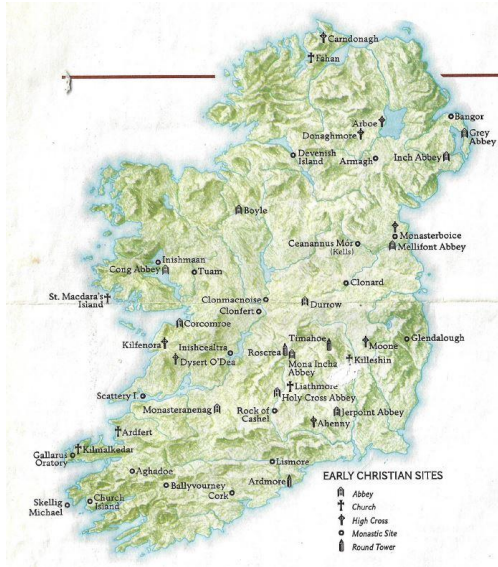


Historic Ireland Maps



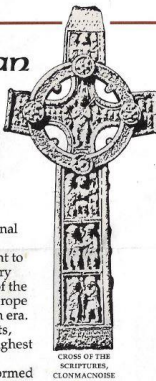
Pre-Norman Ireland

First Century B.C.
-A.D. 1168

When the Irish spirit for independence from England welled at the turn of the 19th century, patriots found national identity in the ancient Irish language and culture, brought to Ireland during the first century a.c. by the Gaels—a branch of the dynamic Celts who swept Europe centuries before the Christian era.

Gaelic priests, judges, poets, and historians enjoyed the highest social prestige as the sacred and learned class, and were exempt from taxes and military service. But the Celtic penchant for battle defied political unity, and as many as 150 tribal kingdoms quelled the island.

Roman forces that routed the Celtic culture in Europe never reached Ireland. The Gaels absorbed a mixture of Roman and Celtic beliefs in the fifth century Christianity. If the legend-inspiring St. Patrick was not the first missionary in Ireland, he was without doubt the most successful, converting many



influential leaders.

The Christian movement blossomed in monasteries that were organized on a tribal basis and reflected the ruling family's wealth. Monks developed a written Irish language and transcribed Gaelic lore and tradition. Pagan and Christian decorative art merged in exquisite illuminated manuscripts, such as the Book of Kells. Zealous Irish monks established their own missions on the Continent.

The plunder of monastic wealth by neighboring kingdoms was commonplace politics in Ireland. The treasuries were also a favorite target of seafaring Vikings throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. The Northmen never dominated Ireland but gradually aligned themselves with various chieftains. They generally lived apart from the rural Gaels, established Ireland's first towns, and expanded trade.

Political change altered Gaelic culture during the last half of the first millennium A.D., as chieftains ambitious for power began to consolidate petty kingdoms into realms that remain today as Ireland's four provinces: Leinster, Munster, Connaught, and Ulster.

Famed warrior Brian Boru, King of Munster, took the title High King in 1002, the first to attempt rule over all Ireland. But political unity remained elusive in Ireland's caldron of family rivalries, and the high kingship was won or lost by the sword.



Medieval Ireland

1169-1690



Anglo-Norman England entered Ireland's embattled politics by invitation in 1169, when Dermot MacMurrough, deposed King of Leinster, petitioned Henry II for troops to restore his throne. Small in number but superior in battle, Normans began to assume power. Henry II, alarmed by the independence of his barons, toured Ireland in 1171, asserting his lordship and demanding allegiance from both Gaelic and Norman rulers. By 1250 Normans controlled three-quarters of Ireland. Great stone castles recall their reign. They introduced

feudalism, founded walled towns, and began to divide the land into counties. Dublin became an administrative center with an independent Irish Parliament.

As war elsewhere diverted England's armies and funds, Gaelic families ousted some of the invaders. More commonly, Anglo-Normans became Gaelo-Normans, intermarrying and adopting Irish ways. By 1400 the area known as the Pale—where English law was observed and enforced—extended only slightly beyond Dublin (whence originated the term "beyond the pale").

Henry VIII strengthened England's political control and took the title King of Ireland in 1541. He declared his realms officially Protestant, but the Irish people remained Roman Catholic, and this religious schism deepened mutual animosity.

Wary of Spanish naval attack, Elizabeth I enlarged English armies in Ireland and subdued native rulers. Seeking to populate Ireland with loyal subjects, she and her successor, James I, chartered a series of plantations. Ironically, the only successful plantation rose in Ulster—the strongest citadel of Gaelic culture and last to surrender to English troops—where Protestant Scots and English formed a majority of landholders in 1640.

A mid-17th-century island rebellion was quelled with bloody thoroughness by Oliver Cromwell. At century's end Protestants—20 percent of the population—owned 86 percent of Ireland.



Modern Ireland

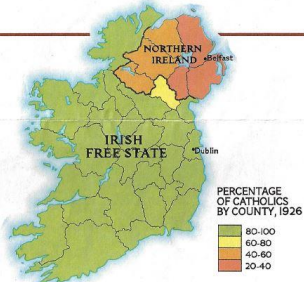
1691-Present

The most severe yoke of English Protestant rule, the penal laws, forbade Catholics to buy or inherit land, bear arms, build churches, or conduct Mass. Laws against worship proved unenforceable, but land laws reduced most Catholics to tenant farmers subject to eviction and high rent.

The Anglo-Irish ruling class prospered during the 1700s and removed most penal laws before the close of the century. A bloody rebellion in the late 1790s inspired by the Protestant idealist Theobald Wolfe Tone—father of Irish nationalism—failed either to cast off English domination or to bind together the various Irish factions. The 1801 Act of Union joined Ireland to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and abolished the Irish Parliament. Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic Emancipator, captivated the masses and in 1830 became the first Irish Catholic member of the Westminster Parliament.

Mounting efforts to repeal the Act of Union were overshadowed by the calamitous potato famine (1845-51). Repeated failure of this staple crop claimed an estimated million lives. An even greater number of Irish emigrated, most of them to the United States and England, starting a population decline not reversed until the 1960s.

Nationalism galvanized post-famine Ireland. Parliamentary maneuvers and the terrorist activities



of groups such as the Fenians eventually brought about home rule in 1914, but World War I postponed the transfer of power.

Proclaiming Ireland a republic, a coalition of political groups staged the short-lived 1916 Easter uprising in Dublin. Execution of the leaders increased anti-British sentiment, and rebellion escalated into war in 1919. Finally an uneasy truce, ratified in 1922, divided the island into the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland—six counties with a Protestant majority that demanded to remain in the United Kingdom. The Irish Free State withdrew from the Commonwealth in 1949 to become the completely independent Republic of Ireland, called Éire in Gaelic.