

**A  
MILLSTREET  
MISCELLANY**

**(6)**

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edited by

Jack Lane

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# Contents

		page
• The Millstreet Bank Robbery of 1919	Irish Bulletin	5
• Mahon's Rock?	Jack Lane	15
• The (Dublin) Annals of Inisfallen - extract (1810)		16
• Correspondence in <i>The Irish Times</i> on the Famine Holocaust		17
• Genealogical maps:		
Ancient Ireland - extract (1846)	Philip MacDermott	22
At the time of the Norman Invasion (1926)	D. O'Daly	24
• The 'Treaty' and the origin of our party divide	Jack Lane	25
• A Keynote to <i>Keynotes</i>	George Egerton	35
• More visitors:		
	William Reed (1810)	37
	Isabella L, Bird (1882)	38
• A map of landowners: Owners of land in Ireland (1881)	Finlay Dun	40
• George Egerton's cottage in Millstreet	Jack Lane	42

# THE MILLSTREET BANK ROBBERY

## Introduction

The Millstreet bank robbery of November 1919 was a sensational event. It involved an enormous sum of money for the time - £16,700 - which would be worth at least half a million Euro today. But more importantly it created a real challenge for the new Irish government that had been formed earlier that year. There were two governments in the country - the new legitimate Irish Government and the now illegal British government that had been rejected overwhelmingly in the 1918 General Election.

There was a full scale war developing between the two. Part of this war was a propaganda war and the robbery was used by the British Government as an example of what would happen if the Irish Government was allowed control of the country. It was even suggested that the robbery was carried out by the Irish Government. All this made it imperative for the new Government to assert its authority, clear its name and gain the confidence of the people that they could be trusted with law and order and good government.

Liam Lynch moved into Drishanebeg to supervise the investigation and presided at the court that heard the case. The recovered money was returned to the Bank. The Bank was the predecessor of the today's Allied Irish Bank. The solving of the case was very significant as it made the new Government credible, trustworthy and effective in running the affairs of the country. Its reputation was enhanced immeasurably destroying the propaganda campaign against it by the British authorities.

Confirmation of the success of the case was reported in the London "Star" on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1920, which said:-

*"A movement which can do this sort of thing is by no means anarchist. It is capable of governing. It seems to be doing more governing than the Government."*

This is the story of how it was done and

the report is taken from the files of the Irish Bulletin which was the official paper of the Irish Government from 11 November 1919 to 12 December 1921.

We hope to republish that paper in the near future.

It was set up after all Republican press outlets were suppressed and the new Irish government needed to make information about the War of Independence available and to put its case for independence to the world. Hence the paper was aimed mainly at audiences abroad to make them face up to what was actually happening in Ireland.

It was edited by Erskine Childers and Frank Gallagher. The latter began his journalistic career with the Cork Free Press and was the first editor of The Irish Press. The Bulletin was very successful and seriously upset the propaganda efforts of the British Government at home and abroad.

At one stage (20/3/1921) its place of operations was accidentally discovered over an Easter holiday when no staff were present. Every single bit of machinery, equipment, paper, ink, envelope and address list were taken to Dublin Castle and used these to produce forged issues for about a month. This was testimony to how successful it had been at countering the Castle's propaganda. The Bulletin itself was re-established almost immediately and continued its work.

The other items in this pamphlet are local examples of the behaviour of the Crown forces toward the civilian population. The first is a statement by the caretaker at Drishane Castle on how he was treated after the nearby Drishanebeg (or Glebe) ambush. The second is a statement on the killing of Mikie Dineen of Ivale which occurred during the Mushera Round-up following the Rathcoole ambush.

Jack Lane

**A REPUBLICAN CAUSE CELEBRE  
REMARKABLE STORY OF A DARING BANK ROBBERY  
How a Gang of Thieves were Rounded Up by Republican Police**

The following is the first accurate account to be made public of the recent Bank Robbery which took place at Ballydaly Cross near Millstreet, County Cork, and was one of the most sensational of modern bank robberies. The account is written from the official Republican records and discloses for the first time the details of the arrest, trial, and sentences of the gang that carried out this audacious theft of £16,700. The discovery of the identity of the robbers and their subsequent arrest is one of the most remarkable achievements of the Irish Republican Police.

Nor is it a less sensational feature of the occurrence that the gang were not interfered with by the British Police or any efforts made by that force seriously or enquire into the circumstances of the robbery or to trace the robbers. The cause for this inactivity will be better understood when it is mentioned that in the first instance the Republican movement was by official propaganda saddled with the guilt of the crime. In accordance with this official British view the investigations of the British police in connection with the occurrence were restricted, first in an effort to suborn evidence implicating a member of the Republican Government of Ireland in the robbery and secondly an endeavour to track down those Republicans who engaged themselves without payment in the unravelling of this mystery and in the dispersal of the dangerous gang whose handiwork it was.

The incidents here related are an example of the ability with which the Irish people, without assistance from any British institution, preserve law and order in Ireland, detect crime and inflict salutary punishment upon criminals. The names of witnesses and of judges are suppressed in this account as, were they given, these witnesses and judges would themselves be liable to arrest by British police.

**THE ROBBERY.**

On November 17th., 1919 the representatives of the Munster and Leinster Bank and of the National Bank left Millstreet, County Cork at 8 a.m. left Millstreet to attend a cattle fair at Knocknagree in that county. They carried with them £16,700 in notes and silver. The officials of the National bank drove in a jaunting car and those of the Munster and Leinster Bank followed in a motor car owned and driven by Patrick Carmody of Millstreet. When the jaunting car was some three miles from the town of Millstreet, five men armed and disguised suddenly appeared on the road and holding up the occupants deprived them of the £6,700 they carried. The five men then loosed the horse from the car and having bound the bank officials to a tree returned to the road to await the arrival of the other bankers.

When the motor car was heard approaching, the jaunting car was used to block the road, and the second "hold up" took place and an additional £10,000 was stolen. Patrick Carmody, the motor driver, was, as were the bank officials tied to a tree, and the steering gear of the car destroyed. The robbers then disappeared. Half an hour later the victims succeeded in freeing themselves and at 9 o'clock they returned to Millstreet and reported the robbery to the British police, who did not even visit the scene of the occurrence but announced later that day they could

find no trace of the robbers. No effort was spared by the British press and British politicians to advertise the fact that the robbery was committed by Sinn Fein and on that plea Patrick Carmody was two months later awarded £300 compensation by a British judge for the damage to his car.

### **THE REPUBLICAN POLICE INVESTIGATE**

It was obvious from the action of the British police after the robbery had been reported to them that they were reluctant to trace the real culprits. As the thieves were allowed to by the British police time to cover their traces completely, the task of establishing their identity seemed hopeless. It was, however, undertaken by the Irish Republican police acting under the authority of Dail Eireann, the Republican Government of Ireland. Progress was slow. The mystery seemed insoluble. But eventually a clue was discovered and it was seen that great caution would have to be taken, as the gang, if they got any inkling of the discovery, would leave the country taking with them the huge sum of money they had stolen. Finally the moment came for striking. Evidence had been secured establishing the identity of every member of the gang, and warrants, of which the following is a copy, were issued against them:-

"Headquarters,  
Millstreet Battn.,  
24th April 1920

To.....

I.....being the officer for the Millstreet area responsible for the lives and property of all Irish Citizens, hereby arrest you on the charge of having (with others) waylaid and robbed certain Bank Officials on the morning of November 17<sup>th</sup>.

As the enemy police (Royal Irish Constabulary) have aided and abetted this outrage instead of tracking down the culprits, it is my duty to the public, until such time as the Irish Police Force is established, to capture and punish the robbers in this particular outrage, which is only one of many carried out at this period when Irishmen are making the final struggle for Independence.

Signed.....Commander, Millstreet Battn."

### **THE ARRESTS**

At 10 o'clock p.m. on April 24 1920, five months after the robbery, fifty armed Republican Police assembled at the town of Millstreet, and scouts were placed to watch the houses of the robbers. These scouts reported that three of the men were in their residences but the fourth, the man most wanted, was at a concert in the Town Hall. The arrest which was timed to take place at 10.30 p.m. was postponed until the concert had concluded. After 11 o'clock the Republican Police took possession of the streets of the town. Some of them, by means of a cordon, isolated the two houses in which the suspects were, while others forced an entry into them and arrested Jerh. and Cornelius Buckley and P. Carmody of Main Street, Millstreet, three of the four men.

