

The Plantation of Ulster

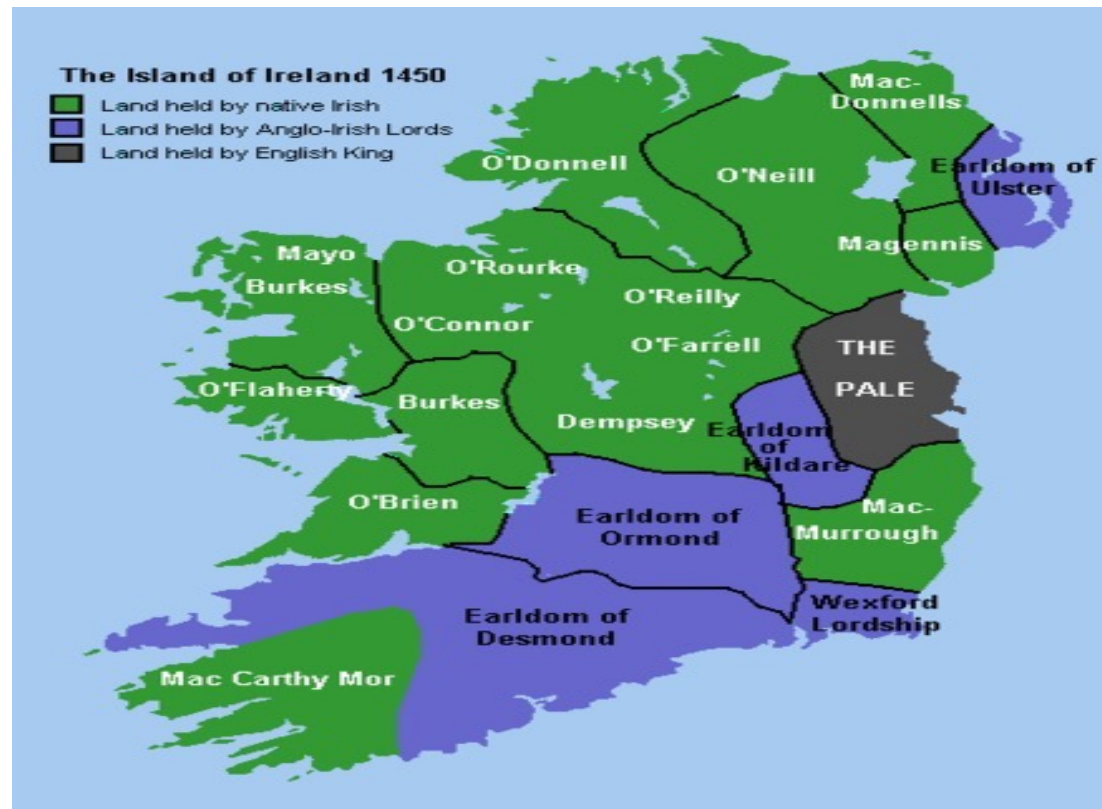


AOH DIVISION II

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The Plantation System in Ireland

- Plantations in 16th- and 17th-century Ireland involved the confiscation of Irish-owned land by the English Crown and the colonization of this land with settlers from Great Britain. The Crown saw the plantations as a means of controlling, anglicizing and 'civilizing' Gaelic Ireland
- **SOME BACKGROUND:**
 - There had been small-scale immigration from Britain in the 12th century, after the Anglo-Norman invasion, creating a small Anglo-Norman, English, Welsh and Flemish community in Ireland, under the Crown of England
 - By the 15th century, English control had shrunk to an area called The English Pale. By the Tudor period, however, Irish culture and language had regained most of the territory initially lost to the Anglo-Normans: "even in the Pale, all the common folk ... for the most part are of Irish birth, Irish habit and of Irish language"
 - **The Pale** (Irish: *An Pháil*) or **the English Pale** (*An Pháil Shasanach* or *An Ghalltacht*) was the part of Ireland directly under the control of the English government in the late middle ages



The Plantation System in Ireland

English discourse on Ireland largely viewed the Gaelic Irish outside the Pale as savages, and compared them with the Native Americans in 1580

