



The Beer family in the 1659 Census

This information is from *A Census of Ireland, circa 1659*, ed. Séamus Pender, Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 2002 (first published in 1939).

The Census is incomplete, lacking returns for Cavan, Galway, Mayo, Tyrone, Wicklow and some baronies in Cork and Meath. It was compiled by Sir William Petty (1623-1687), who had been responsible for the Civil Survey a few years earlier which recorded land ownership (sadly, only information about 12 counties has survived from that Survey). The Census was edited for publication in 1939 by Séamus Pender and hence the references in some books to either Petty's Census or Pender's Census.

The Census records the names of 'tituladoes', those who held title to land in the 1650s. The Census also recorded the total numbers of English, Scots and Irish living in each townland, and the principal Irish names in each barony.

These are the Census references to the family name Beer and its variants:

Province of Ulster – Antrim

In the Barony of Belfast, one of the three 'Tituladoes' listed for the townland of 'Lambegge People' is Rich: Beers gent. There were 202 people in the townland – 155 English and 47 Irish

The Barony of Massareene has an Edward Breers [*sic*] as the Titulado in the townland of Mullacarton in the parish of Maghragall.

Much closer to home and the most relevant is found in the 'Castellreagh Barrony' which has a William Beares gent. in the townland of Bally McConnoghy in the parish of Blaris and Bredaghs. There were only 19 people in the townland – 13 were English or Scottish and 6 were Irish.

One of the listed Commissioners for Co Down was William Bear Gentleman – likely the above gent from Castlereagh.

As a postscript, there was also a Richard Beare in the South Suburbs quarter of 'Corke Citty & Liberties' in the parish of St John's.

And there was a Richd. Beare in the Barony of Orrery & Kilmore, townland of Liscarrolletowne, parish of Liscarroll.