To the dismay of the Republican Officer in charge the missing man was found to be Daniel Buckley, Main Street, and the ringleader. The three captives were promptly blindfolded and bound, and were placed in a waiting motor car. As the car was about to be driven away a man was seen to be walking in the direction of one of the raided houses. The man was Daniel Buckley. Two minutes later, after a short struggle, he was taken into custody. At the same time other Republican police were engaged in similar operations in neighbouring districts, where four others of the gang, Michael

O'Connor, Coolihane (Coolykerane, J.L.), Michael Murphy, Liscreagh, James Cotter, Mill Lane and Denis Sullivan, were arrested. In a third locality, at Nadd, other bodies of Republican police raided the residence of Daniel and Hugh O'Brien, brothers, the remaining two of the thieves known to have played a prominent part in the robbery. The arrest of the O'Briens was, however, not effected. The motor car carrying one party of Republican police whose duty it was to surround the O'Brien's house, broke down, and during the delay this caused the men escaped. The eight prisoners were then brought to a Republican prison and having been fed, were left under a strong guard during the night.

### **SILENT ROBBERS**

At 4.15 a.m. on Sunday morning, April 25<sup>th</sup>, the eight accused were brought individually before a preliminary court, and each was closely questioned. Each denied absolutely his complicity in the robbery and after an examination lasting several hours, the men were put back into their cells.

### **WITNESSES WHO FEAR BRITISH POLICE**

Later on that day, in response to information that British troops and police were seeking to discover the whereabouts of the prisoners in order to liberate them, the guard was doubled at all points. It was then decided to hand the men over to the Banks from which the money had been stolen and to place these banks in possession of all the evidence against the prisoners. But for this a series of signed statements was required from those upon whose evidence the gang had been rounded up. Thereupon a new complication arose. Some of these witnesses feared action by the British police against themselves if these statements were handed over to the Bank Officials. The witnesses were, however, finally prevailed upon to sign statements of their evidence.

### **CRIMINALS UNTOUCHED - ENVOY HUNTED**

Armed with these signed statements an envoy was sent on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> to the directors of the Banks in question. He returned on the same evening with the reply that the Bank directors would advise them more fully of their attitude on the following Wednesday. After his return to Millstreet it was learned that the British police had visited the banks at which the envoy had called, and had endeavoured to establish his identity in order to take action against him.

### **GANG GIVE WAY**

On that Monday, April 26, the prisoners were again individually brought before the Republican Court. They were told that evidence ensuring their conviction was in writing, signed by several witnesses, and they were advised to disclose the whereabouts of the stolen money as, were that refunded, the sentences passed on them would be considerably lighter. The prisoners again refused to declare their guilt; but subsequently under a lengthy examination Daniel Buckley broke down and confessed. He refused, however, to disclose the hiding place of his share of the stolen money but offered to go for it himself and bring it back. This offer was declined by the Court, and some hours afterwards Daniel Buckley disclosed the hiding place. A Republican officer was dispatched immediately to the spot indicated and returned with £2,623. 9. 6, the amount left of Buckley's original share of £2,724.12.6.

Daniel Buckley's confession unnerved his confederates, and before midnight four had admitted their guilt and disclosed the places in which they had concealed their spoil. Carmody returned £1,113 out of his share of £1,517; the rest he had spent. O'Connor returned £2,100, M. Murphy £2,276 and J. Buckley £995. When the Court rose £9,206.12.6 had been recovered and Cornelius Buckley had been found to be innocent of any complicity in the robbery. The prisoners were then placed in the cells and the decision of the Bank directorates was awaited.

### **PREVENTING A RESCUE**

On Tuesday, April 27th. it was learned by the Republican authorities that the locality of the prison in which the men were held was known to the outsiders. Fearing that the information would reach the ears of the British police and that a rescue would be attempted, the guards were again reinforced until, at 11.30 p.m. the decision was come to to take the prisoners to another prison some miles distant. The removal was successfully carried out during the night.

### **THE COURT MARTIAL**

On Wednesday, April 28th., no intimation of their decision having been received from the Bank officials, it was decided to court martial the prisoners. Great precautions were taken that the Court should not be surprised, and large bodies of Republican troops were mobilised to secure all road leading to the house in which the Court was held. At 6 o'clock in the evening the Court assembled. It was composed entirely of Republican officers holding high rank. The trial lasted for five hours. Evidence disclosing the full facts of the planning and the carrying out of the robbery was placed before the Court and this evidence was subsequently substantiated by statements made by the accused. The story of the robbery as disclosed in that evidence is as follows:-

### **THE HISTORY OF THE HOLD UP**

In the April of 1919 the plan was first conceived of robbing the Bank officials. Michael O'Connor, one of the accused, in his statement said that in that month it was spoken about by himself, Daniel O'Brien, Hugh O'Brien and Daniel Buckley. Hugh O'Brien and O'Connor, with whom the plan seemed to originate, called the first meeting of the robbers which was held at night in a graveyard. The gang was definitely formed in October and Patrick Carmody was engaged for some weeks in enlisting suitable members for it. Witnesses gave evidence that they had been approached by Carmody who promised them an "easy job" in the hold up and equal shares of the loot. A few days before the robbery Michael Murphy inquired among his acquaintances as to the best method of making a mask and at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 17th. November 1919 Daniel Buckley, in a cowhouse owned by O'Connor, presided over the final meeting of the conspirators and distributed to them the masks he had made and instructed them in the art of disguise and the method of attack. Six hours afterwards the hold up took place.

Daniel Buckley was leader of the attack on the jaunting car and the O'Brien brothers of that on the motor car. Immediately after the robbery Daniel Buckley and Ml. Murphy walked calmly to their homes. One witness stated that he was at the house of Ml. Murphy when the latter entered after the robbery. He noticed that the pores of Murphy's face were black and that he wore broken boots with no heels on them. Daniel Buckley was seen to enter his house with some red paint still upon his face. The two O'Briens who had taken the £10,000 from the Munster and Leinster bank officials climbed a neighbouring mountain to wash off all the marks of their disguise, and did not return home until 5 o'clock that evening.

### **COUNTING THE MONEY**

Two days afterwards a meeting was called of the gang to count the money. Daniel Buckley in his statement graphically described the ceremony of counting:-

*"We met at J. Tarrant's outhouse in Coole to count the money. Hugh O'Brien was in charge of the count. Daniel O'Brien was on his left hand. I was on his right hand side. Murphy was next to me and then O'Connor. It was on a heap of oats we counted it with a bag under it. We counted about £16,000."*



Before the count was over the thieves began to suspect one another. Nobody except the O'Briens were aware of what amount of money was in the bag taken by them. Nobody even knew that the bag with the £10,000 had been taken at all. Hugh O'Brien in explaining that some of the notes in that bag had got wet and he had thrown them away, suddenly realised that the rest of the gang were not aware that there had been any such bag. Daniel Buckley describing this scene in his statement said:- *"O'Brien felt he had made a blunder when he acknowledged to us there was a small bag we knew nothing about, He could have opened the bag without our knowledge."*

It was believed by the gang that the O'Briens had secretly helped themselves from this bag. None of them accepted the story of the wet notes. But the O'Briens seem to have been too powerful to antagonise for the sake of a few hundred pounds. The counting finished, it was agreed to divide the spoils evenly. Daniel Buckley got more than his share as he admitted to the court. *"The mistake"* he politely explained *"happened by my being given a bunch of £5 notes instead of £s."*

### **A MEMBER OF THE DAIL - AND THE ROBBERY**

The spoils divided each man took his to separate hiding places. The Buckleys and Ml. Murphy buried theirs. Carmody placed his in a pillow case which was, on December 28th. seen by a witness. The pillow case, the witness said, was "filled to the top with money." After the allocation of the £16,000 the men returned again to their homes and subsequently met frequently in the homes of Carmody and Daniele Buckley. Only two of the gang were ever interrogated by the British police. Daniel Buckley was asked by a constable to state his movements on November 17<sup>th</sup>. His statement was accepted without question. Carmody who was an old friend of the police and closely questioned by Sergeant Mulcahy of the Royal Irish Constabulary stationed in Millstreet. He was not questioned as to his own but as to those of Mr. P. O'Keeffe, elected member of Dail Eireann for the Constituency of North Cork, when on the 16<sup>th</sup> November he had driven in his car to Newmarket. In his statement to the Court Carmody said:-

*"I was closely questioned by the Royal Irish Constabulary as to the destination of P. O'Keeffe M.P. when I drove him from his home to the North of Newmarket on the day previous to the robbery. Sergeant Mulcahy also tried to persuade me that I was back at Ballydaly Cross at 12 o'clock on the night of the hold up with P. O'Keeffe, M.P. He also suggested that O'Keeffe was hard up for money."*

(This effort to implicate in the robbery one of the elected representatives of the Irish people, a Member of the Republican Government and the General Secretary of the Sinn Fein organisation, is a sinister example of the "duties" performed by the British police in Ireland.)

