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Louthiana: Ancient and Modern

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Louthiana: Ancient and Modern.

DUNDUGAN FORT.

Wright says of this fort: "This very uncommon Fort is encompassed with three wet Foffes, all concentric to one another, and joins as represented in the Plan to *Dundugan River*, and is called *Dundugan Fort*."

"GREAT Part of the Central Mount has been cut away by Mr. *Fortescue*, the present Poffeffor, to form a new Channel for the said River, which is always very deep, and subject during the Floods, which are very frequent, to overflow all the adjacent Pasture and Meadow-Grounds, so as to form a considerable Lake for several Months, especially in the Winter-Season."

"WHAT the original Design of this odd kind of Habitation was, I can form no fort of guesses, unless it was to guard some Family of the first Planters, from the wild Beasts of the Country, which, in early Times, were very numerous and ravenous: Or else some Clan of the Natives from their ill-disposed Neighbours, and from foreign Invaders."

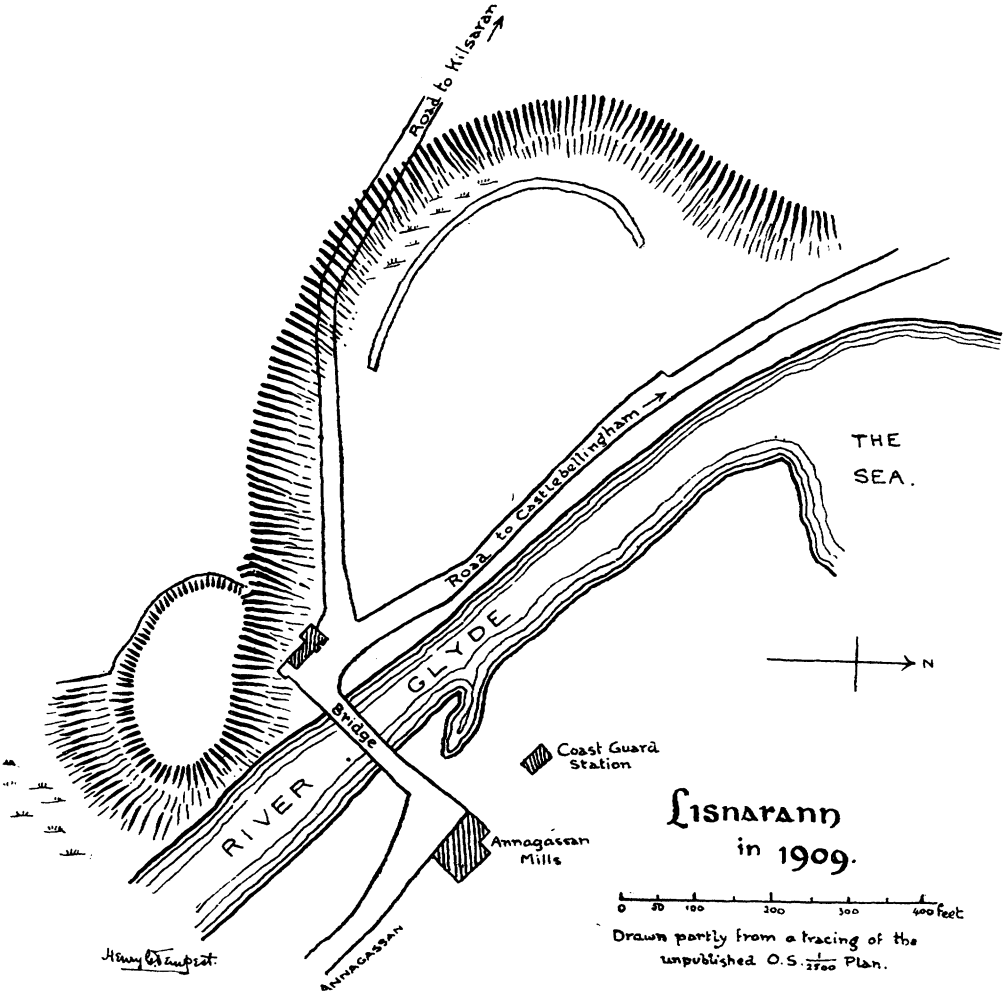
The only "oddity" about this "kind of Habitation" as he calls it, is the water in the fosses, and he has just carefully explained to us the reason for the water—i.e., the cutting of the new river channel through the fort.

