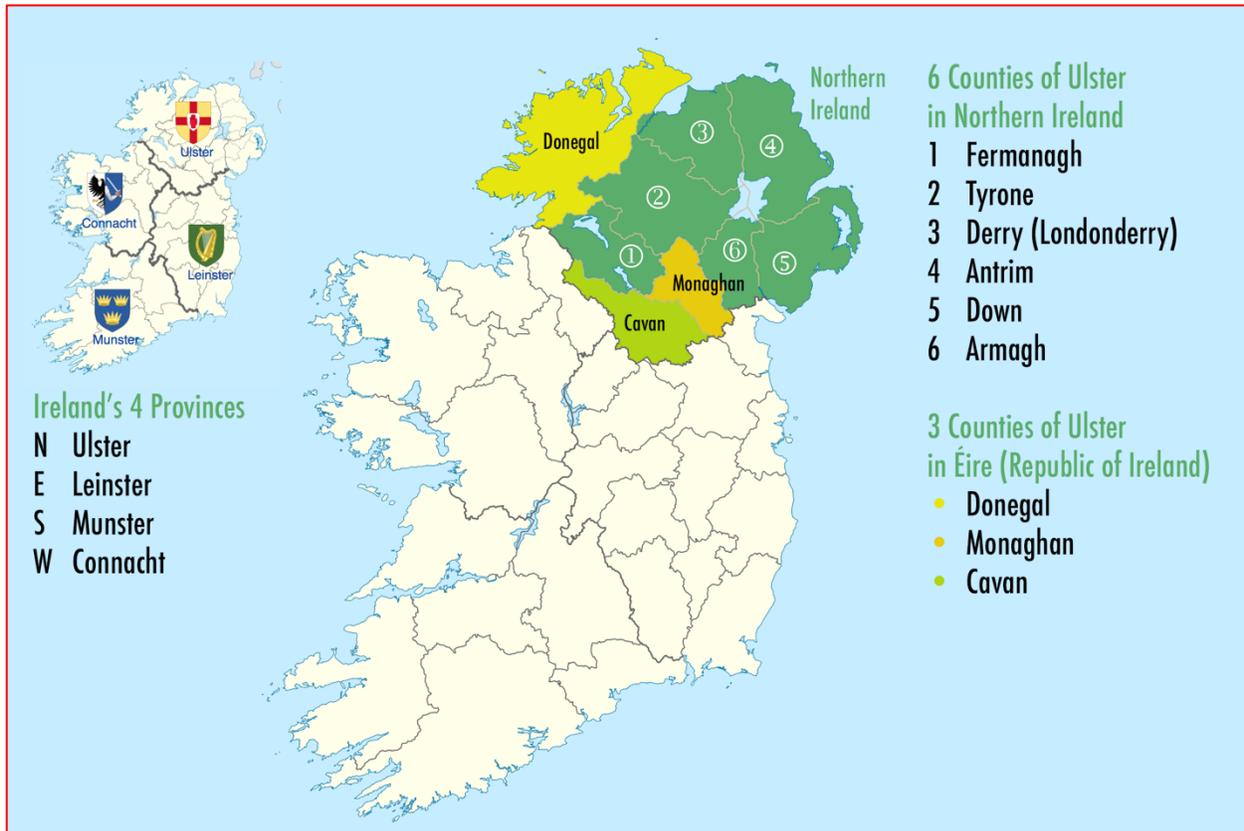
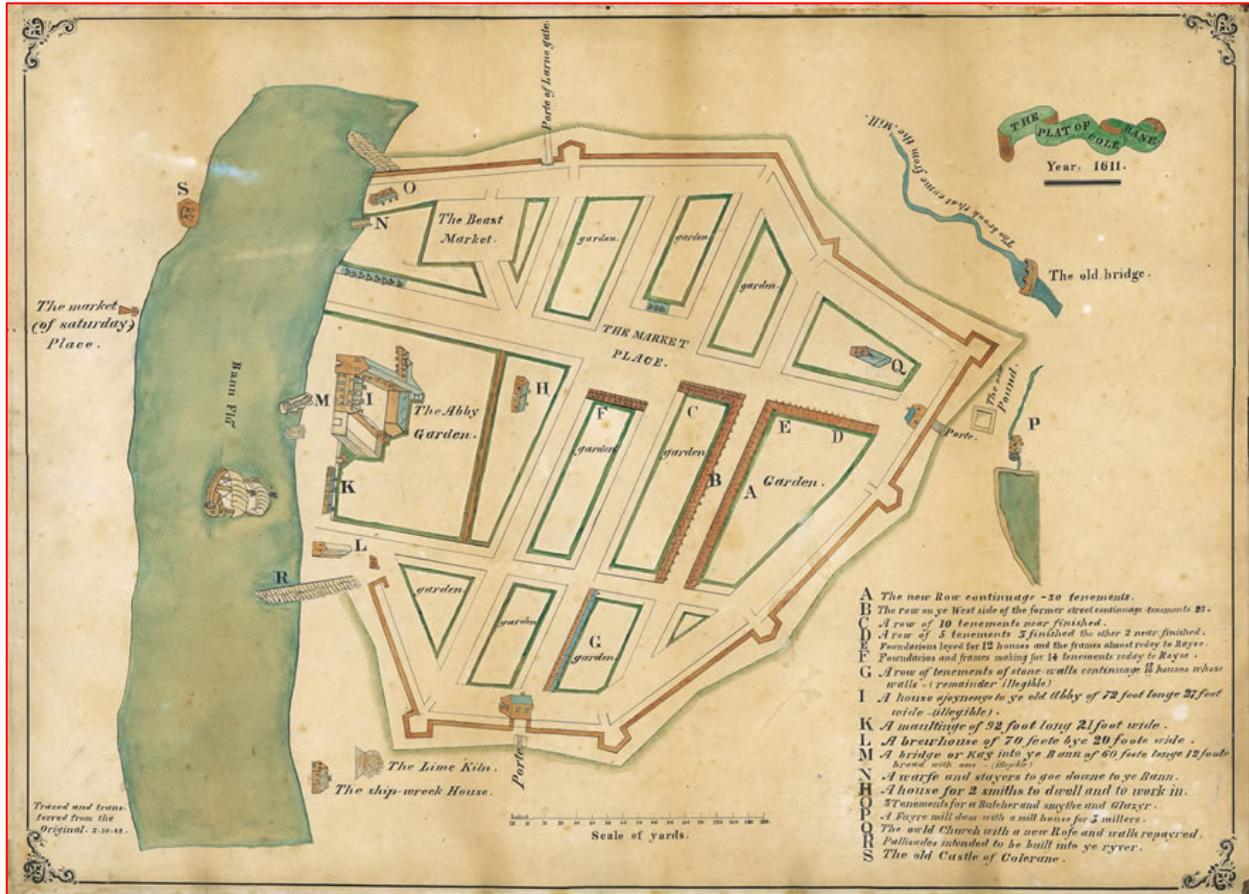


