# The Nunans Of The Province of Munster Ireland

BY

FRANCIS NUNAN HOWARD

This is a revision of my hastily written monograph entitled "The Nunans 'Muscraighe Ui Nunain of Muskreenownaine', Parish of Drumcolliher, Province of Munster, County Limerick, Ireland." It was published in 1968 and was primarily for my family.

While this book is by no means definitive, I hope that it will serve to encourage other members of the Nunan-Noonan sept to send me whatever information they may have on their families, which I will incorporate in another edition.

My wife and I visited Ireland briefly in 1963 but unfortunately did not locate any Nunans or Noonans. In the ensuing years, I corresponded with the late John Nunan of Cappanihan [Cappanehane]; his grand-neice, Mrs. Teresa Herbert Dennehy of Bruff, County Limerick; Lt. Col. Charles Graham Conyers of Ardshanbally, Adare, County Limerick; Mrs. J.M. Dance (nee Cicely Conyers) of Toronto, Ont., Canada; Rev. Father Philip Noonan of Mullinahone, Thurles, County Tipperary; Mr. & Mrs. Sean Nunan of Ballinluig, Ballyfeard, County Cork; Sister Margaret Herbert of St. Rose Convent, Roseville, California and with Mr. John J. Nunan of Aylesford, Greens Hills. County Kilkenny. I wish to express my appreciation

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for their kind helpfulness.

My son and daughter-in-law, Dr. & Mrs. Calhoun L. H. Howard, made a special trip to Ireland in 1967 to make the "rubbings" of the gravestone inscriptions in the grave-yard of the Corkomoyd Church at Castletown Conyers, which are included in this book.

I am particulary eager to hear from any-, one who can confirm the deduction I made after extensive research that the ruined church at Castletown Conyers is the Corko-moyd Church of Corcomohide, County Limerick, that was originally built c. 1275 and rebuilt c. 1388, after having been destroyed in a war in 1302.

Francis Nunan Howard

<sup>12</sup> Howell Lane, Westhampton Beach, New York, U.S.A., 11978.

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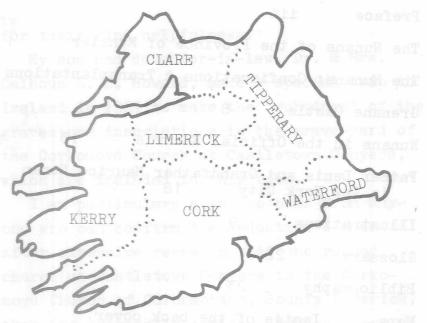
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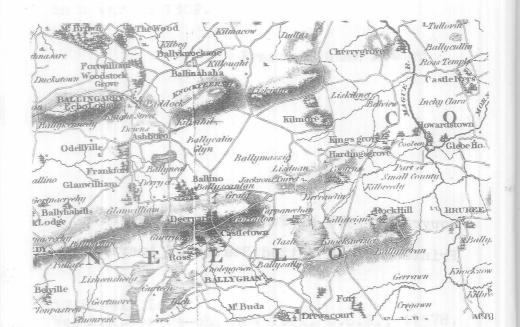
Maps Inside of the back cover.

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The PROVINCE of MUNSTER



### The NUNANS of the PROVINCE of MUNSTER

The Province of Munster in Ireland consists of the Counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford.

The Nunan name, which now is frequently spelled Noonan, in modern Irish is O Nuanain, which is a corruption or contraction of the older Oh Ionmhaineain, of which the anglicised form, O Hinunane is approximately a phonetic rendering.

The Nunan sept <sup>2</sup> originated in Co. Cork in the Middle Ages (400-1400 A.D.) and in the 8th century some members of the Nunan sept were erenaghs <sup>3</sup> of St. Berichter's monastery at Tullylease, in the Barony of Duhallow, Co. Cork.

A priory church incorporating 12th century masonry was built on the site of St.

Berichter's monastery during the 15th and 16th centuries. The ruins of it are now classified as one of the National Monuments of Ireland and it is now under the supervision of the National Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works in Dublin.

From ancient times to about the middle of the 17th century there was a parcel of land in the Parish of Drumcolliher, Co. Limerick, which adjoins Corcomohide, which is about 8-miles West of Rath Luirc <sup>5</sup>, Co. Cork, in the

direction of Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, which was known as Muskreenowaine, which is the anglicised form of Muscraighe Ui Nunain, which, if translated freely, means O Nunan or O Noonan territory. This included the modern Townland of Gardenfield (East, South & West).

