

SURVEYOR: C. O'Brien.

I. T. A.

PARISH: Cong & The Neale.

TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY.

VILLAGES: CONG, THE NEALE, CROSS.

DATE: June, 1945.

COUNTY Mayo.

BARONY: Kilmaine.

COB/MME

TOWNS & VILLAGES: CONG (pop. 200 approx.). The village of Cong presents an appearance that is at once unprepossessing & disordered, though quite unnecessarily so. It is situated on an island formed by the various uprisings of the subterranean streams connecting Lochs Mask & Corrib, but this fact, whilst, perhaps, limiting the scope for clearance & building, should enhance rather than mar the aspect of the place. It consists of one main thoroughfare, with a short, narrow intersecting street - occupied mainly by dingy small cottages - & a continuation of the main entrance road, the Circular Rd., which borders a tributary of the Cong River & sweeps westwards in a semi-circle to rejoin the main road at the W. end of the vill. Entering the vill. from the Headford road, a very sharp turn, partly obstructed by the awkwardly-placed "Market Cross", must be negotiated. The principal street (unnamed) rises in a sharp incline for almost 100 yds & then dips equally steeply for a similar distance. At each side of the road, at this W. end, there are large lake-like pools, connected underground, the appearance of which lends a pleasing & distinctive touch to the view. The pool to the left - Poll Tuathail, (that to the right is Poll Liabain) - is fringed with trees &, further left is the Forestry Department's water-driven saw-mill, the big mill-wheel of which is driven by the turbulent Poll-a-Chuardbhil, the "Pool of the Whirlpool." The pool on the right is bordered by bare limestone outcrops & in the background is the big stone-built flour mill. This view of the W. end of Cong is one of the prettiest sights in the district.

The houses which comprise the vill. are unpretentious & irregularly built, in some outstanding instances they are mere dark hovels, with grass & weeds thriving on roofs which must surely not have been re-thatched in the present generation.

Cong is a pleasant place to live in, however, amongst friendly, easy-going people.

The lovely ruined Abbey is seen on approaching the vill. from the E. It is quite close to the main street, off the Circular Rd, & at the gateway leading into Ashford Demesne. Ugly dilapidated walls at the roadside mar the view.

(Distances: Galway 26½m.; Headford 9½m.; Ballinrobe 7m.; Maam Cross 16m.)

There are two other tiny villages in this parish, i.e., CROSS and THE NEALE. Neither is important in size, appearance or composition, however, though each, particularly Cross, is pleasantly placed - the ~~corner~~ ^{corner} on the Ballinrobe road, close to The Neale Park, 3m. from Cong; the ~~corner~~ ^{corner}, similarly distanced, alongside a small stream which flows into an arm of Loch Corrib nearby.

There is neither public water supply nor sewerage system - a few houses have water & drainage systems installed. The nearest Rly Stn is Ballinrobe (7m.). There is a regular 'Bus service' (Galway/Clifden). Dances are held in a Hall owned by Mr. Patk. Joyce. Joyce's Hall is also used for occasional shows by travelling companies, concerts etc. There is a Private Lending Library at Ashford Castle Hotel. Church Services on Sun. are as follows:- St. Joseph's Cath. Parish Ch, Cong - 9 & 11 a.m.; The Neale Cath. Ch, - 9 & 11 a.m.;

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TOWNS & VILLAGES: CONG (contd.)

Cross Cath. Ch - 9 & 11.30 a.m.; Ch of I., Cong - 11.30 a.m. The Post Office, in the principal street of the vill., transacts all business. (The Neale P.O. transacts all business; Cross P.O., Money Orders; Killowen P.O., stamps only). The nearest Banks are at Ballinrobe (7m.) & at Clonbur (3m.) on Fair Days. Sports supplies may be purchased from Noel Huggard, Ashford Castle Hotel; photo supplies from: Ml. Ryan, Ryan's Hotel, Cong; Miss M. Syce, Cong. There are many natural swimming pools on lakes & river. Cultural society is The Neale Dramatic Club, the Director of which is Mr. T. Ward, N.T. The main industries are those carried on by Forestry Dept. Sawmill, Cong, & Distin's Flour Mill, Cong. Cottage Industries & Handcrafts are as follows:- Ashford Industries (N. Huggard, Hotel) - spinning etc.; Hughes's Nurseries, Cross; Peter Foy, Sculptor, Cong - monumental & ornamental stonework. Public Monuments: Market Cross (see under "Antiquities").

Important Public Bldgs.: Cath. Church, St. Joseph's, Cong - Plain bldg in Abbey grounds, with two short transepts; nave & chancel. Main feature is the beautiful Harry Clarke stained-glass window behind the altar.

Protestant Ch nearby, in Ashford Demesne, is a neat structure with fine spire & Norman style chancel arch.

The Cath. Ch at The Neale is a fair-sized cruciform structure, with magnificent large scale representation of The Calvary at front.

Fairs: Annual Old Fair is held at Ballyholla (Ballincholla), Lough Mask, on Sept. 20th. The half-holiday is Weds.

Petrol Stns are as follows:- Ryan's Hotel, Cong; Rd. Mellotte, The Neale; Arthur O'Connor, Cong; Ashford Castle Hotel, Cong; John O'Connor, Cong (Garage). Taxis may be hired from: Ml. Ryan, Ryan's Hotel, Cong; Mrs. Moore, Cong; Noel Huggard, Ashford Castle Hotel; Ml. Walsh, Cross; P. Farrell, Loch Mask. Boats: See "Angling". Bicycles and Horses may be hired from Noel Huggard, Ashford Castle Hotel (residents only).

TOPOGRAPHY: This distr. encompasses one half, the eastern portion, of the wide N. shore of Lough Corrib & N. of this, a roughly square tract of country running, on the W., close to Clonbur & thence northwards to include the southeastern corner of L. Mask, a few mls of the S.E. coast of this lake & then eastwards in an almost direct line passing within 1m. or so southwards of B'robe, to within 2m. of Kilmaine - then, roughly, directly southwards again to the N.E. extremity of L. Corrib. Several islands of both lakes are included. Amongst these are Inchagoill, Ardillaun & Inishcongga on L. Corrib, & Inishoght & Inishgleasta on L. Mask. Inishowen, Inishcoog & Inishmaine on this lake are now joined together & connected with the mainland owing to subsidence of the waters, & are also included.

The distr. is located on the eastern fringe of the Joyce Country & of Connemara, & possess many scenic attributes of those regions, though these characteristics are greatly modified in some respects, principally in that of timber, for the vicinity of Cong, & indeed a very extensive area, is thickly planted with remarkably fine trees. It is also noted for the great wealth of archaeological evidences of antiquity, significant of some important early battle or other incidents, & for the curious freaks of nature - defects in the limestone sub-stratum - which abound in this neighbourhood. But it is as a place of immense interest & appeal for the sportsman that it has achieved most fame, for the angler