The Cantwells of Cantwellscourt


Among the Knights who came over with Strongbow to Ireland in 1170 was Hugh Cantwell. Gilbert Kentwell, probably the founder of the Tipperary branch of the Cantwell family, received a large grant of lands in the neighborhood of Thurles, the Devilsbit and Templemore, from Theobald Butler, Chief Butler of Ireland, some time after 1177. Thomas de Kentewell, knt., witnesses a charter of the town of Gowran in the reign of Richard I. (1189-99); Walter de Kenteswell or Kentwalle witnessed a grant to St. Thomas's Priory, Dublin, between 1194 and 1205. On the 13th June 1222, King Henry III wrote to the Archbishop of Dublin, Justiciary of Ireland, commanding him to give Gilbert de Kentewell seisin of his land in Kilfane which he held from the Bishop of Ossory, who had disseised him because it was reported Gilbert was dead. The Cantwell connection with Kilkenny, therefore, dates from an early period. Thomas de Cantwell, most probably of the Cantwellscourt family, was summoned to the war against the Scots in 1302; was Constable of Offerlan (Offerlane, co. Leix) in 1310; and, in the same year, was one of William Outlawe's securities in the sum of 200 marks; he was, moreover, empowered to parley with the O'Brenans and other felons of the cantred of Odogh in 1317; and was exempted from attendance at the assizes, being worn out with old age, in 1319-20. In 1333 Thomas Cantwell was knighted by the Earl of Ormond; and two years later, Thomas and John de Cantwell were summoned to the war against the Scots.

In 1381, the King gives license to Thomas Derkyn (L'Ercdekyn ?) and Walter Cantwell, who dwell in the marches of Ballygaveran (Gowran), in front of the Irish enemies M'Morgh and Onolan, to treat (with them) for themselves, their tenants and dependants [*Patent Rolls*].

In Dec. 1408 Walter's son, Robert, had a re-grant from the King of all the lands, tenements, rents and services he (Robert) had held in Rathcoull and Strawan in the Co. Kilkenny; but he appears to have died very soon after, as on March 18th, 1409, the King committed to Richard and Thomas Cantwell custody of the lands &c. which belonged to Robert Cantewell, son and heir of Walter Cantewell, in Rathcoull and Strowan in the Co. Kilkenny. In the year 1487, Oliver Cantwell was raised to the
Episcopate of Ossory and ruled the Diocese till his death in 1527. Richard Cantwell and Peter Cantwell were Priors, respectively, of St. John's Abbey and the Black Abbey, Kilkenny, at the Suppression of the Monasteries in 1540. Piers Cantwell and most of the freeholders of the Co. Kilkenny were presented as charging coyne and livery in 1537.

John Cantwell of Cantwellstown, gent., was pardoned May 18th, 1549, about which time his property in the Barony of Gowran was estimated at 60 pounds, or at about the same value as the (large) estate of Geoffry Purcell of Ballyfoyle, at the same date. A John Cantwell, who appears to be different from him, was Sheriff of Co. Kilkenny in 1569, and was murdered soon after by Geoffry Carraghe Purcell, who was himself slain for the crime by the Earl of Ormond in 1571.

Thomas Cantwell of Cantwellscourt, (probably son or grandson and) heir of John Cantwell of Cantwellscourt, was pardoned for a fine of 3 pounds, in the 28th Dec. 1571; he was again pardoned, together with his wife Mary Fitzgerald, March 22nd 1583-4. In 1585 he was Sheriff of the County Kilkenny. In 1585 he is mentioned among the principal gentry, and his seat at Cantwellston, i.e. CantwellsCourt, as among the principal residences, in the same County. He was again pardoned with (his sons ?) John Cantwell fitz Thomas and Pierse Cantwell fitz Thomas, or CantwellsCourt, gents., Sept. 22nd 1600. He died soon after, his last will, which is preserved in the Record Office, Dublin, having been proved 1606. His lady, who survived him, is returned to the Government in 1610-11 among the relievers and maintainers of Popish Priests, Commissaries &c. in Co. Kilkenny.