From the Plantation of Ulster to Present-Day Ireland and Northern Ireland

Ulster is the northernmost of Ireland's four historic provinces. It consists of nine traditional counties. In 1921, the island of Ireland was partitioned into two new countries: (1) Northern Ireland; and (2) what is now called Éire (pronounced *air-eh*) or the Republic of Ireland — or, simply, Ireland. Six of Ulster's nine traditional counties constitute Northern Ireland, while the remaining three are part of the 26-county Republic of Ireland.



The 1921 partition of the island of Ireland has roots in the fact that during the seventeenth century (i.e. the 1600s), the colonial power, Britain, facilitated the confiscation of native Irish (or Gaelic) lands across much of Ulster for settlement — known as planting — by English Protestants (often Episcopalians) and, more numerous, Scottish Protestants. The majority of the Scottish Protestants were Presbyterians, while the majority of the native Irish were Roman Catholics. Thus, Ulster became a multi-ethnic region, characterized by ethno-religious tensions, not least between displaced natives (mainly Gaelic and Catholic) and arriving settlers (mainly Scottish and Presbyterian). As the Scottish planters established themselves in Ulster, they developed a distinctive identity, known as Ulster-Scots. Later, in the eighteenth century, large numbers of Ulster-Scots emigrated to North America. This so-called Great Migration rendered common an alternative term for Ulster-Scots, namely, Scots-Irish (or Scotch-Irish).



Above: New, fortified settler-towns, often with a central marketplace or “Diamond,” were a feature of the seventeenth-century Plantation of Ulster. This image is a 1611 “plan” of Coleraine in County Derry/Londonderry, the first new town in the Plantation. (Crown Copyright; courtesy of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland)

Let’s fast-forward to the start of the nineteenth century (or 1800s), almost 200 years after the Plantation of Ulster. By that time, the presence of the planters’ descendants meant Ulster was roughly 60% Protestant and 40% Catholic.

