



CLANS, CASTLES & CULTURE IN CO. CLARE

Jane O'Brien



EARLY IRELAND

- Ireland first inhabited about 10,000 years ago
 - Pre-Christian Ireland was dominated by Celtic culture (Celtic language, laws (Brehon Laws) and religion from approx. 400 BC)
 - Unlike Britain, the Romans had not conquered Ireland.
 - There were Christians in Ireland by the 5th Century AD – the most famous of which was St Patrick.
 - The 6th century and after saw many monasteries being built in Ireland (including the community in Dysert near the O'Dea stronghold which Tóla built in 700 A.D.)
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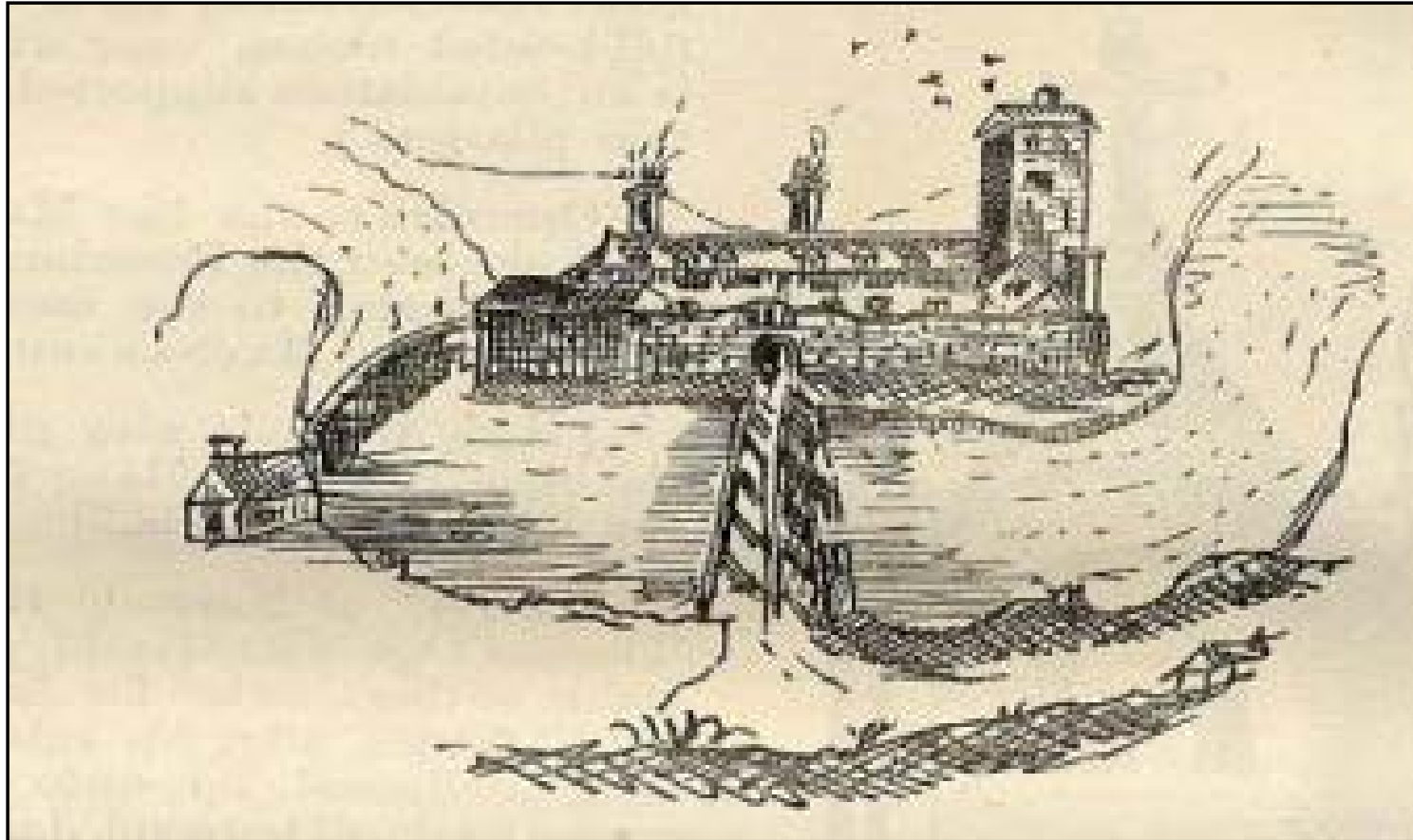
THE VIKINGS AND THE KINGS OF IRELAND

- Vikings era lasted nearly 300 years – 9th , 10th , 11th Century.
- O'Brien's were part of the Dal gCais who were a Gaelic Irish tribe that were a powerful group in Ireland during the 10th century.
- Brian Boru is perhaps the best-known king from the dynasty, and he was famously killed defeating the Vikings in 1014.
- The historic seat of the tribe is now Dromoland Castle and the current day chief is Conor O'Brien 18th Baron Inchiquin.
- Ireland was ruled by many Kings and Kingdoms.