### **A SECOND HOLD UP PLANNED**

Mr. O'Connor was evidently the accountant of the robbers. He it was who distributed the shares to each of the others. At the beginning of January 1920 the meetings in Carmody's house became more frequent. A new plan was developing. The November hold up had been carried off with such success that the robbers were encouraged to greater ventures. By March 1920 the new plan was almost complete. It included a night raid on the Munster and Leinster Bank premises in the town of Millstreet. One of the gang was overheard to say that he had secured an instrument that would cut through the safe door "like a knife." Should the manager of the raided bank come on the scene it was decided to choke him, that being the most noiseless way.

But other plans were developing at the same time and Republican detectives were now watching Carmody's and Buckley's houses day and night. Hearing of the proposed raid on the Bank

an armed Republican guard was placed on this building each night and these guards had instructions to shoot, if the raid was attempted. But before the gang had time to put their more ambitious projects into operation they had been rounded up. The parts played in the conspiracy by James Cotter, Jerh. Buckley and D. O'Sullivan were the least important. Cotter had accepted some of the stolen money as a bribe to keep silent as to the identity of the robbers all of whom he knew. Jerh. Buckley did not take part in the holdup but accepted £1,000 which he knew to have been stolen. Denis O'Sullivan was given sums by the robbers. During the examination Carmody admitted that he himself broke the car for which a British judge awarded him £300 compensation to be levied off the people of the district, and he signed an undertaking renouncing his claim to the compensation.

### **THE SENTENCES**

Such was the story told at the trial. Close upon midnight on April 25<sup>th</sup> seven of the prisoners were found guilty and their sentences were immediately promulgated.

Daniel Buckley, publican, ex-soldier, ex-convict, a man with many years of evil-doing to his credit, known to have been implicated in many minor robberies was sentenced to 16 years' transportation. During that period he was warned against *"entering the Irish Republic without the necessary permit from the commanding officer of the Battalion area."* MI. O'Connor, labourer, who was convicted of engineering the hold up in conjunction with Hugh O'Brien and whose record was very bad was sentenced to 15 years' transportation. Patrick Carmody, baker, motor car proprietor & general merchant, who was convicted of complicity in the robbery but who was shown to be largely under the influence of others who had employed him because he was the driver of the Bankers car was sentenced to 10 years' transportation. MI. Murphy, small farmer, who was convicted of complicity in the robbery but whose record was not bad was sentenced to 8 years transportation. John Buckley, brother of DI. Buckley, who took no part in the robbery but was convicted of accepting £1,000 of the stolen money was sentenced to 12 months transportation. James Cotter, labourer, who took no part in the robbery but who was aware of the conspiracy and accepted hush money was sentenced to five years' deportation from the county of Cork. Daniel Sullivan, labourer, who was convicted of receiving a small sum of the stolen money, was sentenced to leave Millstreet within 24 hours.

These sentences were passed, the Court declared, *"In the interest of Millstreet and especially in the best interest of law and order under the Irish Republic."* The prisoners sentenced to transportation broke down when they heard the terms of their sentences. They were permitted to see their relatives. Under the supervision of the Court arrangements were made by them to contribute to the support of those dependent upon them. At 12.30 a.m. on April 29th. they were removed under armed guard to the coast and were subsequently transported.

### **THE RINGLEADER RETURNS**

Twelve days subsequently those who had been ordered to keep these prisoners under observation reported that Daniel Buckley had returned to Ireland. After two days he was again arrested, and in his possession was found a pencilled list of those he had marked for execution. The list contained 20 names of those who had been engaged in his trial either as witnesses or as judges. He was immediately brought before a Courtmartial and his sentence was increased to 20 years transportation. On the following night he was sent out of the country an armed guard travelling with him.

**WANTED BY REPUBLICAN POLICE**

**Bank robbers who may make armed resistance to arrest.**

In the detailed account given in yesterday's IRISH BULLETIN of the bank robbery at Ballydaly Cross, Millstreet, County Cork, and the subsequent capture of the band of robbers concerned in it, it was mentioned that two of the principal thieves, Daniel and Hugh O'Brien had escaped arrest. The following description of these missing men has now been circulated by the Republican Authorities:-

HUGH O'BRIEN, of Inchamay, Lyre, Banteer, Co. Cork.

Height 6'. 1", athletic and well built, has all the appearance of a drilled man. Eyes sparkling and of a restless disposition; wore a well cared for moustache which may now be shaved off; appears to be of a highly-strung temperament, speaks with a peculiar accent. From information on hand he seems to be an adept at disguising his identity. No risks should be taken in connection with the arrest of the man, as it is likely that might defend himself with firearms.

DANIEL O'BRIEN, of Inchamay, Lyre, Banteer, Co. Cork.

Height about 6'. 1" and built in proportion. Features brownish-red, of a hardy nature, walks with a loose gait and is a typical countryman. He has a peculiar habit of opening his eyes extra wide when looking at any person. A powerfully built man. All precautions should be taken when placing him under arrest. The arrest of the above mentioned two brothers has been ordered by the O/C, Millstreet Battalion, and Cork 2nd. Brigade on the instructions of the Minister of Justice, Dail Eireann. It is of the utmost importance that should these men be found in your area they should be immediately placed under arrest, and you should communicate at once with above officer.

**VOLUME 5.NUMBER 36. IRISH BULLETIN.WEDNESDAY, 20th. JULY 1921.**

**INCIDENTS IN A "RUINOUS CONFLICT"**

**FURTHER SIGNED STATEMENTS OF VICTIMS OF BRITISH VIOLENCE**

We print below copies of signed statements which have just arrived in Dublin. Should the present peace negotiations break down and the British war of aggression re-commence, it is as well for the public outside Ireland to understand what war of this kind means to the civil population. For the last year non-combatants in all parts of Ireland have lived under a terror, the full extent of which is only now becoming known in Ireland, and is not known at all in other countries. The statements published below, with their tales of murder, outrage, cruelties and indignities to women, illustrate the method of restoring "*law and order*" which have been in use among the British forces for many months. These are not isolated incidents; they are the common experiences of thousand of Irishmen and women. It will be noticed that all the incidents described took place within the last six weeks, several of them after Mr. Lloyd George had proposed to President de Valera a conference for the purpose of ending "*the ruinous conflict which has for centuries ....embittered the relations of the peoples of these islands.*"

### **A Sick Man Pummeled And Beaten.**

Statement of Thomas Byrne, Lodgekeeper, Drishane Convent, Millstreet.

(Thomas Byrne, aged 46, lives with his wife and six children in the back lodge of Drishane Convent, Millstreet, Co. Cork. He was visited four times in all by the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans. On two of these occasions he was dragged from bed and beaten. The following is his account of these two incidents):-

"On Friday, June 12th., at 10 p.m., I was raided by Auxiliaries and Black and Tans from Millstreet. At that time my wife was sick in bed for a fortnight and myself down with 'flu (influenza) from the previous Wednesday. I had put a bandage around my head to ease the headache I felt. An Auxiliary came to my bedside, asked me what the bandage was for, and when I said *"For the headache"* he said *"Well, I'll give you a better one"* Then drew his revolver and dealt me a blow which knocked me senseless. When I came to they asked me where two certain men on the run were. I said I did not know, and I did not. They, thereupon, beat me and pummeled me for what seemed at least half an hour. After that they dragged me downstairs, put me on a chair, and pressing a revolver to both temples they gave me three minutes in which to tell them what I did not know, threatening to blow my brains out if I did not answer, and swearing with much blasphemy. At this moment my daughter entered the house, flung herself between me and them, and resisted when they tried to drag her from me. She kept herself between me and them until I got up to my room, and thus, I believe, saved my life.

"On June 17th. They burst in my door at 5 a.m., came to my bedside swearing vengeance for a recent ambush (I have never taken part in an ambush). One said I knew and concealed the men who had felled the trees round the turn of the road. (I did not know them and did not conceal them). He ordered me downstairs and out on the road and asked another, I suppose an officer, would he shoot me. The latter answered: *"Don't mind it this time, but give him a few punches."* These he gave, knocking me down inside my own door. Then they called on me to get up and come out again. But I did not move and my daughter closed the door against them, whereupon they went away still swearing.

I vouch for the truth of the above statement.

(Signed): Thomas Byrne.

