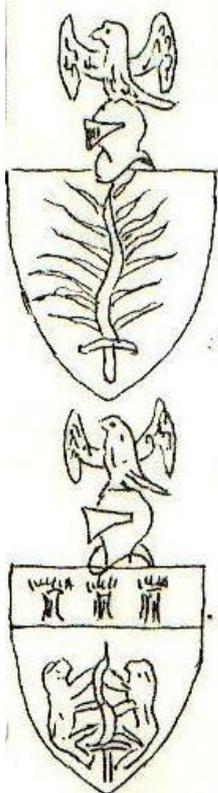


THE FINUCANE FAMILY

Brian Sheehan - 2004



"Arms of O'Finucan: A blazing sword extended on the hilt in a field gules. The crest an Hawk with extended wings over helmet proper, faced or."

The above note is pencilled on a small piece of paper attached to Hugh McCartin's manuscript - 1731. The coat of arms as above described is more in keeping with Irish heraldry than that adopted by Andrew Finucane in 1815. Irish heraldry is noted for its simplicity - generally a single symbol only being displayed on the shield. The flaming sword, the oldest of all symbols, is applicable to an ancient Clan like the O'Finucan, for it reminds us of that time when Eve led Adam astray and an Angel was placed in the east of Eden holding such a sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Irish genealogists profess to trace Milesius, King of Spain, in a direct line from Adam - ab origine.

Arms granted, 1815, to Andrew Finucane, Esq., of Ennistymon House, Co. Clare, son of Hon. Mathias Finucane, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland:-

Gu. Two lions counteramp. ar. supporting a wavy sword ppr. the hilt downwards or. on a chief of the second three garbs of the first.

Crest. - A falcon rising ppr. belled or.

Motto. - Fide et fortitudine.

It is not at all certain how the Finucanes came to live in North Kerry as the name is most prevalent across the River Shannon in County Clare. The Clare Finucanes are mainly Protestants whereas all the Kerry Finucanes are Catholics.

Tradition has it that the Finucanes came to the Tarbert area of North Kerry after the Siege of Limerick in 1691 when all the Catholic armies of Ireland under Patrick Sarsfield surrendered to the Williamite armies. He and thousands of his troops were allowed to go into exile to serve in the armies of Louis XIV and became known as the 'Wild Geese'. Some, including the Finucanes went to Kerry and have remained there for generations and are still numerous around the Tarbert area.

In the early 1600's, the Lord Deputy and Privy Council gave permission to Patrick Crosbie to plant the Tarbert area with the Seven Septs of Leix, namely, the O'Moores, O'Kellys, O'Lawlors, Devoy McEvoy, Dorans and Dowlings who had been in rebellion. They were to be given land at reasonable prices provided that they never returned to Leix. In total, 289 persons were transplanted, some to County Clare, more to Connacht but most of them to north Kerry. Patrick's son sold Tarbert and eventually it was bought by Daniel Viscount Clare who forfeited it in 1660 after King James was defeated by King William. It was then granted to Sir John Leslie and the Leslies still live in Tarbert House. The origins of the village owe much to the Leslies and they developed it extensively from the mid 1700's when one of them was high-sherriff of Kerry.

The first of our ancestors whom we have been able to trace is Thomas Finucane from Ardmore, Tarbert, who was a tenant farmer. He married Mary Quinn and we know from oral tradition that she had a relative in Napoleon's army and tradition has it that he was told by Napoleon that when the English were defeated he would land an army west of Tarbert to attack them in Ireland. Unfortunately, due to Napoleon's defeat, this plan was never put into action.

Thomas and his wife had 5 children; two boys and three girls, and it is Patsy (1839 – 1916) whom we know the most about, not only because he was our great-grandfather, but also because he was a very successful farmer who bought farms for each of his sons around Tarbert.

