

The Chain of Crown Land Occupancy in Morerah

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Tithe Applotments for Morerah

The earliest records we have of land occupancy are the tithe applotments which were compiled between 1823 and 1837.¹ The tithes for Morerah seem to have been divided between east and west.

The occupants found in Moragh East, total 157+ acres:

Pat McGowan, Michael Trower, Widow Quinn & son, Rev. Thomas Ford, John Fowley, Martin Fowley, John McTernan, John Fowley, Peter Meehan, William Meehan, Michael Meehan, Frank Kelly.

The occupants found in Moragh West, 138+ acres:

James Mcgloughlin, John Mcgloughlin, John Melaniff, James Mcgloughlin, Pat Heally, Martin Heally, John Fowley, John Gillaspay, P Banks, John McTernan, John Cullen, Michael Lynet, Pat W Golrick.

Griffith's Valuation

I believe this image shows the original Griffith's Valuation (GV) for Morerah in 1857:

A

County of

Dublin

Barony of

Drumgoon

Parish of

Drumgoon

Electoral Division of

Sung

NAMES.

Reference
to Map.

Townlands and Occupiers.

Immediate Lessors.

Description of Tenements.

Morerah
(Ord. S. 11.)

James Harte

Richard Crowne

James Foley

James Lee

Herd's house and land

Herd's house and land

House off and land

House off and land

Area.

A.

R.

P.

RATABLE ANNUAL VALUATION.

Land.

£

s.

d.

Buildings.

£

s.

d.

Total.

£

s.

d.

10

10

0

0

10

0

11

0

0

10

10

0

0

10

0

11

0

0

3

5

0

0

10

0

3

15

0

3

5

0

0

10

0

3

15

0

Just as in the GV transcriptions we've always seen, Richard Crowne is listed as one of eight tenants² who were apparently sharing 246 of the 592 acres³ in Morerah. James Harte and Richard Crowne were the only two who had a herd's house⁴ and 10+ acres of land, while everybody else in the tenant group had house, office, and 3+ acres of land. So if I add up the acres that the eight tenants used for house and land, we come to approximately 46 acres, leaving about 200 acres of Lot 1 that must have been for common use⁵ by everybody in the tenant group.

- ¹ The images for these early tithe applotments can be seen at the website for the National Archives of Ireland. However, be forewarned that Morerah was, for unclear reasons, cataloged under Cavan/Drumgoon. I notified the Archives of this problem and got back a Sorry reply, but no fix. So beware if you're looking for this original record.
- ² The eight tenants of the 240 acres were: James Harte, Richard Crowne, James Foley, James Lee, Martin Foley Jr, Martin Foley, Michael Foley, John M'Tiernan.
- ³ Apparently consolidated from East and West Moragh as seen in the early tithe applotments.
- ⁴ See my article, "[The Crown Herd's House](#)", MA Schaefer, March 2019.
- ⁵ See my [article](#), "Crowns in the Landed Estates, 1871", Schaefer, March 2019. p. 8. This report showed that Patrick and Cormac Crown had 15 acres described as "rights of common."

So how was it that Richard Crowne came into tenancy in Morerah?

- See my article, [Crowns in the Landed Estates](#), Schaefer, Mar 2019, p. 9. In that article, I speculated that Richard Crown acquired Morerah land by his marriage to Sarah Meehan which likely happened in the early 1820s. I was thinking then that Richard Crown, as a Meighan son-in-law, inherited some Morerah property as a result of John Meighan's death. Perhaps Meighan left a detailed will, and perhaps he didn't, but I think the latter is more likely. However, understanding the Irish marriage system better now, it makes more sense to me that Richard came into possession of the Morerah property by way of Sarah's dowry.⁶ Because Richard Crown did not appear in the early tithes of Morerah, we might assume that the tithes of that area were recorded earlier rather than later (closer to 1823 than 1837, before the marriage of Richard to Sarah).

