

# USA/Canada Clan Egan

Volume 1, Issue 1

Fourth Quarter 2000

## Message from the President of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association

**Byron F. Egan**

Dallas, Texas

Fellow Eagan/Eagen/Egan/Keegan Clan Members:

The Millennium Clan Egan Rally was held in Ireland from June 29, 2000 through July 2, 2000. Approximately 180 people took part in various segments of the Rally, which was centered near Redwood Castle in County Tipperary, lying North of the Birr-Portumna Road (T-41). In addition to exploring our Irish heritage through visits to interesting Egan-related sites in the vicinity of Redwood and the sharing of genealogical information, there was considerable socializing among old and new friends and relations with Egan roots. For the success of our Millennium Rally, we owe much to our Clan Chief, Michael J.S. Egan of Dublin, who organized and led the Rally, and to Eithne Egan and her family, who made Redwood Castle available to us. Eithne's late husband, Michael J. Egan, was our founding Clan Chief and was responsible for restoring Redwood Castle.

We also owe much to Jacki Barber, Chair of our

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## Egan Coat of Arms

*Fortitude and Prudence*



## Australian Clan Rally Report

**Greg & Sue Egan**

Clayton, Victoria Australia

Approximately 180 members of the Clan, including 9 from Australia, assembled on 29th June at Redwood Castle in Tipperary for the 2000 Rally. We were welcomed in Irish and English by the Clan Chief Michael J.S. Egan and the Chapter presidents Greg and Byron F. Egan were introduced. Over the following 3 days the group took part in an interesting and informative tour of Egan and related sites in the immediate area of Redwood, as well as much enjoyable discussion with other obsessive family members on the various backgrounds and circumstances of their relatives.

We visited a 400 year old Law University of the MacEgan's, which is sadly in great disrepair, toured the peat bog which is used to fuel Ireland's power stations and, as in the past, many families' domestic heating systems, visited Clonmacnoise, one of the oldest monastic settlements in Ireland and enjoyed the hospitality of several pubs and hotels in and around Lorrha and Birr. Redwood Castle itself is in great shape as a result of the work of the previous Clan Chief Michael Egan, his wife Eithne and daughter Geraldine and family. It provides a wonderfully atmospheric setting for Clan members to meet during rallies and when touring in small groups. The castle is open to the public and the family welcomes visitors regularly through the summer months. A videotape about Redwood and its reconstruction is

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Technology Committee, Greg Egan and Mary Taylor who, through the Clan Egan web site and numerous e-mails, spread the word of our Rally, to Jane Eagen, who spread the word of the Rally through the Clan's Newsletter, and to the others who helped in these efforts. The current members of our Newsletter Committee and our Technology Committee are listed below. Anyone else interested in joining one of these Committees is welcome to do so by contacting the appropriate Committee Chair at an address specified below.

The new Clan Egan web site address is <http://www.clanegan.org>. This Mac Aodhagain site will continue to be a starting point for all things Egan, with greater emphasis placed on finding and joining Clan branches USA/Canada, Australia and International. Michelle Egan and her father (our Chief) were instrumental in obtaining the Clan's new web site address. Jacki Barber and our Technology Committee have developed this new web site using the Clan's new domain name, which we should frequent. You may also wish to visit <http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/clanegan>, which is a public forum created in Yahoo's genealogy section with links to the Clan web sites and other specialized addresses. While the Clan's origins are ancient, our technology and communications belong to the new Millennium.

Among the decisions made at the Rally were the following:

Our next Rally will be July 3-7, 2002 in Australia. A significant contingent of Australian Egan's attended the Rally and offered to host us in 2002. A number of Egan's immigrated to Australia over the years and have prospered. The Clan Egan Association in Australia has over 120 members. Our Australian cousins pointed out that July is winter in Australia and we can expect daytime temperatures in the range of 70 Fahrenheit, and that, with the prevailing favorable currency exchange rates (currently \$1.7 Australlars for each U.S. dollar), the U.S. dollar goes a long way in Australia, which should help offset the costs of travel. Advance booking of airline tickets, perhaps in one or more groups, can further reduce costs. Our Australian cousins will be working the travel alternatives and plans for the Rally. The tentative itinerary will commence in Melbourne and include traveling to Egan sites in rural Victoria. Professor Gregory K. Egan, Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Systems

Engineering at Monash University near Melbourne, is President of the Australian Clan Egan Association, and will be coordinating the planning for our 2002 Rally in Australia. Greg's contact information is:

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Rally 2002 Webpage:

<http://members.optushome.com.au/gke/Clan/Rally2002.html>

- Our Rally in 2004 will again be in Ireland and coordinated by our Chief Michael J.S. Egan.
- Our Rally in 2006 will likely again be in the U.S. Virginia Crawford and Maryan Egan-Baker developed a proposal for a Rally in Salt Lake City in 2002, which was deferred as the plan for Australia Rally in 2002 was adopted and may be considered again for 2006.
- Dues for the USA/Canada Clan Egan Association are due January 1 for each calendar year at the rate of \$15 per person or \$25 per family household. If you have not paid your dues for 2000, please remit the dues, together with your current mailing and email addresses, telephone and fax numbers, to our Treasurer, Jim Eagen as follows:

USA/Canada Clan Egan Association  
c/o James H. Eagen  
4610 Brad Court  
Rockville, Maryland 20853

- Our Treasurer's report presented at the Rally showed that we have 264 USA/Canada dues paying members and, although we are solvent, it is important that we continue to remit our annual dues to the USA/Canada Clan Egan Association. ❖

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At the Rally a resolution was passed in honor of  
the elevation of Clan member Edward Egan to  
Archbishop of New York.

