

The Nine Years War 1594 - 1603

1594. The Ford of the Biscuits (Ath na mBrioscai) Hugh Maguire, Red Hugh and Cormac O'Neill defeated the English forces.

1595 Art O'Neill brother to Red Hugh captured Portmore on the Blackwater and drove out an English garrison. Red Hugh scored yet another victory at Clontibret, Co. Monaghan.

1597 Three English armies sent to Ulster all met with defeats at, Ballyshannon to Hugh O'Donnell; at Tyrrells Pass by Walter Tyrrell; and at Dromfliuch on the Blackwater to O'Neill.

1598 Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill now extracted submission from a large English Force at the "battle of the Yellow Ford" near Armagh. This was the most important Irish victory since the arrival of Normans almost 400 years before. Soon all the Irish Chiefs of Leinster and Munster, joined by some Anglo-Irish Lords, joined the rebellion. The English occupation was limited to towns and cities.

1599 18,000 well armed English troops arrived in Ireland to quell the rebellion. They marched on Leinster and Munster where repeatedly attacked by Irish armies suffered many casualties and returned to Dublin. Yet another Battle of Curlew Hill was a resounding victory for O'Donnell. O'Neill now appealed to the Catholics of the towns to take up arms but received little support.

1600 Lord Montjoy and Sir George Carew embarked on a savage campaign of deliberate destruction, with slaughter, burnings and pillaging. Many Irish Chiefs submitted to promises of money and titles and the English established garrisons throughout Ireland.

1601 Spain sent 4000 troops who landed at Kinsale. They took the city. Montjoy immediately surrounded the city by land and sea. O'Neill and O'Donnell were still in Ulster had begun the long march south in the mid of Winter. When they finally reached Kinsale the exhausted armies of O'Neill and O'Donnell surrounded the English. In a surprise nighttime attack the English routed the Irish forces and what would otherwise be an easy victory became a tragic defeat. This defeat marked the end of an era for old Gaelic Ireland. The power of the Ulster chiefs was finally broken and Brehon law was abolished in lieu of English Rule over the entire island.

1602 O'Sullivan Bearra defended his castle at Dunboy for months and finally decided to lead his people to Ulster. About 1,000 set out on the journey. As a result of constant attacks, cold, starvation and desertion, Sullivan with 34

survivore arrived at the O'Rourke Castle in Leitrim.

1603 The Treaty of Mellifont . As the residual war dragged on, many more Irish chiefs opted to submit to the English forces. Ulster plagued with famine and few lending any further support to O'Neill, he agreed to meet with Montjoy at Mellifont and sign a treaty. The terms included renouncing his title and authority over his sub-chiefs, a promise not to solicit foreign upport, an oath to be loyal to the crown in exchange for an English title and allowed to retain most of his lands. O'Donnell received the same considerations.