But how did we get from a bunch of little farmers in Morerah in the 1820s and 30s to a tenant consortia in 1857 with 246 acres?? I think Mr. Richard Crown had something to do with it. We know from records dated in 1798,⁷ that the only tenants of Pollboy were three tenant consortia:

- Connolly & co./ /Pollboy (Co. Leitrim)
- Eames 7 co./ /Pollboy (Co. Leitrim)
- Flynn & co./ /Pollboy (Co. Leitrim)

Given that we know of at least one Crown-Eames marriage down the line, it seems nearly certain that Richard Crown was part of the Eames tenant consortia in Pollboy. And from this, I think Richard understood the value of tenant consortia. Here is some background:⁸

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Ireland experienced a significant period of change known as the Agricultural Revolution. This period saw a transformation in farming practices and land ownership, as well as changes in tenant-landlord relationships.

Tenant consortia, or cooperative societies, were organized groups of tenants who formed associations to negotiate better conditions with landlords and collectively address common issues. These consortia emerged as a response to the challenges faced by tenants, particularly regarding unfair land rents, high eviction rates, and lack of security of tenure.

In County Leitrim, as in many other parts of Ireland, tenant farmers often rented land from absentee landlords who lived elsewhere, usually in England. The landlords leased out their land to tenants who worked the land and paid rent in various forms, such as cash, labor, or a combination of both.

Tenant consortia aimed to protect the interests of their members and improve their living conditions. By joining together, tenants could collectively bargain for fairer rents, better terms of tenure, and improved agricultural practices. These associations provided a unified voice for the tenant farmers, enabling them to exert greater influence and negotiate more effectively with their landlords.

⁶ *Marriage in Ireland 1660-1925*, Maria Luddy and Mary O'Dowd, Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 121.

⁷ [Leitrim Landlords of Crown Families](#), Schaefer, 2023, p. 4.

⁸ [Tenant Consortia in Leitrim](#), ChatGPT, 17 Jun 2023.

My thought is that Richard Crown took his experience of being part of a tenant consortia in Pollboy and applied it to Morerah. I think he gathered everybody who was still in East Moragh and then added a few from West Moragh, and the eight tenants together had 200 acres of common land (having walked on the Morerah land myself, I can attest that a fair amount of it to the north is mountainous), and 46 acres for each partner's personal use. I think that was probably a pretty good deal for the time.

Valuation Office Records

On 24 May 2023, I visited the Valuation Office (VO) in Dublin. I had made an appointment online for a two-hour time slot, which is the only way to view their records.

Here is a summary of what the VO has to offer us genealogy researchers:

The Valuation Office has maintained and updated the data from Griffith's Valuation. Its hand-written ledgers record changes of ownership, building changes, land improvement, etc. using a colourcoded system. When the ledgers were filled with amendments, new ones were created ('Current Land Books') and the 'Cancelled Land Books' were archived. These, accessible in the Valuation Office in Dublin, provide a history of every property holding in Ireland. It is possible to follow a chain of land occupancy from the date of the original valuation to close to the present. The date of a change of occupancy can be very useful in family research as it may indicate a date of death of the previous occupier.

The VO office has computers you can use for online search, but County Leitrim is not among the records that are available for searching this way. So you have to go through the old books manually. Luckily, there were only two books that apply to Pollboy – I believe these books included all the townlands in the Lurganboy District.

The clerk who helped me gave an overview of how to use the books, and briefly explained the color-code system. Each occupier and notes pertaining to the valuation of a given time were written in a different color of ink. When a valuation occurred with a different occupier, the previous occupier was crossed out in a new color ink and the new occupier was inserted in the new color ink. Then notes pertaining to the new occupier were written in the new color of ink. Wherever it says "In Fee," that means the occupier bought the property and was now owner. Sound confusing? It is. So my strategy was to just take pictures of everything I could in the time allotted and figure it out later.

However, in an effort to help readers understand this article, here is an example. It helps to compare the left page of the book showing names with the right page of the book which includes valuations and notes.

Left page:

Townland of Pollboy O.S. 11.