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## **Redwood Castle**

The home of MacEgans since AD1350. --- It is claimed that REDWOOD CASTLE is the oldest occupied Castle in Ireland where the present owners are Kinsfolk of the Owners of more than 600 years ago.

It was built by Normans about 1210, and occupied by them until 1350. In 1350 the O'Kennedys, the Chieftains of this Territory, took over the castle and installed the MacEgans. They were the leading Irish Family of hereditary Brehons and Ollaves - Lawyers and Professors.

The Family established a celebrated school of learning - primarily of Law and History - here, and pupils came here from all parts of Ireland for about 300 years.

The location, so convenient to the river Shannon, made it easy of access, because at the time there was considerable traffic by water, and no roads, as we know them. One of the well-known persons educated here was Michael O'Clery from Donegal, the chief of a team of historians who compiled the Annals of the History of Ireland known as the Annals of the Four Masters.

When the compilation of the Annals was completed in 1636, the owner of the Castle - Flann MacAodhagain - was the first of the six leading scholars invited to write his

available from Brooks Video, Barrack Street, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, tel. +353 65 42766.

## **Clan Egan 2002 Rally Australia**

Following some heavy lobbying by the Australian contingent, it was agreed pretty much unanimously at the Plenary Session that the next Rally will be held in Melbourne, Australia in July 2002. Melbourne in July we hear you say! Are we crazy? Perhaps so but the US members of the Association have their summer vacation in July which lines up with school holidays in most, if not all, Australian states. The Americans, unlike us, only have two weeks annual leave; they seemed very keen to visit. Their winter makes our southern Australian winter look like spring.

The Clan Chief Michael J.S. Egan and the Association Chapters in Ireland, England and elsewhere will be encouraging their members to follow the footsteps of their descendants to the bottom of the World.

The tentative itinerary will commence in Melbourne, traveling through rural Victoria to the main gold mining city of Ballarat where we plan to visit the Art Gallery of James Egan and stay near the historic Sovereign Mill Gold Museum and mine. We will then travel on to Eganstown, which was founded abt 1850 by John Egan, an early grazier who discovered gold on his property. Returning to Melbourne through Bendigo another famous gold mining city, we plan to visit the wine growing area of the Yarra Valley, which again has strong Egan connections.

There will be the opportunity to explore a number of the sites in Melbourne including its cultural centres and perhaps an Irish Pub or two that were owned by Egans.

The Rally will provide a unique opportunity to meet Egans from far and wide. ❖

The evolving 2002 Rally WWW Site is at:

<http://members.optushome.com.au/gke/Clan/Rally2002.html>



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# Clan Tour Highlights

Carole Mondragon

On Saturday, July 1, 2000 the Rally attendees gathered at **Blackwater Bog**, a working peat bog near Shannon Bridge in County Offaly. We went through the bog on a small railroad and saw how peat is dug, its role in the economy (past and present) and the history of the area.

We learned from our tour guide that the Bog is 7.5 metres deep. It and goes into three counties and covers 25% of that land. 90% of the people in rural Ireland now are still using peat fires. They collect and dry it for two months before they use it. **Blackwater Bog** is a natural bog area from trees that are 4 or 5 thousand years old. The surface of the bog is black and watery, covered sparsely with shrub bush. The tour guide reports that people have been found buried after centuries in the bog. Their hair and eyebrows turn orange and their skin is very pale and like soft leather to touch. They're so well preserved you can tell what they had for their last meal. Local farmers used to use the bog daily. They would churn their butter and sink the churn into the bog for a while to keep it cool. Interestingly, there was a hard surface, which ran through the bog and was a road from Galway in the west to Dublin in the east of Ireland. Many famine survivors trekked to Dublin via the bog.

## CLONMACNOISE - COURTESY OF THE TOUR GUIDE

The medieval monastery in Clonmacnoise, Offaly, was built by St. Keiran 547 AD, where a major east/west roadway crossed the Shannon River. His followers built an oak church where the monks could live, made of post and wattle (wattle is made from mud and straw). Keiran died from yellow plague along with half the population of Ireland. The monastery became a great centre of ecclesiastical power and learning, a university by the 12th century with 2.5 thousand people and was the foremost monastic school in Ireland at that time. The population today in Clonmacnoise is only 20. This site holds the ruins of 7 churches, 2 round towers and 2 high crosses. This place was known as the crossroads of Ireland for it was close to the River Shannon, which was the main north/south connection of Celtic Ireland by which the Celts would travel to the markets of Tara. The annals record that the Vikings who attacked 15 times burned the settlement at Clonmacnoise in the 12th century. In 1214



*Blackwater Bog*



*Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise*



*The Cathedral and The Round Tower, Clonmacnoise*

*Continued on next page*

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the Vikings built a castle here. In 1552 the English attacked Clonmacnoise. Henry VIII introduced the Protestant religion and every summer here there was a Protestant service Sundays in O'Connor's church. His policy of the dissolution of the monasteries ended the monastic life here. In 1955 the grounds held by the Protestant church were handed over to the state. Access to the tallest round tower is 3.5 metres above the ground. Access to the round tower would be by rope ladder. The monks would seek refuge with their scripts in the round tower in times of danger. There are three stories inside the round tower.

