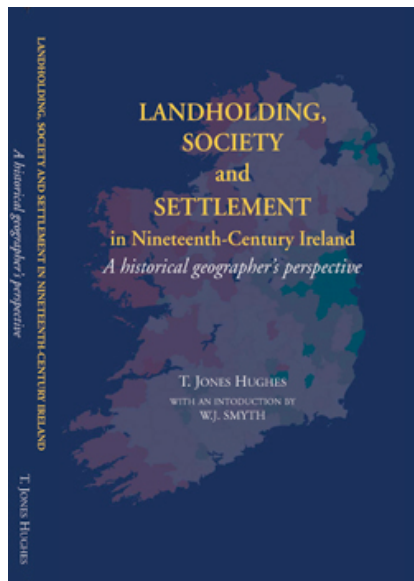


Landholding, Society and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ireland: A Historical Geographer's Perspective by T. Jones Hughes, with introduction by W. J. Smyth. Published in 2010 by [Geography Publications](#). 366 pages with index. Hardback. Size: 150x240. ISBN:978-0-906602-591. Price: €30.



Professor Tom Jones Hughes came to Ireland from Pwllheli, having graduated from the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. In 1950 he founded the Geography Department in University College Dublin and became its first Professor of Geography in 1959. Over a long and illustrious career, he wrote many Irish historical geography papers, based on his detailed field experiences. He is particularly known for his intensive work on the mid-nineteenth century Griffith Valuation of Ireland. He set new standards and opened up challenging new ideas about land and life on the island of Ireland. He is known as “the man who set the standard for geography in the country as a whole”.

This book is a compilation of these papers and is introduced by Prof. W. J. Smyth of University College Cork, Geography Department, who outlines Tom Jones-Hughes’ ground breaking work. The book consists of two sections, the first provides a series of regional case studies, whilst the second is an overview of the cultural and historical morphology of the landscape of Ireland through the seventeen and eighteen hundreds, Charles Travis’ review recognises Jones-Hughes’ work which “patiently lays out in a meticulous and detailed approach, the economic, cultural, political and topographical strands which contributed to the development of townlands, villages, estates and landholding patterns in the 1800s.”

Tom Jones Hughes is an Emeritus Professor of Geography at UCD. He was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1964. In 2004 the National University of Ireland awarded him an honorary D. Litt. He lives with his wife Mary in Monkstown, Co. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

Author: T. Jones Hughes
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Landholding, Society and Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Ireland: A historical geographer's perspective

This book is written by a man who came as a stranger to this island, knowing very little of its peoples or their ways. Through his phenomenal work on the mid-nineteenth century Griffith Valuation and his intensive fieldwork in every corner of the land he has made Ireland his own. Landholding, society and settlement in nineteenth century Ireland reflects the lifetime's work of a geographer with a lively, sympathetic and subtle mind who challenges practically all our preconceptions about land and life on this island. Anchored around the interconnected themes of landholding, settlement and ways of living, it reveals not a homogenous Irish society but a human world full of diversities and surprises and does not flinch from exploring the darker sides of Irish society. In particular, it explores both the impressive material achievements and the devastating social and cultural consequences of what it has meant for Ireland to be a colonial country. Equally, this scholarly work reveals both the striking continuities and adaptations of an Irish society faced with conditions very different to any other West European society. Readers of this book will come away with understandings and insights which will greatly enlarge and enrich their vision of Ireland.

Welsh-born Tom Jones Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Geography at UCD, is a graduate of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. He founded the Geography Department at UCD in 1950 and was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1964. He was awarded a honorary D. Litt by the National University of Ireland in 2004. He lives with his wife Mary in Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

IEHN On-line review by Charles Travis

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Jones-Hughes' text is both a compendium of his fruitful academic career as an Irish historical geographer and a masterwork in the land-man tradition, as espoused by William Pattison in 1963. His text is divided into two sections which provide a focused series of regional case studies in the first instance, and a more synthetic birds' eye view of the cultural and historical morphology of Ireland's landscape from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, in the second. Both sections richly evoke the methodologies espoused by Carl Ortwin Sauer and should be mandatory reading in any undergraduate or graduate coursework which addresses the multiple but integrated topics of how regional cultures, societies and physical topographies, as well as patterns of human settlement, acted as historical and geographical forces which shaped each other and produced Ireland's various landscapes during the nineteenth century.

In his introduction, W. J. Smyth acknowledges Jones-Hughes' major contribution to our understanding of the phenomenal impact which the Griffith Valuation had upon the development of late nineteenth century Irish society, and which would come to influence the cataclysmic events of the early twentieth century on the island. Jones-Hughes' work patiently lays out in a meticulous and detailed approach the economic, cultural, political and topographical strands which contributed to the development of townlands, villages, estates and landholding patterns in the 1800s. These separate strands are skilfully woven into a tapestry, which Jones-Hughes, like his fellow Welshman E. Estyn Evans, colours with ethnographic and folkloric flourishes to fashion both a singular and comprehensive methodology.

It is such an approach that informs the case study in Chapter One's micro regional geography *The Townlands of Inishbofin*, taken from a 1956 study, to the full-on panoramic, wide lens view provided in Chapter Thirteen's *Society and Settlement in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, drawn from a 1965 work. Jones-Hughes' text calls to mind the Annales School tradition of the *longue durée*, as well as the recent 'Deep Mapping' methods popularized by native American author William Least Heat Moon in his work *PrairyEarth: A Deep Map* (1991). This methodology provides for a subtle interweaving of biography, toponymy, natural history, anthropology, and climate studies. Jones-Hughes' work represents an empirically rich account which touches upon these as well as other subjects, and is deftly illustrated with a plethora of micro-regional maps (including four colour plate maps) to accentuate and emphasize the themes of his regional case studies and island-wide syntheses.

In conclusion, the subtext of Jones-Hughes' work speaks to the development and maturation of historical geography as a discipline in Ireland during the latter half of the twentieth century. It is also a timely reminder to a new generation of human geographers studying the histories and landscapes which comprise the Irish island, of the importance of grounding theoretical concerns with active and sustained archival research and fieldwork. At the launch of this work at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, it was recalled how Jones-Hughes would shepherd his family into a late model automobile to undertake weekend jaunts down the country in pursuit of local culture and the experience of the latent remains of historical regional landscapes. In essence, he would breathe in the country and feel its soil under his feet, collating archival and local knowledge to subtly polish the lens of his eclectic methodological technique. Such is the legacy that should be engendered to students and fellow travellers by this magisterial and landmark work of Irish historical geography.