Patsy had gone to America as a young man and worked as a labourer before returning home with a little money. However, he had learnt how to borrow money and, in due course, having inherited a small farm at Ardmore, he set about buying more land from the local landlords. He bought out Kilcolgan, which was part of Hamilton's Manor farm and he also bought the Pottery farm, of which Farnawana is part, from a family named Goodbody.

Until the late 19th century, the land around Tarbert was owned by Anglo-Irish landlords to whom rent had to be paid twice yearly. The principal landlords in the area were the Sandes who had been granted their land following the Cromwellian Settlement. In paying his rent, Patsy Finucane was only permitted to ride to within one mile of Thomas Sandes' house before dismounting and continuing the rest of his journey by foot out of respect for his landlord. This rule applied to all of Sandes' tenants.

William Sandes of Piermount was landlord of the two townlands of Carhoona and Coolnagoonagh where a large number of our relatives now own farms. When Sandes died without issue in 1867, he was succeeded by his brother Thomas who was a tyrant and a prosletizer. He tried very hard to have his tenants, and especially their children, convert to the Protestant faith. He also carried out wholesale evictions for the least excuse and it is said that he evicted twenty-five Catholic families in Coolnagoonagh and replaced them with Protestants. The evicted families mostly went on free passage to America.

One of Patsy Finucane's brothers, Dan, and his cousin James Finucane (1838–1927), eloped with two local Protestant girls named Bessy and Harriet (Bessie) Fitzell and this caused consternation in the locality. Dan took his girl to America and James took Harriet (1840–1932) to England. Because of the elopement, James' family were duly evicted but were given a home at Doonard by another local landlord, Captain Leslie, who, in due course, made Johnny, who was a brother of James, his steward. Johnny became a very successful steward for Major Leslie and was highly regarded. Meanwhile, Sandes of Sallowglin, and a Major Collis of Tiernaclea, had appointed Scottish stewards who ran both estates into debt and they became the first estates to be bought out by the Land Commission for the benefit of the former tenants.

Patsy Finucane's brother Dan, who had run away with one of the Fitzell girls, went to New York and stayed there. The girl became a Catholic, married Dan, and they had one daughter. However, sometime later she was insulted by the local parish priest

and, was so infuriated, she reverted to her Protestant faith. Dan Finucane made a lot of money in America and became a director of the Bell Telephone Company. When our granduncle, Father Dan Finucane, went to America to raise funds for the O'Connell memorial church in Caherciveen, he stayed with the family, but his uncle's wife refused to have anything to do with him. She frequently visited Tarbert in later years but never visited the Finucanes and stayed, instead, with her Fitzell cousins.

In researching the Finucane family history, I came in contact with Mary Kay Finucane. She lives in Pennsylvania in the United States. I discovered that her great-great grandmother was the same Harriet Fitzell who had eloped, all those years ago, with James Finucane. They had, initially, gone to Plymouth, England where their first child, Thomas Finucane, was born in 1862. They eventually emigrated to Pennsylvania in America where the family have remained. Mary Kay has sent me a genealogical report prepared by Harriet Fitzell, in 1930, showing her father James as born in Carhoonakinella in 1838.

The Fitzell family origins are in Essenheim in the Rhineland region of Germany which had been devastated during the Thirty Years War (1618 – 1648) and again in the late 1600's. New horizons beckoned and English proprietors in the New World carried out extensive advertising campaigns in the Palatine in the early 1700's to persuade settlers to go to the American colonies. One of the large number of families who landed in St. Catherine's Dock in London in 1709 with the intention of emigrating to the Colonies in America were the family of Hans Adam Fissel. We know that Hans Adam was baptised in Essenheim on February 25, 1649 and he married Maria Wilhelm of Essenheim on February 23, 1683. Hans Adam's parents were Christoph (also called "Stoffel") Fissel and Elizabeth Hartman. We have been in contact with one of their descendants, Stefan Mossel, who still lives in Essenheim and who has given the family's background information.

