

Massey Lord Clarina Papers

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Introduction

The Massey family of Clarina, County Limerick, first came to Ireland under Cromwell's invasion in 1641 and as a reward for his services during the invasion General Hugh Massey was granted 1,800 acres in Duntryleague near Galbally Co. Limerick. His great grandson Hugh (1700-1788) became the first Baron Massey and in 1757 he inherited an estate at Elm Park, Clarina. On his death the property passed to his brother George (1771-1796) and subsequently to another brother Eyre. (1719-1804).

Eyre Massey was then awarded the title of Baron Clarina of Elm Park in 1800 for services to the crown, as he had fought with great distinction as a general in the British Army, and the family then held this title until 1952. The title passed to Eyre's son Nathaniel William (1773-1810), who became the second Lord Clarina in 1804, and held the title until 1810 when he died of fever while on military duty with the British Army in Barbados. His son Eyre Massey (1798-1872) became the third Lord Clarina and held the title for sixty-two years. He married an heiress, Susan Elizabeth Barton and this marriage financed the replacement of the existing house in Elm Park with a grand new construction, Clarina Castle. The building was designed in the gothic tradition by the brothers James and George Pain, then working in the practice of John Nash. The building was completed in 1836 and Lord Clarina was actively involved in construction of the estate village of new Clarina. His eldest son, Eyre (1830-1897) succeeded him as fourth Baron and served as a Tory MP, and he was then succeeded by his brother Lionel (1837-1922) as the fifth baron and the last Lord Clarina to live in Clarina Castle. The castle was accidentally burnt in 1933 and was later demolished. His son Eyre Nathaniel (1880-1952) became the sixth and last Lord Clarina, as the title became extinct on his death.

The collection is small but includes material relating to the third, fourth, fifth and sixth barons covering the period 1828 to 1914. The collection includes a marriage settlement for the third baron of Clarina, a letter from the fourth baron to his brother, and a property deed relating to the fifth baron. The collection relates mainly however to Eyre Nathaniel Massey, the sixth, and last Baron Clarina.

The collection mainly documents Eyre Nathaniel's military activities as it includes his three military commissions. It also includes letters written to his father and his sister Mary while on duty with the Scots Guards in the Transvaal. These provide an insight into pre World War One military duty and include references to hunting and other daily activities. Later letters provide an insight into his personal life with references to his engagement to Erin Alhuesen including a letter written to his sister Mary from the battlefield of the First World War.

Bibliography

The Life and Times of Eyre Massey, First Baron Clarina of Elm Park 1719-1804, The Old Limerick Journal, Summer Edition 1998, Dr. Matthew Potter pp 20-23

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Potter, Dr. Matthew, The Architectural Legacy of Eyre Massey 3rd Lord Clarina (1798-1872), North Munster Antequarian Journal Volume 42, 2002 pp11-20

Burke's Irish Family Records p778

1. Deed: Copy of memorial of marriage settlement
 Date: 9 September 1828
 Parties: Lord Baron Clarina, Elm Park, County Limerick of the first part and Susan Elizabeth Barton of the second part
 Property: Land in County Limerick including part of Doon, Clarina, Ballybrown, and Raheen, in the barony of Pubblebrien,
 Terms and Conditions: To be held by Lord Baron Clarina, Elm Park, County Limerick, until and from his marriage to Susan Elizabeth Barton. On his death his wife to receive an annual sum of six hundred pounds as a charge on the estate.
 Size: 4pp

2. 20 December 1891 A letter from Eyre Massey, Elm Park, Clarina, [Fourth Baron] to his brother Adolphus writing that although they seldom corresponded he thought of him often and had begun preparing a box to send for Christmas. He writes that they are both busy men, he with farming, his brother as a 'curer of souls'. p.2 He writes of family news, his four beloved dogs and his few social activities, 'I am a regular savage and never go out if I can help it', relating however that he had been shooting in Dromoland recently with Lord Inchiquin.
 8pp

3. 24 May 1898 Conveyance of a piece of land 45 feet square in the demesne lands of Elm Park, Kilmeedy, Barony of Pubblebrian, by Lieutenant Colonel Lionel Edward Butler Massey, Fifth Baron Clarina to John Beatty Barrington, Esquire County Limerick, to be used as a Massey family burial ground. Includes a map of plot.
 2pp

4. 8 March 1899-15 March 1899 The Honourable Eyre Nathaniel Massey's Commission to 2nd Lieutenant in the militia forces, 3rd battalion, the South Wales Borders.
 1 item

5. 24 May 1900-2 June 1900 The Honourable Eyre
Nathanial Massey's Commission to 2nd
Lieutenant, Land Forces, Scots Guards.
1 item
6. 6 July 1910-9 July 1910 The Honourable Eyre
Nathanial Massey's Commission to
Lieutenant, Land Forces, General Reserve of
Officers
1 item
7. 22 April 1900-1 August 1902 File of letters from Eyre Massey to his sister
Mary written while on duty with the First
Scotts Guards Field Force in South Africa.,
describing current locations, weather, shooting game, thanking her for gifts of
food and apologising that he gets very little opportunities to write.
8 items
8. 1 June 1901 Letter from Eyre Massey Transvaal to his
father, outlining his current , location and
daily activities, includes a humorous sketch
showing him riding a very small pony, writing, 'the Swazis are capital fellows
and kill Boers whenever they get the chance'.p.2.
3pp
9. 5 November 1905 Letter from Eyre Massey, St. Leonard's
Gardens, Smith Street, Chelsea, to his sister
Mary, 'Dearest Duchess', writing that he
had become engaged to Erin Alhusen, inviting her to meet him that day at his
fiancé's home for tea.
2pp
10. (5) November 1905 Letter from Eyre Massey, Beechmount,
Rathkeale, County Limerick, to his sister
Mary, complaining that his mother in law
had written to an aunt that he was a 'noodle' to allow himself to be bossed by his
wife. p.3.
4pp

11. 22 June 1911 Invitation to the 'Honourable Eyre and Mrs Massey', to the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary at the Abbey Church of Westminster.
1 item
12. 28 December 1914 Letter marked 'confidential', from Eyre Massey, 2nd Battalion Scots Guard, 20th Brigade, 7th division, to his sister Mary, writing that the day before he had sailed, he had written to his wife Erin, and had told her that should he survive the war he would not live with her again. He describes his battalion's recent severe losses as a result of attacking and capturing the German trenches opposite using bayonets. Includes original envelope stamped 'passed by No.1666 censor'
2pp