Ireland’s long history as a British colony became formalized in a unique way by the passage, in 1800, of the Act of Union, which created a new nation: the UK. The UK’s original full name was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. (Great Britain is an island, Ireland’s next-door neighbor, containing three countries: England; Wales; Scotland). Under the Act of Union, Ireland lost its limited parliament in Dublin. The government of Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland became centralized at the Westminster parliament (London).

After Ireland’s Gorta Mór or Great Hunger (i.e. the catastrophic potato famine of the 1840s), the native Irish felt betrayed by the UK; therefore, they intensified their efforts to gain political independence from Britain, a movement that worried many of Ulster’s Protestants. The post-Great Hunger Irish-nationalist agitation continued into the early twentieth century, until it looked likely that the British would grant Ireland a form of self-government, known as Home Rule. If that came about, Ireland would cease to be part of the United Kingdom, although it might continue to recognize the British monarch as its head of state (just as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and a number of other self-governing nations do today).

In general, Ulster Protestants, including Ulster-Scots Presbyterians, resisted Home Rule. They asserted that it would mean **Rome Rule**. Realizing that a self-governing Ireland, with Dublin as its capital city, would be a majority-Catholic polity, the Ulster-Scots and their allies feared a future where significant influence would be exerted upon Irish lawmakers by the **Vatican** in Rome (that is, the Pope and the senior administration of the Roman Catholic Church). In addition, they did not wish to lose access to the economy of the UK or that of the global British Empire. By the early twentieth century, the city of Belfast and its hinterland in northeastern Ulster had become Ireland's most industrialized region, a world leader in **shipbuilding** (think *Titanic*) and **linen-manufacture**.



Above: Photograph of the *Titanic*, taken by Robert John Welch at the **Harland & Wolff** Shipyard, Belfast, in 1911. The works had a reputation as a Protestant factory.

Ulster-Scots **unionists** and **loyalists** became leading organizers and campaigners in an effort to exempt as much of Ulster as possible from Home Rule. (Unionist implies a preference for the UK; loyalist implies loyalty to the Protestant British monarch [“the crown”] as the head of state.) While the ensuing events are very complicated, the end result was that in 1921, six Ulster counties were — under the name Northern Ireland — partitioned off from the other three Ulster counties (**Donegal**, **Monaghan**, and **Cavan**), plus the rest of Ireland. The full name of the UK was changed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the phrase still used today. The resulting situation can be summarized in a table:

	6 Ulster Counties	The 3 Remaining Ulster Counties + the 23 Other Irish Counties
Name after Partition (1921)	Northern Ireland	The Irish Free State until 1948 • Éire or the Republic of Ireland (Ireland) after 1948
Nickname/s	“ The North ”	“ The South ” • “ The Republic ”
Majority Religion	Protestant (mainly Presbyterian)	Roman Catholic
Capital City	Belfast	Dublin
Form of Government after Partition	One of 4 constituent countries of the nation called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • Some governmental functions (such as defense) resided with the UK parliament at Westminster (London) • The remaining governmental functions resided with a new Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont (Belfast)	While the new Northern Ireland parliament began meeting in 1921, the Irish Free State parliament (the Oireachtas) first met in Dublin in 1922 • The Irish Free State was a self-governing nation; however, it recognized the British monarch as its head of state, an arrangement that gave it dominion status within the British Empire • In 1948, the Irish Free State ceased to exist; it was replaced by Éire (Ireland), a self-governing republic with: an elected president as its head of state; its own written constitution; and no political connection to the British Empire
Flag after Partition		

17th Century

Plantation of Ulster

- Scottish & English Protestants settle on Ulster lands confiscated from mainly Catholic native Irish
- Scottish Presbyterian settlers (planters) become the Ulster-Scots, aka Scots-Irish or Scotch-Irish



1800

Act of Union

- Ireland forced into closer political relationship with Britain, the colonial power, by means of creation of the UK, ruled from Westminster (London)

RED HAND OF THE O'NEILL FAMILY: TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF ULSTER



1840s

Great Hunger (Gorta Mór)

- Potato famine intensifies desire on part of native Irish for political independence

1921

Partition of Ireland

- 6 Ulster counties become Northern Ireland, a Protestant-majority part of the UK
- Ireland's remaining 26 counties become self-governing Irish Free State, which in 1948 declares itself the fully independent Republic of Ireland (Éire)



Above: Belfast-manufactured postcard from the anti-Home Rule movement. It shows characters representing the four countries of the UK: Pat from Ireland; John Bull from England; Sandy from Scotland; and Taffy from Wales.