

*The FitzGerald*s of Ballydavis  
*Researched and*  
*Compiled by Kenneth*  
*FitzGerald Simonds, 1999*  
*E. & O.E.*

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# The FitzGerald's of Ballydavis

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## Preamble

The Simonds and Wethered families have a common descent from Major Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald, born 1827, Commissioned into the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Bengal Infantry and latterly to the Bengal Staff Corps. He died of cholera in Calcutta in 1867. He married Mary Swayne, who travelled to India round the Cape, taking her furniture with her for use in her otherwise empty cabin. She spent her old age in Wokingham, Berkshire, where we were all born and Duncan and I both have recollections of her, whilst Louis remembered her well. She died about 1923, and is buried in the churchyard of All Saints, where we were all baptised. Her son Herbert and her daughter Amy respectively were the parents of Dolly Wethered and Amy Hill, grandmothers of the present Wethered, Dickinson and Simonds families. Unfortunately direct contact with the FitzGerald's has been lost long since. It is a vast family, part Protestant and part Roman Catholic, whose head today, is the 3<sup>th</sup> Duke of Leinster, the premier Duke of Ireland, whom I did once meet. Amy FitzGerald, our grandmother was the second wife of John Sheriff Hill of

Hawk's Wick, St. Albans, who was born in 1836, the year before Queen Victoria came to the throne, - 163 years ago.

By his first wife, he had seven children. She died and he married Amy FitzGerald who bore him five more. He then lost his money, sold Hawk's Wick, and died in 1897, leaving Grandmother with an extended family of twelve, the eldest being but little younger than their stepmother, and from all accounts she was a wonderful mother to them all. For sure, we three grandsons loved her dearly.

### **Objectives**

These are limited to straight line descent of the FitzGeralds, from the earliest days, to Louis, Duncan and Kenneth Simonds, Anne Dickinson & Guy Wethered. I have drawn a line at FitzGerald grandchildren, to keep the operation within bounds. Similarly, siblings are eliminated throughout, except for those of importance to the line, or of special interest.

### **Sources**

I have drawn on two FitzGerald family trees, both slightly different, and on Duncan's short history of 1992, written for the benefit of his granddaughter, Sally FitzGerald Simonds, which should be read again.

## **Geography**

Most of the action takes place in Counties Kildare, Offaly and Laois (pronounced 'Leash', and until the Republic, called Queen's County), with its county town at Queenstown, now Portlaoise. The principal family homes were Morrett Castle, built by Lord Mortimer, held for many years by the FitzGerald, fiercely contested by the O'Mores and the O'Neils, who murdered Gerald FitzGerald, and burnt the castle in 1601. Herewith, a photograph of the existing ruin, though I have a 19c watercolour which shows rather more remaining. Drive down the N7 from Dublin to Portlaoise, and it is clearly visible on the left of the road at The Togher, about 4 miles beyond Ballybrittas. The other is Woodstock Castle at Athy, still intact and the scene of the rescue by a pet monkey of the infant heir, John FitzThomas FitzGerald the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Kildare, from the blazing castle in 1316. This was the origin of the family's monkey crest, with the motto 'Crom-A-Boo', their war cry shouted at the enemy. 'Crom', was the name of a heathen god, and 'A-Boo', means 'To Victory' or 'Forever'. The Latin motto, 'Non Immemor Beneficii' was a later addition. Athy lies on the river Barrow, and a picture of this is also included. 10 miles south of Monasterevin, it is a left hand turn off the N7 before Ballybrittas. Ballydavis, the real origin of the family, is also on the N7, a couple of miles from Portlaoise.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Dukes of Leinster's family homes were in Dublin, where Leinster House is now the seat of the Dail, and Carton their country house by Maynooth, Co. Kildare, on the right of the R148 some 12 Miles from Dublin. Carton is another vast house, where they lived in great state, rarely paid the bills, and entertained Queen Victoria in 1849.

