

Collon Estate Rentals, 1779 – 1782

Repository Code: IE LHA
Collection Reference Code: PP00019/
Title: Collon Estate Rentals
Dates: 1779 – 1782, 1943
Level of Description: Item
Extent: 2 items
Name of Creator(s): Anthony Kieran, agent to the Right Honourable John Foster (1740-1828)

Admin/Biographical History: The Collon estate was owned by The Right Honourable John Foster. The Fosters lived in Dunleer; a parliamentary borough controlled by the Fosters landlords, the Tenison family. The Tenisons were negligent patrons and the Fosters rose to prominence through taking control of the return of one of the two parliamentary seats. First, Anthony Foster (1705-79) was returned as an MP for Dunleer, then his son John (later 'Speaker') Foster (1740-1828) was returned from 1761 to 1768. John Foster enjoyed a particularly successful political career, serving as MP for county Louth from 1768 to 1821 (when he was elevated to the peerage as Baron Oriel), Chancellor of the Exchequer 1784-5, and Speaker of the House of Commons 1785-1800. John's son, Thomas Henry Foster married Harriet Skeffington, daughter of the 4th Earl Massereene. The death of the 4th Earl in 1816 without male issue allowed Harriet to succeed in her own right as Viscountess Massereene, and the Viscounty, along with the substantial estate, descended through her.

Originally concentrated around Dunleer, the Fosters estate in Louth and Meath was acquired through a number of purchases. It is estimated that well over half of their estate, which stood at 6,500 acres in 1778 and yielded a gross rental of £4,854, came from the Moore family (a cadet branch of the Moores, Earls of Drogheda), who sold off their estate in the first part of the 18th century.

The Fosters were interested in improving their new estate. Anthony Foster invested in agricultural improvements, improving the drainage, fertility and general quality of the land. Arthur Young who wrote 'Tour in Ireland' visited the estate in 1776, five years before the rental, and said that the Chief Baron Anthony Foster's 'operations were of a magnitude he had never heard of before' (CLAJ, X, 3, 1943 p227). John Foster developed the linen industry in the area, building mills and encouraging Protestant weavers to settle in Collon.

However, despite the attempts to develop the prosperity of the Collon estate, its very acquisition had taken a heavy toll on the Fosters' finances. Much of the money raised for the purchase of the estate was borrowed, and by 1810 John (Speaker) Foster's debts were estimated at £72,000. The importance of the Collon estate to the Foster family declined in the 19th century. The huge debt created in the acquisition and running of the estate, coupled with the family's inter-marriage with the Skeffingtons, Earls and Viscounts Massereene, shifted the focus of attention away from the estates in Louth and Meath. The estate was eventually broken up under the Land Commission.

Anthony Kieran, the agent who wrote up the rental and accounts, belonged to the Ashville and Rathbrist family. He married a Miss Markey of Glaspistol

and is meant to have lived at the Corner House in Collon which was accidentally burned down in the early 1920s.

For further information see 'Foster Massereene' at <http://www.louthnewryarchives.ie/online-exhibitions/landowners-county-louth/index.shtml>. See also http://www.proni.gov.uk/introduction_foster_massereene-2.pdf.

- Archival History:** The rental and accounts were obtained by Reverend Brother B Keenan, SM from JJ O'Neill, Philipstown, Dunleer and are thought to be all that has survived of the earlier estate papers in Collon Estate office after it was closed (County Louth Archaeological Journal, Vol X, No 3, (1943) pp222-9). The County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society deposited the papers with Louth County Archives Service in April 2001.
- Scope and Content:** This collection contains one rental and accounts of the Collon estate dating to 1779 - 1781. It also includes a photocopy of an article on the rental and accounts 1779-81 taken from the County Louth Archaeological Journal, Vol X, No 3, (1943) pp222-9. This article includes information on the Foster estate.
- Subject index:** Collon, County Louth; Kieran, Anthony, agent to John Foster; Foster, John (1740-1828); Landed estate; Rental; Tenants
- Appraisal & Destruction:** Retain permanently
- Accruals:** No further accruals are currently expected.
- System of Arrangement:** The collection is arranged by document type.
- Conditions of Access:** Open Access, by appointment
- Conditions Governing**
- Reproduction:** Contact County Archives staff regarding copying.
- Language/Script of Material:** English
- Physical Characteristics:** Paper. Poor – fair condition.
- Technical Requirements:** Careful handling required
- Finding Aids:** Descriptive list can be found on on-line catalogue available at <http://www.louthcoco.ie>
- Existence & Location of Originals:** Louth County Archives Service
- Existence & Location of Copies:** Some digitised documents may occasionally be found on <http://www.louthcoco.ie>
- Related Material:** Louth County Archives Service: PP00286/ Emerson Papers, 1824 – 1840, 1865 – 1925
PRONI: D207, D562, D1739, D4084 Foster/Massereene Papers, 1590 – 1939

Publication Note: HG Tempest, *Rental and Accounts of Collon Estate, 1779-81* (CLAJ, Vol x, No 3 1943, p222-9)

Repository Home Page: <http://www.louthcoco.ie>

Source Material: <http://www.louthcoco.ie>

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Descriptive List

PP00019/001

Account of the rents and arrears given in charge by the Right Honourable John Foster to Anthony Kieran. The rental details, under each townland, the names of tenants, number of acres, arrears due as of May 1779, rent due as of May 1780 and 1781, total rent due November 1781, arrears due November 1781 and observations. The denominations listed include Collon, Strinagh, Glasson, Ballysillagh, Corlis, Drumin and Knockdenny, Silloge, Lawlesstown, Philipstown, Blakestown, Knockaclave, Ralust, Knockenny, Mullacurry, Manymore, Drogheda, Newtown Monasterboice, Dunleer and Corrstown, Painstown, Ardee, Carrick, and tythes (tithes) for Ardee South, North, Small, Richardstown, Mosstown and Stickillen.

The accounts include payments from the rents and interest and cash paid out on the John Foster's account, for example '11 March 1781, paid Thomas Mulholland for roads £208.0.10' or '19 October 1782, paid flax premiums for the year 1779 £165.0.0'; cattle sold by Anthony Kieran for account of John Foster; and account of wool sold for account of John Foster at Mullaghgrew Fair.

01 May 1779 – 24 Nov 1782

20pp

PP00019/002

Photocopy of the 'Rental and Accounts of Collon Estate, 1779-81' article by HG Tempest taken from the County Louth Archaeological Journal Vol X, No 3, 1943, pp222-9. It contains a transcript of the rental and accounts in PP00019/001.

1943

8pp