALD
CONNECTION
1487-2021**

The Simonds-FitzGerald connection

prepared by Kenneth FitzGerald Simonds (25% Irish)

and dedicated to Sally FitzGerald Simonds (6.15% Irish)

Major Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald of the Bengal Staff Corps, (b.1827, d. of cholera in Calcutta, 1867), and his wife Mary, née Swayne, who had sailed to India round the Cape to marry him, had a daughter Amy Elizabeth, who allegedly was born in the jungle in 1857 when her father's sepoy's in Lucknow warned of the imminence of the Indian Mutiny. After her Father's death, she and her Mother returned to England and she, at the age of 21, married John Sheriff Hill, of Hawkswick, St. Albans, whose first wife had died, leaving him with 7 children. Amy bore him five more children, then he went broke and died leaving her to bring up the entire family of twelve, in straightened circumstances. This she did magnificently - they all loved her dearly and called her Mother, the eldest of the first family being but a few years younger than her. I have a splendid Wedding-cum-21st birthday portrait of her by John Hanson Walker. Her eldest daughter Amy FitzGerald married Frederick Adolphus Simonds and here the connection started.

Amy and Eric Simonds had three sons and one daughter (deceased) and in all some 29 descendants of the Simonds-FitzGerald line. There could thus be a great many more in years to come, all with their trace of Irish ancestry. We three grandsons all knew our 'Greatgrannie Fitzgerald' who ended her days near our original home in Wokingham, Berkshire, in 1923, whilst 'Grannie London', her daughter, we all loved dearly.

The FitzGerald's, though long since one of the largest Irish families in the world, were of French origin, Les Géraldines, and came to England from Normandy, then made their way slowly west to Ireland via Wales, and there established themselves in Counties Kildare, Offaly and Laois (pron: Leash). There are the remains of two old family homes, both greatly damaged by warfare and old age, Morrett Castle on the left of the N7 from Dublin to Portlaoise, and Woodstock Castle at Athy to the south, where the monkey rescued the infant heir, John FitzThomas from a disastrous fire and perpetuated himself in the family crest.

Major family homes of C18 & C19 survive, in Leinster House, Dublin, now the seat of the Dail, and Carton, a dozen miles into the country, near Maynooth, where they entertained Queen Victoria in 1849.

The origins of the FitzGerald's are recorded as far back as Octavius Duke of Cornwall in 383. Naturally the early records are shadowy, but from C11 onwards they are much more reliable and include Gerald FitzWalter who married Nesta, daughter of Rhese ap Gryffith, 11th King of South Wales in 1112, and Bishop David FitzGerald, Bishop of St. David's, consecrated by Archbishop Theodore in 1146, died in 1176 and gave a banquet for Henry IV in 1172.

Other notable family members include five brothers who were hung, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in 1533 and their nephew 'Silken Thomas', 10th Earl of Kildare, who met the same fate the following year, whilst Elizabeth, 'The Fair Geraldine' 1528-89 married Sir Anthony Browne, Master of the Horse to Henry VIII. Others who were murdered in those troublesome times were Gerald, of Morrett in 1601, Stephen hanged in 1690 and Richard Earl of Cambridge, beheaded in 1415.

There are three titles in the family - ~~Gerald FitzGerald~~ ^{Gerald} FitzMaurice was created 1st Baron Offaly in the late C12. John FitzThomas became 1st Earl of Kildare in C13 (and it was he as a baby who was rescued by the monkey from the blazing Athy Castle) and James the 20th Earl (b.1732) was created the 1st Duke of Leinster in 1766.

To-day, the present 8th Duke of Leinster is head of the family, but sadly the young Lord Offaly was killed in a car accident in Ireland in recent years. The Leinsters themselves remain a Protestant family, though the vast majority nowadays have embraced Rome. The only one with whom I am now in touch is Major John FitzGerald, of York, who is a third cousin and thus a much closer relation than most of our Simonds cousins.

There is also a descent from the Tudor monarchs, and Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald, great Grandfather of Louis, Duncan and Kenneth Simonds was a 12x Great grandson of Edward 1V (1461-1483) which makes Sally Simonds his 16x Greatgranddaughter.

The conclusion of all this must be that the FitzGeralds are a great family and our branch of the Simonds can be proud of our Irish descent. For further reading see the Pedigree and notes I prepared in 1999.