John Cantwell, son and heir of Thomas, succeeded, and had livery of seisin, for a fine of 5 pounds English, Feb. 15th 1608-9. By Inquisition held at the "Balckfryers," Kilkenny, Sept. 6th 1637, it appears that in the year 1609 his estate included the manors of Rathcoule and Kilfayne, except the portion belonging to Walter Walsh in Kilfayne aforesaid; of the towns and lands of Rathcoule, Cantwell's-courte, Killbennell, Tullaghbryn, the Ouldtowne of Rowebone, the Ouldtowne of Cowllwockair, the Ouldtowne of Glaneheylie, Cubicketanevallie, Killfaine, Stroane, Cloghskreggie, Lisnemenagh (now Blessington), Reamynduffe (parish of Ballinamarra), Carrigine, Killudigan, Rassigine otherwise Rathsigyn, Kilerin, the Garrans, otherwise Cantwell's garrans (now Grove), John's Graige otherwise Graigshane, Inshilugh, Ballyhomas and Gowran [but his title to Gawran or Gowran was called into question in 1607 and does not seem to have been admitted]. He was still living at the time of the Confederation of Kilkenny, but being then a very old man he took no active part in its deliberation. He died somewhere about 1650. There is mention of his wife Elizabeth in a deed of the year 1609.

Thomas Cantwell of CantwellsCourt, son and heir of John, threw himself whole-heartedly into the Catholic Confederate movement. He was appointed Provost Marshal of the Confederates, and, in discharging the duties of that office, could not fail to bring himself the bitter hatred of the Protestant loyalists. He is called "that cruel and bloody rebel" by Joseph Wheeler, of Stamcarthy, and others. One of the acts of cruelty attributed to him was the hanging of an Englishman, a malster to one Richard Shawe of Kilkenny, for having said, "that he would believe the divell as soon the Pope." In the Act of Settlement of Ireland, in August 1652, he was excepted from pardon of life or estate. He died in that or the following year; he was certainly dead before Dec. 1653. His wife was Margaret Walsh (daughter of Thomas Walsh of Piltown, Co. Waterford, son of Sir Nicholas, son of another Sir Nicholas Walsh,
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Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, who died April 22nd 1615), one of the seven sisters, of whom, Marcella was wife of Sir Robert Hartpool; Mary, married 1st. Morgan Kavanagh Esq., of Borris (died 1700), and 2ndly, Mr. ---- Long; Joan was wife of William Sweetman Esq. of Castleve, who forfeited under Cromwell in 1653; Catherine married Mr. John Warren, of Tullow, Co. Carlow, and was still living in the year 1700; and Ruth married Squire Kennedy, one of the last Catholic Judges in Ireland in the 17th century.

John Cantwell, son of Thomas, the Provost Marshal, and Margaret Walsh, was proprietor of the family estate in 1653, in which year he was transplanted to Connaught, with his mother and their dependants. His possessions, confiscated at the same time, consisted of Cantwell's Court, (with "a castle and a large stone house in repair"), 417 acres; Cantwell's Garden (now Grove), 206 acres; Tulloghbrine, 753 acres profitable, and 428 acres unprofitable, in the parish of Rathcoole; Strahan (with "a good castle in repair, and a water mill"), 339 acres; Kilfane, (with "the ruins of an old abby or church and a stone house"), and Closecreggs, 413 acres profitable and 20 unprofitable, in the Parish of Kilfane; and Rameeneduff, 24 acres, in the Parish of Ballenamara -- in all 2,600 acres. On the same occasion, John Cantwell, junr., forfeited Kilkerane (with "a water corn mill"), 448 acres, in the parish of Rathcoole; and Nicholas Cantwell Carrigeene, 277 acres, in the same parish.

John Cantwell joined the service of his exiled Majesty King Charles II, and served under his ensigns beyond the seas, finally becoming a Captain in Colonel James Dempsy's Regiment, which served under the Prince of Conde. He signed the petition of the officers of that Regiment to be restored to their estates but got no redress. No record remains of his ultimate fate. In 1663 Captain John Cantwell, son-in-law to Philip Purcell of Ballyfoyle, paid 1 pound hearth money for Cantwell's Court, and, in the same year, Redmund Purcell paid 6s. hearth money for the house or castle of Stroane.

Richard and Thomas Cantwell, gentlemen, both of Cantwell's Court, were attainted as adherents of King James II., on the 26th of April 1691. There is no further account of the Cantwell's Court family.

Extracts from The Calendar of Ormond Deeds

When consulting the Ormond Deeds the first mention of the name is Gilbert de Kentewell, who was among the witnesses, circa 1190, of a grant by Theobald Walter to Jordan de Losche of fifteen carucates near the vill of Clarah (Clara). [Vol I, p.5]

Between 1195-1206, Gilbert de Kentewelle and Walter de Kentewelle, were witnesses of a grant by the Archbishop of Cashel to Theobald Walter, Butler (Pincerna) of Ireland, for his homage and service Kylfinan (Kilfinnan) and eight carucates of land of the territory of Let, which Maurice son of Maurice held. [Vol I, p.8]