Reference to Map.	NAMES.	
	OCCUPIERS.	IMMEDIATE LESSORS.
	<u>John Molloy</u>	
8a	James Scanlon	In Fee L.A.P.

Right page:

ght page.

Area.			RATEABLE ANNUAL VALUATION.									OBSERVAT		
			Land.			Buildings. etc.			Railways, Fisheries, Tolls, Half Rents, &c.				Total.	
A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
135	2	34	57	5		5	5					62	10	
13	1	14	3	50		0	5	0				3	50	
			3	10	0	0	5	0				3	10	0
												3	15	0

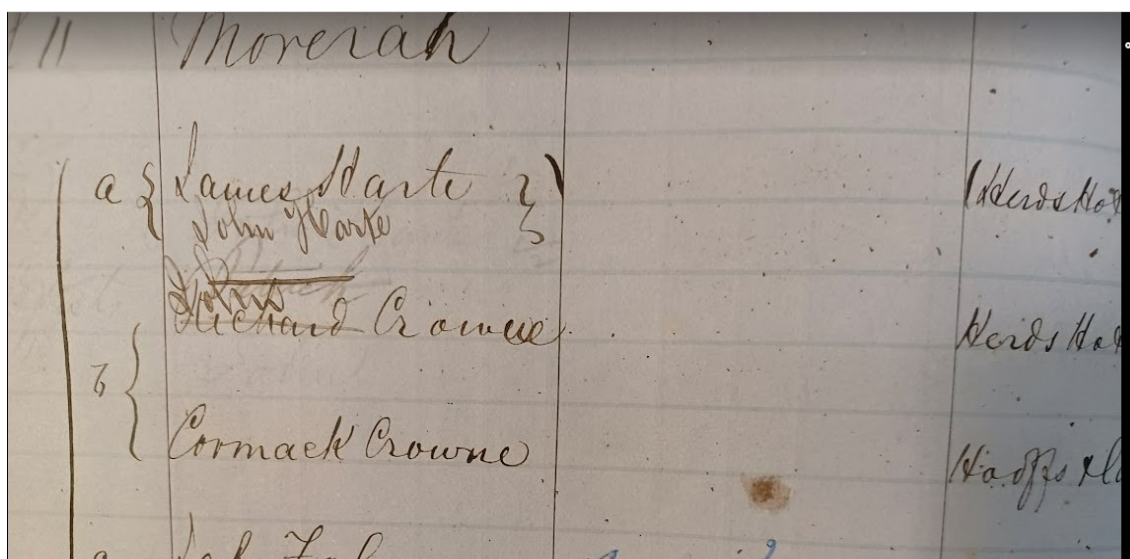
In this example, here is how I read the chain of occupiers for lot 8a in Pollboy:

- Starts with James Scanlon who was both the owner and occupier.
- BLUE INK: crosses out James Scanlon and inserts Mrs. J. (Scanlon). That happened in 1942 (noted in blue ink, right-hand page). We might surmise that James Scanlon died around this time.
- ORANGE INK: I think somebody went through later and changed the valuation. There is no orange ink associated with the names in this case.
- GREEN INK: crosses out Mrs. J. (Scanlon) and inserts James (Scanlon) – probably a son. This happened in 1944, probably around the time that Mrs. J. died.
- PURPLE INK: crosses out James (Scanlon) and inserts John Molloy. This happened in 1955.

Clear as mud? Welcome to genealogy research.

Even though I collected images of several townlands in the Lurganboy district, this article focuses only on Morerah because I found a couple interesting things that deserve further consideration (see Discussion at end of article). I have arranged these valuations in date-order, starting with the earliest after the GV in 1857.

Next Valuation



A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
			10	10	0	0	10	0	5	10	0
			10	10	0	0	10	0	5	10	0
									5	10	0
									5	10	0

This valuation shows that lot 1b was 10+ acres shared between Richard Crown and Cormack Crown as well as, presumably 1/8th share in the common 200 acres. The overall value for their personal part was 10 pounds, or roughly 5 pounds each. Besides their share of land, note that Richard had the herd's house, and Cormack had a house and office.