Laudabiliter was a Papal Bull issued in 1155 by [Pope Adrian IV](#), the **only Englishman to have served in that office**. Existence of the bull has been disputed by scholars over the centuries; no copy is extant but scholars cite the many references to it as early as the 13th century to support the validity of its existence. The bull purports to grant the right to the [Angevin King Henry II of England](#) to invade and govern Ireland and to enforce the Gregorian Reforms on the semi-autonomous Christian Church in Ireland

The *Laudabiliter* could be compared to the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera," issued by Pope Alexander VI, which gave the Spanish the exclusive right to rule the lands discovered by Columbus, making the native American's their "subjects". Despite this the *Laudabiliter* had a continuing political relevance into the 16th century. Henry VIII of England was excommunicated by Pope Paul III on 17 December 1538, causing his opponents to question his continuing claim to be Lord of Ireland, which was based ultimately on *Laudabiliter*. Henry established the Kingdom of Ireland in 1542

Gerald of Wales argued that the English crown has the right to rule Ireland because of a mission to civilize a barbarous people. **His writings shaped English and European views of Ireland for centuries.** He says: The idle woodland people the Irish reject agriculture, cities, the rights and privileges of citizenship and hence civilization itself, the mission is to civilize and truly Christianize the Irish

The Irish rejected the *Laudabiliter*...

The Plantation System in Ireland

In 1568 there was an attempt to establish a corporate colony in Kerrycurrihy barony, but it was destroyed by the Irish

In the 1570s a privately-funded plantation of east Ulster was attempted, but it also sparked conflict with the local Irish lord and ended in failure

The Munster plantation of the 1580s followed the Desmond Rebellions. Businessmen were encouraged to invest in the scheme and English colonists were settled on land confiscated from the defeated rebel lords. However, the settlements were scattered and attracted far fewer settlers than was hoped for. When the Nine Years' War broke out in the 1590s, most of these settlements were abandoned, although English settlers began to return following the war.

In the Nine Years' War of 1594–1603, an alliance of northern Gaelic chieftains—led by Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone, Hugh Roe O'Donnell of Tyrconnell, and Hugh Maguire of Fermanagh—resisted the imposition of English government in Ulster and sought to affirm their own control. Following an extremely costly series of campaigns by the English the war ended in 1603 with the Treaty of Mell font.

The plantations changed the demography of Ireland by creating large communities with British and Protestant identities. The ruling classes of these communities replaced the older Catholic ruling class, which had shared with the general population a common Irish identity and set of political attitudes

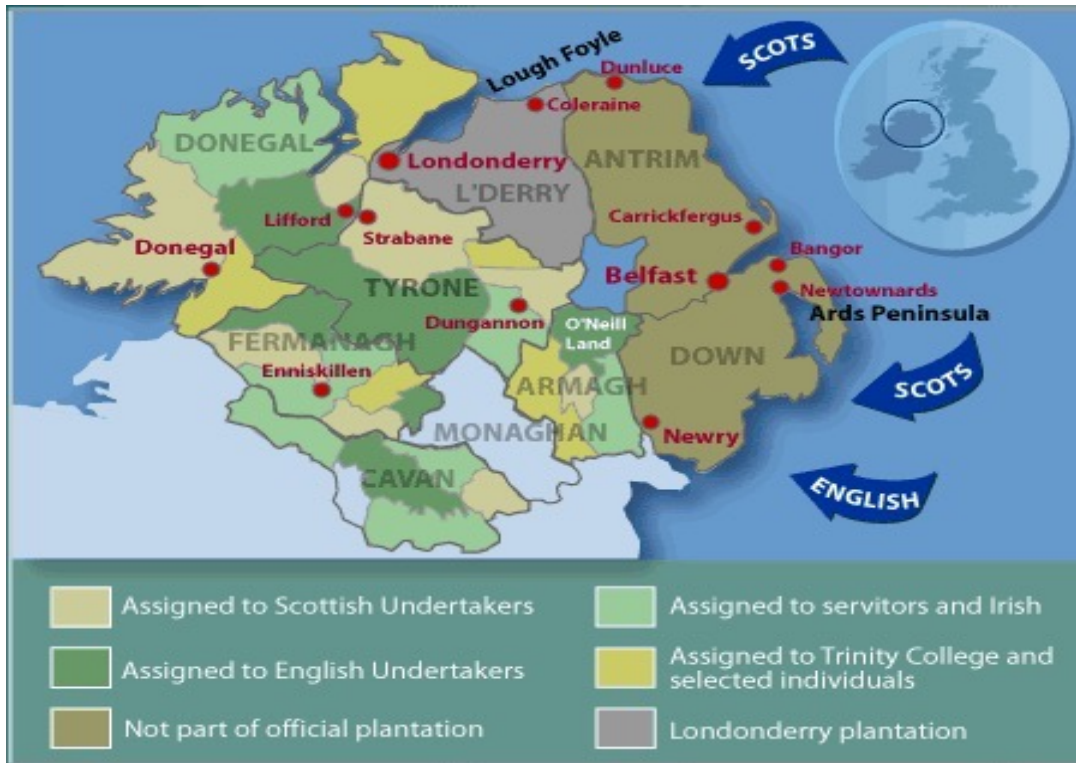
By the 1720s, British Protestants were the majority in Ulster.