Gilbert de Kentewell is again among the witnesses of a grant to Theobald Walter, between 1200-1207, from the Abbot of Glendalough of all the land that belongs to him of the abbacy of Glendalough, within the fee of Arklow. [Vol I, p.9]
In 1201, Gilbert de Kentwell witnesses an acknowledgement by Theobald Walter that he and his heirs owe to William de Brahusa (Braose) and his heirs, the service of twenty-two knights, of lands which he holds in Munster; so that if William de Brahusa be not able to acquire the land and service which William de Burgh holds of the said Theobald within the said five and a half cantreds, same to be void. But if Theobald make good the said services, and de Brahusa acquire the said land which William de Burgh holds, the said lands and services to remain to Theobald and his heirs. [Vol I, p.13]

Prior to 1205 Gilbert de Kentewell witnessed the grant from William the Marshal to Theobald Walter of the vill of Arklow and the castle there, by the service of one knight; also Machtalewi (Gowran?) by the service of four knights; the vill of Thelagh (Tullagher, parish of Dysartmoon, barony of Ida), in Ossory; by the service of four knights. [Vol I, p.17]

Before 1206 Walter de Kentewell witnessed a grant from Theobald Walter to Adam de Hereford, for his homage and service the whole "theodum" of Chlenmonet in Helycaruel (Ely O'Carrol), and the vill of Clunfertmelo (Clonfertmulloe, now Kyle, Queen's County). [Vol I, p.17]

Walter de Kentewell was witness, circa 1206-1219 (or 1251-60), of a grant by William Mallard to the church of St. Mary of Kells and the Prior and canons the ecclesiastical profit arising from the land which he had of the donation of his lord, the Earl of Pembroke, namely, the mother church of Kilmacmintan (Mallardstown), in pure alms, saving the right of the present clerks while they live. [Vol I, p.18]

Thomas de Kentwell was among the witnesses, between 1258-1283, of a grant of ten marks yearly rent to Theobald Walter in the tenement of Bearnan Eli. [Vol I, p.57]

Circa 1270, Roger de Kentwell witnessed a grant to Theobald, Butler of Ireland, a half villate of land called Curragh in the tenement of Achedrum (Aughrim). [Vol I, p.67]

Sir Thomas de Kentwell witnesses a grant, circa 1270, from Robert Thalebot to Theobald Walter the land which he had of the donation of Laurence son of Hugh at Loch Capell (Loughcapple, barony of Middlethird, co. Tipperary). [Vol I, p.68]

Sir Thomas de Kentwell witnesses, between 1273-1287, a grant of lands by Theobald le Botiller to his free burgesses of Balligaveran (Gowran). [Vol I, p.77]

On September 29, 1277, William son of Fulc and Katherine Chauntecler his wife grant to Richard de Cantewell and his heirs an acre in the north of the way called Druff in the middle of the long meadow in the tenement of Kylmenaddok ... [Vol I, p.89]

After 1284, Sir Richard de Kantwell witnesses a grant from Mathildis de Mariscis to Sir Thoebald le Botiller and his heirs Karregnefech, to be held in fee, with homage and the sixth part of the service of a knight... [Vol I, p.108]

On May 13, 1291, Peter de Kantewell witnessed a grant from John son of Lodowic to Theobald son of Walter, Butler of Ireland, the vill of Thomlowe, the vill of Rynnyninche, rendering a rose on the feast
of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and the sixth part of the service of a knight's fee, when royal service is proclaimed. [Vol I, p.120]

In April, 1294, Thomas de Cantewell, knight, was among the witnesses of a grant to Roger de Pembrok, knight of land in Lowystown (Lavistown, parish of St. Martin's, barony of Gowran). [Vol I, p.129]

In June, 1297, Sir Thomas de Kentwell was among the witnesses where William Walensis grants to Theobald, Butler of Ireland, and his heirs, 16 marks yearly rent out of two knight's fees called Athkincon (Aghancon) and a moeity of a theodum in Corryn, and Moydale. [Vol I, p.135]

Circa 1300 Peter de Cantwell witnessed a quit-claim to Edmund le Botiller of Monennyn in Omany. [Vol I, p.140]

Circa 1300 Sir Philip de Cantwell, knight, among others, witness a grant from William son of David Fedunan to ... (illegible)... in the tenement of Fedunan (Fiddown, co. Kilkenny). Consideration 9 marks. [Vol I, p.140]

On March 29, 1304, Walter Cantuell witnessed a grant to Gilbert le Botiller of all of Ralph de Haselor's land in Ardhen in the tenement of Obride. [Vol I, p.147]

Circa 1305, John de Cantwell and Milo de Cantwell witnessed a grant from Nicholas de Hoo to Gilbert de Botiller and his heirs his manor of Novan. [Vol I, p.148]