It transpired that arrangements in London for the mass transportation of the families to the Colonies were not well thought out and more than 11,000 refugees crowded into London in the space of three months causing all sorts of problems. The Irish Parliament played its part in trying to solve the problem and persuaded a number of the refugees to come to Dublin. Thus, it was from the ranks of the refugees who landed in London from Rotterdam that a large number of families came to Ireland rather than going to America or Canada. Having embarked from Chester, more than 3,000 made their way to Ireland and on September 10, 1709 the *Dublin Gazette* reported that:

‘ On Sunday last went through the city to be lodged in the barracks, a great number of poor Palatines, that arrived in the bay on Saturday night’.

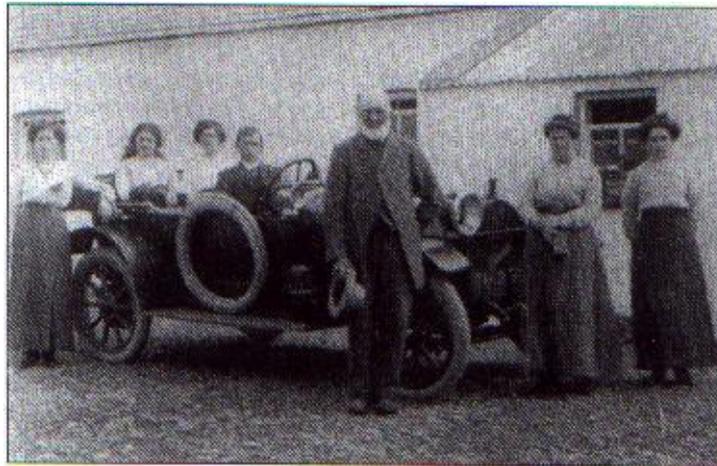
Overall 794 families, comprising some 2,071 people, landed in Dublin Bay in 1709. This, in turn, put an enormous strain on the city's resources and a Commission was set up to arrange for the dispersal of the immigrants throughout the countryside. They were sent to various parts of Ireland and a large number were settled on the Southall (Rathkeale) and Oliver (Kifinane) estates in County Limerick. They were allowed eight acres of land for every man, woman and child at five shillings rent per acre, the Government undertaking to pay the entire amount of rent for twenty years. Eventually, some of these families were introduced onto the Leslie Estate in

Kilnaughtin. The most enduring and prolific of the clans to be introduced here were the the family of Hans Adam Fitzelle (Fissel) who settled in Tarbert as early as 1755 and Palatine families included Bovenizers, Teskeys, Cronberrys and Youngs. The townlands of Cockhill, Doonard Upper, Glancullare and Tirnaclea Lower all registered a Palatine presence in the nineteenth century.

The brown-eyed dark-haired Palatine girls did not escape the attentions of the local farmer's sons if we are to judge by the well known Munster balled entitled '*The Palatines Daughter*'

*As I roved out one evening through the woods of Ballyseedy,
Whom should I meet on a cool retreat but a Palatine's daughter,
You'll find gold and silver, oh! And land without tax or charges,
And a pretty lass to wed if you choose a Palatine's daughter.*

Evidently, the two Finucane boys, Dan and James took this tune to heart!



Mr and Mrs Fitzell, members of a Palatine family from Tarbert, County Kerry outside the family home with their car, the first to come to Tarbert. The photo was taken around 1911.

Patsy Finucane, our great-grandfather, was born, in 1839, at his parent's farm at Ardmore, Tarbert and, in February 1868, he married Margaret McEvoy (1849 - 1917) in the Chapel at Tarbert. She was the daughter of John McEvoy from Ralapanne whose forebears had been expelled from County Leix during the transplantation of 'The Seven Septs'.