KFS February 2003.

WINLOED
BERE COURT ROAD
PANGBOURNE
BERKSHIRE
RG8 8LB

Tel: (0734) 842003

14 June 1992

Dear Sally FitzGerald,

I am giving to your Dad today a family tree of the FitzGerald, because I expect that one day you will be interested to know why you were christened with this name.

Your great-uncle is Kenneth FitzGerald Simonds.

His mother (and mine) was Amy FitzGerald Simonds (née Hill).

Her mother was Amy Hill (née FitzGerald), the daughter of Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald and Mary (née Swayne).

Mary was, therefore, my great grandmother, and I can just remember her as "Great-Granny FitzGerald." Her dates are not recorded but to the best of my recollection she was born in 1831 and died in 1922 age 91. When you are an old lady some time in the middle of the next century, you may care to reflect that my lifetime bridged the gap between that of my great-Grandma and your own - a span of well over two hundred years.

At the time that I remember her she had been a widow for over fifty years, for her husband had died of cholera in Calcutta in 1867 leaving her with four children to take back to England and to bring up as young ladies and gentlemen of the Victorian age. As she probably had nothing to live on apart from his Indian Army pension this must have been a great struggle.

I recall her as a little old lady all in black except for a black and white bonnet, a white scarf and collar, and black boots. I wonder what you will be wearing when you are an old lady?!

The career of Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald was probably not dissimilar to that of many young officers in the Indian Army of his day. He was appointed Ensign in the 31st Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry on 20th June 1843 at the age of 16, and promoted to Lieutenant in 1846. Soon afterwards he was transferred to the Commissariat Staff of the Bengal Army. He served with the Commissariat in the Burmese War of 1852-53, and as Principal Commissariat Officer in the Moveable Column under Brig-Gen. John Nicholson CB in July 1857. He was severely wounded in the action at Trimmoo Ghat. He was also Principal Commissariat Officer in the Field on the Staff of Lord Clyde in the campaigns of 1857-58 and was twice thanked by Lord Clyde and by the Governor-General of India in Council. He received two medals for war services and was promoted Captain in 1860. He was transferred to the Bengal Staff Corps on its formation in 1861 in which year he was honourably mentioned in General Orders for his services in the Sikkim Expedition. In 1863 he was promoted to Major, the rank in which he died four years later.

From Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald, the tree traces the history of this famous Irish family back through some three hundred years and nine generations to Gerald FitzGerald, son of the eleventh, and last, Earl of Kildare who was born in 1546 and, like so many others of the family, met a violent death.

You will see that throughout history the family name was spelt as I have spelt it in this note, that is to say, all in one word but with a capital G in the middle; I hope you will always remember to spell your name in this way.

In the panel at the lower left corner of the tree is shown the descent of the earlier Earls of Kildare, going back almost to the mists of time, and I daresay there may be an element of guesswork about some of the earlier people and dates. They all lived tempestuous lives fighting alternately each other and the hated British invaders; or, if they wanted to score off their neighbours for any reason, they would change sides and work for the British for a time.

Especially notable is the tenth Earl, Thomas FitzGerald, who is recorded as having been ~~hanged~~ at Tyburn with his five uncles. Tyburn was an open space outside London where Marble Arch now is, and it is here that the gallows were erected on which to hang traitors.

Gerald, 9th Earl of Kildare having died a prisoner in the Tower of London on 13 December 1534, was succeeded by his son Thomas commonly called "Silken Thomas" whose execution at Tyburn on 3rd February 1536 is thus recorded in the "Annals of the Four Masters" 1537. "Thomas the son of the Earl of Kildare, the best man of the English in Ireland of his time, and his father's five brothers, James Margach, Oliver, John, Walter and Richard, were put to death in England on the 3rd runes of February, and all the Geraldines of Leinster were exiled and banished. The Earldom of Kildare was vested in the King (Henry VIII) and every one of the family who was apprehended whether lay or ecclesiastical was tortured or put to death. These were great losses and cause of lamentation throughout Ireland."

Fortunately for all of us, the 9th Earl had married a second time, and his son, Gerald, was 10 years old at the time of his death. After many adventures, which included being smuggled out of Ireland to France in the care of his tutor, he eventually returned to London after the death of Henry VIII. Here he succeeded in making a diplomatic marriage to Mabel, daughter of Sir Anthony Brown KG. His new father-in-law was Master of the Horse to King Edward VI and in full favour with the Court.

