

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0002770 • MANOR
Florida, County Down, Ulster

Evidence status: Unverified
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Location: Ireland
Associated places: Ireland

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

- Lordship of the Manor of Florida | Associated | 1638 | Provisional

ABOUT THE MANOR

Note: FeudalTitles.com does not guarantee to the validity of Irish feudal titles - which have been

abused mightily and exist outside of ANY formal gov't recognition. See:

'Suspicious &

Fake Titles' page for more.

Florida Manor is located at Kilmoody in County Down in the Province of Ulster, Northern Ireland.

Ordnance and Estate plans of the locality show the Mansion House of Florida Manor with its surrounding parkland at the centre of the Florida Estate toward the end of the 19th century.

Whilst the early history of the Lordship of the Manor of Florida has not been fully researched the

Patent and Crown Grant in the 13th year of Charles 1, dated 19th March 1638 are to Sir James Montgomery, Knight, in County Down granting lands of Greyabbey and other townlands and all the

tithes arising from the lands and the tithes of the quarterland of Kilmoody and the whole rectory of

Kilmoodymanagh. It recorded that "That the Lord of the Manor may hold" One Court, in the

nature of a Court Baron, to be held every Three Weeks, or seldomer, at his will and pleasure, in the

said Manor of Florida, before any Seneschal, by the said Lord, respectively nominated and appointed.

That every such Seneschal so appointed, shall respectively have and enjoy full power, authority, and

jurisdiction in such Court to hold Pleas of all Debts, Agreements, Transgressions, Accounts, Detentions, Causes, Contracts, and all other things whatsoever, which in Debt or Damage shall not

amount to the sum of Forty Shillings of lawful money of England, happening, arising, or committed,

in the said Manor of Florida. That One Court Leet within the limits of precincts of the said Manor

shall be held before the Seneschal, twice in every year, for ever, according to the Statute in that

case made and provided, in which Court he shall enjoy and exercise full authority and jurisdiction to enquire of all Felonies, Transgressions, Deceits, Nuisances, and all other Offences, Causes, and Crimes whatsoever, which in any Court Leet are accustomed to be enquired of. The Seneschal shall receive, collect, and perceive, all and singular the Profits, Fines, Perquisites, Forfeitures, Emoluments, out of all and singular the aforesaid Courts. The Inhabitants and Occupants of the Manor shall render suit and service at the said Courts in every Third Week, or seldomer, and pay their Leet Money or Head Silver as they are required and bound to do, according to the Provisions of the Patent, and the several Statutes in that case "made and provided."

In the articles for the Grand Jury in the Manor of Florida 1690 it lists 22 offences which were to be brought before the Manor Court. These instruct:- You, Foreman and your Fellowes... are to present all High Treasons, petty Treasons, Felonys and Riots, cognisable in this leet, but are not punishable in this leet, but by higher authorities till we get a warrant to secure all such offenders to the County Gaol ... You are to present all Cursers and Swearers, and breakers of the Lord's Day - present their names... You are to present all Tale bearers, Whisperers, and all those that you find abroad at night, about to sow sedition - present their names... You are to present all Eaves Droppers that stand at windows to hear and raise tales... You are to present all Vagabonds and Idlers that will not work and have not their own to maintain them, but are burthensome to the commonwealth... You are to present all those that keep false measures, false weights, the small to sell with, and the great to buy with, to deceive the people...

In 1691 the Crawford family purchased Florida Manor and lands from the Montgomerys of Greyabbey. Anne Crawford, daughter of John Crawford and niece and heiress of David Crawford of Florida Manor married James Arbuckle. Their daughter Alice Arbuckle, in turn was heiress of Florida Manor and married firstly Thomas Whyte, then when widowed, she married Robert Gordon in 1755. It was through this marriage that the Gordon family acquired Florida Manor and the Lordship of the Manor of Florida. Robert Gordon was a wealthy merchant and brother of John Gordon, the Chief Justice of North Carolina in America.

Robert Gordon and his wife Alice bore six children. He died in 1793 and was succeeded by his eldest

son, John Crawford Gordon. John Crawford Gordon died unmarried in 1797 and was succeeded by David

Gordon the second child of Robert and Alice Gordon. Their third son was Robert Gordon, the fourth

Alexander Gordon and there were two daughters, Alicia who died unmarried and Anne who married a

Pottinger, the family that later was responsible for the arrangement that Hong Kong should be ruled

by the British.

David Gordon was an attorney at law and expanded the lands of Florida Manor. There is a copy case

paper dated 18 January 1803 reciting title deeds relating to the Earl of Londonderry's entitlement to collect leet money from the tenants and also the copy opinion upholds Lord Londonderry's right to collect leet money through the attendance of tenants at the manor court.