The Clonmacnoise Monastery has MacEgans buried in it, but they didn't live there. The **whispering arch** (see picture below) was where monks in the monastery could hear confession without connecting with the people during the plague. ❖



*The Round Tower*



*Bill Egan at the **Whispering Arch**, Clonmacnoise*



*Tim, Jackie & other uncover Egan grave at Clonmacnoise.*



# MacEgan Genealogy

**Carol Mondragon**  
USA

Cousin is a very loose word. It may be applied to close cousins and to cousins many times removed. The term may also be applied to all of the Egans at this year's clan gathering and to those unable to attend at this time.

Concerning the spelling of words, Samuel Johnson published an English dictionary around 1776, which greatly standardized the way words were spelled. Before that time, words and names were often spelled without much attention to their spelling. Even so, name spelling still varied from place to place. Earlier in this century, for example, a woman might be named Bridget Egan on her marriage certificate. Later, when she registered the birth of a child, the Registrar might mishear her pronunciation and write down Hagan. The Irish often pronounce Egan (pronounced Eegan) as Agan (pronounced Hagan dropping the H). Closer to Tipperary the name is pronounced Egan. In Antrim there are McEgans and in Kerry there are McEgans.

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***The first Egan was a Kelly who took the name  
Bright Eyes or Egan circa 980 A.D.***

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Lannigan means tall Egan

Finnegan means fair Egan

Donnegan means dark Egan (Spanish?)

Dunleavy means Brown Mountain

Kennedy means Long Face ❖

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*"It is one thousand three hundred and fifty years tonight since Jesus Christ was born and in the second year after the coming of the plague to Ireland was this written and I myself am full twenty one years old i.e. Aedh the son of Conor Mac Egan, and let every reader in pity recite a 'pater' for my soul. It is Christmas Eve tonight and under the protection of the King of Heaven and earth I am on this eve tonight. May the end of my life be holy and may this great plague pass by me and my friends and restore us once more to joy and gladness.  
Amen.*

*Pater Noster. Aedh mac Conchobhair mac Giolla na Naomh mac Duinnshl6ibhe Mac Aodhagiin wrote this on his father's book, the year of the great plague". Note written in the manuscript  
**SENCUS MAR** in 1350 A.D.*

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*A.D. 1235*

Record of death of Flann Mac Egan  
i.e. An Giolla Suasanach, in the

**ANNALS OF CONNACHT**

*"This is a page I wrote on St. Nicholas night, and all the school idle except myself, and may God forgive this to me and to the woman who gave me light, i.e. Sheila". Note written by Aodh O'Davoren in the Book of Ollar at PARK in Co. Galway, now a part of the **YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN**, 1408 A.D. ❖*



**The Speckled Booklet is completed**, as is the Annals of the Four Masters, available at <http://www.clanegan.org/archives.htm>. Special thanks to Pat for transcribing the Annals and to Greg and Sue Egan for scanning the Booklet.

Some sites that may be of interest:

<http://www.ancestry.com/ssdi/advanced.htm>

<http://www.ancestry.com>

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~irish/index.html>

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/famine.html>

<http://www.irishaci.org>

<http://www.HistoryChannel.com>

Register you own domain at:

<http://www.register.com?SOURCE=fss-banner/>

# Dinner at the County Arms

**Mary Theresa Taylor**

Herndon, VA USA

On Saturday evening, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000, Clan Egan Rally participants gathered at the County Arms Hotel in Birr, County Offaly, for the Clan Egan Gathering Dinner. Many came as families, others as individuals, couples, and small groups. A full range of ages was represented, including a fairly large number of teens and young adults.

Before dinner many gathered in the bar area for a bit of socializing, awaiting the final preparations for a larger-than-expected crowd in the banquet room. When the signal was given to move to the hall, the crowd massed in the corridors and slowly entered the dining area. Once there, they discovered that there were not enough tables and chairs set up for all the members. Two more rows of tables had to be assembled and set! It was quite a large assemblage.

The menu offered two choices for most courses: an appetizer of Farmhouse Egg Mayonnaise or Chicken Vol au Vent; Fresh Cream of Homemade Vegetable Soup; a main course of Roast Sirloin of Beef with Horseradish Sauce or Poached Galway Bay Salmon with Hollandaise Sauce, either accompanied by Fresh Vegetables and Potatoes; a dessert of Profiteroles with Hot Chocolate Sauce or Fresh Fruit Pavlova. All were delicious according to reports of the guests at my table. Father Joe Egan said the Grace.