Marriage Certificate of Patsy Finucane and Margaret McEvoy

ÉIRE IRELAND *TOWNLAND HARDING P.A. SHOULD BE FINUCANE*

Act um Cúrsa Pósadh, 1863. Foirm A. Registration of Marriages Act, 1863. Form A

Parish or Sub-parish of the Catholic Diocese of <i>Clogher</i> or <i>Sandwich</i>		Parish or Sub-parish of the Registrar's District of <i>ROBERT No 1</i>	
Clergyman or Minister of the Gospel <i>John</i>		Registrar <i>Conrad</i>	

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	State or Condition	Given Name	State or Condition	Actual Cause	Name and Surname of Father's Name and Surname	Given Name
5	<i>20 Feb 1868</i>	<i>Robert Finucan No 1</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Robert</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Robert Finucan</i>	<i>Robert</i>
		<i>Margaret Meeley</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Margaret</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>John Meeley</i>	<i>Margaret</i>

Area of Parish: *Clogher* or *Sandwich*

By this Act signed and sealed in the presence of the Clergyman and Registrar, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Catholic Church by us *Robert No 1*

In the presence of us *John Finucan* or *John Finucan*

1868

TO ALTER THIS DOCUMENT OR TO UTTER IT SO ALTERED IS A SERIOUS OFFENCE

Originally, the Ardmore townland was owned by a person called Hoare and twenty one families were evicted to give him some 650 acres which now comprises the area where Patsy Finucane was born. A number of the evicted families are reputed to have gone to Argentina.

Patsy was a very successful farmer and when he died in 1916, there was a very large turnout for his funeral, not only because he was extremely highly regarded in the locality, but also because by then he had a very large extended family and his sons and sons-in-law were, also, extremely well known. Patsy was buried in Kilnaughtin Cemetry, Tarbert where all our Finucane ancestors are buried. One of his sons, Fr. Dan Finucane, was, in later life, parish priest for 50 years in Killorglin where the annual 'Puck Fair' is held. He died in 1956.

The Pottery house and farm, which had been acquired by Patsy Finucane was owned by a person called Blacker Douglas, a local landlord, who sold it to a person called Goodman Gentleman who, in turn, sold it to Patsy.

Patsy gave the farm at Kilcolgan to his son Jim (1887–1972) who married Mary Anne (Mol) O'Connor who was our grandfather Jack O'Connor's sister. Jim was our grandmother Annie's brother. Thus, two out of one family married two out of another. Jim's son Denis still lives in Kilcolgan where his son, Andrew, now carries on the farming tradition.

We knew our grandaunt Mol very well as she used to spend quite an amount of time in later years with our grandmother in Bray after our grandfather died.

One of Patsy's other sons, Pat (1888- 1960), married Nora (1891-1966), another O'Connor sister, and one of their sons, Conor Finucane, who died in 2002 farmed the land at Farranawana until he sold it in the early 1990's. Conor gave us a tremendous amount of backround information on the history of the O'Connors and the Finucanes.

A Daughter of Patsy's, Katie (1875–1949), married Robert Keating (1878–1914) who was a local creamery manager. He died quite young and, in due course, Katie remarried Morris Cotter and emigrated to America and eventually ended up in Chicago where her children were reared. One of them, David (1912–1949), became a policeman and he was the first policeman shot by gangsters in Chicago during the Al Capone era. His name appears on the Police Roll of Honour in Arlington Cemetary in Washington.

We keep very much in contact with our Chicago cousins as Ida Keating (1906 – 1995) married Roger Harty (1917) from Ballybunion and for many years they have come home for holidays each Summer to Ballybunion, where they have built a house. As a student, I stayed with them in Chicago during the 1969 Summer and worked in Nabisco, an internationally known biscuit factory, where Roger was an engineer before retired. I got to know my Chicago cousins during my time in Chicago, especially Bobby and Kathleen Leonard, who are all grandchildren of Katie Finucane.

The O'Connor and Finucane families are so closely related that it is almost impossible to keep track of one side without bringing in the other family and, if the reader is confused about the interrelationships, it is hardly surprising.

Tarbert View



TARBERT, FROM AN ENGRAVING BY THOMAS MILTON, 1793.