About 12-miles N. E. of Drumcolliher there is an area named in the Ordnance Survey maps as the Townland of Castletown, Co. Limerick; Barony, Upper Connello; Parish of Corcomohide, in which the ruins of an early 13th century Roman Catholic Church remain. This church belonged to a convent of Augustinian nuns. 7 My Nunan ancestors lived in and around this place, which was renamed Castletown Conyers c. 1703.

From c. 1276 to c. 1287 a descendant of one of the 1169 [1170] Anglo-Norman invaders of Ireland, Maurice F. Maurice, was in possession of the Parish of Corcomohide. It is my belief that he had the church built there, which is referred to in "The Black Book of Limerick" as the Corkomoyd Church of Corcomohide, Co. Limerick.

In 1287 a daughter of Maurice F. Maurice,
Juliana, who was the wife of Thomas de Clare,
granted the rights of the patronage of the
Corkomoyd Church to St. Mary's Cathedral in
the City of Limerick. The latter was founded

3 c. 1194. In the same year Juliana de Clare also surrendered its advowson 9 to St. Mary's Cathedral.

An account of the period states that "The Corkomoyd Church, located in the Baron's demesne 10 in the Parish of Corcomohide, was destroyed in a war in the year 1302."

About 1344 another descendant of the Anglo-Norman invaders, Richard de Clyfford [Clifford] occupied the Parish of Corcomohide after Maurice F. Maurice and the de Clares, and is believed by me to have rebuilt the Corkomoyd Church.

In 1349 an Irish sept, the Mac Eneiry's, built a castle near the Corkomoyd Church in the Parish of Corcomohide, the ruins of which now can be seen there.

In 1389 a relative of Richard de Clyfford, Thomas de Clyfford, became  $L_{0}rd$  of the Manor of Corcomohide.

Because of their allegiance to King James II of England (a Catholic) the Mac Eneiry's castle and lands were confiscated by the Crown in 1688.

In c. 1703 Captain George Conyers of the British Army acquired "The Townland of Castletown, Co. Limerick, Barony, Upper Connello; Parish of Corcomohide" from the Crown and he renamed it Castletown Conyers. He was buried

in a mausoleum inside of the Corkomoyd Church.

His descendants lived there in a mansion named

Castletown House until about 1912.

My father, Denis Nunan, was born in or near Castletown Conyers in 1854. His father, Maurice Nunan, was born in that vicinity in 1827. My paternal grandmother was Margaret Drinan, whose sept originated in the Province of Connacht, which is N. W. of the Province of Munster. My father was a cousin of the Harolds or Rath 'Denis Luirc, Co. Cork.

In the middle of the 17th century many of the Co. Cork and Co. Limerick Nunans left their ancestral homes for other counties in Munster. Many also emigrated with other native Irish Catholics to America, France, Spain, Portugal and to the West Indies. The Spanish name "Nunez" is believed to be derived from Nunan.

Castletown Conyers and the surrounding countryside is pastoral and the principal agricultural activities there are horse breeding, cattle and dairy farming. It is located in The Golden Vale. An apt description of the place is given in Samuel Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary of Ireland", which was published in London in 1837, from which the following excerpts were taken:

"Castletown Conyers, a parish, in the barony

of Upper Connello East, County of Limerick, and the Province of Munster, 3-miles S. from Ballingarry: the population is returned with the union or parish of Corcomohide. This place, called anciently 'Kilmoodun' . . . was granted by King William III to Captain George Convers, from whom it derives its present appellation . . . The parish is situated on the road from Rathkeale to Charleville, and comprises 10.086 statute acres. as apploted under the Tithe Act: about 1/8 th. of the land is under tillage, producing good crops; the remainder is in demesnes, and in meadow and pasture lands belonging to large dairy farms; there is a large tract of turbary (peat bog) which is very valuable as fuel. The whole of the substrata is limestone, of which several large quarries are extensively worked. The surrounding country is highly improved, and abounds with interesting scenery and with numerous handsome seats, of which the principal within the parish of Castletown Convers is the residence of Charles Convers, Esq. . . . Fairs are held on Febuary 11th; April 17th; November 3rd and December 1st. chiefly for cattle, sheep, pigs and pedlery. . . . There is a dispensary in the Village of Castletown Conyers. The ruins of the old church are situated near the village; and there are some small fragments of an ancient castle, but they are inadequate to convey a distinct idea of the original extent or character of the buildings."