His title and Irish Estates were restored to him by letters patent at Westminster on 25th April 1552. However his son Gerald (Oge) was still barred from his right to succession by the Act of Attainder applied to his grandfather, so the title died out with the eleventh Earl.

But the most famous of the Earls of Kildare was the eighth Earl, yet another Gerald FitzGerald. He rates a special mention in Winston Churchill's "History of the English Speaking Peoples, Vol II. Churchill is describing the difficulties which King Henry VII had in trying to establish his rule in Ireland. You may remember from your history lessons that Henry VII was the first Tudor monarch and he assumed the throne after the battle of Bosworth in 1485, in which King Richard III was killed, and which brought to an end the Wars of the Roses.

Churchill wrote as follows:-

"Henry had many reasons to feel his throne shake a little beneath him. The Wars of the Roses had weakened English authority in Wales, but it was in Ireland that their effects were most manifest. The dynastic struggle had been eagerly taken up in Ireland; there were Lancastrian and Yorkist cities in the English Pale around Dublin and among remote outposts of the Englishry like Limerick and Galway. But all this turmoil was a mere continuation of clan feuds. The Butler family, under its hereditary chief, the Earl of Ormonde, was Lancastrian, because it had always been more loyal to the King of England than the rival house of FitzGerald. The FitzGeralds led by the Earl of Kildare in Leinster and the Earl of Desmond in Munster, both having close alliances of blood and marriage with the native chiefs, were Yorkist in sympathy, because they thus hoped to promote their own aggrandisement.

In Munster the Desmond FitzGeralds were already "more Irish than the Irish". In the Pale, Kildare, who was called "Garret More", or Great Earl, might perform his feudal duties and lead the English, but on his remoter lands on the Shannon a different rule prevailed. Lords Deputy from England found it profitless to assert their legal powers in face of Kildare's dominating local position and island-wide alliances. There was even a chance, unknown since the defeat and death of Edward Bruce, that his great house might provide a dynasty for all Ireland. But even if Kildare remained loyal to England would he adhere to a Yorkist king or a Lancastrian king? His kinsman Desmond supported Lambert Simnel; there was good reason to suspect that he himself supported Perkin Warbeck. Sir Edward Poyning, appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1494, tried to limit his powers of mischief. He persuaded the Irish Parliament at Drogheda to pass the celebrated Poyning's Law, subordinating the Irish Parliament to the English, which was not repealed for three hundred years and remained a grievance till the twentieth century.

Kildare was attainted and sent over to London; but Henry was too wise to apply simple feudal justice to so mighty an offender, with his fighting clan on the outskirts of Dublin, and cousins, marriage-kin, and clients all over the island. The charges against the Great Earl were serious enough apart from his suspect favour to Perkin Warbeck. Had he not burned down the cathedral of Cashel? The Earl admitted it, but excused himself in a fashion that appealed to the King. "I did, but I thought that the Archbishop was inside." Henry VII accepted the inevitable with a dictum that is famous, if not authentic. "Since all Ireland cannot govern the Earl of Kildare, let the Earl of Kildare govern all Ireland." Kildare was pardoned, freed, married to the King's cousin, Elizabeth St. John, and sent back to Ireland, where he succeeded Poynings as Lord Deputy.

Power in Ireland still rested on the ability to call out and command a sufficiency of armed men. In this the English King exercised a potent and personal influence. He could clothe with the royal insignia and status of Deputy any great noble who could muster and control the fighting men. On the other hand, by raising Butlers and Burkes the King could make it impossible for even a Kildare to control the great clan chiefs. This precarious and shifting balance was for a while the only road to establishing a central Government. No English king had yet found how to make his title of "Lord of Ireland" any more real than his title of "King of France".

But a powerful ally was at hand. Artillery, which had helped to expel the English from France, now aided their incursion into Ireland. Cannon spoke to Irish castles in a language readily understood. But the cannon came from England. The Irish could use but could not make them. Here for a time was the key to an English control over Irish affairs far beyond the outlook of Henry VII or Sir Edward Poynings. For generations the chiefs of the Fitzgeralds, from their half-gaelic Court, had terrorised the Pale and kept to Irish eyes a more truly royal state than the harassed Deputies of the English monarch in Dublin Castle. Now in the advance of culture precedence was regulated by gunpowder."

