

Ballinrooaun House.



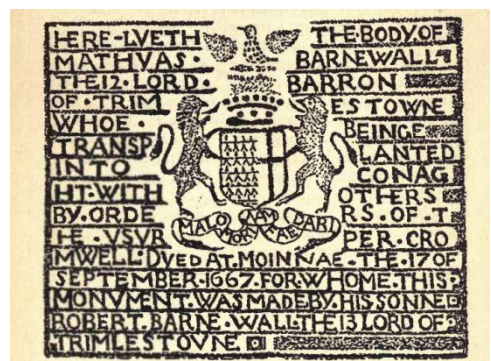
A study of the records of the Down Survey and Civil Survey of the 1640's shows Edmond O'Concannon, a catholic, as the ruling landowner of Ballinrooaun what was then known as Carrowcornovragh. The O'Concannons were Gaelic chiefs mainly in the Kilkerrin area of north east Galway. Edmond O'Concannon was dispossessed and relocated during the Cromwellian war when most of his lands were confiscated. However after that period the O'Concannons or Concannons would again be a prominent family in the locality when the lands of

Carrownacregg were granted to Sisby O'Concannon by patent dated March 21st 1678.⁷ Waterloo House, in the Aghanahil townland, replaced Carrownacregg as the main family residence in the early 19th century and in 1824 Edmund Concannon, of Waterloo Lodge, is recorded as a resident proprietor in County Galway. Carrownacregg West, including a mansion 'out of repair', was sold to James Browne in 1851 and is the current property of the Hughes family.

When the O'Concannons were displaced the lands of Carrowcornovragh were granted to Baron Trimlestown, of Trimlestown in the County of Meath, which is a title in the Peerage of Ireland. It was created in 1461 for Sir Robert Barnewall, brother of Nicholas Barnewall, Chief Justice of the Irish Common Pleas, and younger son of Sir Christopher Barnewall, Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland.

The Barnewalls arrived in Meath from County Dublin around 1349 when Sir Wolfram Barnewall received the manor of Crickstown and lands at Kilbrew. However, it was not until the fifteenth century that the Barnewalls began to add to their landed wealth, mainly as a result of the marriages of the sons of Sir Christopher Barnewall. The most advantageous marriage was made by his second son, Robert, who married the heiress of Sir John Brune sometime before 1442. This brought Robert a share in the lordship of Athboy including the important manor of Tremblestown (or Trimleston).

The Barnewalls were themselves a catholic family and were displaced in County Meath and were forced across the Shannon River as part of Cromwell's 'To hell or to Connaught' plan. Naturally they were least pleased about their uprooting and were reluctant arrivals to these parts. The most emphatic proof of this, if it were needed, is an inscription on the tombstone of Mathyas Barnewall, the 12th Baron, and who was the first of that family to control the lands of Carrowcornovragh or Ballinrooaun. He is buried in Kilconnell Abbey beneath these words: *"Here lyeth the body of Mathyas Barnewall the 12th Barron of Trimestowne whoe beinge transplanted into Conaght with others by orders of the usurper Cromwell dyed at Moinivae the 17 of September 1667 for whome this monument was made by his sonne"*



⁷ Landed Estates. Moore Institute, NUI Galway, n.d. Web. 31 July 2016.

sonne Robert Barnewall the 13 lord of Trimestowne. Here lyeth alsoe his uncle Richard Barnewall, James Barnewall who died at Cregan the 2 of October 1672 and James Barnewall of Aughrim. God have mercy on their soules”.

The Barnewall family actually resided in a Woodlawn House though not on the site of the present Woodlawn House as we know it while they also held dominion over the townlands of Gilkagh, Gorteendrishagh and Carrowferrikeen as well as some others on the Galway-Clare border. Again they married into well-established Galway tribes such as the Kirwans and Martins before the 15th Baron eventually returned to their original seat in Co. Meath in c.1740.

Control of the townland now came under the Lynch family who were one of the Tribes of Galway and the last Lynch, Alexander, actually resided in Shannonbridge on the Roscommon bank of the Shannon River when the property again changed ownership in the early 1830s. At this time it was controlled by two men namely George Porter who owned about 494 acres and Thomas H. Thomson who owned the remaining 154 acres. The Porter portion of the townland was sold under The Encumbered Estates Courts on March 25th, 1852 and was purchased by John Cannon Evans whose family would remain until ownership of the lands was eventually granted to all tenant farmers in the early 1900s. John Cannon Evans would later acquire the Thomson portion of the townland also in 1864.