### **The Torture and Murder of Michael Dineen.**

(The following statement has a peculiar interest in that neither the Press nor Dublin Castle ever reported this murder. Such crimes on the part of the British forces have been so numerous that eventually both the press and the public ceased to be surprised at them, regarding them as normal incidents in the daily life of the people. Dublin Castle, whose agents were involved in this horrific murder, were careful to conceal its occurrence).

Statement of Daniel Dineen, Ivale, Kilcorney.

"About 7 a.m. on Friday, June 24th., I noticed some Auxiliaries and a policeman at a little distance from my house. I have since ascertained that the policeman's name was Dowd. I called my brother, Michael, who was in bed. He got up and dressed, and was saying his morning prayers when the Auxiliaries came in. They questioned him and charged him with being in the Rathcoole Ambush on the previous week, and with being an officer in the I.R.A., all of which was untrue, and which he

denied. Then they took him out of the house and one of them went to his room, searched it and took some money. When this man came downstairs he ordered my brother to be brought in again, and questioned him about Sinn Fein, etc, and said: *"I'm going to shoot you because you must be an officer in the I.R.A."* *"If you do,"* said Michael, *"I can't help it. I suppose you shot as innocent men as me."* He ordered Michael to be brought outside again.

"We heard Michael shouting."

"My wife and I begged that Michael would not be shot, but the door was shut on us. We heard Michael shouting as if he were being beaten. My step-son went out, and he saw two Auxiliaries shooting my brother. He also heard them telling Michael to run, but he did not. My wife went out, and three men in uniform told her she had better go into the house again. She heard a good deal of firing as she returned to the house. Shortly afterwards two Auxiliaries came into the house, and one of them told me they had shot my brother, that they had turned the machine-gun on him, and he ought to be dead by this. He told us to bring him to one of the sheds and put him in a coffin, and bury him, and said they would report the matter themselves, and that I need make no report. The man who said this was the man who had questioned Michael previously and who had taken the money. I can identify that man. The policeman named Dowd was present during the whole proceedings.

"Terrible Wounds."

"When I examined the body of my brother, Michael, I found that one of his legs completely shattered at the knee. There was no wound or any mark of gun fire here, so the leg must have been broken when he was beaten. His back was covered with bullet wounds, and nearly all the blood was drained from his body. There was a long cut in his vest, and a large open wound in his breast, which I thought was caused by a bayonet. I have never been asked to give evidence at any inquiry into my brother's death."

(Signed) Daniel Dineen.

Ivale, 3rd. July 1921

**Incidents of a raid by Auxiliaries**

Statement of Mary Margaret Dennehy, Millstreet

"11.15 p.m. on the 18th. May some Auxiliaries in uniform accompanied by Constable Duckham entered my father's house. They asked my brother John his name, striking him in the face at the same time. They charged him with typing dispatches for the I.R.A. They kicked him and struck him with a rifle so that his face was swollen, and he bled from the nose and mouth.

"At 11.30 p.m. on June 29th, A body of Auxiliaries again entered our house. I and a lady friend were in bed. Our room was entered by uniformed Auxiliaries, who ordered us to get up, and remained in the room while we did so. They searched our room including the bed. My mother, who was in delicate health, was compelled to stand barefoot outside the street door. My brother was dragged out of the house. Two Auxiliaries who were drunk were dragging him along. One said to the other to carry him up the road and shoot him. My mother overheard this, and appealed to the officer in command, who ordered them to leave my brother go.

"This raid lasted about three quarters of an hour. (Signed):

Mary Margaret Dennehy,

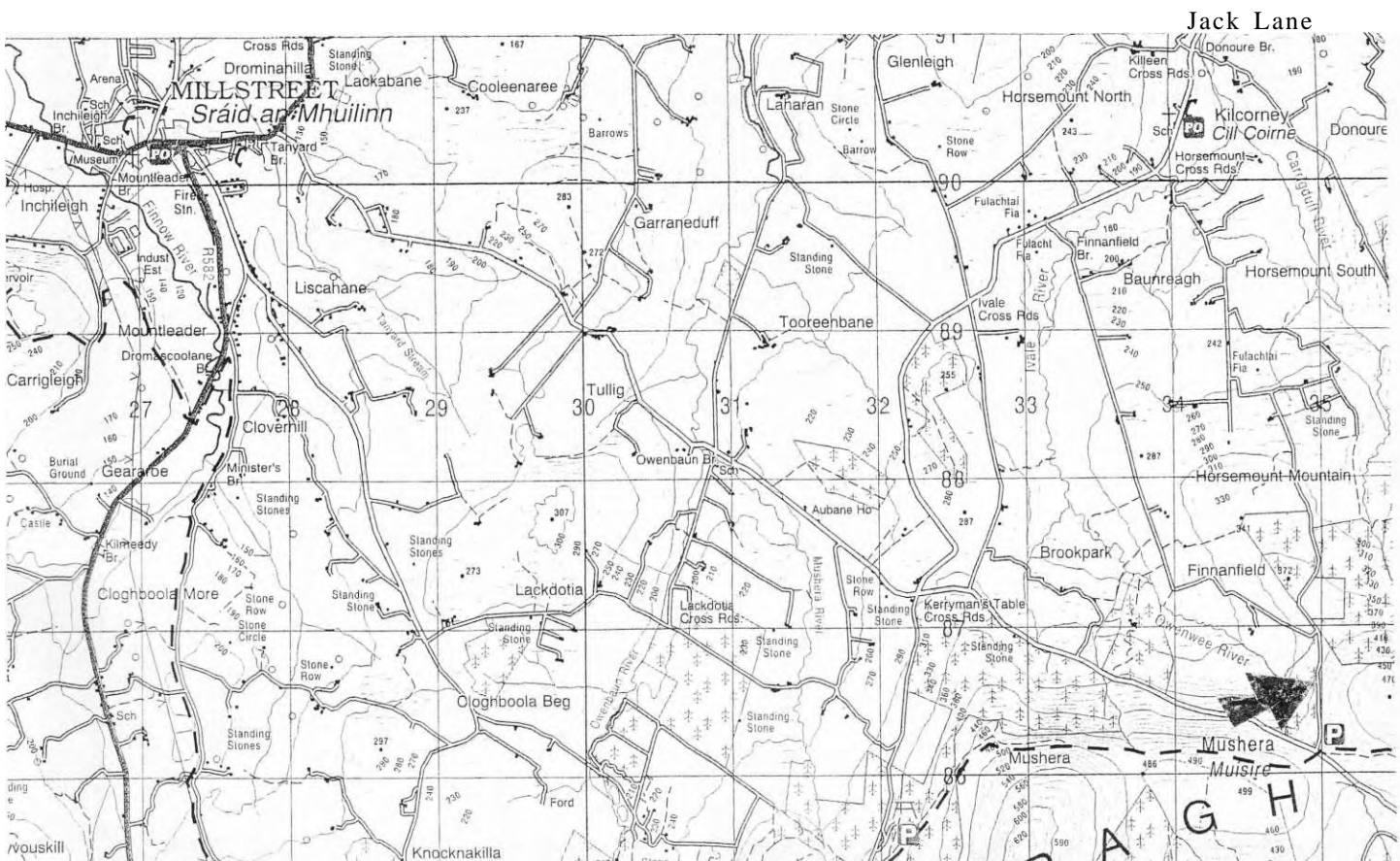
Millstreet, 3rd. July 1921."

# MAHON'S ROCK?

It is recorded in "The (Dublin) Annals of Inisfallen" and noted by John O'Donovan in his "Annals of the Four Masters," and other sources, that King Mahon may have been betrayed and killed at Mushera mountain. The relevant page entry in the Annals is copied on the next page from a Manuscript in the British Library, Egerton Mss.96-98. The reference is at lines 10-11 in the Ms. Which can be translated as: *"Others (say) that it was at Mahon's heap, on Mushera-of-much-turfhe was betrayed."* The heap would refer to a heap of stones named after Mahon indicating the place of his death and/or burial.

This happened in the year 976 and turned out to be a turning point in Irish history. The background, briefly, is that Mahon was the first of the Dal Cais to rule Munster from Cashel after overthrowing the Eoghanacht Clans who had dominated the area heretofore. They did not take this lying down and treating it as a usurpation they went to war with Mahon. They tricked him into peace talks with the Bishop of Cork as an intermediary. As soon as he was in their sight they had him killed. However, they seem to have reckoned without his younger brother, Brian Bora, who was then something a tearaway. He avenged Mahon's death at the battle of Bealach Leachta near Macroom and went on to rule Munster and then Ireland. He was, in a sense, too successful in establishing a High Kingship that could not be followed up with the result that there was intensified competition and conflict between the various clans with no central authority to control and mediate between them. This provided the opportunity for the Norman invasion.