- 1 Mac Lysaght, E., "Irish Families", Dublin, 1957.
- In the old Irish system, a sept was a ruling family tracing its descent from a common ancestor; a clan. They bore a common surname and inhabited the same area.
- Originally a monastic official; later a hereditary farmer of parish lands.
- 4 Seventh century Anglo-Saxon Saint. Also spelled St. Berechert, St. Beretchert, St. Beiricheart, etc.
- 5 Formerly named Charleville, Co. Cork.
- 6 From an Ordnance Survey Office letter dated August 19th, 1963.
- 7 Leask, Dr. H. G., "Irish Churches & Monastic Buildings", Dundalk, Ireland, three volumes, 1955-1960.
  - 8 Mac Caffrey, Dr. James, Editor. "The Black Book of Limerick", Dublin, 1907.
  - 9 When property was bequeathed to the ecclesiastical authorities it was called an "Advowson".
  - 10 An estate.
  - 11 Royal Irish Academy's extract from T.J. Westropp's "Ancient Churches in County Limerick". Pro. XXV; Section C; No. 8, pages #416-417.
  - 12 Ibid.
  - 13 Ibid.
  - 14 From letters from Mrs. J. M. Dance, nee Cicely Conyers of Castletown Conyers, Co. Limerick, who now lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

- NUNANS in the OFFICIAL RECORDS
- 1230 O Onrleioe Ua Hionmaineain, a holy monk in the Cistercian Abbey at Boyle, Co. Roscommon, died.
- 1233 Anlane [Alinus] O None lived in the City of Limerick.
- 1265 Anlane O None was the first Nunan to be a Bailiff in the City of Limerick.
- 1279 Anlane O Noyne was a Bailiff.
- 1280 " " " "
- 1295 Anlonus O Neonan was a Bailiff.
- 1361 Dr. William O Neonan, alias Ouhynaunen, was a surgeon. He operated on Lionel, the Duke of Clarence, in Ireland.
- 1391 Analus O Noyn was a Bailiff.
- 1394 " " " "
- 1462 Anlenus O Neonan was a Bailiff.
- 1502 The Venerable Father Richard Y. Hunwan was a Clerick of the Diocese of Limerick.
- 1688 The principal Irish names in Connologh Barony were Nunane and O Nonane. There were 12 persons so named in the Census of 1659.
- 1783 Mary (a'li Conyers) Nunan was born at Castletown Conyers. The three letters,

- "a'li" on the headstone over her grave are believed to be an abbreviation of the Latin "a'li-as-dictus" which means: otherwise called; another name or an assumed name.
- 1810 Denis Nunan, a soldier, lived in Cork.
- 1815 Denis Nunan lived at Moyge, Co. Cork.
- 1823 Denis Nunan of the Parish of Corcomohide held the Gurtroe Bog.
- 1823 Denis Nunan held 16-acres, 1-rood, at an annual rental of ± 15/2/0.
- 1823 Denis Nunan held 52-acres, 2-roods.

  The annual rent was £29/7/6. Apart
  from Charles Conyers, whose address
  was Castletown House, Castletown Conyers, Co. Limerick, this was the large
  est Applotment in that area.
- 1823 Denis Nunan lived in the Townland of Gurtalassa. He was related to John, Conner, Darby, Francis, James, Patrick and to a widow Nunan.
- 1823 Denis Nunan held 1-acre in the Townland of Carhuard in Drumcolliher.
- 1824 Catherine Kilbridge was born in or near Castletown Conyers. She was the mother of Mary Nunan Kelly.
- 1827 Denis Nunan lived at Moyge, Co.Cork.
- 1827 Daniel & Denis Nunan lived in Charleville, Co. Cork. (now Rath Luirc).



Inside of the church looking East. Note the gravestones.



Gravestones of Mary Kelly, Mary Nunan and Ellen Noonan.

