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FOREWORD

Where Dalua Rolls Its Flood Along is a wide-ranging and comprehensive account of the development of Kanturk town and its surrounding area over a period of 350 years.

Based on extensive use of primary sources, local historian and scholar, Patrick O'Sullivan, draws a fascinating picture of the evolution of a hamlet of rudimentary clansmen's dwellings (located near their chieftain's castle at Kanturk) into a thriving market-town in the nineteenth century. Along the way he introduces us to the triumphs and vicissitudes of both the local clan chief, Mac Donogh Mac Carthy (Lord of Duhallow) and the English settlers, the Percivals.

The Percivals gained possession of the Duhallow Mac Carthy territory by deviously advancing money to the Mac Donogh Mac Carthy chieftain by way of a mortgage on his castles and lands. Mac Donogh Mac Carthy was unable to redeem the mortgage on time and Percival foreclosed on him.

Therefore, Kanturk Castle (The Old Court) on the outskirts of the town can be seen as a fitting monument to the Mac Donogh Mac Carthy chieftains while, on the other hand, Kanturk town itself could be viewed as a monument to the Percivals.

The author's tracing of the development of Kanturk covers, for the most part, the tenure of the Percival family. By 1657 Kanturk town consisted of a market house and 40 dwelling houses. By 1731, there were 62 houses, some of which were made of stone. The Percivals preferred English to Irish tenants and, by 1683, many English tenants were named in a local rent roll. Over the years and under the Percivals, Kanturk continued to advance in size and urbanisation.

The book covers many aspects of life in the area during the three and a half centuries from 1550 to 1900 and it guides us through the intricacies of urbanisation and industrialisation. Along the way we meet many interesting personalities residing in or connected with the town. The work is organised into 22 chapters. Each chapter covers such varied topics as the famines of 1740 (Bliadhain an Áir) and 1845-1850 (The Great Famine), Rights of Labour, Fight for the Land, Nineteenth Century Surveys and Reports, Railway Branch Line, the Hidden Kanturk, Religion and Politics, Education and a wide variety of other topics including the difficulties caused by flooding in the Dalua River.

After reading *Where Dalua Rolls Its Flood Along*, anyone walking around Kanturk can get a feel for the history of the town by a study of its buildings, streets, laneways and square, as well as by contrasting the styles of dwellings and buildings in different locations as, for example, the simple single storey dwellings of Bluepool Lower and the two or three storey houses of Strand Street and elsewhere.

Where Dalua Rolls Its Flood Along is set to become the definitive study of Kanturk for the 350 year period it covers. It will be of great interest to residents of Kanturk, those with connections to the town, historians, and those with an interest in local history.

Dr. Jean J. MacCarthy, 2011.

PREFACE

The house in which I was born is now the property of a political representative. My mother came from a shop two doors away, while my father first saw the light of day in the house directly opposite that in which I was born, once a newsagent-grocer's premises, now a barber's emporium. In the adjoining house lived a teacher, musician and archaeologist whose research into the history of this region provided the incentive to walk a similar path. The street in question, long and narrow, of irregular frontage, both indications of antiquity, is named Percival Street. Why *Percival* Street? Who and what was Percival? It appears that up to the late nineteenth century it was known as Peacock Lane. Peacock as in bird species? Peacock a surname? In the Land beyond The Water there are Egmont Place and Earl Street: similar questions present themselves. Questions demand answers, to supply which is not always possible.

This study, conceived in youthful curiosity, born of erudite example and nurtured to maturity by endless encouragement, represents the work of several decades and I present it now with no little sense of trepidation. Committing anything to public scrutiny can be a chastening experience. Attempting to portray the social history of a community over a period of three and a half centuries is a daunting task. Folk-memory, of its very nature, is limited in range and unlikely to relate very much to this particular project. Traditional accounts of the oral variety are not always reliable. Seanchas (i.e. folklore) is often guilty of gloss. Written reports, on the other hand, are often inadequate or affected by bias of one kind or another. If all history, national and local, is to be treated in an even manner, our route-map must be, in the words of John A. Murphy, our respected teacher of times past, the stern discipline of sources.

In terms of inadequacy, it is frustrating to discover, for example, that the River Allow separated the two estates of Percival and Gethin. In attempting to trace the evolution from settlement to town, our task is greatly hindered by the absence of worthwhile information on Greenane. That townland contains a cemetery enclosing an ancient church site which gave its name to a civil parish and about which virtually nothing is known. Therefore, for lack of authentic information, this essay is not the full story. Prior to the seventeenth century, relevant sources, such as they are, relate almost entirely to Clan Carthy, are quite limited and do not form any kind of basis for in-depth study of a community. Owing to the disorganized state of the Catholic Church in Ireland throughout the eighteenth century, knowledge of religious practices in the area covered by the parishes of Clonfert and Kilcorcoran is minimal. The little we do know comes from other, usually hostile, sources.

The study ends more or less at the dawn of the twentieth century. By then the area's profile was complete. Demographically, with population at its lowest ebb for a century, the town remained static for another fifty years. Without an industrial base, unemployment and migration continued relentlessly to rise. The political power base that was the Poor Law Union had by then been relocated. Rural district councils eventually disappeared. Nevertheless, the political excitement engendered by the surge to Home Rule and its aftermath, plus the human conditions which accompanied two major world upheavals, should provide ample research material for another pen.

In a process, at times laborious, more often rewarding, but never uninteresting, help and encouragement came from many diverse quarters. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by the staffs of the Cork, Kerry and Limerick County Libraries, Cork City Library, National Library of Ireland, National Archives, Cork City and

County Archives, Irish Architectural Heritage, University College Cork and the British Library. A special word of thanks is extended to Kieran Burke, Tim Cadogan, Kieran Wyse, Anne McCarthy, Damien Brady, Chris O Mahony, Michael Murphy, Dr. C. J. Wright, C. Robinson, Nicola Beech, and in particular to the late Pádraig Ó Maidín, County Librarian, friend and mentor to all involved in historical research in Cork county, for the courtesy and guidance shown to a mere novice in this field.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made to this study by fellow-researchers, school-friends, acquaintances and family members, among whom I would like to number John O'Callaghan, John Ryan-Purcell, Canon James Coombes, Canon Bertie Troy, Frank Johnson, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, Charles O'Sullivan, Dominic O'Sullivan, Gertie O'Keefe, Dion McAuliffe, Mary O'Connor, Peggy Linehan, Donal Horgan, Sean Sheehy, David Perceval, Denis Hickey, Jerry Murphy and Anne Sweeney.

The ready access provided by the British Library and the *Cork/Irish Examiner* to their resources, which have been extensively used and without which it would have been well-nigh impossible to complete this treatise, is greatly appreciated. Thanks are also extended to the editorial committee of *Seanchas Dúthalla/Duhallow* Magazine for permission to reproduce some of my contributions to that journal. I am deeply indebted to Peadar O'Callaghan and the staff of St. Colman's B.N.S. for frequent use of their photo-copying equipment.

The financial support of IRD Duhallow was significant in presenting this project and is very much appreciated. For their goodwill and support in this venture, I am heartily grateful to Kanturk and District Community Council, in particular to its then Chairperson, Tom Daly, for his advice and help in so many ways, as well as his dogged determination in bringing this undertaking to a successful conclusion.

Jean Mac Carthy very kindly agreed to review the work and for this and for her Foreword I am deeply grateful. I would also like to thank Patrick Casey most sincerely for the use of his photographs.

Last but not least, I cannot but applaud my wife Eileen for her quiet tolerance of long sessions spent in pursuit of this project at home and abroad.