November 1307, Thomas de Cantwell, knight witnessed a grant from Walter de Wyrecestre to Edmund son of Walter, Butler of Ireland of the manor of Dermor (Co. Tipperary) in exchange for the manor Novan (co. Kildare). [Vol I, p.161]

Circa 1310 (?), Thomas de Cantewell, knight, as well as Peter de Cantewell, were among the witnesses of a grant by the bishop of Killaloe to Edmund Walter, Butler of Ireland, one penny rent and the lordship of the manor of Louchkyn with its appurtenances in Ormond (Ermonia). [Vol I, p.175]

April 30, 1311 - John son of Richard Cadel grants to Edmund Walter m Butler of Ireland, all his right and claim in the manor of Clonleynan in the county of Carlow, except a certain piece of land called 'le Strynelond' (or Stryvelond)..., in exchange for which Edmund had given him the land of Smetheston i the barony of Balygaveran (Gowran). Thomas de Cantewell was among the witnesses. [Vol I, p.179]

April 6, 1317 - Thomas de Cantewell, knight, witnesses a grant from William de Sancto Leodegario (St. Leger) to his son James of property he had in Balyustre and in Kylhalary in the tenement of Rosconyll. [Vol I, p.215]

Circa 1329, Gervase Raly grants to Richard de Cantewel and his heirs a messuage and four acres in Rathmecally in the tenement of Kulmenaddoch which he had in marriage with his wife. Among the witnesses was a William de Cantewel. [Vol I, p.252]
June 15, 1331 - Thomas de Cantewell, knight, witnessed a grant, given at Kilkenny, from John son of Robert le Poer, knight, to Fulco son of Fulco de Fraxinetio (Freyne) and his heirs of all his lands and tenements in Fathely with all their appurtenances. [Vol I, p.267]

January 2, 1334 N.S. - Mabilia daughter of Peter Purcell in her liege viduity grants to Laurence son of Milo de Cantwell and his heirs all her right in six carucates of arable land in the towns of Roslethan, Lysouny, Graigecwrry, Monyfwsoge, Clonemaniron, with all their appurtenances and in four shillings worth of annual rent from Roslethan, eighteen shillings from Lysouny, twelve shillings from Graygcrrry and ten shillings from Monyfwsioge and Clonomanairyn. Given at Kildenall... Winesses: Nicholas Bywy, William Bywy and Richard Stok. [Vol I, p.280]

Simon Cantewell, and many others, were witnesses, September, 1343, of a grant of 80 acres in the tenement of Kildenal. [Vol I, p.324]

April 22, 1345 - Richard son of Milo de Cantewell appoints John son of Thomas Cantewell his bailiff and attorney for placing Milo son of John Cantewell of Kyllyns (Kells) in full seisin of one messuage and forty acres of land in Hayneston. [Vol I, p.328]

April 27, 1345 - Richard son of Milo de Cantewell quit-claims to John son of Thomas Cantewell and his heirs all his claim in one messuage and forty acres as above. Witnesses included John son of Milo Cantewell and Simon Cantewell. [Vol I, p.328]

September, 1347 - James Cantewell grants to Milo son of John Cantewell two messuages and three carucates of land in Lysneboyghill and Corgrage, To have and to hold for ever of the chief lords of the fee by the services due and accustomed. Given at Dirnechrawe on Saturday... Witnesses included Simon Cantewell. [Vol I, p.328]

November, 1347 - Thomas de Cantewell, knight, was among the witnesses where Simon son of Walter Purcell grants to Maurice son of Walter Purcell the advowson of the church of Fynel with all rights pertaining to the same. [Vol. I]

August 26, 1353 - Bartholomew Laffan grants to Simon son of John de Cantewell of Killyns, one messuage, a half carucate of land, twenty acres of wood, twenty of pasture, twenty of turbary and twenty of moor in le Pollagh near Kyllynys. To have and to hold to him and his heirs of the chief lords of the fee by the services due and accustomed. Witnesses: John son of Milo de Cantewell, Thomas Flaunt, James Cantewell, Adam Roth and Walter Broc. Given at Kyllynys on Monday next after the feast of St. Bartholomew in the 27th year of Edward III. [Vol. II, 21]

March 12, 1372 - Walter, son of Peter de Cantewell, and Peter, son of Peter de Cantewell, qui-claim for ever to James le Botiller, Earl of Ormond, and his heirs, all their right in all lands and tenements in Thomonyn and Rynskeghyn in Arrich (?). Given on the 12th day of March inb the 46th year if Edward III. Two Cantewell seals perfect. [Vol. II]