The Corkomoyd Church at Castletown Conyers, Co. Limerick.



the enclosure, 1963 The author inside







1864-1895

Mary Kelly 1844-1923

Piscina





My father, Denis Nunan, from a photograph by Sarony of Union Square, New York, c. 1885.



One of Bianconi's public coaches in the South of Ireland in 1856. There were no railroads then. Father and grandfather used one of these coaches to reach the Port of Cobh, Co. Cork, to board the S/S "Etna" for New York on October, 1864.



Cobh, Co. Cork as it looks today. St. Colman's Cathedral at left.

Photograph by courtesy of the Irish Tourist Board, Dublin.



The S/S "Etna" in a storm on the Atlantic Ocean in January, 1864, during which she lost her mainmast. Built in 1955 for the Cunard Line by Caird & Co., Greenock, Scotland. Bought by Inman Line in 1860. Length, 304-ft., width, 37-ft. Single propeller Speed 11-knots per hour.



The Hudson River and West Street, looking North, c. 1869. Ship at upper left resembles the S/S "Etna."



Lower Manhattan Island from Hoboken, N. J. The Elysian Fields left and center and Steven's Castle in right foreground, c. 1866.



Lower Broadway c. 1850. Start of Park Row left of Barnum's Museum at left. Astor House right foreground with St. Paul's Chapel and Trinity Church beyond.



J.J. Astor's Park Row stores, which were built c. 1854. Patterson Brothers occupied the 27 Park Row building, which is fourth from the right, from 1858 to 1938.



This Priory Church at Tullylease, in the Barony of Duhallow, Co. Cork, which is in a remote valley 3-miles S.W. of Drumcolliher,, Co. Limerick, was built in the 15th & 16th centuries and incorporates 12th century masonry work.

It was built on the site of a monastery that was founded by St. Berichter, a 7th century Anglo-Saxon saint.

Some members of the Nunan sept were erenaghs at St. Berichter's monastery.

The remains consist of the ruined nave and chancel, many fragments of sepulchral slabs, the saint's 'house', 'tombstone' and a holy well. The nave is 44-ft. 3-in. in length and 27-ft. wide. The chancel is 31-ft. by 17-ft. 6-inches.

This church is one of the National Monuments of Ireland.

Photograph by courtesy of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.

The NUNANS: CONFISCATIONS/TRANSPLANTATIONS.

In the years 1653-1654 many native Roman Catholic Irish people were transplanted from their homes to other counties North of the River Shannon, and their property was confiscated by the Crown. They were called "Irish Papists" by the British.

A family of Nunans (O Honane), Donnogh, More, Onnora and Daniel from Co. Limerick were transplanted to another district in Ireland during that period.

Commencing in the year 1657, under the Cromwellian Settlement Act., the property of thousands of native Irish Catholics was confiscated by the British Government.

In the Barony of Duhallow, Co. Cork,
there were twenty-nine such confiscations,
six of which belonged to the following
Nunans: Dermod Mac David Hunane; Connogh
Mac Ed[mund] Hunane; Dermod Oge O Hunane;
Teige Oge O Hunane; Teig Mac Patrick O
Hunane and Morrish [Maurice] Mac Richard
O Hanane.

<sup>1</sup> From John O'Hart's "The Irish & Anglo-Irish Gentry, etc.", Dublin, 1884. Reprinted in 1969 by the Irish University Press, Shannon, Ireland.

Grenane Castle, which was situated about 6-miles S. E. of Limerick City, belonged to the Nunan sept until about 1540 when a Norman, Shane Burke, gained possession of it.

The following are excerpts from a book that was published in Dublin in 1826, which was written by the Rev. P. Fitzgerald, the Vicar of Cahircorney in the Diocese of Emly, Co. Limerick, and J. J. Mc Gregor: 1

. . Isert Laurence lies to the W. of Caherconlish . . . in the Diocese of Emly, 6-miles S. E. from Limerick (City), and contains 507-acres. In this parish is a burying place, walled in, within which is the parish chapel. There are also the ruins of an old church, and in the midst of the graves a deep well . . . on a hill adjoining the church-yard, stands the ruined Castle of Grenane, which belonged formerly to the family of the Nunans, and beyond the castle, on an eminence called Sgeahard (Skahard), or the High Bush, is an ancient rath. There is a stone circle near High Park, the residence of J. Gabbett, where a number of stones are to be seen, some lying in confusion, others in circles or direct lines. It is remarkable that they are all round, and one large stone, detached from the rest, stands erect, which measures 9-feet in height, nearly the same in breadth, and is 4-feet thick on one side."

