

# Murphy of Gragara and Castle Annagha

BY TOM HOYNE

Edward Murphy of Gragara, Jenkinstown, Co. Kilkenny, married Johanna Keating. Both are buried at Coolcraheen. (*Tombstone*). Edward's Ossory Will was proved in 1734. (*Phill.* 23). It is uncertain if he was the "Edward Murphy, City of Kilkenny, gent" who was attainted as a Jacobite, 21st April, 1691. (**Carr. IV, 402**) His son, WILLIAM MURPHY of Gragara, was born in 1710. He died on the 11th October, 1769 (**Tombstone**) and his Ossory Will was proved in 1770. (*Phill.* 24) William married on the 11th February, 1745-6, Margaret, daughter of Michael Langton fitz Nicholas, of Kilkenny City, by his wife, Eleanor, daughter of Pierce Rothe. The marriage was solemnised at the Langton House in Kilkenny. Margaret was born on Wednesday, 16th August, 1721. (**Lang. 106**) She died 15th February, 1771 (**Tombstone**) or 1774 (**Lang. 106**) at the house of her sister, Jane Langton, (the house in which she was born) "of a dropsical complaint". (**Lang. 106**) The Prerogative Will of Margaret Murphy, alias Langton, Gragara, Co. Kilkenny, widow, was proved in 1774. (*Vicars* 342) Betham was more precise. He gives the date of the Will as 31-1-1774, proved 15-6-1774. A Mrs. Margaret Murphy contributed £5 13 9 to the building fund of the old St. Mary's Chapel in Kilkenny in 1771.

(**Carr. 111, 126**) "Mrs. Murphy of Gragara" contributed £10 to the same fund in November, 1773. (**Ibid. 127**) William and Margaret Murphy had several children. (*Prim.* 106) We know of five of them (**Betham**) EDWARD, the eldest, James, (of whom we have no information) May, who married Joseph Burke of Rockville, Co. Tipperary, a daughter who married Richard Shee, and Margaret, who died unmarried in 1775, aged 17, buried in Coolcraheen (**Tombstone**).

EDWARD MURPHY WAS BORN IN 1747. He went to Spain and became a prosperous merchant in Cadiz. According to tradition he was engaged in the wine trade. He married in Cadiz, 28th July, 1765, his first cousin, Josepha or Josetta,

daughter of Nicholas Langton of Cadiz, by his wife, Frances, daughter of Laurence or Lorenzo Carew of Cadiz. (**Lang. 106**) Josepha is stated to have brought Edward Murphy a fortune of £20,000 (Pub. Gaz.) Edward inherited a considerable fortune from his uncle, Peter Langton of Cadiz, who was also his wife's uncle. Peter Langton died in 1779 or 1781 and was buried in the Cathedral of Cordova (Lang. & Prim 104-5).

In the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Waterford, there is a set of six silver candlesticks, each two feet in height and inscribed "The gift of Mrs. Laurence Carew of Cadiz, to the parish chapel of Waterford, 1751." There is also a silver reliquary, about 2ft 3in high, inscribed "Orate pro Dr. Laurentia Carew, 1752". (**Egan 526-7**) I have seen the candlesticks and the reliquary.

Edward Murphy returned to Ireland about 1795 and purchased the estate of Annaghs, near New Ross, and the house and lands of Birchfield, near Kilkenny, besides a third property in the county of Carlow. (**Prim 106**)

Edward and Josepha had eight children, all of whom died under the age of six years except one son, EDWARD JOSEPH (of whom later) and one daughter, Frances, who married Thomas Fitzgerald, Esq., and died at Caen in Normandy, leaving five children. (**Prim 106**)