Dated 27 and 28 March 1805, case papers relate to David Gordon's entitlement to collect leet

for the tenants within the Manor of Florida. The paper recites David Gordon's title to the

Lordship of the Manor and his accompanying rights. With contact between The Trustees of the Commissioners of the First Fruits, Viscount Castlereagh, the Marquis of Devonshire and Lord Londonderry, the parish of Kilmoody was improved and a new church built, together with a school and a courthouse.

By the time of his death in 1837 David Gordon and his wife, Mary Crawford, a cousin from West Cork

had three children. Through the will he had set up for his father, the Manor of Florida and the

properties that had acquired were left to the surviving male line of the family, in tail, for 200

years. David Gordon's first son Robert married another Mary Crawford, but they did not have

children, nor did his second son, the Reverend James Crawford Gordon who married Geraldine Penrose,

also from West Cork. David Gordon's daughter, Jane Maria, died unmarried in 1866, the Reverend

Gordon in 1842 and Robert Gordon in 1864.

Their uncle, Robert, the next brother to David Gordon had two children, but they never had any, so

the next heir was the eldest son of the fourth son of Robert and Alice Gordon. He was Alexander

Gordon who married Dorothea Gisborne, the daughter of General Gisborne, the Commander-in-Chief of

the army in Ireland. Their eldest son Robert Francis Gordon and they had five other children,

namely, The Reverend John Frederick Gordon, Alexander Thomas Gordon, James Gisborne Gordon, Marian

Gordon and Alicia Gordon. In 1868 there was a challenge to the will of David Gordon by

Geraldine,
the widow of the Reverend James Crawford Gordon and the family of Anne, the sister of David Gordon
who had married Mr. Pottinger. The case went to the House of Lords on appeal from the High Court of
Chancery in Ireland. Judgement of the Vice-Chancellor, as revised by himself, dated the 5
June 1868
and a decree by the Vice-Chancellor of Ireland, dated 8 June 1868 was not in favour of the
Pottinger
family. The schedule referred to in the Decree was as follows:-
All the Manor and Lands of Florida, the Lands of Ballybrindon, Kilmood, and the Lands of
Drumreagh,
the Lands of Ballymacashen, the Mill and lands of Balloo, the Lands of Ballybeen and
Carrowreagh,
with the rectorial tithes thereof and the Lands in Church Quarter situate in the Parish of
Dundonald
in the County of Down, the Longfield Estate situate in the Parishes of Upper and Lower
Longfield in
the County of Tyrone, the Town and Lands of Mullough, otherwise Delamont and Tullyclinh,
situate in
the Parish of Killyleagh, the lands of Drumalig with the Rectorial tithes thereof situate in
the
parish of Saintfield all in the County Down.
Robert Francis Gordon, the eldest son of David Gordon's younger brother Alexander
Gordon, was
the beneficiary of the judgement. Robert Francis's next brother was the Reverend John
Frederick
Gordon. There were two other younger brothers and two sisters. The Reverend John Frederick
married
and had 10 children, the eldest of whom was Alexander Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon. The
Reverend
John Frederick died in 1875 and his elder brother died, unmarried, after him in 1883, so the
inheritance of Florida Manor, the Lordship of the Manor and the lands were passed to
Alexander
Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon. He married Ada Austin Eyre the daughter of the Australian
Explorer and
Governor of Jamaica who was the last person to be impeached in Parliament. He was held
responsible
for the massacre of Morant Bay, but later, was found not to be responsible. AHMH Gordon and
his wife
Ada produced 11 children, the first born being Alexander Robert Gisborne Gordon who was born
in July
1882. The next child was Eyre Gordon. There were 4 more younger brothers and four sisters.
From the time of the court case in 1868 the Irish Land Acts were brought in, which gave the
tenants
the right to buy the farms they rented. The Florida Estate was left with 247 acres from the
4000
acres that belonged to it, which could not sustain the manor house, so it was sold with its

acres. The tenants bought the other properties in County Down and County Tyrone, which reduced the

land owned by AHMH Gordon from c. 20,000 acres to 230 acres, and the mansion house of Delamont. Eyre

Gordon was the last of the family to be born at Florida Manor.

Possibly, helped by the pressure he had been put under, AHMH Gordon died in 1910. In 1907 the will

of David Gordon was dis-entailed. AHMH Gordon was the sole heir to the hereditaments and then after

his death, his eldest son ARG Gordon succeeded to the remaining property, including the Lordship of

the Manor of Florida. ARG Gordon attended the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and Eyre Gordon

joined the Civil Service, in India, after graduating from Oxford University. Lt-Colonel ARG Gordon

was severely wounded in France and left the army. After recovering, and after the partition of

Ireland, he went into politics to represent Ulster Unionists. He was MP for East Down and Minister

of Agriculture in the old Stormont Parliament and, latterly, he became the Speaker of the Senate at

Stormont. On his death in 1967, his title was Lt-Colonel the Rt Hon. Sir Alexander Gordon PC KCMG DL

JP DSO. He married, but did not have children.