### **Names and Titles**

The family were originally the Geraldines of Queens County, of Norman origin who came to Ireland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The prefix 'Fitz', denotes bastardy, but I've not discovered its origin. The present Duke of Leinster, the 2<sup>th</sup> of the line, has the additional titles, Marquess Kildare and Earl of Offaly, which attach to his eldest son and grandson respectively, though young Offaly was tragically killed in a road accident in 1997. For the Leinster descent, from the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl, see **Appendix II** In essence, the Dukedom arrived when, on the marriage of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Richmond's granddaughter Emily Lennox, a great granddaughter of King Charles II and his mistress Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth to James FitzGerald, it seemed right that he be made a Duke too. The last common ancestor we can lay claim to, is the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl who died in 1612.

**Appendix III**, traces the Royal Descent of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl, with connections to King Edward III & Richard II, the Black Prince, John of Gaunt, Kings Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII, Henry VIII and Edward V, and a

throwback to Geoffrey Chaucer. It will be appreciated that the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl was the great Common Denominator.

**Appendix I**, covers the years 383 - 1112, and is necessarily more romantic than authentic. The relationships throughout are not very clear, but it has been put into broadly chronological order. Whilst this has meant leaving out a few unattached and colourful characters, it does become easier to follow.

## Notes

1. **Gerald FitzGerald, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl**, died a prisoner in the Tower of London on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1534. He was succeeded by his son 'Silken Thomas', the 10th Earl, and by Gerald the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl, see (2) and (3) below.
2. **'Silken Thomas'**, was executed at Tyburn, (though some authorities say on Tower Hill), on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1536, in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Henry VIII, together with his five uncles, the sons of the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl. Tyburn was for three centuries the site of a triangular gallows which accommodated eight on each side, i.e. twenty-four at a time. It was located close to the present site of Marble Arch, by the Bayswater Road, and a tablet by the footpath marks the spot. After hanging, and often before death, the bodies were drawn and quartered and the whole performance was considered a popular entertainment and drew big crowds. Today, a Roman Catholic Convent stands across the Bayswater Road with an enclosed order of Nuns, who maintain perpetual prayer for the souls of the victims. I enquired of the Vatican for news of the FitzGeralds, in the hope of finding a family martyr, but their response was that there was insufficient good quality evidence to justify martyrdom.

3. **Gerald FitzGerald, the 9th Earl**, was great-grandson of Elizabeth and Sir John Grey; Elizabeth's second husband was Edward IV, who succeeded his cousin Henry VI, founder of Eton College and of King's College, Cambridge (b1421 reigned 1422 - 1461, deposed 1461 and murdered 1471). Edward IV and Elizabeth were also parents of Edward V and Elizabeth Plantagenet of York, wife of Henry VII, and mother of Henry VIII. Gerald was also 10 x Great Grandfather of Louis, Duncan & Kenneth Simonds and of Anne Dickinson and Guy Wethered. see **Appendix II & III**

4. **Sudden Deaths.**

In addition to those noted in (1) and (2) above, Stephen FitzGerald of Morrett, was hung by the O'Cabril in 1690.

Richard II was murdered 1400 and Richard, Earl of Cambridge beheaded 1415.

5. **The Leinster Succession.** **Appendix II, and III**, show the common descent from Gerald, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare (d 1534), of the Dukes of Leinster and of our own branch of the family. The relationship is a distant one, but the family of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke, the premier Duke of Ireland, is full of interest. He, as 20<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare, married Emily, daughter of the second Duke of Richmond and a great-granddaughter of King James II and his mistress, Louise de Keroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, This, as shown in

the **Preamble**, was the pretext for his Dukedom. Emily bore seventeen children in twenty-four years and after his death she married William Ogilvie, her children's tutor, and by him, she had two more, nineteen children in all. Her fifth, favourite and most spectacular son, Lord Edward FitzGerald made a hobby of warfare and his recent biography, 'Citizen Lord', is a very good read.

6. **For further reading: -**

**REBELLION** - a television history of the Irish Rising of 1798, by Thomas Bartlett, Kevin Dawson, and D'aire Keogh. Gill and Macmillan, Dublin 8, 1998.

