

GRANUAILE

1530-1603

THE PIRATE QUEEN OF MAYO

Grace (sometimes called Gráinne) O'Malley was born to the head of the O'Malley clan in Mayo. They were a noble, seafaring family who traded with Spain and Scotland in groups of caravels and galleys.



Grace wanted to go on voyages with her father, but he said that the codfish go because her long hair would catch in the rigging. This made her very angry, so she cut off all her hair! Her father got the message and let her on board. This is how she got the nickname Granuaile (Gráinne Mháel) - Bald Gráinne.



Granuaile became a very powerful pirate and was feared all around Ireland. Once, she wanted to raze at Howth Castle but the Lord wouldn't open the gates to her. She got angry and kidnapped his grandson! She returned him on the condition that the gate was always left open to visitors and an extra place was set at every meal. He agreed, and the tradition continues in Howth Castle today.



Granuaile had her third son, Tibbot, while she was at sea on a voyage! The day after she gave birth, the ship was attacked by other pirates. She went out on deck and joined in the fight, shooting at them with a blunderbuss.



In the 1590s, her sons were taken captive by the English. Granuaile sailed to England to personally ask Queen Elizabeth to release them. They spoke to each other in Latin as they did not know the other's language.

THE NINE YEARS' WAR

The Nine Years' War was fought between Irish chieftains and the English army during the Elizabethan era. It was started because Hugh O'Neill (the Earl of Tyrone) became angry with England's desire to control not only the Pale but also the whole island. The war can be broken down into five main events:

1594-1603



FORD OF THE BISCUITS

In 1594 English forces attacked the land of Hugh Maguire, the Lord of Fermanagh, because they wanted to introduce English laws to the area. He fought back and defeated a large English force at the Ford of the Biscuits. It got this name because of the amount of provisions, including biscuits, that the Irish captured from the English army.

BATTLE OF THE YELLOW FORD

Hugh O'Neill (Tyrone) and Hugh O'Donnell (Donaghy) joined forces with Hugh Maguire. The three Hughes had many victories that led to the Battle of the Yellow Ford in 1598 - the biggest defeat of English forces in Irish history!



PASS OF THE PLUMES

When the Munster chiefs heard of Ulster's great victory, the Munster rebellion broke out. Queen Elizabeth sent over the Earl of Essex with 18,000 men. He went south and was badly beaten in the Pass of the Plumes in 1599. The battle is named after the plumes on British helmets, which covered the fields around.

BATTLE OF KINSALE

Spanish soldiers arrived in 1601 to help the Irish chieftains in the war. The English had surrounded Kinsale by land and sea, so O'Neill and O'Donnell decided to surround them with 12,000 Irish and Spanish men. O'Neill warned to wait and keep them holed up until they surrendered, but the other chieftains wanted to attack. This attack was badly organised - the Spanish surrendered and the Irish Army was defeated, marking the end of the Nine Years' War.



FLIGHT OF THE EARLS

After their defeat at the Battle of Kinsale, many earls were exiled to Europe. In 1607 Hugh O'Neill, Rory O'Donnell (Hugh O'Donnell's brother) and about 90 followers and family members left on a ship headed for Spain. This marked the end of their reign in Ulster, and the beginning of British rule over their lands.