- The first question is when did the partition of Richard Crown's 10+ acres in Morerah happen? I would say between 1857 (GV) and 1866 (first notated change in tenancy on this valuation). It seems to me that change of tenancy often occurred around the time of somebody's death, or somebody's marriage when tenancy's were transferred as part of a bride's dowry. We know that

Richard Sr. didn't die until September, 1867, so were there other major life transitions from 1857-1866 going on in the Crown family?

- Patrick Crown married Ann Clancy in 1860. Ann's family was from Farrabar,⁹ so it's hard to ponder how their marriage triggered a partition of Crown property in Morerah.
- John Crown married Mary Rooney in 1862. John had returned from America and, according to family notes, Mary Rooney was a widow when she married. I don't know how that dowry might have looked, but again, I don't see how it might trigger a partition of Crown property in Morerah.
- Sarah Meehan Crown died in 1865. Maybe there was something in her marriage settlement with Richard Sr. that triggered the partition?
- Richard Crown II married Kate Melaniff in 1866, which is certainly the event that triggered the first change of tenancy seen in this valuation. But that leads to the second question, which is:
- After the partition of Richard Sr.'s 10+ acres, sometime after 1857, was it Richard Sr. or his son Richard II who had responsibility for half of the Crown tenancy in Morerah before 1866? In other words, did Richard Sr. give half to Cormac and keep the other half himself, or did he split the Morerah property and give half each to his sons Cormac and Richard II?

To answer these questions, I think we might be overlooking another life transition that was going on in Crown family: old age. If it's really true that Richard Sr. was born in 1769, then he was 88 years old in the GV, and 97 years old in 1866. Is it possible that Richard Sr. transferred his 10 acres in Morerah to his two unmarried sons¹⁰ while he was still alive? One source reports this:¹¹

Older tenants would generally continue their tenancy as long as they fulfilled their obligations and responsibilities as outlined in their lease agreements. These obligations typically included paying rent, maintaining the property, and following any other conditions specified in the lease. As long as these requirements were met, age itself would not be a disqualifying factor for remaining a tenant.

However, it is important to note that social and economic factors, such as changes in land ownership patterns or the introduction of new agricultural practices, could have had an impact on tenancy arrangements. In some cases, shifts in economic conditions or changes in land use policies might have resulted in the displacement of older tenants. But these circumstances would not be solely based on age but rather on broader factors related to land and agricultural practices of the time.

.....

In many cases, lease agreements included provisions for inheritance or transfer within the family. These provisions could allow for the transfer of tenancy from a father to his sons while the father was still alive. However, the exact details and conditions of such transfers would vary based on the specific lease agreement and the legal framework in place at the time.

9 See my blog post, [Discovering Clancys of Barr of Farrow](#), Sep 2016.

10 We can imagine this time was perhaps after 1862 when John married. After that time, Richard had only two unmarried sons, Cormac and Richard II.

11 [Disabled Land Transfer: Leitrim 1800s](#), ChatGPT, 17 Jun 2023.

It's worth noting that the legal and social dynamics surrounding land tenure in Ireland during the 1800s were complex, and there were various factors that could impact the ability to transfer tenancy. These factors included local customs, the type of lease agreement (e.g., a life lease or a lease for a specified period), the agreement of the landlord, and any legal restrictions or requirements specific to the region.

If indeed Richard Sr. was disabled by old age before or around 1862 when John was married, then Richard II was around 18 years old in 1862, and so probably old enough to generate the means to pay a rent before he was married.

In any case, let's say these were the circumstances for the Crown family in 1866:

- Richard Sr. was infirm, for whatever reason, by or about 1862. At that time, he would have been 93 years old.
- Prior to 1866, Richard Sr. had transferred tenancy to his unmarried sons, Cormac and Richard II.
- By 1866 when Richard II married Kate Melaniff, Richard Sr. had a competent male representative / guardian who then negotiated the marriage settlement between the Crowns and Melaniffs so that:
 - Richard II would get the family farm in Pollboy provided that he support Richard Sr. (Sarah had died in 1865).
 - The Melaniff interest in Morerah would go to Richard Sr.'s son, Patrick.