Edward Murphy built the present Annaghs House. The house is said to have been designed by James Gandon (1743-1824) but I have no documentary support for this statement. The house has features which suggest that John Roberts of Waterford may have been the architect. The foundation stone is inscribed as follows, "This stone laid by Edward Murphy, 24th April, 1797". The basement storey is faced with granite, the facings of the upper storeys, parapets etc. is Portland stone. This stone is said to have been cut and dressed at the Portland quarries and imported ready for use. (**Traditional**). The sundial, now in the garden of Mrs. Alfred J. Mockler, The Lodge, Kill, Co. Kildare, is also of Portland stone. Its brass dial is inscribed "Edward Murphy, Annaghs", but there is no date. Annaghs House is said to have cost £20,000 to build. (**Don. 13**) Tradition says that Edward Murphy paid all the labour connected with the building in gold coin which came across the seas in his own ships. The gold is said to have been shipped

in wine casks embedded in tallow in order to lessen the risk of discovery and possible loss. Edward Murphy purchased other lands in the vicinity of Annaghs and the late Mr. A. J. Mockler told me that his estates amounted to about 3,000 acres.

The Murphys used to attend Mass in Rosbercon church which was burned during the rebellion of 1798. A new church was built about 1800 and Edward Murphy presented the High Altar. The altar remained in use there until another new church was completed in Robsercon in 1950. It was then removed to Mullinarrigle (Listerlin) Church (a chapel-of-ease for Rosbercon parish) where it is still in use. (*Murphy 12*). It is a simply styled wooden altar but it was probably thought to be rather a fine one in 1800.

"Edward Murphy, Cadiz," appears amongst the list of subscribers to the Kilkenny Charity School Society for the years 1785 and 1793-96. A Barnaby Murphy of Cadiz also contributed to the same fund. (*Birch 12*).

Edward Murphy died 8th May, 1807. His obituary notice in the "Leinster Journal" (Kilkenny), May 9/13, 1807 reads,— "Died on Friday last at Annagh, in this county, Edward Murphy, Esq." He is buried with his parents and grand-parents at Coolcraheen, close to the family home at Gragara but nearly 40 miles from Annaghs. His tombstone is inscribed as follows;

"Here lieth the Body of Edward Murphy of Castle Annaghs, who departed this life on the 8th of May, A.D. 1807, in the 60th Year of his Age. R.I.P. Erected to the memory of the kindest and best of fathers".

Josepha returned to Spain and died at Cadiz, 16th October, 1826. (**Prim 106**) I do not know where she was buried. The Langtons had a vault in the church of the Women's Hospital in Cadiz, but her brother, Michael Laurence Joseph Langton who died in 1810, "was interred in the burial ground of the parish of St. Josef exterior of the walls of Cadiz, at the right of the chapel, in the tomb No. 118, on the high row of the principal front in the 11th division, with his name and age and day of his death inscribed on the monument" (**Lang. 107**) Michael Laurence Joseph Langton's first wife, "Marie Elene Wadding, daughter of Gerard Wadding of Carrick on Suir, and Anastasia Murphy of Kilkenny (ob. 1763) . . . was buried in the

vault of St. Simon Stock's altar in the Carmelites Church of San Lucar de Barrameda." (*Lang. 84*).

It is not clear when Mrs. Murphy returned to Spain but local tradition has something to say about it. The story runs like this: "Edward Murphy married a wealthy Spanish lady—her name is forgotten. He returned to Ireland from Spain and commenced the building of Annaghs, being kept in funds with gold shipped from Spain by his wife. When the house was completed (and most of her money spent) the Spanish lady came over to Annaghs but didn't like the place. The freshly cut Portland stone was almost white and cold looking. The trees now growing about the house were not then planted and maybe the weather was bad too! Mrs. Murphy stayed at Annaghs only for a short time before going back to Spain, leaving Edward a "grass widower".

Perhaps Mrs. Murphy went back to Spain before 1801. In the course of a letter dated from Bellevue, 7th April, 1801, Richard Sheil to William Garvey, we find "Last week your father was so kind as to come here to see us and my brother and I returned with him next day to Annas where we breakfasted to return Mr. E. Murphy's visit". (**Garvey Archives**) The letter goes on to further mention of William's father, Patrick Garvey, his brother Thomas, and his sister (Mary, who later married Patrick Kearns) but there is no reference to Mrs. Murphy. (See notes re. William Garvey and Richard Sheil below).

