

Historic references to the Owen O'Corke mill and surrounding area in the Hamilton manuscripts.

The bolding of each **Owen O'Corke** reference is editorial.

Hamilton Ms General Appendix lii, *Copy Inquisition, Dated 13th October, 1623*

Wee further find, that the said Lord Vicecount Claneboie, on the said 8th daie of December last, did and yet doth receive and take to his own use within all the territories, landes, tenements, and hereditaments in his possession as aforesaid, all the whole benefitt, tythes, and profits of the severall fishings of salmons, and all other kindes of fish in the loghes, rivers, baies, ports, roades, soundes, and creekes of the sea following, viz: in the bay of Killileagh; ... in the river and baie of **Owen O'Corke**; ...

Hamilton Ms pages 55-57 (a very extensive footnote!)

By lease dated 15th Oct, 1644, from the Right Honble. James second Viscount Claneboy, to William Kelsoe, merchant and burgess of Ayre, in the realm of Scotland, after reciting, that, by agreement bearing date the 3rd of April, 1624, the late Viscount Claneboye, deceased, had granted to Richard and Harry Whiteshead a lease of the Townland of Ballymacarrett, as it then was possest for twentie--one years, from All-Hallow-tide then next ensuing, the said Viscount Claneboye thereby demised unto the said William Kelsoe, his executors and assigns, the said towne of Ballymacarrett, with the appurtenances thereunto belonging (excepting and reserving thereout unto the said Viscount, his heirs and assigns, all and all manner of royalties, tithes, heryots, fines, amerciaments, woods, underwoods, suits, services, customs, anchorages, fishings, and fishery places, with the parcel of land already set off for the ferry, and held and enjoyed with the same, being by estimation six acres, lordes-fishes, and tithes-fishes, mills, mill-steads, mill-draughts, mill-ponds, waters, and water-courses, with two acres of land to the same, deducting therefore proportionably of the rent as was answered out of the whole premises, with full liberty of ingress, egress, and regress, into and from the premises, at all times and upon all occasions whatsoever).

To hold the said Townland of Ballymacarrett (except as before excepted) unto the said William Kelsoe, his executors, and administrators, and assigns, for 21 years, to begin from Allsaints, 1650, at the yearly rent or sum of £32, with six days' work of a man and horse. Upon this lease the following memorandum is endorsed:—

“That before the signing, sealing, and delivery hereof, it is covenanted, concluded, and agreed, by and between the within-mentioned persons to these presents, that if it shall soe fall out that Richard Pierson (who hath a lease of the said townland for seven years, to and at All-saints, 1650), his executors administrators, or assigns, shall quit the lease of the said land, and shall leave the same before the expiration thereof, that then the within specified 21 years thereof to the said William Kelsoe, his executors, administrators, and assigns, shall be and begin, from and immediately after the next tearme day, either of May or All-saints, that he, the said Richard Pierson, shall soe give up the said land to the said Lord Viscount, his heirs and assigns, or remove themselves therefrom.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of Hans Hamilton, Alexander Sloane, Isaiah Forest, Alexander Smith.”

—A further lease, dated 16th Sept., 1669, from the Right Honble. Henry Earl of Clanbrassil to John Kelso, of Ballymacarrett, gent., witnessed that the said Earl, for and in consideration of the yearly rents duties, and services thereafter expressed and reserved, and especially for, and in consideration of, the sum of £300 sterling, current and lawful money of and in England, thereby set, and to farm let, unto the said John Kelso, the Townland of Ballymacarett, lying and being within the Barony of Castlereagh and County of Down, aforesaid, with the appurtenances. (Excepting and always reserving out of the said demised premises, unto the said Earl, his heirs or assigns, the mill of **Oyn O’Cork**, with six acres of land to the said mill).

To Hold the above townland, with liberty of the ferry-boat, with all the benefit and profit that could be had thereby, or that should grow due out of the same, together with all the houses, meares, and marshes, of the said townland, as it was then meared and bounded, with their and every of their appurtenances, for and during the full term, time, and space of three score and one years, to be and begin from the 1st of Nov. then next:

Yielding and paying therefore, unto the said Earl, his heirs and assigns, £12 sterling, yearly, during the first two years, to begin from the 1st of Nov. then next, and also paying yearly thereafter, during the said Earl detaining the said sum of £300 sterling in his or their hands, £25 yearly, at May and All-saints; and when the said £300 should be repaid in one entire sum unto the said John Kelso, his heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, then paying thereafter the sum of £55 yearly, at the terms formerly mentioned ; and the said John Kelso did, thereby, amongst other things, covenant to do suit and service to the Courts Leet and Courts Baron of the said Earl, his heirs or assigns, to be held for the Manor of Hollywood, and to be ruled by the Steward of the said Courts for the time being.

Upon this lease there is also endorsed the following memorandum:—

“Before the signing and sealing of the within demise, I, the within-named Henry, Earl of Clanbrassil, do, for me, my heirs and assigns, during the years within mentioned, convey and make over to him, the said John Kelso, his executors and assigns, all the fishing that of right doth belong to me, and that formerly the tenants of Ballymacarrett were possessed of.