In the early part of the 18th century the land on which Grenane Castle stood was sold to The Hollow Sword Blade Company.

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;The History, Topography and Antiquities of the County & City of Limerick, Dublin, 1826.

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- 1829 John & Denis Nunan lived in the Parish of Corcomohide, Co. Limerick.
- 1829 Denis Nunan held 52-acres of land in the Parish of Corcomohide.
- 1829 Denis Nunan, in the City of Cork, was a grantor of a deed.
- 1830 Denis Nunan, one of the two sons of
  Mary (a'li Conyers) Nunan, held ten
  acres of land in the Townland of Gurtalassa, Co. Limerick.
- 1830 Mary (a'li Conyers) Nunan died on Feb.
  14th, 1830 at the age of 47. She was
  buried in an open masonry enclosure
  in the grave-yard of the Corkomoyd
  Church at Castletown Conyers. Her headstone was a memorial from her two sons,
  Denis Nunan of Gurtalassa and James
  Nunan of Knockroe, Co. Limerick.
- 1836 Denis Nunan died at Castletown Conyers.
- 1837 James Nunan was a farmer who lived at Knockroe, Co. Limerick. I believe he was buried there. In his Will he left property valued at £ 1,600. That was 133-years ago and that sum was equivalent to \$8,000. based on the £ @\$5.00. Considering the erosion of the value of all currencies since that time, it would be worth at least \$80,000. in purchasing power today.

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- 1844 Mary Kilbridge, daughter of Catherine Kilbridge, was born.
- 1850 Catherine & James Nunan lived at Grague.
- 1850 John Nunan lived in the village of Ballagran, Co. Limerick.
- 1850 James Nunan lived at Coolagowan [Cooley-gown] in the Parish of Corcomohide.
- 1850 Ellen & Edmund Noonan lived in Cappanihan [Cappanehane], Co. Limerick.
- 1850 Edmund, John & Patrick Noonan lived in Gortroe [Gortro] in the Parish of Corcomohide.
- 1850 Connor & Jeremiah Noonan lived in Derraulin in the Parish of Corcomohide.
- 1850 Charles Noonan lived in Castletown Conyers in the Parish of Corcomohide.
- 1850 John Nunan lived in Incha [Inch], County Limerick.
- 1850 Matthew Noonan lived in Knowle's

  Lane, Rath Luirc, Co. Cork.
- 1850 Patrick Noonan lived in The Glen,
  Rath Luirc, Co. Cork.
- 1850 Thomas Noonan lived on Main St., Rath Luirc, Co. Cork.
- 1854 My father, Denis Nunan, was born in or near Castletown Conyers, Co. Limerick or in Rath Luirc, Co. Cork. His mother, Margaret Drinan, died before he left Ireland in 1864 for New York.

She came from the Barony of Corcumroe and her people were a branch of the Siol Anmchadha sept of Co. Galway. Some of her people lived in Co. Clare.

The name Drinan was also spelled in these ways:

O Drinane
O Drenan
Dreinan

FATHER DENIS & GRANDFATHER MAURICE NUNAN in N. Y.

'My father, Denis Nunan (1854-1912) arrived in New York Harbor on October 15th, 1864 with his widowed father, Maurice Nunan (1827-1880?) aboard the Inman Line's three masted steam and sail ship the S/S "Etna" ["Aetna"]. They debarked at the Emigrant Landing Depot, Castle Garden, which was off-shore from Battery Park just S. of Pier 1 on the Hudson River. The Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden was operated by New York State until 1892, when it was moved to Ellis Island and became a Federal Government operation.

The voyage of the S/S "Etna" from Cobh,
Co. Cork, Ireland took about two-weeks as the
principle motive power of this iron-hull ship,
which was built in 1855 for the Cunard Line by
Caird & Co. at Greenock, Scotland, were her
sails. Her overhead-beam engines were run by
steam that was generated by burning coal and,
as she could not carry enough coal to provide
steam for the engines for the entire Atlantic
crossing of about 3,000-miles, the engines were
only used for manoeuvering the vessel in and
out of ports and during storms at sea when the
sails had to be furled.