Tom Goggin of South Horsemount has drawn my attention to a large rock on the Brandy Road which has been traditionally known as Mahon's Rock. It is about 500 yards from the junction with the Butter Road. It was originally a standing stone by the side of the road but was knocked down and moved a little when the County Council was improving the road about 10 years ago. Legend has it that originally it was on Mushera mountain facing Limerick/Clare from whence Mahon came. Below is an indication of where the stone lies today with a photograph of it on the back cover. It is not yet clear if there are any markings on it that would help with its provenance. I am grateful to Tom and Gisela Jones, (c/o "Con the Pound's"), for their help.



Jack Lane

u. T. 975.

ar̃p mōp ʒ loelānāib hīmnis ʒ cōpēadē ʒ ʒōpēlāpʒe le  
ʒhētʒamān ʒ le brian.

976.

Donabān mē Cēnēl ʒr̃s Cōpēbē wōdā do ʒabail  
ʒhētʒamān mē Cēnēdē, le ealʒ mē t̃is ʒeīn ap ndul do an ap  
Cōmpēet Cōlūm mē Cōpēʒam Cōmāpba bāpē, Cūm ʒit do d̃nā  
le ʒhōlmūad ʒ donubān do Cōdlaeān a bēall ʒo ʒhōlmūad mē  
bpoīn ʒ ʒo Cādʒ mē bpoīn ʒ brian mē bpoīn le ap mārbiad ē  
ʒap ʒlānūʒad an hōm Cādēp d̃pōnʒ do na ʒeāncāib ʒup ar̃s  
bēapnān d̃ēpʒ ʒlābe ʒeapmāʒe ʒeīn do d̃pōe mārbiad mātʒa-  
mān ʒ d̃pōnʒ t̃ile ʒup ar̃s leaēt ʒhētʒamān ap mūʒpē n̄ mona  
mōpē do ʒeallad ap Cōmāpba bāpē ʒa Cēp do mālūʒad  
na bōdne d̃pēall ap ʒhētʒamān.

z. i. ʒhōlmūad ʒ abail  
bēalāe abpō mē t̃on le bōne  
d̃s do ʒeap bēalāe leaēt  
ē bēalāe abpō. Uide ʒhōn  
Cōpēʒam ʒal Cēnēdē mē  
ʒhōlmūad.

Brian bōpūmē mē Cēnēdē ar̃s ʒabail ʒr̃s ʒhōmān.

977.

Jñr Cēnē do ʒapūʒad do Brian mē Cēnēdē ar̃s ʒo do  
māe dōmāll ʒr̃s Cōpēbāpʒm ʒop ʒallāib hīmnis ʒ ʒōmāp  
ʒ amlēʒm ʒ d̃r̃bēān aīe a Cōpēbāp mē ʒpāit ʒōnā d̃r̃ mē  
bī ap nealōʒ an ʒ oʒ cēad loelānāe mē t̃on lēo.

Cēnē na nōlān an ʒhōp nē ʒhōmān ʒ an ʒacē ar̃e  
ʒōnā pūbādāp loelānāis do dēannān le Brian mē Cēnēdē ʒo ʒr̃s  
lēp o loelānāib a n̄le mōmē ap cēadnā.

ʒhōpūʒad ʒhōpēbāpʒe mē dōmāll n̄ lēill ar̃s  
Cōʒalāe mē dōmāll ʒ Cōʒalāis dā ʒr̃s dāmnā brian le  
hāmāʒm mē ʒeīnāe ar̃s le loelānāib ar̃e-elāe.

ʒlūʒ le Brian mē Cēnēdē ʒo hīb ʒr̃sēntē ʒ ʒāplā  
donubān ʒr̃s ʒ ʒr̃sēntē ar̃s amlēʒm ʒr̃s ʒall ʒhōmān do.

# CORRESPONDENCE IN *THE IRISH TIMES* ON THE FAMINE/HOLOCAUST

There was an interesting exchange of letters in the Irish Times recently on the nature of the Famine and how it could be best described. As is not unusual with the 'journal of record' it was truncated at the point at which it got really interesting.

Dr. Deborah Lipstadt was the keynote speaker at a seminar in Trinity College on 17 August which was a three-day seminar on teaching the Holocaust for teachers and was organised by the Herzog Centre in TCD and the Holocaust Education Trust Ireland. A report in the Irish Times said: "She said people who describe the treatment of the Palestinians, black people under apartheid or the deaths of one million Irish people in the Famine as a holocaust trivialised the Famine or misunderstood the nature of what had happened in the gas chambers." "Not speaking as a Jew but as a historian, many of these things that happened are dreadful, but it is a sloppy use of the word," she said." (18 August).

I think nobody can be accused today of misunderstanding what happened in the gas chambers. But her views begged some questions that needed clarification. If masses of people are deliberately sacrificed for a specific purpose what/who determines how it is best described? What circumstances and context makes it genocide, a holocaust, a 'horrendous tragedy', a criminal act, a crime of passion, or whatever. I can't for the life of me see how describing the Irish Famine as a holocaust trivialises it, or any other holocaust. It was a description used at the time and later and long before the WWII holocaust. Did the people who did so not know what they were talking about? The word and the concept of a holocaust have been around for quite a while and were understood.

It seems that some issues like that were posed for Dr. Lipstadt as she felt obliged to write a letter to the Irish Times clarifying her remarks and the following ensued:

23 August 2011

## **GENOCIDE AND THE FAMINE**

Sir,

I may not have expressed myself as precisely as I meant to in my interview with Ronan McGreevy (Home News, August 18th). Regarding the death of one million Irish people in the Famine, I am not an expert in this field and simply do not know enough of the precise history to determine whether this was indeed a genocide. What it was, without any doubt, was a horrendous tragedy, one that could have been prevented had there been the will to aid the victims. Of that there is no doubt. However, genocide as defined by the United Nations has a precise meaning and not all mass murders - horrendous though they may be - qualify as such. I urge caution in the use of the term. - Yours, etc,

Deborah E Lipstadt, PhD



7 September 2011

Dear Sir,

I find it difficult to understand Dr. Deborah Lipstadt's doubts about the victims of the Famine not being classifiable as victims of genocide by the UN definition (letters, 23 August). The latter says, *inter alia*, that: *"genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;"* As she accepts that the famine *"could have been prevented had there been the will to aid the victims"* I cannot see her difficulty.

The Lord Lieutenant at the time, Clarendon, wrote to the Prime Minister, Russell: *"I do not think there is another legislature in Europe that would disregard such suffering as now exists in the west of Ireland, or coldly persist in a policy of extermination."* (April 26, 1849). I think he would have no difficulty in describing it as genocide if that was the language of the time and there is no reason to believe he had any particular axe to grind on behalf of the native population.

Dr. Lipstadt gives a precise figure of one million victims but they were never counted at the time. However, *The Times* reported on 15 March 1847: *"The workhouses are full and only hold 100,000 while 4,000,000 are starving."* In view of the fact that the blight returned for two more years and that the new Liberal government later that year abandoned food and relief works, as a matter of principle, I cannot imagine how the vast majority of those starving at that time could have possibly survived.

Yours,

Jack Lane

14 September 2011

Sir, - Jack Lane (September 7th) is, as always, cogent and to the point in his discussion of culpability in the Great Famine. He is right to say that state policy contributed to the million deaths. Whether this amounts to genocide, including the "intent" specified by the UN definition he quotes, I am less sure than he is. There is one aspect of his letter which is worth clarifying, however. His evidence of intent is a letter by the lord lieutenant of the time saying that the government was "coldly persisting in a policy of extermination". The word "extermination", as it was used during the 1840s in Ireland, meant removal from the land, usually multiple evictions, rather than murder. In 1849, Edmund Roche, MP for Cork, told the House of Commons that a proposed change in the law meant that "the extermination in Ireland would be trebled, until the whole of the pauper population would be got rid of and transported beyond the seas".