Our Chieftain, Michael J. S. Egan, who sat with his lovely family—his wife Terry and their four beautiful daughters—formally welcomed everyone to the Clan Egan Gathering dinner. He introduced Vince Egan, who spoke to the members about his idea of Egan's Pence, similar to Peter's Pence, collected every year by the Vatican to support the work of the Pope. An immediate application of any money collected in the Egan's Pence would be to defray the costs of the new heater for Redwood Castle, where Eithne Egan, widow of our former Chieftain, Michael J. Egan, had made us all welcome for many of our Rally events. Vince passed around a voluminous "leprechaun" hat and chided those assembled to be generous. (At our final meeting of the Rally, Eithne made a lovely, tear-filled speech thanking the Clan members for their gift and saying that she has always and will always welcome the Clan Egan to



*Belly up at the bar*



*Michael J. S.  
addressing the Clan*

*William Schmidt with  
Steve & Jason*



*Byron, Sue, Michael & Terry Egan*

# The O'Sullivan Beare Epic March

**Michael J.S. Egan**

Dublin, Ireland

During our visit to [Poll na gCapall](#), near Redwood Castle, on June 30<sup>th</sup>, one of our stops during the Rally, Michael J.S. Egan detailed the particular account of the March of the O'Sullivan Beare. Carole Mondragon transcribed the presentation, and Michael made some final revisions, as follows:

Following the defeat of the Irish armies of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and Red Hugh O'Donnell, Chief of Tyrconnell at Kinsale in December 1601 the English armies under Lord Mountjoy set about destroying the balance of the province of Munster. In due course they laid siege to Donall Cam O'Sullivan Beare's main castle at Dunboy on the Beara Peninsula in west Co Cork. Following the capture of the castle all of the defenders were put to the sword and Donall Cam was forced to flee with one thousand of his supporters to the north of the country. It was his intention to link up with O'Neill and continue the fight against the English. Posterity has been fortunate in that Philip O'Sullivan, a historian, Donal Cam's nephew, who was on the march, committed all of the details of this epic journey to paper at the time of the retreat and published their amazing story in *Historiae Catholicae Compendium* in 1621.

Donall Cam and his followers left Glengarriff on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1602 and headed north. They were forced to avoid all the larger towns, which might possibly contain an English presence while at the same time, keep away from conflict with the many local Irish chieftains. The presence of one thousand people moving through the countryside must have caused considerable consternation to the local peasantry, given that the territory was in a state close to famine resulting from Mountjoy's scorched earth policy. Whilst in Munster the danger to the O'Sullivans was great and they clearly recognised that their safest path lay by way of Connaught. However, the river Shannon lay as a major obstacle in their path and they could not cross at the bridges due to the presence of the English at those key points.

Donall Cam's epic journey was not for the fainthearted. On the first day the group covered over thirty miles.



Each day thereafter they set out before sunrise and kept moving unless impeded by the numerous skirmishes, which they had to endure with the local chieftains. When things were particularly dangerous the whole band marched all night on one occasion covering over fifty miles. Considering that this was in the depths of winter this was no mean feat.

It was decided that the safest place to cross the Shannon would be at a ford in the river north of Lough Derg. This was in County Tipperary and the High Sheriff of the county at that time was Donough Mac Egan, son of Cairbre Mac Egan, who lived at Redwood Castle. In order to be seen to be attempting to prevent O'Sullivan heading northwards Donough had all the boats removed to the Connaught side of the river or destroyed. O'Sullivan with his starving people was determined to cross and pitched camp near the edge of the river. They immediately began cutting down trees and built a palisade for protection.