Cormac's half of Morerah remained unaffected by his brother, Richard II's marriage in 1866. Cormac would later marry Kate Foley in 1869.

- Then 1875 came along. Richard Sr. had died in 1867, the lease on Morerah had expired, and Patrick was moving to New York. Patrick's brother, John, had married Mary Rooney in 1862 and they lived in nearby Clooneen. I think Patrick made a deal with his brother, John, and off he went to the USA.

Next Valuation

Map.		Morerah (O.S. - 11)	
a	{	James Harte	{ Herd's ho land
		John Harte	
		<u>Lawrence Munday</u> John Crown	Herd's ho land
b	{	Cornack Crown	Herd's ho land

A.	R.	P.	E.	S.	P.	E.	S.	P.	E.	Total.	Onset
										5 10 0	
										5 10 0	
										5 10 0	83
										5 10 0	

Now we see that Lawrence Munday became the occupier of John's half of the Morerah land in 1883, which is shortly after John Crown died in 1882. I don't believe this person was a family relation, but we should double-check.

Next Valuation

Map.

	Morrah 100.111		
a	James Warte	John Dolan	Huds. ho & L...
	John Warte	In fee	Land
	Lawrence Munday		Huds. ho & L...
b	John Crowne	John Dolan	Ho off & L...
	Anne Cormack Crowne		Land
c	Patrick Foley (James)	same	
	James Foley	Lawrence Munday	
1	Batt		

12 00	0 10 0	5 10 0	
10 10 0		12 10 0	85
		5 10 0	85
x 5 5 0		x 5 5 0	1901
x 10 10 0	0 10 0	x 5 10 0	right 84
x 5 5 0	0 10 0	x 5 15 0	86
		x 5 10 0	95 1901
			89

In this valuation, we see that John Crowne and Cormack Crowne still shared lot 1b. In 1889 (blue ink), a year after Cormack died, there was some kind of improvement made on Cormack's lot which added 10 shillings of value.

For John Crown's interest, we see that Lawrence Munday, as previously indicated, acquired John's interest around 1885, and then it looks like John Dolan became owner (in fee) of all the Crown-occupied property in 1901 (red ink).

And by 1895 (gray ink), somebody of the name Anne Crowne became the occupier of Cormack's interest. See Discussion section for more thoughts about Anne.

Next Valuation

Townland of <i>Morerah</i>		NAMES.		Description of Tenements.
Reference to Map.	Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.		
<i>19</i>	<i>a</i> <i>Patsy Healy</i> <i>John Healy</i>	<i>John Dolan</i>		<i>Herdshe & land</i>
<i>20</i>	<i>b</i> <i>John Dolan</i>	<i>Infee</i>		<i>Land</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Cathie</i> <i>Anne</i> <i>Braune</i>	<i>John Dolan</i>		<i>No off & land</i>

[illegible]

Given the previous valuation, this one is at first a little confusing. It seems to me that in 1909, Catherine Crowne (I think widow of Cormack) became the occupier. This change of occupier could indicate that the previous occupier, Anne Crowne, died around that time. It's not clear to me what the 1910 date indicates.

Next Valuation

Townland of <u>Morerah</u> O.S. <u>11</u>		NAMES	
Reference to Map.		OCCUPIERS.	IMMEDIATE LESSORS.
ED 1233 ED 87261 ED 81431 SD 81431 whole townland	1A26C	James Healy John McJannet John McJannet John McJannet	Infu Lar John Dolan
		John McJannet	Infu
2A26DEF		Catherine Crown John McJannet John McJannet John McJannet	Infu Lar John Dolan

4 15 0	45
6 30	74 '74 stet.
6 6 0	71 72 { Offs de
5 15 0	43. As plot F. 208.
11 75	176. Dec NB 9