My father and grandfather are believed to have lived after their arrival in New York City in a hotel that was located at 45 Chambers St.

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Little is known about my grandfather,
Maurice Nunan, except that he was employed
by the hotel that was then at 45 Chambers St.
in Lower Manhattan, and that nine-years after
his arrival he opened a savings account with
the Emigrant Savings Bank, which is now at
51 Chambers St. The date was June 7th, 1873;
the account was No. 96,940 and the initial
deposit was \$10.00, which today would be the
equivalent of at least \$100.00.

Four-years later, on August 31st, 1877,he amended the account to be payable either to himself or his son, Denis Nunan.

The account, which had grown to \$17.06, was closed on December 15th, 1880 and on the same day my father opened an account with the same bank with a deposit of \$17.00. It was account No. 148,333.

It is interesting to note that in 17-years the Emigrant Savings Bank, which was founded by Irish-Americans, added 51,393 new depositors to their books.

Because of these banking records, which the Emigrant Savings Bank graciously sent to me, it is my belief that my paternal grand-father, Maurice Nunan died in December or 1880.

My father went to work at 10-years of age for Patterson Brothers, who were New York's leading hardware merchants, called Ironmongers in Ireland. Patterson Brothers began their business on the Bowery in 1848 and in 1858 moved to 27 Park Row. In 1938 they moved to 15 Park Row and in January, 1959 they went out of business.

My father started with Patterson Brothers as an apprentice and in a few years became one of their salesmen in the store. He was too short to see over the counters in the store but he managed to wait on customers with the aid of a wood soap box.

In 1890 he became the Secretary of the company and in 1909 he became its vice-president.

The New York City Directories for the years 1885 to 1888 list my father's address as Brooklyn- no street address.

The 1890 edition of that Directory gives 1187 Lexington Avenue, New York City, as his address. The 1891 edition gives 3 West 84th St. as his address with 27 Park Row as his business address.

The following year, 1892, father moved to the Wilbraham Apartment house at 1 West 30th St., which was built in 1888.

My father married my mother, who was
Eugenie Ann Thomas of Hoboken, New Jersey
c. 1895. The marriage was performed in Our
Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Church in

Hoboken. Frank and an and the British

Soon after their marriage they moved to a house on Egbert Hill, Morris Township, which adjoins Morristown, New Jersey.

Mother and father had seven-children: Thomas, Maurice, Marguerite, myself, Francis, Mary, Eugenie and Denis.

Their summers were spent at Spring Lake, New Jersey.

22 " Bredmid . Pas beream Mrs knews Bailiff In 1197 the City of Limerick obtained a charter from King Richard I (1157-1199) that enabled the citizens of that city to choose a Mayor and two Duumviri, or Bailiffs. Later, King James I (1566-1625) granted another charter that permitted the citizens to choose Sheriffs in place of Bailiffs. These, with the Mayor, performed the municipal government duties of the City of Limerick.

Ballaun An artificial basin-like hollow in a boulder. It was used for grinding grain with a pestle. They are usually found at early monastic company pusites. 309 kg racements vice

High Cross A tall, ring-headed cross of stone. It was a compromise between the Latin and Greek crosses, having the circle of the Greek cross placed upon the shafts of the Latin

Piscina A stone basin for washing liturgical vessels. They are usually found in wall-niches on the South wall of the church and close to the altar.

Rath A ring fort.