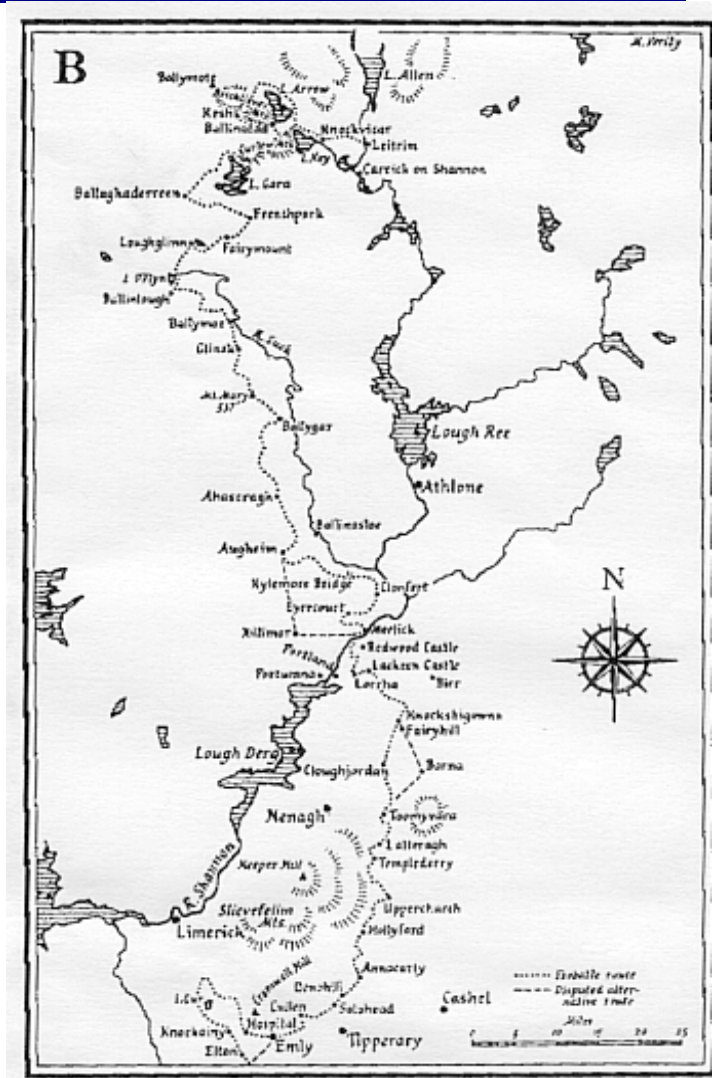
*Continued on next page*



Philip O'Sullivan's father Dermot had first hand experience of boat building from his own home territory at Dursey Island and set about the task with urgency and determination. The work was carried out behind the palisade and Mac Egan had no idea of what was going on. Thirteen horses were killed and their skins prepared to cover the boat frames, which were cut from trees nearby. The O'Sullivans ate the horsemeat and undoubtedly the feed would have lifted their spirits. In two days two boats were made – one, a circular boat made with a frame of osiers used only one horsehide and must therefore have been very small. The second used 12 horsehides and was twenty-six feet long, six feet wide and five feet deep, had a flat keel and was propelled by oars. Why two boats were built is not exactly clear but it is possible that the smaller boat was to be used to send a small advance scouting party to the Galway side of the river – approximately a quarter of a mile away. In any case the circular coracle was launched in the darkness with ten soldiers on board but this faltered in mid river and all were drowned. It is hard to imagine how they all fitted into so small a boat considering that they would also have been armed. The larger boat was more successful and on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1603, in the dim light of the quarter moon, successfully made several trips across the Shannon, carrying thirty soldiers at a time.

The surviving horses were roped together and swam the river behind the boat. It is likely that a rope would have been stretched from one side of the river to the other to act as a ferry rope. By daybreak most of the O'Sullivan band were safely on the other side of the river with the exception of some women, children, non-combatants and an assortment of baggage.

Donagh Mac Egan for some reason or other decided to attack this apparently vulnerable group – possibly with an eye on bounty but it is also likely that he was more than a little annoyed that O’Sullivan’s band had outwitted him and that he would look foolish in the eyes of the English authorities. However the O’Sullivans had another ace up their sleeves and had hidden a crack force of twenty pikemen and twenty musketeers in the nearby woods. No sooner had the MacEgans attacked than the elite force commanded by Thomas Burke swooped down and annihilated the Mac Egan band of fifteen. Donagh himself was slain.



The balance of the O'Sullivan group immediately crossed over into Galway. The place from which they crossed is to this day called Poll na gCapall (The hole of the horses) and a large number of horse bones were found here in recent times.

Donall Cam ordered that the boat be destroyed and immediately began marching his people through the swampy Galway marshland. The poor bog land probably saved the group from the skirmishes they had to endure from the local O'Madden clan. By nightfall they had encamped in woods near Killimor, about 8 miles from the Shannon crossing point. Since they had left Glengarriff to this point they had lost one hundred and twenty soldiers and possibly a much larger number of non-combatants, men, women and children.

The O'Sullivans were now in the territory of the Earl of Clarrickard (Burke) and he was loyal to the crown. To their immediate north lay Aughrim and the greatest test they had

*Continued on page 13*

Redwood for their Rallies in Ireland.)

In addition, Vince mentioned that the Pope had appointed an Egan over the Archdiocese of New York—Archbishop Edward Michael Egan. *(See photo page 16)* Vince suggested that we contact the Archbishop and express our congratulations and our recognition of the great honor to the Clan that an Egan descendant has been elevated to so high a post in the Church. A resolution was passed to contact Archbishop Egan and invite him to be a member of Clan Egan.

Michael J. S. also introduced Byron Egan, President of the USA/Canada Clan Egan Association, who also welcomed everyone and thanked Michael for all the work he had done to organize the Clan Egan 2000 Rally. He also thanked Eithne Egan and her family for her warm and gracious hospitality at Redwood Castle and he thanked Jane Eagen and Jacki Barber and the many others who had helped organize in the U.S., in Ireland, and in many other places.

Michael then introduced Greg Egan, President of the Clan Egan Australia. Greg also thanked Michael, Eithne, and all the organizers and pointed out that there were many Egan cousins in Australia, some of whom were there at the Rally, but many more in Australia. He invited everyone to come to Australia to visit them.

Many members wandered over to a long wall in the dining hall on which Peggy and Charlie Brooks had displayed a huge family tree. It encompassed many Egan family branches over several counties. It is a most impressive work.

After the meal was finished, the music and entertainment began. Michael J. S. and family once again impressed all with their conscientious preparation for this event: they passed out packets of song lyrics and an Irish band and singer lead the group in singing Irish songs.

While other Clan events were a means for active members to learn about Egan history and to take part in governing and organizing future activities and while there were many informal meetings in the evenings in the pubs, especially among the younger crowd, the Clan Egan Gathering Dinner at the County Arms had the highest attendance and the greatest degree of fellowship and esprit de corps of all age groups. It made a unique and significant contribution to the success of Rally 2000. ❖

approbation of the work.

Duald MacFirbis - a celebrated Genealogist - traveled from County Sligo to be educated here.