—Signed sealed, and delivered, in presence of John Swadlin, and William Richardson”

“A Fee-farm Grant of this date (24th July, 1672), from the Right Honourable Henry, Earl of Clanbrassill, to Thomas Pottinger, of Belfast, in the County of Antrim, merchant, witnessed that the said Earl, in consideration of £300, sold, and confirmed, unto the said Thomas Pottinger, his heirs and assigns, for ever, the Townland of Ballymacarrett, alias Balinacrett, in the Parish of Knock, in the Barony of Castlereagh and County of Down, and then in the tenure and occupation of John Kelso and Captain James McGill, their undertenants and cottiers, together with all and singular the castles, &c.; loughs, ponds, fishings, marshes, and waye of water, ferrie and ferry boats, and all and singular other profits, commodities, emoluments, immunities, rents, reversions, remainders, appendances, rights, members, advantages, and appurtenances whatsoever, to the said townland, incident, belonging, or in any waye appertaining, by what name or names soever the same be called or known, by or belonging to, or to the same usually had, occupied, enjoyed, or reputed, accepted, used, and known as part and parcel thereof; and also the corne mill called by the name of **Owen Corke Mill**, situate neere or upon the premises; together with the lands belonging to the said corne mill then, in the possession of John Wilson, and his undertenants and cottiers; that was to say, six

acres of land, part of Ballymacarrett, aforesaid, and six acres of land, part of Ballyhackamore, together with the nett profits of toll or mulcture thereunto belonging, issuing and pavable out of the townes and lands of Ballymacarrett, Ballyhackamore, Knocke, Ballyloghan, Strandtown, Ballymather, and Ballymaser; and also the fynes payable thereout by the tennants inhabitinge the said townslands, for not grinding their corne and grayne at the said mill, according to the covenants therein exprest, and all other incident profits and duties to the said mill belonginge:

Yielding and paying yearly and every year, to the said Earl, his heirs and assigns, yearly for ever, the full sum of £30 sterling. By an endorsement on the foregoing deed, reciting the lease and mortgage to John Kelso, of 16th September, 1669, and further reciting that the whole interest of Kelso, to the lands, and to the said £300, was since legally come to James Magill, of Ballynesterragh, Esq., and that the same was then wholly and absolutely in him; and further reciting that the said Earl, by his deed bearing date the 4th day of July, 1672, did make over the reversion of the said lands, and the power of redeeming the same, to Pottinger. It was thereby witnessed that the said James Magill had received from the said Thomas Pottinger the said sum of £300, according to the said deed of lease; and the said James Magill did thereby release, acquit, and discharge the said Thomas Pottinger, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, of the said sum of £300, and every part thereof.”

The Townland of Ballymacarrett continued in possession of the Pottinger family till the year 1779, when they sold it to Harry Yelverton, Esq., then Recorder of Carrickfergus (afterwards Chief Baron of the Irish Exchequer, and raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Avonmore), for a sum of £18,113 5s, which agreement was afterwards carried into formal execution by a deed of 1st July, 1781, whereby Eldred Pottinger, and Anne, his wife, conveyed to him, “All the town and lands of Ballymacarrett, and the mill and mill lands of **Owen Cork**, otherwise **Owen O’Cork**, together with all the tithes, both great and small, coming, growing, arising, and renewing for ever in and out of the same, and all dwelling-houses, &c., woods, underwoods, mills, mill-dams, and mill-ponds, waters, water-courses, strands, shores, fishings, fisheries, fishing-places, wrecks, waifs, estrays, deodands, forfeitures, easements, profits, advantages, emoluments, and hereditaments whatsoever, to the said lands and premises, and every part or parcel thereof belonging, or in anywise appertaining.”

By a deed of conveyance, dated 1st July, 1787, Lord Chief Baron Yelverton conveyed the townland of Ballymacarrett and **Owen O’Corke** mill, in consideration of £25,000, to Arthur, Earl of Donegall, who, by his will, dated 7th August, 1795, devised them to his second son, Lord Spencer Chichester, whose grandson, the Right Honble. Henry Spencer, Baron Templemore, is the present owner.

His rental out of Ballymacarrett amounts to upwards of £1,000 per annum, and is daily increasing; but that represents only a small portion of the present value of the townland, which with, the buildings upon it, was valued in the poor-law rate-books of 1855 at £18,891 10s, which must be considered as a wonderful realisation of the estimate formed of its value in the above will of Sir James Hamilton, dated upwards of 240 years before, that the townland, which only then produced him £4 a year, would eventually be let at a great rent; and the still more extraordinary prophecy contained in it, “that a great part of it might well be taken into the plains of Belfast, and cannot be wanting to that town,” is at present on the eve of complete fulfilment, by the embankments of the Harbour Commissioners, and the formation of the People’s Park, out of the residue of the unreclaimed slob-lands of Ballymacarrett.