The Plantation of Ulster Irish: Plandáil Uladh



The Plantation of Ulster

- Before the plantation, Ulster had been the most Gaelic province of Ireland, as it was the least anglicized and the most independent of English control. The region was almost wholly rural and had few towns or villages
- Throughout the 16th century, Ulster was viewed by the English as being “underpopulated” and undeveloped. The economy of Gaelic Ulster was overwhelmingly based on agriculture, especially cattle-raising. Many of the Gaelic Irish practiced "creaghting" or "booleying", a kind of transhumance whereby some of them moved with their cattle to upland pastures during the summer months & lived in temporary dwellings during that time. It was often mistakenly believed that the Gaelic Irish were nomadic
- The Plantation of Ulster began in the 1610s, during the reign of James I. Following their defeat in the Nine Years' War, many rebel Ulster lords fled Ireland and their lands were confiscated
- Most of the settlers (or planters) came from southern Scotland and northern England; their culture differed from that of the native Irish



The Plantation of Ulster

- The official plantation comprised an estimated half a million acres of arable land in counties Armagh, Cavan, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Tyrconnell, and Londonderry (DERRY)
- Land in counties Antrim, Down, and Monaghan was privately colonized with the king's support
- The colonists (or "British tenants") were required to be English-speaking, Protestant, and loyal to the king. Some of the undertakers and settlers, however, were Catholic.
- Ulster was the biggest and most successful of the plantations and comprised most of the province of Ulster. While the province was mainly Irish-speaking and Catholic, the new settlers were required to be English-speaking Protestants, with most coming from northern England and the Scottish Lowlands. This created a distinct Ulster Protestant community.
- The Ulster plantation was one cause of the 1641 Irish Rebellion, during which thousands of settlers were killed, expelled or fled
 - The **Irish Rebellion of 1641** (Irish: *Éirí Amach 1641*) was an uprising by Catholics in Ireland, whose demands included an end to anti-Catholic discrimination, greater Irish self-governance, and return of confiscated Catholic lands. It led to the 1641–1652 Irish Confederate Wars, with up to 20% of the Irish population becoming casualties
- After the Irish Catholics were defeated in the Cromwellian conquest of 1652, most remaining Catholic-owned land was confiscated and thousands of English soldiers settled in Ireland
- The Plantation of Ulster was the biggest of the Plantations of Ireland. It led to the founding of many of Ulster's towns and created a lasting Ulster Protestant community in the province with ties to Britain. It also resulted in many of the native Irish nobility losing their land and led to centuries of ethnic and sectarian animosity, which at times spilled into conflict, notably in the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and more recently, the Troubles.

The Plantation of Ulster

- There had been very few towns in Ulster before the Plantation. Most modern towns in the province can date their origins back to this period. Plantation towns generally have a single broad main street ending in a square in a design often known as a "diamond", which can be seen in communities like The Diamond, Donegal Town, Donegal.



Figure 39. Reconstruction drawing of Dúnallog Fort and Irish settlement.

The Legacy of the Plantation System

- It created a society segregated between native Catholics and settler Protestants in Ulster and created a Protestant and British concentration in north-east Ireland. The Plantations were one of the long-term causes of the Partition of Ireland in 1921, as the north-east remained as part of the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland
- The densest Protestant settlement took place in the eastern counties of Antrim and Down, which were not part of the Plantation, whereas Donegal, in the west, was planted but did not become part of Northern Ireland, as it was still gaelic and catholic