The only son of Edward and Josepha to survive childhood, EDWARD JOSEPH MURPHY, was presumably born in Cadiz. I have not got the date of his birth. According to tradition he came to Ireland with his father. He seems to have got deeply into debt. The Peninsular War (1808 - 1814) may have been the cause of his financial ruin. This war certainly caused his cousins, the Langtons, to leave Spain and settle in England—at Bath. (**Prim 81**) Another suggestion is less favourable towards him, "young Edward was a ne'er do well, and last appears flying from Annaghs, with his creditors hard on his heels". (Don. 14) Yet the "ne'er do well" seems to have erected the monument at Coolcraheen inscribed "to the memory of the kindest and best of fathers". Annaghs was held by various tenants under the Courts until 1850 when it was convey-

ed to Walter Sweetman under the provisions of the Encumbered Estates Act. (Don. 14 and Mr. Mockler).

Edward Joseph Murphy sold his interest in Birchfield to the Catholic Diocesan authorities in December, 1813, for £2,000. **(Carr. 1,269)** "On the 1st April, 1813, the House and Demense of Birchfield was advertised for letting, in the **Kilkenny Chronicle**. The lands consisted of 70 acres, and proposals were to be submitted to Ed. Murphy, Esq., Castle Annas, Ross, or to Patrick Byrne, Esq., Kilkenny. The advertisement appeared for the last time on May 6th . . . in December, 1813, the property was taken over by the College authorities, and the "fine" of £2,000 was paid to Mr. Murphy for the lease".

**(Birch, St. Kieran's, 96-97)** "The rent paid seems to have varied from year to year". **(Ibid.)** "On October 9th, 1838, the rent on Birchfield was paid to Mr. Smithwick, the new owner of the farm and premises, and at the end of that year the students of St. Kyran's College left Birchfield" **(Ibid 117)**. It may be that the Murphy interest in Birchfield was subject to a head rent. I am told that the College authorities decided not to build there owing to the difficulty of obtaining freehold title to the property. **(Fr. Clohosey)**

Tradition, **(Mrs. Mockler)**: "Young Edward Murphy was a very charming man, a great wit and raconteur. Becoming financially embarrassed he left Annaghs in some haste and was driven by his coachman . . . Fortune, to Waterford, where he took a ship to France. Reaching Paris, he stayed for a time at one of the fashionable hotels, where (being deemed a great attraction for other guests) he was maintained free of charge".

Edward Joseph Murphy died in the debtors prison in London in 1841. (Prim 106) I do not know if he ever married.

This incomplete account of an interesting Kilkenny family is published with the hope that some of its readers may be in possession of information that would enable many obvious gaps to be filled. The writer would welcome suggestions as to sources of which he is unaware.

## NOTES

WILLIAM GARVEY was the second son of Patrick Garvey of Castle Annaghs by his wife, Mary, daughter of William Power, and grandson of John Garvey and his wife, Ellen, daughter of Colonel Thomas Shortall. John Garvey settled at Castle Annaghs early in

the eighteenth century. It would appear from the above letter that the family was still at Annaghs in 1801. They moved later to Brownsford Castle, near Inistioge, where the family continued until the death, without issue, of Pierce Francis Garvey in 1874. While at Castle Annaghs the Garveys lived in the house (now demolished) attached to the ruined castle. A sketch of this house was published with an article signed "G. H. Ross, Sept. 24th, 1835" in the "Dublin Penny Journal," January 30, 1836. The article states that the house "was occupied till very lately." This explains why the Garveys and the Murphys could both be described as "of Castle Annaghs" at the same time. Patrick Garvey died intestate in 1812.

William Garvey was born in 1756 and died in 1824. He went to Spain about 1780 where he found employment with the firm of Devereux, Sheil & Co. of Cadiz, wine merchants. Within a few years he engaged in the wine trade on his own account and founded the Bodega de San Patricio at Jerez de la Frontera. This Bodega (the largest in Spain) continues in the ownership of his descendants to the present time and only they can become shareholders in the Company, Garvey S.A.

RICHARD SHEIL, as well as being a wine merchant in Cadiz, was also engaged in other branches of trade. When he wrote the letter referred to he was in Ireland, partly on a holiday and partly on a business trip which he proposed to extend to England, Germany, the Low Countries and France. Presumably he was a kinsman (uncle?) of Richard Lalor Sheil (1791-1851) M.P., barrister-at-law, author and orator.

