

BUTLER FAMILY HISTORY

The Butler Family,(de Butler in Gaelic and French), whose name comes from the French word "bouteleur" or "butler" is a noble family of Anglo-Norman origin, famous in the history of Ireland, where she was established in 1206. It is the only one comparable to the Geraldine, who was its neighbor and her worst rival. The Butler family is the 20th oldest subsisting aristocratic family in France,and one of the oldest in England and Ireland,dating back to the Norman conquest by William the Conqueror. She has many existing branches, not only in the UK but also in France, Spain,Germany and America.

Origin and history

The Butler family, which is believed to be of the family of the Counts of Briannel arrived in England with William the Conqueror in 1066 during the Norman conquest,and received many lands and titles after participating in the Battle of Hastings.

It has a proven lineage that begins with Hervey Gaultier, who owned the manor of Newton in Suffolk at the time of King Henry II (1154-1189). From the large survey of 1212, he had married in 1160 his son Walteri or Galtier Matilda or Maud, daughter of Thibaud de Valognes, who became lord of Parham to Plomesgate in Suffolk County and whose sister had married Berthe Ranulf Glanville, chief justice of the king.

There are three known sons, Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1193, Rotgier, Hamo and Theobald (1206).

The latter became Grand Bouteiller (or "boteleur"),an hereditary office which will give the family name "Butler".

The Plantagenets

The Butler family was also part of the Plantagenet dynasty through the House of Normandy,which was a French royal dynasty which ruled England from the High Middle ages until the late Middle Ages.Founded by Geoffrey V de Plantagenet,a line of 14 Plantagenet Kings ruled over England and Ireland from 1154 until 1485.

Famous kings from this dynasty include Henry II,King John,Edward I "Longshanks"Richard "The Lionheart" and King Richard III.

Anne Boleyn

The Butler's are related to Anne Boleyn, and therefore Queen Elizabeth the 1st. Lady Margaret Butler was born at Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny, Ireland, somewhere between 1454 and 1465. She was the daughter of Thomas Butler, 7th Earl of Ormond, (known as "The Wool Earl") and his first wife, Anne Hankford, and her paternal grandparents were James Butler, 4th Earl of Ormonde, and Joan Beauchamp. James Butler was known as "The White Earl".

Lady Margaret's father, Thomas, was a friend of Henry VII and so sat in the Irish and English Parliaments. In 1509 he became Queen Catherine of Aragon's Lord Chamberlain and served her in this post for three years. He died in 1515 leaving his English estates (72 manors!) to his two daughters, Margaret and Anne.

Lady Margaret married Sir William Boleyn, son of the wealthy mercer Geoffrey Boleyn from Blickling, Norfolk, and his wife, Anne Hoo. The couple had ten children and their eldest son was Thomas Boleyn, father of Anne Boleyn. Margaret died in 1539.

Queen Elizabeth 1st is the last Tudor monarch with Butler blood on her maternal side as she died without issue.

Main Branches of the Butler Family

Butlers of Ireland

The Irish branch of the Butler family is probably the best known historically.

The main branch, it includes the Barons, Viscounts, Counts, Earls, Dukes and Princes of Ormond or Ormonde. His motto was "As I think", Comme Je Trouve (in French).

Before being made Dukes of Ireland, the Butler's were Princes of the Palatinate of Tipperary.

James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde, Viceroy of Ireland under King Charles II. A very famous and illustrious man, mentioned many times in Samuel Pepy's diaries. One of the most trusted men at court and a close friend of the King's from his exile in France to his restoration following the death of the regicide Oliver Cromwell.

Butler's of Cahir

This branch begins with James Butler, 2nd Earl of Ormond (1331-1382), youngest son of James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormond and Eleanor Bohun. Under King Edward III they were given large areas of land and Cahir Castle. From his marriage with Elizabeth Darcy, he has a daughter, Eleanor, which brought the Cahir branch into relation with Gerald FitzGerald, 4th Earl of Desmond.

The FitzGerald's are one of the most illustrious Irish families and close kin to the Butler's.

Their motto was "God be my guide."

Butler Galway and de Butler of La Rochelle

The French Branch of the Butler family continues to this day with the de Butler's of La Rochelle, a military family which left Ireland in the 17th century to establish themselves in France.

Their motto was "Depressus Extollor."

There exist many other branches of the Butler family to this day, all over England, Ireland, much of continental Europe and in America.

Lands of the Butler family

The patrimony of the Butlers of Ormonde encompassed most of the modern counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and parts of County Carlow. Only the earldom of Desmond would have had more extensive land holdings than Ormond in the Lordship and Kingdom of Ireland. Following the successful Norman Invasion, the ancient Gaelic lands would have been annexed to the crown and passed as baronies or fiefs to the supporters of the crown (the victorious barons). These (administrative) baronies corresponded to the (Irish) túath ("country") or trícha cé ("thirty hundred [men]") of a Gaelic chief, for example Éile. However, sometimes baronies combined small territories, or split a large one, or were created without regard for the earlier boundaries. In the Norman period most Gaelic chiefs were killed, expelled, or subordinated by the new Norman lord; in the Tudor period, many Gaelic and Hibernicized lords retained their land by pledging allegiance to the Crown under the policy of surrender and regrant.

In 1837, the remains of the following Butler castles were recorded in County Kilkenny alone by Lewis.

"Granny or Grandison Castle, in Iverk, is one of the most considerable: it was the residence of Margaret Fitzgerald, the great Countess of Ormond, a lady of uncommon talents and qualifications, who is said also to have built the castles of Balleen and Coolkill, with several others of minor note. The Butlers owned the castles of Knocktopher, Gowran, Dunfert, Poolestown, Nehorn, Callan, Ballycallan, Damagh, Kilmanagh, and Urlingford..... The castles of Drumroe, Barrowmount, and Low Grange, are said to have belonged to Lord Galmoy;"