Its position is not apparent at first glance, as we have no river now bearing the name given which savours of a corruption of Dundalgan. The mention of Mr. Fortescue and of a river liable to flood suggests however Clermont Park, which is bounded on the south by the River Fane. A search on the Ordnance six inch map revealed a small circle on the edge of what is now an old channel of the Fane, while a journey to the spot demonstrated that there is a small fort there partly cut through by the river and showing faint traces of concentric rings. This seems to identify this as Dundugan Fort and the Fane as the river then called Dundugan. This falls in with some information Mr. Dolan of Ardee has, which also refers to Dundugan River.

The fosses are at present quite dry, mostly levelled, while the central mound is insignificant, and there is very little to repay a visit. A later attempt at preventing the floods in these parts has given us the present straight course of the Fane and so relegated Mr. Fortescue's "new channel" to a low and weed-choked stream. The one strange point about the fort, Wright does not mention. This is, that whereas the great majority of forts are on the top of hills, often very high ones, this fort is on quite level ground on what, only for two or more modern cuttings, would be frequently flooded. In the Contents of *Louthiana*, Wright defines this fort above others as "probably as old as the first Planters."

The lower view in Wright's book is drawn from the east.

H. G. T.

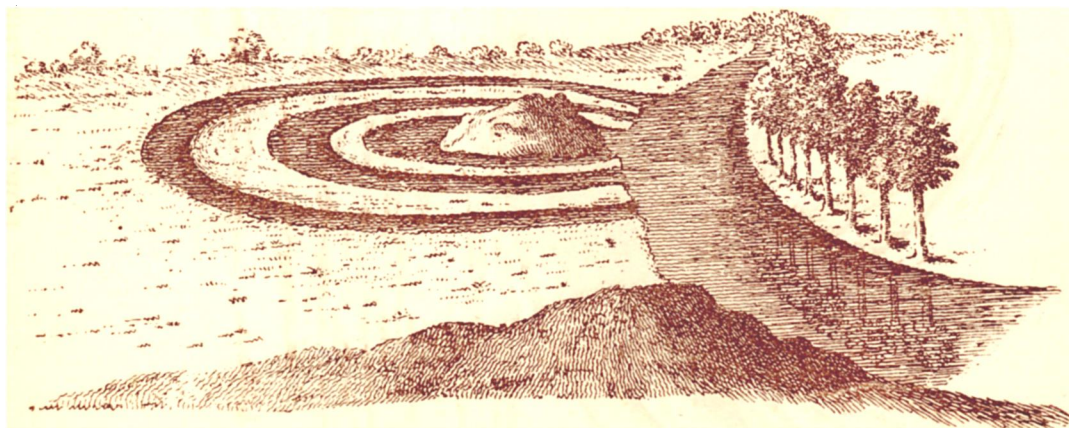
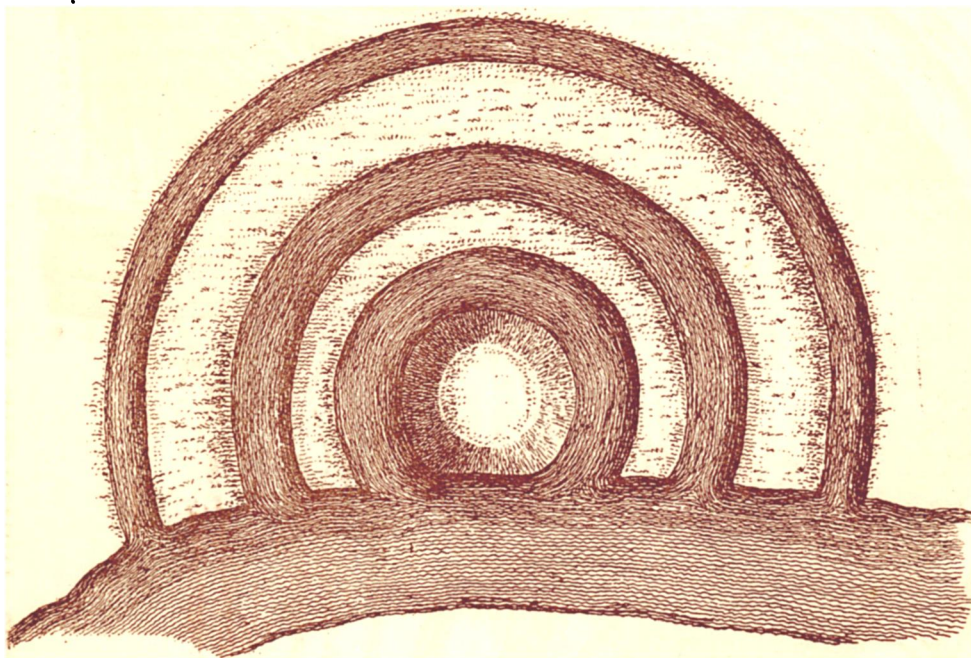