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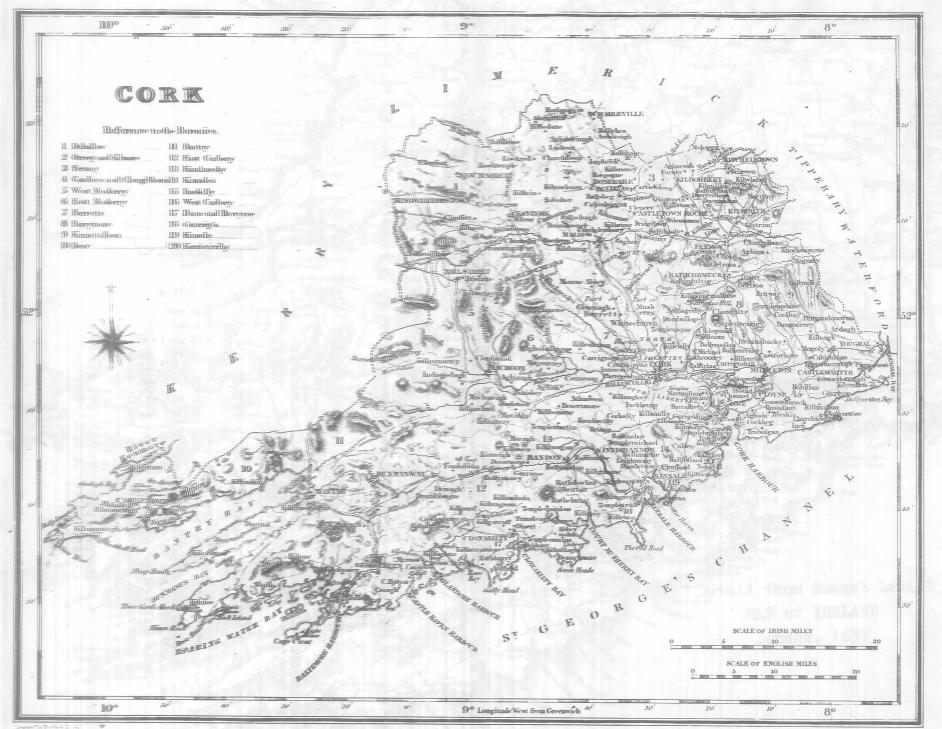
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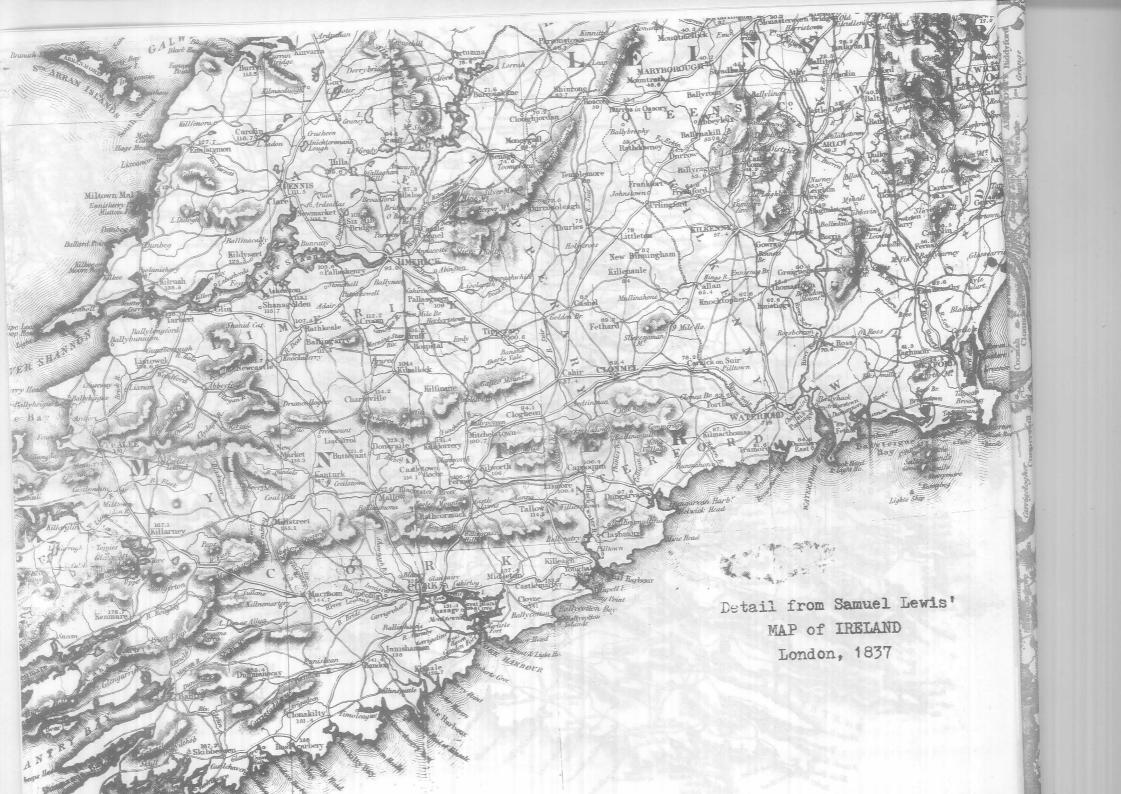
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Drawn by R. Creighton .