In the Civil Survey published in 1654 it is stated, "On the lands of Keilterua stands an old ruined castle, the walls only standing and two thatched cottages". In the same survey the occupier of the property in 1640 is given, and he is described as Conly MacEgan an Irish Papist.

The building was destroyed in Cromwellian times and the roof and wooden floors burned. This meant that from the ground floor you looked up to the stone barrel vaulted arch, which is now the ceiling over the third level, and the topside of the arch, was the floor of the Main Hall.

For 350 years the building was a ruin considered to be beyond redemption, and suitable only as a shelter for cattle, and later for farm machinery.

On the outside the ivy thrived until it covered the entire building and it reached out from the walls to a thickness of about 6 feet. The stonework was totally covered; all the window slits were choked with ivy and the spiral stairway was completely dark. It was only when the ivy was removed that it was possible to identify that there were three different periods of building i.e. 1210, 1350 and 1580.

Experts can identify building periods from the stonework chiseling, and the doorway was obviously replaced in 1580 as the chiseling is of that period. The only part of the building visible when it was covered by ivy was the doorway, and as a result the idea got abroad that as the chiseling there was of the 1580 period, that was the period of the whole building. The incorrect date appears in the published Tourist Literature.

It was from the O'Kennedys that the MacEgans acquired the old Norman Castle in 1350, and by a remarkable coincidence it was from Michael Kennedy of Redwood, on whose holding the old ruin was located, that Michael J.S. Egan, a Mayo lawyer in the family tradition purchased the ruined building in 1972.

Because of its ruinous state it was inconceivable that

it would be possible to restore the building to its former condition, but despite many obstacles the restoration was completed with the idea that the Egan family would use it as a private house. However, the Government decided to introduce a Residence Tax of 1% per annum, which would be an unbearable burden on the Owners.

In the act, however, provision is made for the exemption from the tax of buildings of great historic interest, which are open to the public for specified periods. It is for this reason that visitors are now invited to visit.

After the Normans landed in Ireland, they picked good land in various centres and built timber strongholds on high earth mounds known as mottes. They erected timber stockades to bring in their livestock for protection. It is recorded that in 1207 Norman settlements in Lorrha (i.e. Redwood) Birr and Kinnity were attacked and burned by the O'Brien's of Munster, but the Normans decided to stay at Redwood - then called Coillte Ruadh - and they erected this substantial stone building.

The walls were built almost nine feet thick, and at ground level there was not a single opening other than the single door at the front - there were no windows or even slits to admit light or air. This was because the owners were so conscious of their vulnerability to attack. When the lights are off, there is total darkness on the ground floor, so it would be suitable only for storage or livestock.

The second doorway was provided by the restorer to fill an opening in the wall on the West side which was made over a hundred years ago to enable the farmer, who owned the land, to bring farm machinery into the old ruin where cattle were normally housed.

The folklore is that it took three men a fortnight to make a hole in the 9' thick wall large enough to let a horse and cart through.

Just inside the front door - the only entrance to the castle originally - you will notice if you look upwards a rectangular hole over your head. This was a trap door in the small room known as the "Murder Hole". If there was an assault on the Castle, and the attackers succeeded in smashing down the door, the occupiers would, as a second line of defense, rain down missiles on the heads of the attackers from the Murder Hole.

As we ascend the spiral stairs you can see the Murder

Hole and trap door.

The spiral stairs in medieval castles were constructed so as to give an advantage to a right-handed swordsman defending the castle. He could better wield a sword as he was backing upwards than the attacker climbing the stairs whose movement would be very much restricted.

As you climb the stairs you will notice the rough construction at the lower level - particularly on the underside of the stone steps. This crude construction dates back to 1210.

Half way up the stairs there is a change in the type of construction - the sharp corners of the steps are chamfered, and the undersides of the steps are more refined. This confirms that building upwards in the 14th Century after the MacEgan family was put into possession enlarged the building.

There were four floors in the castle, but strangely it is only possible to gain access to three of the floors from the spiral stairs. On your return journey downstairs you will visit the other floor. We now enter the large hall under the stone barrel vaulted arch.

As explained originally the floor of this hall was destroyed by fire in the 1650's. The timber beams rested on ledge about 18" wide, and the ledge extended for the full length on both sides, and also along the back gable wall.

In the 1798 period an outlaw named James Meaney was on the run, and he chose to hide out in this castle, then in ruins. He was able to walk around the ledge and gain access to a room in the thickness of the wall, and now known in the locality as "Meaney's room". It was quite precarious exercise to walk around the ledge to reach the hideout. There are two other rooms on this floor - one a small room directly under Meaney's room and the other to a garderobe or toilet.

This facility consisted of a wooden seat with a hole located directly above a chute or duct which went through the thickness of the wall to an opening about 5 feet above ground level on the wall on the Eastern side of the building.

In this Hall there are six wall hangings of figures dressed in armour as for a medieval tournament.



You will notice that the design on the shields is reproduced in the costume or surcoats. The figures represent O'Kennedy, four different Armigerous Egan Families, and Moran the wife of the present owner.

We now move to the main hall, which would be the living quarters of the original owners. In the restoration a minstrel gallery has been provided. This is where musicians would perform if there were festivities in the great hall. In the reconstruction the gallery was made deeper than the norm so that it would serve the dual purpose of providing sleeping accommodation in an emergency.