#### SOURCES :

- Phill.** — "Indexes to Irish Wills," edited by W. P. W. Phillimore, London, 1909.
- Vicars.** — "Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland," edited by Sir Arthur Vicars, Dublin, 1897.
- Betham.** — M/s abstracts from the Prerogative Wills, compiled by Sir William Betham, Ulster King-of-Arms, circa 1810 and preserved at the Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle. Examined by courtesy of Basil O'Connell, K.M.
- Lang.** — "The Register of the Langton Family," commenced by Nicholas Langton Fitz Richard Fitz John (1562-1632) and continued by several of his descendants. Edited, with footnotes, by J. G. A. Prim and published in the Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society (J.R.S.A.I.) April, 1864.
- Prim.** — John George Augustus Prim's notes with the above Register.
- Tombstone.** — Murphy tombstones at Coolcraheen, Conahy Parish, Co. Kilkenny.
- Carr.** — "History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory," by Rev. William Carrigan, D.D., M.R.I.A., 4 Vols., Dublin, 1905.
- Pub. Gaz.** — "The Public Gazetteer" (Newspaper), 3rd September, 1765. Information from the late Mr. J. J. Neary, Waterford, who obtained it from Squadron-Leader Charles Gray.
- Don.** — "The Christian Brothers in New Ross," by Patrick Donovan, Wexford, 1952.

- Murphy.** — “The Parish of Rosbercon,” by Very Rev. William Murphy, P.P. Paper read to the New Ross Historical & Archaeological Society, 14th April, 1958, Stereotype, unpublished.
- Garvey Archives.** — Original letter now in the Garvey Archives, Bodega de San Patricio, Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Examined by courtesy of Ilus. Sr. Don Jaime Fraser-Luckie, Export Director, and Sr. Don Manuel Pastor, General Manager Emeritus, Garvey S.A.
- Birch.** — “Some Early Schools of Kilkenny,” by Rev. Peter Birch, M.A., Ph.D. Paper in the “Old Kilkenny Review,” No. 12, 1960.
- Birch. St. Kieran’s** — “Saint Kieran’s College, Kilkenny,” by Rev. P. Birch, M.A., Ph.D., Dublin, 1951.
- Fr. Clohosey.** — Very Rev. T. J. Clohosey, B.A., P.P., Mooncoin. Verbal information.
- Mockler.** — Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Mockler, The Lodge, Kill, Co. Kildare, owners of Annagh 1905-1947.
- Leinster Journal.** — Files of “Finn’s Leinster Journal,” later the “Kilkenny Journal,” preserved at the “Journal” office, Kilkenny. Examined by permission of Mr. W. J. Kenealy.
- Egan.** — “History, Guide and Directory of the County and City of Waterford,” by P. M. Egan, Kilkenny, n.d.

## Murphy of Gragara and Castle Annaghs

Edward Murphy of Gragara = Johanna Keating  
 Will proved, 1734. Buried at Coolraheen. Buried at Coolraheen.

William Murphy of Gragara = Margaret, dau. of Michael Langton  
 b. 1710. d. 11 Oct. 1769. of Kilkenny and Eleanor Rothe,  
 Buried at Coolraheen. Will his wife, b. 16 Aug., 1721, d. 15  
 proved 1770. Feb. 1774 at Kilkenny. Buried at  
 Coolraheen.

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28 July, 1769

Edward Murphy of Cadiz and Castle Annaghs, b. 7 1747, d. at Annaghs 8 May 1807. Buried at Coolraheen = Joseph, dau. of Nicholas Langton of Cadiz and Frances Carew his wife, b. 1748, d. at Cadiz, 11 Oct. 1826

James May = Joseph Burke dau. = Richard Shee

Margaret d. unm. 19 April 1775. Buried at Coolraheen

Edward Joseph Murphy of Castle Annaghs, b. presumably at Cadiz, d. in London 1841

Frances  
d. at Caen  
in Normandy

= Thomas Fitzgerald

Six other children  
who d. in infancy

Five children

The above pedigree is compiled from M/ss., published material and tombstones. See attached notes.

T. J. Hoyne. September 1960. January 1967.