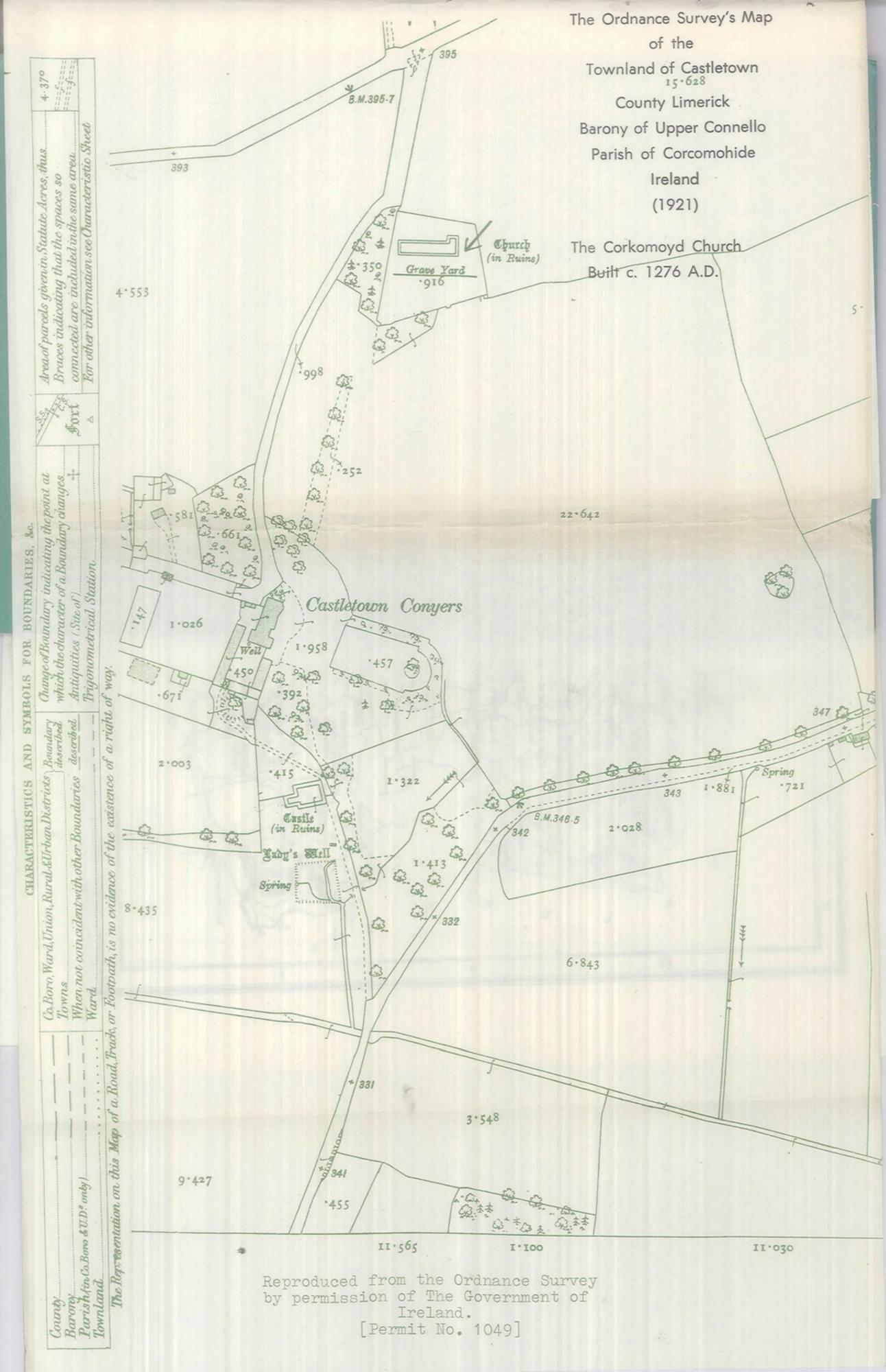
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### ERRATA

Page numbered 12 is #9.
On page 10, 6th line from bottom should read: "mast.
Built in 1855 for the Cunard!
Page 9 should be page 12.
Page 20, para.#!, last line should read: "out of the retail business."