For the convenience of guests a wash up and toilet was provided by excavating into the thickness of the wall just under the gallery. The old garderobe - in addition to the toilet has a bath and washhand basin. A section of the great hall was cut off to provide a kitchen with all its modern equipment. Over the kitchen a new floor has been provided with family bedrooms and bathroom.

On the return to the ground floor we will pass through the hall under the vaulted arch and get onto a new staircase which leads to the oratory where Mass is celebrated from time to time. The Bishop of this Diocese of Killaloe has given permission for the celebration of mass in this oratory at any time. ❖



*Judy & Michael J.S.*



*Clan gathering outside the Castle*

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*Group photo reprints are available. You can view the photos on our website, <http://www.clanegan.org/archives.htm>, and e-mail Jacki Barber, [jacki@nettally.com](mailto:jacki@nettally.com) with your requests.*

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*Clan gathering outside the Castle*

## More Egan Trivia

### Byron F. Egan

Dallas, Texas

Egan is the 1,621st most popular last name (surname) in the United States. Its frequency is 0.008%.

A number of states have towns named Egan, including the following:

- Egan, California, is in Riverside County; location is 33°43'56"N 117°0'40"W; elevation is 1,517 feet.
- Egan, Illinois, is in Ogle County; location is 42°11'18"N 89°24'21"W.
- Egan, Iowa, is in Allamakee County; location is 43°9'24"N 91°17'22"W.
- Egan, Louisiana, is in Acadia Parish; location is 30°14'12"N 92°30'21"W.
- Egan, Louisiana, Zip Code is 70531.
- Egan, Minnesota is located 15 minutes from the downtowns of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- Egan, South Dakota 57024, is in Moody County, population was 208 in 1990; housing units was 98 in 1990; location is 43°60'N 96°39'W; land area is 0.34 square miles (219 acres).
- Egan, Tennessee, is in Wilson County; location is 36°13'19"N 86°20'45"W; elevation is 560 feet.
- Egan, Texas, is in Johnson County; location is 32°27'10"N 97°17'58"W. Egan is at the intersection of Farm roads 2280 and 917, eight miles northeast of Cleburne in north central Johnson County. The area was settled by M. J., J. P., and W. E. Miller during the Civil War. A town site was surveyed in 1883, when the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad extended its tracks through the area. A surveyor gave Egan its name. A post office began service there in 1883, and within two years the settlement had a population of fifty, a store, a school, and two churches. A winery operated in Egan during the early twentieth century, but was closed down during prohibition. The community had a population of 115 by the mid-1920s. Egan's post office closed sometime after 1930, and the population fell to fifty by the late 1940s. This estimate was reported consistently through the mid-1960s. In 1990 the population was twenty-one. ❖

faced since leaving west Cork. There on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1603 they found their way blocked by a strong force of English troops under the command of Captain Henry Malby. The English who occupied the high ground on top of the long ridge had five companies of foot soldiers, two troops of horse and local people armed to defend their territory. They were well armed, had trumpets, bagpipes and drums and must have presented a fearsome sight to the weary and starving O'Sullivans. Philip O'Sullivan recorded a long rallying speech given by Donall Cam to his troops on that day "...victory is a gift of God..." and they were either to win or die on that day. It is estimated that O'Sullivan had approximately 280 battle-hardened foot soldiers and no horsemen.

The English cavalry charged down the hill and the O'Sullivans were soon in full retreat. However, the wily Donall Cam had picked his retreat route very carefully and led the cavalry into marshy ground, which had some tree cover for his men. Suddenly, on his command the retreating group turned to face the enemy in an inverted V formation. At the top of the V the O'Sullivan musketeers poured a deadly volley of shot into their attackers. It is unlikely that they would have had time to reload. After the muskets had exacted their toll the battle commenced in earnest with fierce hand-to-hand fighting. O'Sullivan's men concentrated on the English leaders and Malby and Richard Burke. Clarrickard's brother, three standard bearers and many Anglo Irish and English gentlemen were amongst the casualties. In all approximately 100 Royalists were killed for a loss of 14 O'Sullivans and the brilliant tactics of Donall Cam had produced a miraculous victory out of a seemingly impossible position.

After the battle the O'Sullivans decided not to rest but to make a night march further north. Such a decision could not have been easy as they would all have been exhausted but it was considered necessary to move before English reinforcements arrived in the area. So they moved out through the pathless impoverished boggy countryside as a victorious, yet worn out, band.

Philip O'Sullivan describes the further battles and skirmishes and miseries of the clan as they moved ever northwards. Soon snow, rain and getting lost made their journey all the more arduous and many more of

*Continued on next page*

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## Post Script

**Jane Eagen**

Bowie, MD

A thought has been running around in my head for a while, it's about the clan meeting every two years and how difficult it must be for some Egens to participate. Young families don't have as much vacation time as we retirees and they have more obligations to family members and children. Some are on fixed incomes or simply do not wish to travel long distances. I propose that small geographic groups of clan members meet once or twice a year. Byron Egan attended a gathering of over 70 Egens in **Evansville, Indiana** on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, an experience that he thoroughly enjoyed. I believe there was another gathering in Illinois. It would provide more opportunities for Egens to get together and form a network that includes those not desiring or not able to travel long distances.