Eyre Gordon spent his career in India until the second world war. He received the honours of,

Commander of the Star of India and Commander of the Indian Empire, and was knighted. He married the

Hon Liliias Napier of the Napier and Etterick family. His daughter Patricia Liliias married Archibald

Arundel Pugh and his son John was killed in action in Italy in 1941. Archibald Arundel Pugh and his

wife Patricia had two daughters and a son, Archibald John Eyre, the sole heir of Lt-Colonel Sir

Alexander Gordon, Lord of the Manor of Florida.

As a part of the manor estate the vendor owns lakes extending to 28 acres with the fishing rights

and the sporting over 3,056 acres in County Down and 4,816 acres in County Tyrone. The lakes comprise half of Lough Lack 14.88 acres, Lough Doo 5.91 acres, unnamed 5.85 acres and 1.19 acres.

All or part of these interests could be made available on terms to be agreed separately.

Rights, customs and incidents That One Court Leet within the limits of precincts of the said Manor

shall be held before the Seneschal, twice in every year, for ever, according to the Statute in that

case made and provided, in which Court he shall enjoy and exercise full authority and jurisdiction

to enquire of all Felonies, Transgressions, Deceits, Nuisances, and all other Offences, Causes, and Crimes whatsoever, which in any Court Leet are accustomed to be enquired of. There is a copy case paper dated 18 January 1803 reciting title deeds relating to the Earl of Londonderry's entitlement to collect leet money from the tenants and also the copy opinion upholds Lord Londonderry's right to collect leet money through the attendance of tenants at the manor court. The paper recites David Gordon's title to the Lordship of the Manor and his accompanying rights. From the time of the court case in 1868 the Irish Land Acts were brought in, which gave the tenants the right to buy the farms they rented. As a part of the manor estate the vendor owns lakes extending to 28 acres with the fishing rights and the sporting over 3,056 acres in County Down and 4,816 acres in County Tyrone. Catalogue source Lot #27 of Strutt & Parker Auction November 2003 Associated manorial documents / archive references David Huddleston 1999 Public Records Office, Belfast The Gordon Papers at PRONI.D/4204 Public Records Office, Belfast Genealogical Notes of the Gordon Family by Lt-Colonel Rt Hon. Sir Alexander Gordon reference D/2229 1680 - 1950 Seneschal's Holding Office 1784 - 1837 Patents, Commissions, etc. of Lt-Colonel Rt Hon. Sir Alexander Gordon 1901 - 1964 Note: FeudalTitles.com does not guarantee to the validity of Irish feudal titles - which have been abused mightily and exist outside of ANY formal government recognition. See: 'Suspicious ' Fake Titles ' page for more.

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

Historical holder / succession information Alexander Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon 1875-1883 • passed_to • historical_holder_or_transferee Source wording: The Reverend John Frederick died in 1875 and his elder brother died, unmarried, after him in 1883, so the inheritance of Florida Manor, the Lordship of the Manor and the lands were passed to Alexander Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- 1875-1883 | Alexander Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon | passed_to | Lot #27 of Strutt & Parker Auction November 2003
- 1638 | Sir James Montgomery | Patent and Crown Grant | Manor And Title |
- 1691 | Crawford family | Purchase | Manor And Title |
- - 1755 | Alice Arbuckle | Inheritance | Manor And Title |

- 1755 - 1793 | Robert Gordon | Marriage settlement or descent through marriage | Manor And Title |
- 1793 - 1797 | John Crawford Gordon | Succession | Manor And Title |
- 1797 - 1837 | David Gordon | Succession | Manor And Title |
- 1868 - 1910 | Robert Francis Gordon | Chancery judgment and succession | Manor And Title |
- 1883 - 1910 | Alexander Hamilton Miller Haven Gordon | Succession | Manor And Title |
- 1910 - 1967 | Alexander Robert Gisborne Gordon | Succession | Manor And Title |

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Court baron jurisdiction, described in the 1638 patent as a court to be held every three weeks or less frequently at the lord's pleasure before a seneschal.: The patent states that the lord of the Manor of Florida could hold a court in the nature of a Court Baron for specified debts, agreements, trespasses, accounts, contracts and other matters below forty shillings.
- Court leet held twice yearly within the manor precincts.: The 1638 patent expressly provides for one Court Leet twice each year before the seneschal, with jurisdiction to enquire into offences and other matters customarily presented in a Court Leet.
- Leet money or head silver and attendance at the manor courts.: The supplied record states that inhabitants and occupants were required to render suit and service and pay leet money or head silver; nineteenth-century case papers are said to concern entitlement to collect it.

RESEARCH GAPS / WANTED EVIDENCE

- [OPEN] The historical identity, parish extent, title continuity, and surviving status of the lordship require source verification. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The Domesday status is not applicable or established from the supplied record. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point

DISCLAIMER

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