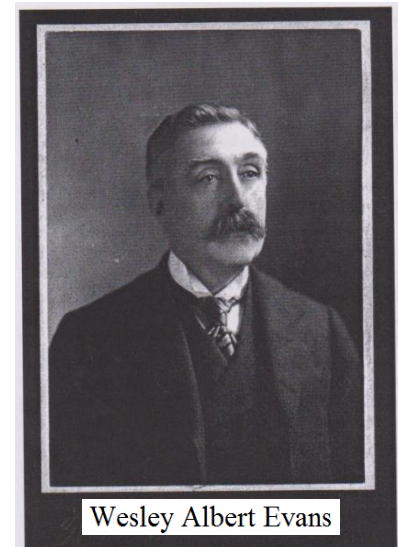
John Cannon Evans

John Cannon Evans was the eldest son of Samuel Evans and Esther Cannon and was born at Mount Evans near Woodlawn. He married Mary Anne Malley at Hollymount, Co. Mayo on May 15th 1827 and afterwards they resided at Cross House, near Menlough, in the parish of Killoscobe. They had no children and John Cannon Evans died on March 19th 1871 while Mary Anne died in 1895. The lands he held at Mount Evans were on lease from Lord Ashtown of Woodlawn Estate and the lands at Cross were leased from Lord Fitzgerald Vesey. Having purchased a portion of the Ballinrooaun townland in 1852 under the Encumbered Estates Court he continued to lease the major portion of the townland to his tenants but retained the original Porter farm (later Treacys, Murphys, Flynns) for his own use. The remaining part of Ballinrooaun he held on lease from Thomas H. Thompson (later Parkers) and he also farmed this portion.

John Cannon Evans will of March 3rd 1871 (sixteen days before his death) directed that all stock, farm produce, farming implements and furniture be sold by public auction except for £200 worth to

be chosen by his wife. To his wife he willed the interest in the lease of Mount Evans and that portion of Ballinrooaun that he had purchased in 1852. He willed that portion of Ballinrooaun held on lease from Thomas H. Thompson to his nephew Wesley Albert Evans. However two days later he was to revoke this latter part of the will and instead left it to his wife's nephew Thomas Noble Holton. He left part of the Cross farm to Robert John Parker of Ballymacward.⁸

Wesley Albert Evans was the nephew of John Cannon Evans and was born in 1848. He farmed his uncle's land at Ballinrooaun and lived in Ballinrooaun House. It appears however that he ran up a considerable debt following which he requested assistance from his brother-in-law John Robert Parker and it was agreed that John Robert Parker would purchase the Thomas Noble Holton portion of Ballinrooaun and lease it back to Wesley. However Wesley was to emigrate and John could not recoup either the purchase cost of the land or the repayment of Wesley's loans to the Bank of Ireland in Mountbellew and it was eventually sold to the Land Commission and further divided amongst the tenant farmers of Ballinrooaun and Ballaghmagrosheen.



Wesley first married on July 4th 1878 and described himself as a gentleman farmer and gave his address as the Wicklow Hotel, Wicklow Street, Dublin. He would emigrate a few years later and marry again in 1885 and in 1902. Wesley died on April 6th 1909 in Chicago and is buried in Philadelphia.

The fields of Ballinrooaun had seen numerous owners over the previous centuries but they were finally distributed to local tenants in the early 1900s and the final act was played out in 1917 with the eventual distribution of what was by now a Parker farm to those very same families along with some others. While Ballinrooaun never had a 'Big House' it did have a substantial residence in Ballinrooaun House and its associated large holding. It would be safe to say that it was always governed by absentee landlords who at most times would have leased the property onwards. Ballinrooaun House would however have been a hub for farming on a large scale with expansive fields and courtyard as well as dedicated outhouses for a variety of farming enterprises and indeed much of this has been retained and still in daily use.



Views of Ballinrooaun Ringfort



⁸ Parker, Herbert. "The Evans Family of Cross House." Letter to Jimmy Laffey. 02 Apr. 2014. MS. N.p.