This valuation shows that Catherine Crown, probably wife of Cormack Crown, born Catherine Foley, leased her property from John Dolan. I believe that Catherine died in 1924, and her death was reported by her son, Richard, who had been in America but returned just before Catherine died. This Richard Crown died in 1935. In any case, according to VO records, the occupancy of the Morerah lot after Catherine Crown went like this:

- Kate Crown, unmarried daughter of Cormac and Catherine – bought the Morerah property in 1943. At that time, the property consisted of 6+ ac, and an office (smaller than a house?)
- James Healy and Michael Nelly acquired the property 1971, 72. This was after Kate's death in 1967.
- John James Healy – 1974

Discussion

I have learned two things from this exercise:

1. It appears that John Crowne, the shopkeeper of Manorhamilton, was in possession of his part of the Morerah land from about 1875-1882. It's possible that we talking about some other John Crown, but honestly, I just don't think so. John's interest was taken over by another just shortly after John's death, which suggests to me that we are talking about John, son of Richard Sr. and Sarah Meehan. Because John was a shopkeeper in Manorhamilton, we can hypothesize that like his father, he didn't actually occupy the herd's house in Morerah.

I would also like to note the order in which the Crown children seem to have been involved in the Morerah property. Given that I believe John Crown was the oldest of Richard Sr. and Sarah's children, how do we explain that John was third in line to have his share of the Morerah land? Well, it seems that John Crown went to America early on, before the American Civil War, and he later returned to Ireland when he married and opened his shop in Manorhamilton. When Patrick decided to leave for New York, he apparently turned over his interest in the Morerah lands to his older brother, John.

2. Now for Anne Crown who was apparently the occupier of Cormack's half of the Morerah property from 1895-1909. Who in the world was she? This is a name that doesn't appear as such among the early descendants of Richard and Sarah. I do, however, have notation in my research of somebody named Honor Crown. I have found at least two examples in Crown genealogy where the same woman was referred to both by Honor and Anne, the second being something of a nickname.

In this case, I previously found record of a person named Honor Crown who was a witness at the marriage of Martin Eams of Pollboy and Mary Quin of Morerah in 1875. Pollboy and Morerah are Crown Central, at least in my branch of the Crown families, and if Honor Crown was at least 20 years old in 1875, making her birth around 1855 or before, then Honor is a candidate as a daughter of Richard Sr. and Sarah. And if I speculate that the order of Crown names who inherited the Morerah property is possibly some indication of birth order, then Honor was likely the youngest child.

But if Anne Crown was an unmarried daughter of Richard Crown, how did she become the occupier of Cormac's interest in Morerah? It could be that when Richard Crown Sr. (or his representative) negotiated the marriage settlement for Cormac in 1866, he made some provision for his youngest daughter to inherit after Cormac died.¹² But why did Anne not take possession of the tenancy until 1895? It's hard to say – maybe Cormac did leave a will which took a while to get through the courts, or maybe there is a different explanation.

¹² *Marriage in Ireland 1660-1925*, Maria Luddy and Mary O'Dowd, Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 122-123 describe a marriage settlement that specified a circumstance in which the farm would revert to the groom's unmarried sisters.

So this theory that Anne Crown was child of Richard Sr. and Sarah Meehan probably needs more evidence, but if right, it would mean the chain of occupiers of one-half of the Morera property was:

Richard Crown (RC) Sr. → Cormac Crown (RC son) → Anne Crowne (RC daughter) → Catherine Crown (widow of Cormac) → Kate Crown (daughter of Cormac and Catherine).

There's one hole (at least) in this theory, however. I find no Anne Crown enumerated in Morera in 1901 or anywhere else in the Leitrim area, for that matter. And Catherine Crown was clearly enumerated in Morera in 1901 with three of her children, so Catherine was the one occupying in 1901. What is the explanation? Maybe Anne left for America as other relations had done, and maybe she died there around 1909. Until that time, the valuation office didn't realize the change of occupiers.

In any case, I believe these VO records are giving us clues about another child of Richard and Sarah, and so now we must be on the look-out in records and DNA matches for Honor!