The **Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area** could include Northern Virginia and meet in one of the many parks nearby. Perhaps they could rent a hall and meet for a get together or arrange to view the St. Patrick's Day parade as a group and then go out for a meal. How about having a holiday open house for the Egens in your area. The local telephone directories could be a source for locating them, especially those who are not in the clan already. It would mean that someone would have to initiate it, get a small group to help out and give it a go. This is much simpler than planning a clan rally and has the potential of attracting and including many that heretofore have not been a part of the clan activities.

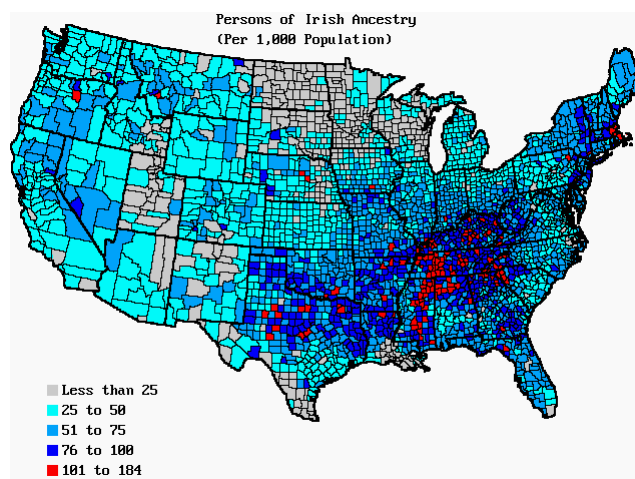
Another idea has been present in the otherwise vacuum. I know that Byron contacted the Hibernian magazine last year advising them of the rally in Ireland. They did respond in a modest way and list it. There are other Irish cultural organizations that we could make contact with and benefit from their networking. One that comes to mind is the Irish American Cultural Institute. They publish a quarterly newsletter, Ducas that relates their activities and Eire-Ireland, an annual journal of Irish studies. They support research and scholarly efforts and sponsor two traveling artists and/or exhibits. The Irish Way, "a program designed to provide young people the opportunity to explore the rich traditions and heritage of Ireland, while also experiencing the country's distinct culture face-to-face" is another of their activities. Eighty-two students from twenty-one states participated in the five-week program this year. To reach

## The O'Sullivan Beare March -

*Continued from previous page*

the O'Sullivans were to die or simply stop due to exhaustion before they reached their final destination at the fortress of Brian Oge O'Rourke in Leitrim town. It was 11 o'clock on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> January that the journey ended and all that remained of the 1,000 who had left Glengarriff 15 days earlier were 16 armed men and 19 non combatants —one of who was an unnamed woman - a total of 35 souls.

Donal Cam, Philip and Dermot O'Sullivan after further tribulations sailed to Spain where they joined Philip's mother who had stayed with Donal Cam's wife in Glengarriff during the 200-mile march. It was in Spain that Philip published the detail of this amazing journey. ❖



them use one of the following:

Irish American Cultural Institute (973) 605-1991  
1 Lackawanna Place  
Morristown, New Jersey 07960-9859  
Web Site: [www.irishaci.org](http://www.irishaci.org)  
E-mail [Irishwaynj@aol.com](mailto:Irishwaynj@aol.com)

A special thanks goes to Doug, the new editor. I am not the swiftest on the computer and/or layout tasks and my life has become too busy and my calendar too crowded to allow me the time to do it. ❖



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## Officers of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association

The current officers of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association, who were reelected at the Rally and agreed to continue, are:

### President:

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### Vice President:

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Email: [jacki@nettally.com](mailto:jacki@nettally.com)

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***Your Clan Chief and your USA/Canada President each have been elected by members of their respective groups for life. Your other officers were elected to serve until the next Rally and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. In the interim between Rallies, vacancies may be filled and new officers and committee members may be appointed by the Clan Chief or USA/Canada President, as the case may be.***

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Jane Eagen, Robert Egan, Carole Mondragan and others have agreed to work with Doug Egan in publishing the Newsletter. Carole recorded key parts of our Millennium Rally and will furnish summaries for inclusion in future Newsletters. We owe much to Jane Egan for her past labors in developing and producing our Newsletter, and to Doug Egan for undertaking the responsibility commencing with this issue.

The Technology Committee, chaired by Jacki Barber, includes Ellen Bell, Russ Brehm, Patrick J. Eagan, James H. Eagen, Doug Egan, Greg Egan, Kathleen A. Egan, Michelle Egan, Jane Rock Kennedy and Mary Theresa Taylor.

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# Happy Holidays from the CLANN MAC AODHA GÁIN



## **Archbishop Edward Michael Egan**

**New York**

BISHOP EDWARD EGAN  
APPOINTED ARCHBISHOP OF N.Y.  
*(See next issue for details.)*



## **Father Joe Egan**

Saint Patrick's Parish  
Larkspur, California

Father Joe Egan said mass on Sunday, July 2nd to the Clan Egan, in the Catholic Church, Lorrha County Tipperary.

Thanks a million Father Joe and God E'anna!



CLANN MAC AODHA GÁIN  
ASSOCIATION