FORT OF THE LLYNS, ANNAGASSAN, IN 1748.

Wright's Louthiana, Book I., Plate XX.

COUNTY LOUTH ARCHÆOLOGICAL JOURNAL



DUNDUGAN FORT IN 1748.

Wright's Louthiana, Book I., Plate V.

LISNARANN.

The only description given by Wright in his *Louthiana* of this fort is that given in the Table of Contents—viz., “A Danish fort by the Pass of the Llyns upon the banks of the sea.” The plan, as reproduced from him, is from Plate XX., Book I., and there is no explanation of the lettering thereon. Comparing this with the modern map of fort and its surroundings we can see that there have been many changes in the place within the last 150 years—drainage operations accounting for some. The bridges B and C are evidently on the old sea road which ran at one time from Dunany to Dundalk, and portions of which still remain along the coast between Annagassan and Salterstown. It will be also noticed that the greatest volume of water of the combined rivers Glyde and Dee run not as now under the bridge B, but under A. This branch of the river is, in fact, now a mere stream running at the back of the residence and coalyard of Mr. John Hoey, which occupies the island between the branches of the river. On the map opposite, the modern road from Kilsaran and bridge are shown beside the fort proper A. Mr. King’s mill and store lie between B and D.

It is clear from Wright’s plan that the original fortifications ran around the brow of the hill enclosing the low-lying island on which Mr. Hoey lives. It has a horse-shoe formation, and the residents say that the Danes dug it out. It is very probable that we have in Lisnarann (which means either “the fort of the promontory” or “the fort of the divisions.” A meaning suggested to me “the fort of the ferns=*lis renny*, is out of the question), an ancient encampment of the first Norwegians that arrived in Ireland. We know that they landed in Annagassan about 831 or thereabouts and established themselves here, from which, according to the Annals, they made predatory incursions even as far as Clonmacnoise. The Norwegians were the first to arrive, but in 849 the Danes came and dispossessed them, and they seem to have remained at Annagassan until 926 at least. Lisnarann was certainly a very strong fort protected from enemies practically on three sides by water, and only approached by a narrow path from the land. Greenmount can be seen from it, and it is probable that the Danes encamped at both places. Whether Lisnarann was older than the Danish period is another question. Perhaps an earlier settlement of native Irish was here in 830—it is just the place where one would be—at the mouth of two rivers communicating with a fertile country and close to the sea. The original fortifications of A—viz., the vallum, etc., can be fairly well traced along to the river. It is on the lands of Mr. J. Hoey. See *History of Kilsaran*, pp. 93-95.

J. B. L.

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