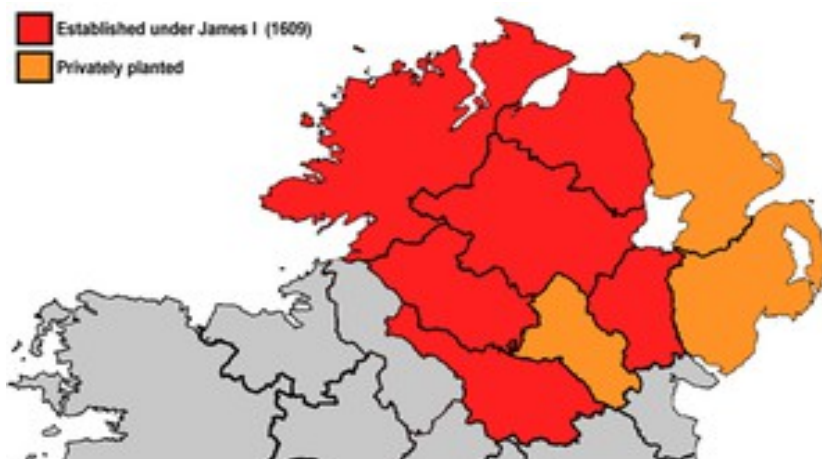


## PLANTATIONS OF ULSTER

In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century the North of Ireland was largely rural and undisturbed by the spread of the English who were centred around Dublin and “The Pale”, from where the governance of the country was carried out. The northern Irish clans continued to control their areas and fight among themselves; at times coming into conflict with the English and at other times joining with them against their neighbours. Ulster is described as the most Gaelic area of the island holding onto their Irish language, Catholic faith, customs and ways of farming.

In the 1570s, Elizabeth I authorized a privately funded plantation of eastern Ulster, led by Thomas Smith and Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex. This was a failure and sparked violent conflict with the local Irish lord, in which Robert, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex and one-time favourite of the Queen, killed many of the rebellious O’Neill clan.

The resultant bad feelings led to three of the northern Irish chiefs, Hugh O’Donnell, Hugh O’Neill and Hugh Maguire uniting and waging war on the Government forces, which lasted for nine years (1594 – 1603). Following the Treaty of Mellifont in 1603 what remained of the O’Neill clan and the rebels tried to consolidate their position. They had been allowed to retain their lands but were constantly undermined despite the terms of the Treaty. They left Ireland in what became known as the “Flight of the Earls” in 1607 with the plan to elicit Spanish help for their cause. This flight to an enemy country gave King James I the excuse to label them as traitors and declare their lands forfeit to the crown. They never did get help from either Spain or France and many of them went on to illustrious careers in the armies of their host nations.



Half a million acres of land in Donegal, Londonderry, Armagh, Tyrone, Cavan and Fermanagh was confiscated. Scottish Presbyterians had been moving into Antrim, Down and Monaghan since 1606 under private plantations which had James VI's blessing.

The English and Scottish government officials set out the orders and conditions for parcelling out the forfeited land to suitable settlers. The land was divided into parcels of 2,000, 1,500 and 1,000 acres with three categories of grantees: "Undertakers" who were wealthy landowners in England & Scotland and who "undertook" responsibilities to fortify and protect the settlements. They were to import settlers from their mainland estates who were loyal to the Crown, spoke English and were Protestant, preferably Anglican. The second category consisted of civil and military servants of the Crown in Ireland and known as "servitors". They were allowed to have Irish tenants so long as they had taken the English side in the recent war and were loyal to the Crown, but they received more favourable terms if they settled their allotted land with English or Lowland Scots tenants. The third category were the "native" Irish who had proven their allegiance to the Crown and were, in effect, granted tenancy of the land they had always worked. They had to pay higher rents and abstain from Irish tillage methods. 28 baronies or precincts were established – 8 for English Undertakers, 8 for Scottish ones, and 12 for servitors and natives jointly.

Successful applicants came from lists drawn up in London and Edinburgh. English "Undertakers" received 18% comprising the best quality land. They consisted mainly of gentry from East Anglia and the midlands. Scottish "Undertakers" from lowland Scotland received a similar portion of less profitable land. 10% went to the Irish Society and its associated London companies for the strategic plantation of Londonderry. The "servitors" received 12%, the Church of Ireland (Anglican) got 16%, mainly the lands belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Trinity College, Dublin, received 3% and local schools, towns, and forts also got 3%.

By 1622, a survey found there were 6,402 British adult males on Plantation lands, of whom 3,100 were English and 3,700 Scottish – indicating a total adult planter population of around 12,000 (including females). However, another 4,000 Scottish adult males had settled in Antrim and Down which were planted privately immediately after the war, giving a total settler population of about 19,000 (again including females). By now settlers were coming on their own initiatives through the new ports of Carrickfergus and Londonderry, although

Northern Ireland had to contend with Virginia and the new Colonies on the other side of the Atlantic, also seen as lands of opportunity.

While James I's plantations in Northern Ireland provided the main migration of English and Scots protestants and the displacement of the native Irish population this was reinforced again in the 1640s when Cromwell's New Model Army had to re-establish British rule over a rebellious Ireland and the resulting costly campaign was paid for by way of land grants to the soldiers and officers of his army.

A further 50,000 Scottish Presbyterian lowlanders migrated to Ulster over the ten years either side of a famine in their home territory from 1696 – 98.

*(From Philip Robinson "The Plantation of Ulster" (1984) & Wikipedia)*