Deborah Lipstadt's letter (August 23rd), to which Jack Lane was responding, urged caution in the use of the term "genocide" relative to the Famine, and she was of course right to do so. Your original report (August 18th), however, quoted her as saying that the famine was not "a holocaust", which is different. The word "genocide" was coined in the 20th century and has a precise legal and literal meaning; the word "holocaust", meaning "wholly burnt offering", has existed for centuries, is used mostly figuratively, and took on its current dominant meaning - "the Holocaust" rather than "a holocaust" - only since about 1970. Before the second World War, it carried much less of a charge. It could be used to mean a sacrifice, as when Parnell in 1879 said that Irishmen who joined the British army became "the holocaust of Imperialism"; or it could simply mean destruction by fire,

which is its literal meaning. The historian D B Quinn in 1933 could even refer to the burning of the Dublin state archive a decade earlier as "the holocaust of the Public Record Office", a usage which would be unthinkable now. At least one contemporary referred to the famine of the 1840s as a "holocaust". This was a city councillor in Cork who told a meeting in January 1848 that "a million and a half of Irish people perished, were smitten and offered up as a holocaust". This was a more serious usage than those of Parnell or Quinn, but does not imply an equivalence to the Nazi Holocaust. Precision in language is as necessary with the word "holocaust" as it is with "genocide", and indeed with "extermination".

Yours etc,  
NIALL O CIOSAIN,  
School of Humanities,  
NUI, Galway

The following letters were submitted but not published:

14 September.

Sir,

**Genocide and the Famine**

Niall O Ciosain (Letters, September 14) is no doubt correct in saying that the normal meaning of "extermination" in the mid-19th century was "getting rid of, mainly "expelling" rather than specifically killing. It might be interesting to study whether the extermination in Ireland in the 1840s had anything to do with a change in the word's connotations. When the Lord Lieutenant Clarendon criticised his government in 1849 for "coldly persisting in such a policy of extermination", he was clearly not unaware that this policy of human removal had involved large-scale death.

Regarding the question of genocide, we must think of the clearly foreseeable and foreseen results of actions. It seems that the number of British policy-makers and influential thinkers who advocated or expressed approval of large-scale death in Ireland, in those precise terms, was relatively small. But there were many who expressed approval of the "extermination", which was the policy resolutely pursued and which involved avoidable large-scale death. Clarendon was correct to say that such a policy would not have been pursued by any other government in Europe. (Russian government responses in famine times offer a striking contrast.)

Article II, section (c) of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide states:

"In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such: ...

(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

Was this not done in Ireland in the 1840s?

Yours truly,

John Minahane

16 September

Dear Sir, Niall O Ciosain is right to emphasise the virtue of precise use of language, especially in the use of words that have changed their meaning, (Letters, 14 Sept.). Context is therefore all important. His references to the changed meanings of holocaust are very much to the point and the Irish Famine is a good illustration of this.

It was described at the time as a "*Holocaust offered at the shrine of political economy*" (Cork Examiner, 22/1/1847), as a "*holocaust of humanity*" by Michael Davitt in *The Fall of Feudalism* (1904) and as a "*demographic holocaust*" by Roy Foster in *'Modern Ireland'* (1988).

Naill's point of contention on the Famine as genocide issue is his doubt about the element of intent by the British Government.

No politician or government ever did - or ever will - openly declare their intention to implement mass starvation or genocide! However, the fact is that after the new Whig/Liberal government came to power in mid 1846 starvation in Ireland increased due to the recurring blight (for five seasons) and that government systematically decreased state assistance to zero. They could have decided otherwise. They were the most powerful government in the world and were beholden to nobody. They could have used the food resources of the country to do the very opposite. They decided as they did because they were, very consciously, the harbingers of Progress and being logical and consistent they accepted that that necessitated the implementation of the Malthusian solution to 'surplus population.' Progress needs famines.

Malthus had long since spelt out clearly and unambiguously why that was so, At least he had the great virtue of not being a humbug. In view of the clarity with which he had done so the government could not have willed the means without knowing and willing the ends. Therefore, in view of what they actually did, I can't see how there can be doubt about that government's intentions. They knew what they were doing and I find it impossible to believe otherwise.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Lane

September 19th.

Dear Irish Times Letters Editor:

A main difference between officialdom of 1847 and now is the earlier precision of language due to their classical (Latin, Greek) education. Thus this response to Niall O Ciosain's claim (Irish Times, Sept. 14, 2011) that when the Lord Lieutenant of the time accused the government of "...coldly persisting in a policy of extermination" of the Irish that he really meant to say "evictions" rather than murder. Correspondence of that time is rife with references to "ejectments" and "extirpations," both of which are Latin-based as is "extermination" all with clear definitions. "Stirpe" (root), thus extirpation is "uprooting of the people," and "ejectments" were evictions. "Extermination" was then, and still is, extermination. O Ciosain's claim is all the more dubious due to the sixty-nine British regiments (of its total empire army of 137 regiments) that removed, at gunpoint, Ireland's food to its ports for export while the people starved, and Lord Clarendon letter of the time: "But for the onerous duty of escorting provisions (edibles) the army in Ireland would have little to do." Thus, it was indisputably genocide (a word that didn't exist then, being coined during

WW2 by Rafael Lempkin), so the Cork Examiner referred to the mass murder underway in 1847 as "Holocaust," as did others including Michael Davitt in his "The Fall of Feudalism..." in 1904.

Chris Fogarty  
Chicago, IL 606

## SOME AUBANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

- \* Canon Sheehan: *A Turbulent Priest*, by B. Clifford
- \* *A North Cork Anthology*, by J. Lane and B. Clifford
- \* *Spotlights on Irish History*, by Brendan Clifford
- \* *The 'Cork Free Press': The Restructuring of Ireland, 1890-1910* by B. Clifford
- \* *Aubane: Where In The World Is It? A Microcosm Of Irish History In A Cork Townland*, by Jack Lane
- \* *Piarais Feiritéir: Dánta/Poems, with Translations* by Pat Muldowney
- \* *Thomas Davis*, by Charles Gavan Duffy
- \* *Extracts from 'The Nation'*, 1842-44
- \* *Millstreet - "the cockpit of Ireland"* (by various authors)
- \* *Na h-Aislingí, vision poems of Eoghan Ruadh O'Súilleabháin*, translated by Pat Muldowney
- \* *Aubane versus Oxford: a response to Professor Roy Foster and Bernard O'Donoghue*
- \* *The Shakespeare Conspiracies – untangling a 400-year web of myth and deceit* by Brian McClinton
- \* *The Poems of Geoffrey O'Donoghue* by John Minahane
- \* *Elizabeth Bowen: "Notes On Eire". Espionage Reports to Winston Churchill*
- \* *Dánta/Poems by Eoghan Ruadh O'Súilleabháin* translated by Pat Muldowney
- \* *From Cologne to Ballinlough – A German and Irish boyhood in World War II* by Herbert Rimmel
- \* *The Famed Hill of Clara, its poetry, history and the heritage of its environs* by Fr. Sean Tucker
- \* *An affair with the Bishop of Cork*, various authors
- \* *An Argument Defending the Rights of the Kingdom of Ireland (1645)* by Conor O'Mahony, first publication in English translated by John Minahane
- \* *A Millstreet Miscellany, 1 - 5*, by various authors.

## GENEALOGICAL MAPS

The two genealogical maps that follow may be of interest to people who are seeking to trace their family history.

The first is an extract from a map by Philip MacDermott, M. D., which covers the south of the country. The map was the first that gave family locations in such comprehensive detail and is accepted as authoritative.

The second is from a history called "Cork - a short history of the city and county" by D. O'Daly, M. A., and H. DIP. ED., Headmaster, St. Patrick's School, Cork and published by the Educational Company of Ireland in 1926. It is more general than MacDermott's and covers Cork only.





TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL  
**MAP**  
OF  
**Ancient Ireland**

Shewing the Five Kingdoms of the Brehon Law  
MEATH, ULSTER, CONNAUGHT, LEINSTER & MUNSTER  
as they existed under the Milesian Kings with the old Principalities & other Chief Divisions the  
Palatines of the Kings, ancient Cities, Bishops' Sees, & remarkable Places, and the Territories  
possessed by each of the Irish Princes, Lords & Chiefs from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century; also  
the Possessions of the Danes in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and of the great Anglo-Norman  
and old English Families from the Reign of HENRY THE II to that of EDWARD THE FIRST  
comprising the Period from the latter end of the 12<sup>th</sup> to about the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.  
On the Printed Sheet accompanying the Map an Account is given of the extent  
of all the ancient Territories, and of the Possessions, Rank, Titles & Descent, of all  
the Irish Princes, Lords & Chiefs, and also the Titles & Territories of the Anglo-Norman Lords &  
great English Families. The Milesian Chiefs are all distinguished by O. and Mac. The Head  
Chiefs are placed about the Middle of each Barony & the others in their Localities. The  
Anglo-Norman are placed on some part of their Possessions & the word DANES is marked  
on the Territories which they possessed.