THE O'DEA CLAN

- The O'Deas, together with the O'Quinns and the O'Griffins, belonged to the Uí Ferarmaic group
- This was also a branch of the Gaelic Irish tribe of the Dál gCais of county Clare, and was related to the O'Brien ruling dynasty of the area.
- They occupied the region between Corofin and Miltown Malbay, centred around the parish of Dysert Tola.
- The annals show that throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the O'Dea lords were important members of the O'Brien kings' council.
- The O'Dea castle was built between 1470-1490
- The Battle of Dysert O'Dea, which drove the Anglo-Normans from the region for over 200 years, took place 10 May 1318



O'BRIEN STRONGHOLD FROM 12TH CENTURY



ENNIS FRIARY – FOUNDED 1240'S

HOSPITALITY WAS A VITAL CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

- Tradition of Feasting
- Medieval food
- Bards
- Harpists
- Braigetoír
- Tradition of Hospitality





FOSTERAGE

- Fosterage was a central feature of medieval Irish society and culture.
 - Seven years was traditionally regarded as the suitable age for the commencement of fosterage.
 - A foster fee was often paid, and the child was education for their position later in life.
 - The children of kings, chiefs or other distinguished persons were eagerly sought after for fosterage.
 - As the annals confirm the medieval world was violent and fosterage was one of the most binding of ties which society had to offer.
 - One chief Donnchadh O'Dea was foster-father to King Toirdhealbhaich Mór O'Brien and, as was traditionally the case with Irish foster-fathers, was his most devoted follower during his foster sons stormy adult career.
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CLOTHING

- **Main items of medieval clothing included**

Léine – long loose shirt like garment, yellow linen, held up with a crios (belt) made of woven wool

Gúna – On top of the Léine the women wore a large heavily pleated dress or gown, often in red or green

Brat – large outer covering made of thick wool

Cóta Mór (great coat) – worn over the Léine and made of wool or leather

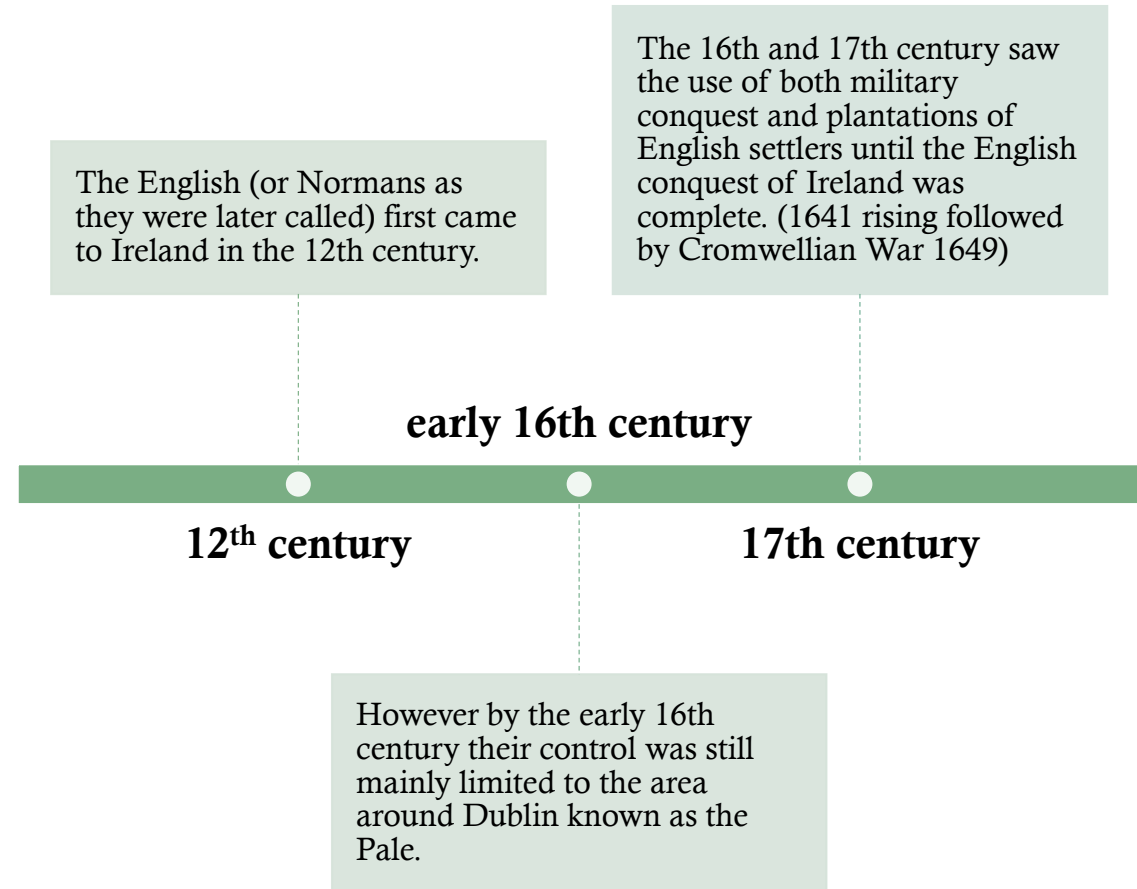
Seaicéad – a short jacket barely reaching the waist