**REBELS AND INFORMERS** Oliver Knox, John Murray 1997 - A longer, more detailed account of 1798, with extensive coverage of Lord Edward.

**CITIZEN LORD** Stella Tillyard. Chatto & Windus 1997.  
A biography of Lord Edward FitzGerald.

**ARISTOCRATS** Stella Tillyard. Paperback, Vintage 1995.  
An account of Emily Lennox, Duchess of Leinster, and her Lennox sisters. Now a TV serial.

**THE GREAT HUNGER** Cecil Woodham-Smith. Paperback, Penguin 1991. The Irish famine of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, from which the family emerged with some credit.

**ANGELS OF ALBION** Women of the Indian Mutiny, Jane

Robinson. Viking 1996.

Whilst there is no specific family reference, this book gives credence to the story of Mary Swayne, our great grandmother (see Preamble).

7. **Great Grannie FitzGerald.** It is said that great grandfather, Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald, got prior warning of imminent mutiny by his sepoys in Lucknow in 1857, when she was pregnant with our grandmother Amy. He sent her out into the jungle and it was there that 'Grannie London' was born.

APPENDIX II

DESCENT OF GERALD THE 9<sup>th</sup> EARL OF KILDARE FROM KING

EDWARD III AND IV

1. **Edward III** (b1312, r1327 - 1377) = Philippa of Hainault  
and they had sons:-
  - (1) **Edward the Black Prince,** (1330 - 1376) = Joan of Kent (1325 - 1385) and they had a son **Richard II,** (b1366, r 1377 - 1399, murdered 1400).
  - (2) **John of Gaunt,** (1340 - 1399) whose 3<sup>rd</sup> wife Katherine Swynford was sister-in-law to Geoffrey Chaucer, and John was also King of Castile.
  - (3) **Edmund Duke of York,** (1341 - 1402) = Isabella of Castile. Their son **Richard, Earl of Cambridge,** = Anne Mortimer, and was beheaded in 1415.
  
2. **Richard,** (above) had a son, **Richard Plantagenet,**  
**Duke of York,** (1411 - 1460) = Cecily Neville, and they had sons:-
  - (1) **Edward IV,** (b1442, r1461 - 1483)
  - (2) **Richard III,** (b1452, r1483 - 1485).

3. Edward IV, = Elizabeth Grey (Woodville) (1437 - 1492),  
(see 5 below), whose son Edward V, (1470 - 1483) was  
proclaimed King in 1483, but never crowned. The succession  
passing to his uncle, Richard III, = Anne Neville (1454 - 1485).
4. Edward IV, (above) became King in 1461 in succession to his  
cousin Henry VI, Founder of Eton College and of King's  
College, Cambridge (1421 reigned 1422 - 1461),  
deposed 1461 and murdered 1471). Edward and Elizabeth also  
had a daughter Elizabeth of York, (1465 - 1503),  
who married Henry VII (b1457, r1485 - 1509), by whom she  
became mother of Henry VIII.
5. Elizabeth (Grey) Woodville's 1<sup>st</sup> marriage had been to  
Sir John Grey, by whom she had a son Thomas Grey,  
Marquis of Dorset. Thomas married Cecilia, daughter of Lord  
Harington, and they had a daughter Elizabeth Grey who mamed  
Gerald, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare .
- Charles Mordaunt FitzGerald was thus:- 11 x Great  
Grandson of the Mother of Henry VIII, and 12 x Great  
Grandson of Edward IV, et seq.

## **Subsequent Generations**

Amy Hill and Dolly FitzGerald were first cousins, each with a FitzGerald parent, which makes the three Simonds sons and Anne and Guy Wethered 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins, and Juliet and Guy, Jo and Katie, 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins once removed, and their children 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins twice removed to the Simonds sons or 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins once removed to their children - Erica Burrows, Gerald Simonds, Louise Westmacott, Raymond, Colin and Gavin Simonds

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