

A Kilkenny Printer's Will

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In the *Old Kilkenny Review* 1978, there is an article, Finn's Leinster Journal, by Mary Kenealy. On the 24th January 1767 Edmund Finn produced the first edition of his newspaper, *Finn's Leinster Journal* from an address in St. Mary's graveyard in Kilkenny. The price was 4d. It was published twice weekly and circulated in all the local towns where messengers brought it on horseback and it went by post to Dublin and London. The address of St. Mary's graveyard is explained by the fact that all the surrounding houses opened onto the graveyard as the wall forming St. Mary's Lane was not then built. Soon after Edmund Finn transferred to another house in High Street.

In 1777 just over ten years after starting his paper he died leaving a widow and seven young children, the eldest not more than eight years old. Edmund Finn was buried in St. Mary's graveyard. His wife Catherine Butler carried on the printing of the paper.

The will of Edmund Finn, printer and bookseller of Kilkenny, dated the 4th April 1777 was proved in the Prerogative Court on 15th August 1777. The will itself, formerly preserved in the Public Record Office, Dublin was destroyed in the burning of the Four Courts in 1922. However, Sir William Betham had made an abstract of the will and this is available in the National Archives. The names of Edmund Finn's relatives mentioned in the will are his wife Catherine, his two sons Michael and James, his five daughters Mary, Elizabeth, Catherine, Frances and Anne, his kinsman James Finn, his aunt Jane Flinn and his brother-in-law Michael Butler.

After Edmund Finn's death the *Journal* bore the name of Catherine Finn to the end of 1800 except for the year 1799, when the name of Michael Finn was substituted. Catherine herself lived until 1832 when she was eighty three years of age.

Michael, the first child of Edmund Finn and Catherine Butler was baptised on 10th October 1769 and in June 1796

he married Sarah, daughter of the late James Williams, a Dublin bookseller. In 1800 Michael Finn became partner with William Williams in a private bank at Kilkenny, which failed in 1806. The second son James died in Kilkenny on 30th July 1793 aged 19.

Michael Butler, printer, married Ellen Archdekin in Kilkenny in 1758 and he died on 8th May 1779.

The inscription on the Finn tomb in St. Mary's graveyard is almost illegible. To ensure that the Finn family will not be forgotten any legible words on the tomb were recut in August 1994 by Mr. Larry Creamer, Emly, Co. Tipperary at the request of Kilkenny Archaeological Society

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The Subscription for a fund to build a new Chapel at Graiguenemana, for the increased population there, was lately remitted to Newports' Bank in Waterford, by the Treasurer, accompanied with a request, that until the building commenced, the Bank would generously allow the fund to derive some interest for the money; and Messrs Newport, Grattan & Scott, have replied by letter, in the most beneficent terms, requesting leave to contribute Fifty Guineas from themselves towards erecting the Chapel, – consenting (however unusual) to allow the full interest of 6 per cent. – expressing their lively satisfaction that the Protestant Neighbourhood had acted on the occasion with enlightened liberality, – and concluding with their own constant conviction and earnest wish, “that the period is not remote when all religious distinctions will be done away forever”

[*Leinster Journal*, 16.12.1809]