So you will see that if, perhaps, you have a slightly mischievous turn of mind, you may attribute that to your ancient ancestor Gerald FitzGerald!

You will also see on the top of the Tree the FitzGerald coat of arms, and this is described in detail on the back of a coloured version of the same on a small card. On top is a Latin motto which means "not forgetful of good deeds", and below are the words "Crom a Boo." This is said to be an Irish war-cry used by the FitzGerald in battle, with great success - something like the New Zealand "Haka" before a Rugby match, I suppose.

The monkey in the coat-of-arms has a legendary history. The son of the eleventh Earl of Kildare, Gerald (Oge), was attacked by his enemies at his home, Morett Castle in Queen's County in 1601. He was murdered - as were so many other FitzGeralds in the course of history, and the castle was burned down. His baby son is said to have been asleep in one of the towers of the castle, and was rescued by the family's pet monkey who carried him away to safety, thus once again preserving the FitzGerald line for the future - and for you! Whether true or not, it is a nice story, and it is natural that the family adopted the monkey as the principal feature of their coat-of-arms.

Gradually, as the generations went by, the FitzGeralds lost their power, their lands and their influence. They also multiplied greatly and bred many younger sons who would have been very impoverished, and did what many impoverished sons of Irish gentry would have done in those days - namely joined the British Army in India. Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald, our ancestor, did exactly that, and was - as we have seen - a Major in the Bengal Staff Corps at Calcutta when he met his untimely death from cholera at the age of only forty. Three of his brothers, and his son, also Charles Mordaunt, followed this example, and several of them met violent and unpleasant deaths, leaving no near relatives that I know of.

However, the FitzGerald family was prolific, and they abound in Ireland at the present day, including a recent, and famous Prime Minister, Gaireth FitzGerald.

It would be reasonable to assume that you are related in some way or another to most of them, but it is now impossible to say how, or to which. However, one day when you are older, you may care to make a sort of pilgrimage to Timogue church, in Ireland, where many generations of the family are buried, and presumably have tombstones there.

I hope you will enjoy reading this little bit of personal history one day, and - who knows - it may inspire in you an interest in history which I am sure you will find very rewarding.

With lots of love,

from

Grampa Durcan

SIMONDS family descent from Gerald, 8th Earl of Kildare, whose five sons and their nephew, 'Silken Thomas', 10th Earl of Kildare, were all executed at Tyburn in February 1536.

<u>Gerald FitzGerald</u> , 8th Earl of Kildare d. 1513	=	(1) Alison d. of Lord Portlester (2) Elizabeth d. of Oliver St. John
<u>Gerald</u> , 9th Earl	=	Elizabeth d. of Marquis of Dorset James. Oliver, Richard, John & Walter, who, with their nephew, 'Silken Thomas', 10th Earl of Kildare, were executed at Tyburn in February 1536.
<u>Gerald</u> , 11th Earl d. 1585	=	Isabel Brown
<u>Gerald FitzGerald</u> Murdered at Moret by The O'More 1601	=	Margaret Bowen
<u>Gerald</u> High Sheriff of Queen's County 1637	=	Ann O'Dempsey
<u>Thomas</u>	=	Sibella Piggott
<u>Alexander</u> 1666-1712	=	Elizabeth Piggott
<u>Dudley</u>	=	Ann Delaney
<u>Alexander</u> d. 1797	=	Sarah Ridgeway
<u>Martin</u> 1768-1829 (buried in Bath Abbey)	=	Barbara Loftie
<u>William</u> 1798-1844 (Major, Bengal Engineers)	=	Sarah Fulcher
<u>Charles Mordaunt</u> 1827-1867 (Major, Bengal Staff Corps)	=	Mary Swayne 17-7-1850
<u>Amy</u> , b. 1857 d. 1935	=	1877 John Sheriff Hill
<u>Amy</u> , b. 1883	=	1909 Frederick Adolphus <u>SIMONDS</u>
<u>Louis Duncan Kenneth SIMONDS</u>		

Gerald FitzGerald, 8th Earl of Kildare, and father of five sons executed at Tyburn in 1538, with their nephew, the 10th Earl, was Great x 12 Grandfather of Kenneth FitzGerald SIMONDS