Triús – trousers worn instead of the Léine usually in winter

Bróg – shoes made of one piece of leather, the front and sides curled up with small hole added for a lace to pass through

Image shows Irish Kern (foot soldiers) from 1521 – note the Léine and woollen Brat

THE MAKING OF PROTESTANT IRELAND



DROMOLAND

- Now a luxury hotel outside Ennis
- Drom Ólainn (Hill of Litigation) and site of Mooghaun Bronze Age Hill Fort
- O'Brien land – 1500's tower house, 1730's and 1830's castles
- Sir Donagh O'Brien settled there in 1684 and eight generations of O'Briens since then
- O'Brien lineage scroll stored in Lloyds of London





**TOWER HOUSE (1500) - OLD GROUND
HOTEL ENNIS**



MAIRE RUA – RED
MARY



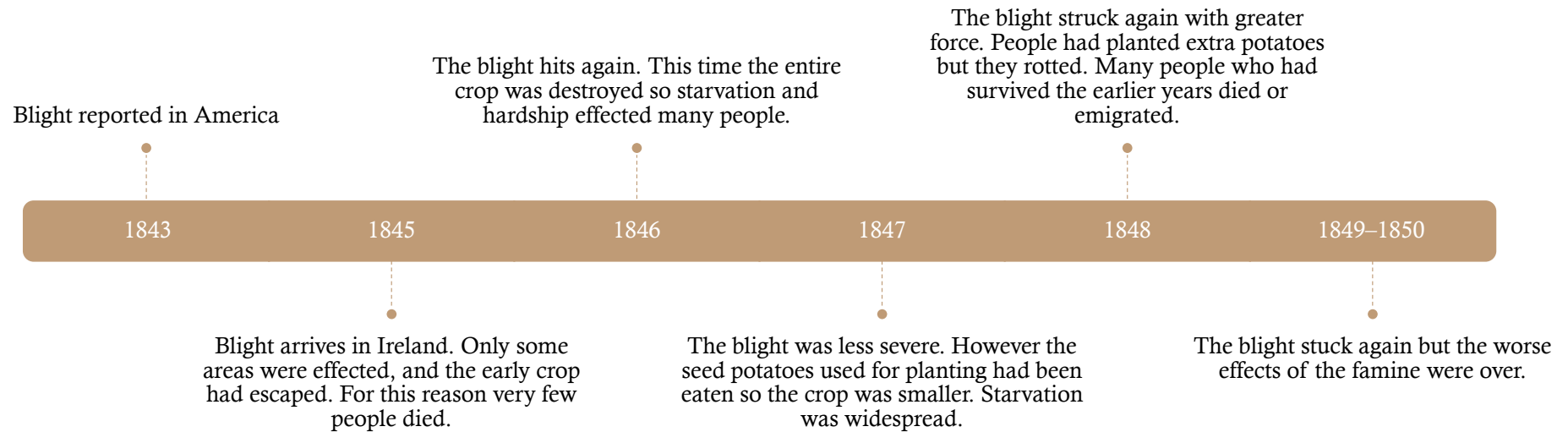
Leamanagh Castle, Co. Clare

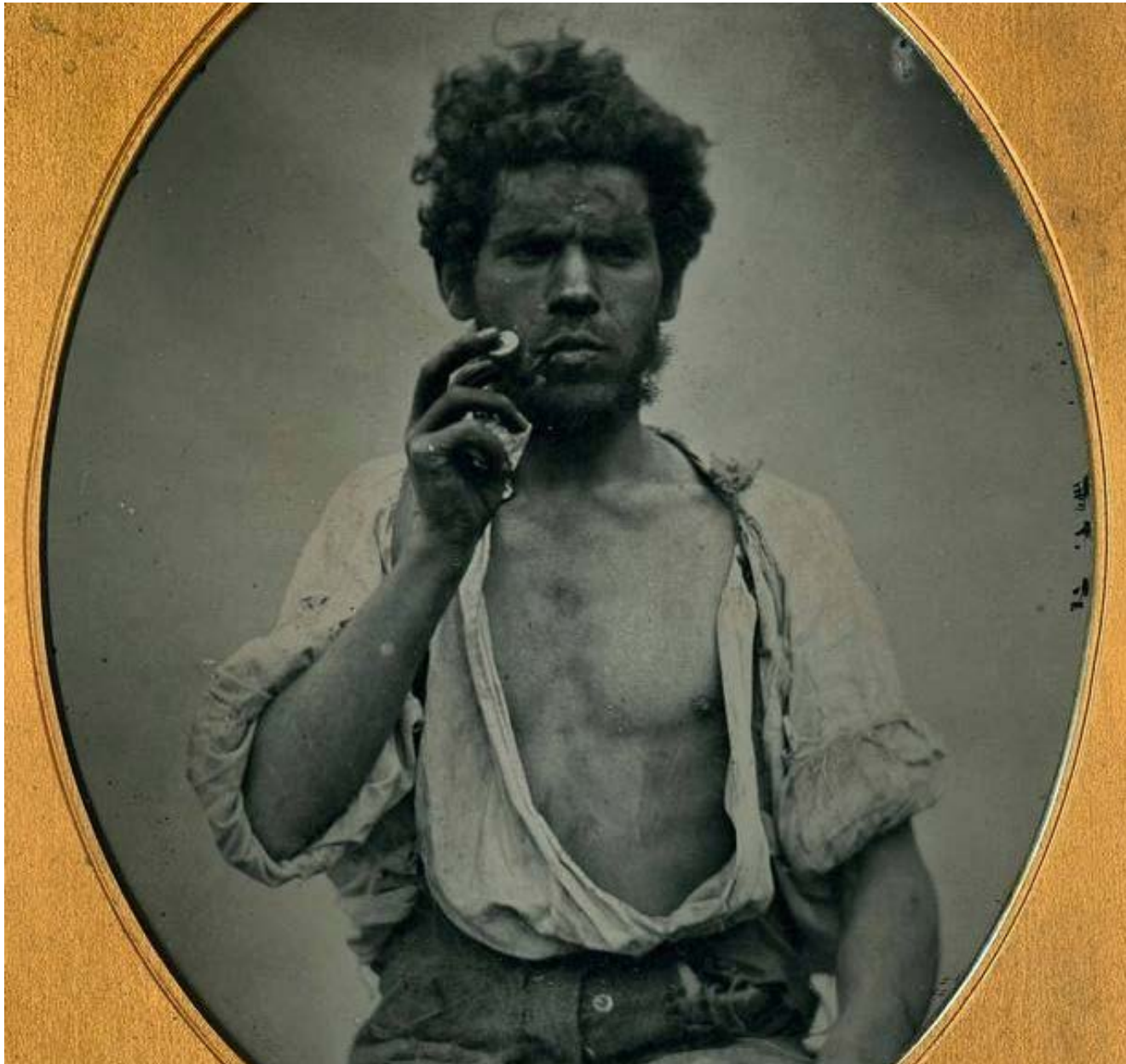
- Leamanagh Castle



ENNIS COURTHOUSE AND MARKET - PAINTING BY TURNER DE LOND 1820

PROGRESS OF THE FAMINE





THE FAMINE EMIGRATIONS

- Between 1845-55 approx. 1.2 million people emigrated
- Coffin ships to America
- Population decline in Ireland continued until 1966
- Famine was a humanitarian crime that was committed against a defenceless people
- Consequences of the famine



LAWRENCE COLLECTION – O'CONNELL ST (JAIL ST)





COUPLE IN THEIR SUNDAY BEST



ROYAL MAIL DAY CAR, GALWAY, 1880



IRISH TRAVELLER BOYS, 1954



FAIR DAY AT BALLYBRICKEN, 1910



LARGE GROUP OUTSIDE COTTAGE, LATE 19TH CENTURY