The Abbreviations are P. Prince, L. Lord, C. Chief, C. Chief, B. Baron, V. Viscount, and E. Earl.

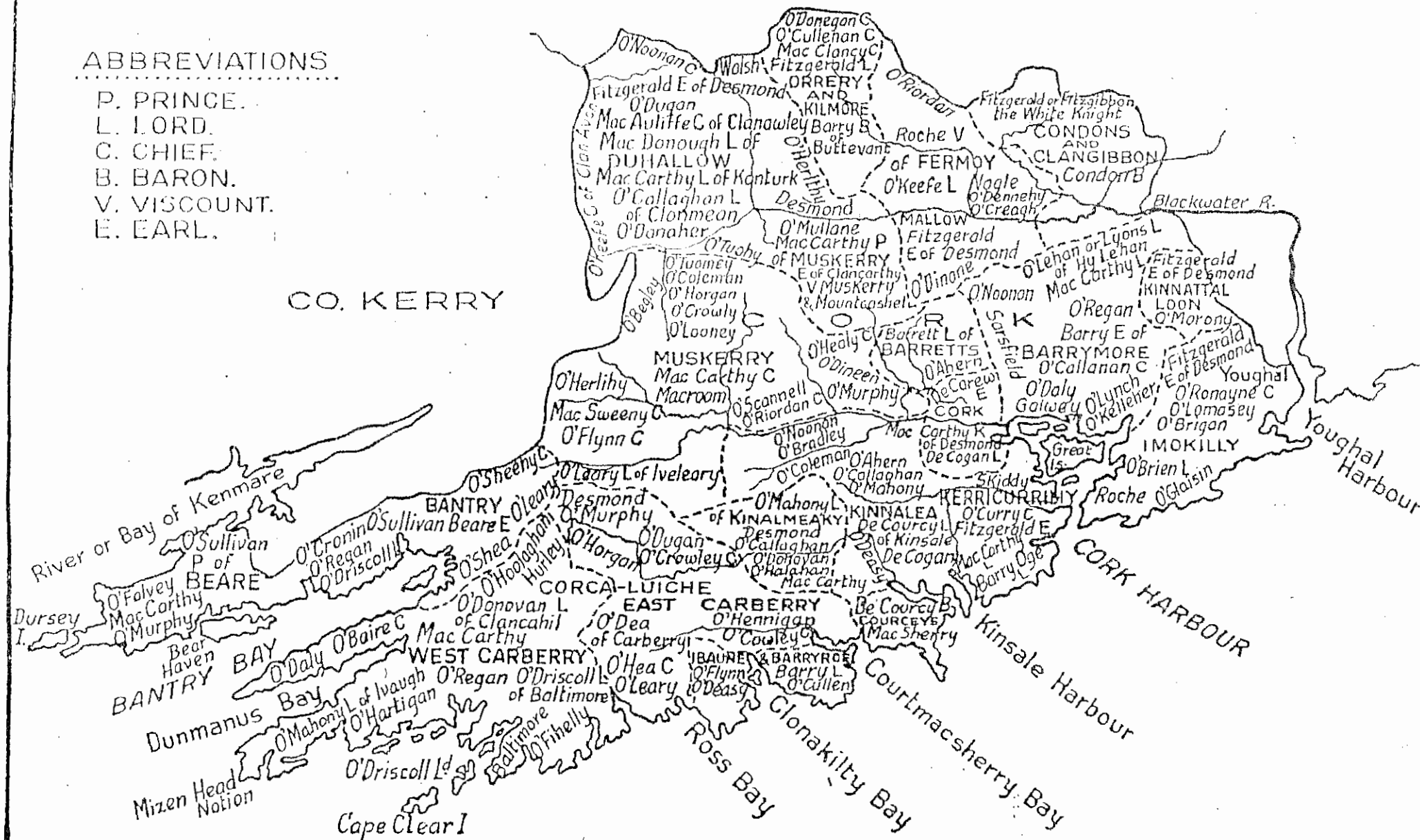
EIRE ARD INIS NA RIGH  
NODLE ERIN ISLAND OF KINGS.



# ABBREVIATIONS.

P. PRINCE.  
L. LORD.  
C. CHIEF.  
B. BARON.  
V. VISCOUNT.  
E. EARL.

CO. KERRY



Genealogical and Historical Map of Cork County.

# THOUGHTS ON THE "TREATY" AND THE ORIGIN OF OUR PARTY DIVIDE

A talk at "Feile Duthalla," Newmarket, 12 August, 2011

The last election confirmed that our traditional party divide is alive and well. Even more so, as now we have effectively a Fine Gael government and a Fianna Fail/Sinn Féin opposition we have 'civil war' politics with knobs on.

Irish political life is often decried as being based on 'civil war' politics and that this makes us out of kilter with other countries. But these politics have remained constant for nearly 90 years and it is now surely time to accept that they will be with us for some time yet and we may as well try to understand what drives them and why the divide is so entrenched. At this point in time we should surely be able to assess the issues dispassionately.

The divide originated with the 'Treaty' and that must be the starting point in trying to understand the divide. The 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary is approaching. I think the only way to get to grips with an issue like this is to try to give a narrative of the basic facts and the context that gave rise to the political division over what is called the 'Treaty' and 'civil war.' These were unique events as all defining moments are and they must be understood in their own terms and not through ideological eyes or some other prism.

We are often told quite rightly that nobody in Ireland wanted 'civil war' and all tried to prevent it but it happened! How come? Also, all sides were Republicans so how come they could not agree? These are the issues I will try to deal with by providing a narrative of the essential events at the time.

The first problem is getting basic words right.

There was not a 'civil war' in any meaningful sense. There was a war over the 'Treaty' but both sides were Republicans. They had no different vision for the country, unlike civil wars in the USA, Spain, Russia, England,

France, etc. All the main people concerned were Republicans. The Gaelic description is much more accurate it was a "Cogad na mBrathair" or "Cogad na gcara."

I have headed this with 'Treaty' in inverted commas. This is deliberate. The issue began with the 'Treaty' and here we have another problem with words because there was no 'Treaty' signed - there was a collection of 'Articles of Agreement' between the people who signed them and the British Government but not between two sovereign independent states which is the basis of any treaty worthy of the name.

The Irish signatories were specifically barred from getting their government's agreement to the Agreement so it cannot be described as being signed by the Irish government.

Also, it was and is a constitutional impossibility for the British Government to sign a Treaty with a subordinate government, i.e., with a Dominion as Ireland was under the 'Treaty'. A Treaty is between equals not between superiors and inferiors. The Union was not repealed so there could not have been a Treaty between the two parties.

And this is not playing with words because the inclusion of some and exclusion of other words became crucial elements in the conflict that emerged. And some believe the whole thing was silly because it was all about words. But of course it was not. The words had real meaning and this is what I try to show. Yet there was a very serious conflict - why? It can be very misleading to look at issues with the wrong concepts or words. This can distort the whole issue and prevent a real appreciation of what was involved.

The only way to deal with this type of issue is to look at the actual course of what happened and put the events in their context. The



way the 'Treaty' came about and the way it was handled is the crucial issue as regards the 'civil war'. That's what I will try to describe here. I will try to separate the wood from the trees and as there are limitless number of trees that grew then and even more that grew since we have to cut our way through quite a lot.

### **THE TRUCE**

Let's start with the Truce of 11 July 1921. This was an indication of a great success in the fight for independence. The Government and its army, the IRA, had brought the British Empire at the height of its powers to the negotiating table after dropping several previous conditions such as giving up its arms, accepting terms of reference, etc.

It had made British administration impossible in Ireland. That was the crucial fact.

After many attempts to the contrary by Lloyd George, it was an unconditional truce. A world war had just been fought for 'the freedom of small nations' and millions had died for this including up to 50,000 Irishmen of nearly a quarter of a million who signed up. It seemed right to most public opinion that a nation like Ireland was fully entitled to be free and there was room for optimism.

The crucial reason for the success so far was the unity of the people. This was clearly and democratically expressed four times during the war - at the 1918 General Election, both the local government election and municipal election in 1920 and the 1921 general election. Britain suspends election during war. And the Irish had PR suddenly imposed to stymie the Sinn Fein vote.

The 1921 Election is often overlooked but in many ways it is just as important as the 1918 Election and we need to look at it a bit more closely because it had great significance afterwards.

This was the Election to set up the Government of Southern Ireland and the Government of Northern Ireland under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. There was not a single vote cast for that Government of Southern Ireland in that election. There was a formal

alliance with what was left of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Every seat went uncontested to Sinn Fein except for the 4 appointed by Trinity College Dublin. Sinn Fein won 124 out of the 128 seats. It was the most overwhelming election result ever in any democracy and it was never queried or challenged by anyone then or since. It should be in the Guinness book of records. Naturally there was then no question of this Government of Southern Ireland coming into existence. It was a dead letter as not a single person voted for it. Please park that in your mind for the moment. Not a single vote was cast here for that Government of Ireland Act and its Parliament of Southern Ireland.

This overwhelming unity was the fact that most impressed the world and Lloyd George and the British government in particular and led to the Truce a couple of months later. And the success of the Truce created a new situation and new issues - what to do next?

### **THE BRITISH POSITION**

The British knew precisely what to do. Retrieve and reverse the situation as much as possible. Ireland had gone outside the Empire and it must be brought back in by hook or by crook. And people with a clear and straightforward aim like that are in a very strong position. They had lost the ball but not the game and they were determined to win the game at all costs. They had just won a world war so they were fully confident of dealing with these parvenus who were still wet behind the ears when it came to people like them - Lloyd George, Churchill, Chamberlain, and Birkenhead. They were the 'masters of the universe' as we say today. And the key to winning the ball back was to divide the Irish forces that had won the victory in the first place.

And the 'newcomers' had real problems in the face of this determination and the sheer power that lay behind their enemy. There was also what might be called a psychological problem. The Irish did not have, and do not have, a concept of unending war as an end in itself, as a way of life. You fight a war to achieve something and then you stop. The British have taken war as

a way of life for over three hundred years and negotiations before or after a war are part and parcel of war. This shone through in these events.

One major change that had occurred was the development of the struggle from a conspiracy as 1916 was, led by the IRB, to a popular people's war led by the IRA. They had become very different animals despite an overlap of memberships and leaders. The IRB because of its nature found it difficult to adapt to the new open politics. Their great strength was their underground skills and indifference to what would be called public opinion. This had served them well and had caused the Irish Revolution in the first place by being the driving force behind 1916. The great strength of the IRA and Sinn Fein was the open, popular support across the whole society.

### INITIAL NEGOTIATIONS

There were exchanges of letters and then negotiations between Lloyd George and de Valera after the Truce to gauge attitudes. Dev asked for the British position in writing and when Dominion Status was proposed he would not even take the document but threw it back on the table. The rejection led to the following exchange which gives the flavor of these negotiations and the basic issues that remained all through the negotiations and afterwards:

**Lloyd George:** *"Do you realise that this means war? Do you realise that the responsibility for it will rest on your shoulders alone? "*

**de Valera:** *"No, Mr. Lloyd George, if you insist on attacking us it is you, not I, who will be responsible, because you will be the aggressor. "*

**Lloyd George:** *"I could put a soldier in Ireland for every man, woman and child in it. "*

**de Valera:** *"Very well. But you would have to keep them there. "*

But Lloyd George did not declare war and implored Dev to, at least, take a copy of the document.

Lloyd George claimed that negotiating with de Valera "was like sitting on a merry-go-

round and trying to catch up with the one in front." He also famously said that negotiating with de Valera was 'like trying to pick up mercury with a fork' to which de Valera replied, 'why doesn't he use a spoon?' These were compliments coming from Lloyd George as he was not known as the 'Welsh wizard' for nothing. He was a political genius at getting his way, as he proved later, but he got no change from de Valera on this occasion.

But de Valera learned an important lesson and that was that it was going to be difficult to maintain independence through negotiations with Lloyd George and any negotiations would be a continuation of the war of independence by other means with a possibility of real war if the negotiations broke down.

There was a deadlock and that had to be broken to move forward. De Valera did so.

### EXTERNAL ASSOCIATION

The concept of what kind of association there should be between Ireland and the Empire was the crucial issue in these negotiations and deciding on what this should be was the way forward but 'association' alone seemed meaningless.

On 27 July 1921 de Valera " ....was tying his bootlaces, sitting on the side of his bed in Glenvar, when the word 'external' flashed into his mind. It would clarify all that he had been trying to say...The whole idea was that Ireland would be *associated* with the Commonwealth but not a *member* of the Commonwealth."

Lloyd George did not accept this but nevertheless he later issued the following invitation: "We, therefore, send you herewith a fresh invitation to a conference in London on October 11th where we can meet your delegates as spokesmen of the people whom you represent with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish National aspirations." (29 September 1921).

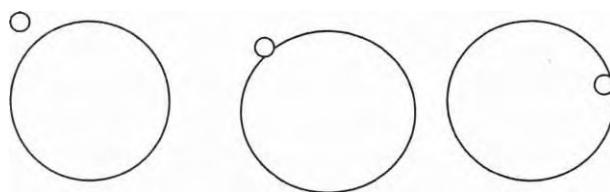
This is a great example of what Lloyd George was capable of. While there are no Conditions; note also that there is no mention of

Dail Eireann, or the Republic that existed. The 'people you represent' could mean what? It need not mean the same things as representing an Irish Government - simply those that voted for Sinn Fein or maybe they were just representing themselves. It was left ambiguous.

On the other hand there were no preconditions after a lot of initial demands for preconditions by Lloyd George such as giving up arms and accepting Dominion status as a basis.

External Association envisaged independence that need not necessarily mean a Republic. The Republic was a form of Independence but not the only one. de Valera had earlier put forward the idea of a Cuban type relationship with Britain similar to what that country had with the US. It was spelt out later as Document Number 2. The crucial thing being that the people decided of their own free will. There was to be no allegiance to Britain or the King but he had no objection to swear to be faithful to an agreement between equals and associated with the Empire/Commonwealth where the King could be simply recognized as head of that arrangement. He could swear to be faithful to such an arrangement but not accept allegiance to the King in Ireland.

At one point de Valera gave a diagrammatic version of the concept along the following lines with Ireland represented by the small circle and the British Empire by the large circle:



1" Dail

External Association

"Treaty"

This was going to be tricky to negotiate and in October 1921 at the Sinn Fein Ard-Fheis he said: "The problem is to devise a scheme that will not detract from Irish freedom... What may happen I am not able to judge but you should realize the difficulties there are in the way, and the fact that the best people might legitimately

differ on such a scheme. The worst thing that could happen would be that we should not be tolerant of honest differences of opinion."

## THE NEGOTIATIONS

Then there was the question of who was to go. Brugha refused and did not go. He suggested a neutral venue which was a very good idea but not taken up. So Collins could have refused point blank like him if he wished. But he was offended at not being part of the initial negotiations so he could hardly refuse this time. Griffith was the leader and he agreed with Collins going instead of de Valera. Griffith was Minister for Foreign Affairs and there was a very pertinent point to be made in sending the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic as head of the delegation. Griffith also had great status as the founder of Sinn Fein with a longstanding reputation. De Valera also argued that they would take more notice of Collins because of his reputation.

But Collins did have a real problem as an IRB man with engaging in this type of negotiation. De Valera also regarded Woodrow Wilson's attendance at Versailles as a tactical mistake in that he agreed to things he could not carry forward at home. America had won the war for Britain and France and Wilson was fooled into signing the Versailles Agreement which was rejected by the US Congress. If Wilson had reflected US opinion there would have been no Versailles Treaty - to the great benefit of the world.

de Valera argued that unity at home was most essential and he would help maintain it there and he never ruled out going if necessary. That would be the last throw of the dice. In any case there was to be no signing without a reference back.

The cabinet position was based on his concept of External Association and in fact this is what all the subsequent negotiations were about. There was an ambiguity about it but this provided for flexibility and the substance depended on the determination of each side to put the final meaning in it.

It is also important to note that there were very clear instructions given to the negotiators who were called plenipotentiaries:

*"Dublin, 7 October 1921*

*(1) The Plenipotentiaries have full powers as defined in their credentials.*

*(2) It is understood however that before decisions are finally reached on the main questions that a despatch notifying the intention of making these decisions will be sent to the Members of the Cabinet in Dublin and that a reply will be awaited by the Plenipotentiaries before the final decision is made.*

*(3) It is also understood that the complete text of the draft treaty about to be signed will be similarly submitted to Dublin and reply awaited.*

*(4) In case of a break the text of final proposals from our side will be similarly submitted.*

*(5) It is understood that the Cabinet in Dublin will be kept regularly informed of the progress of the negotiations.*

(Instructions to plenipotentiaries  
from the Cabinet)

But when they arrived their credentials were ignored. In other words, they were not treated as representatives of a government. They were treated as representing themselves and their job was to get their friends in Dublin to accept an agreement. This was overlooked by the delegates but it was a crucial issue when it again came to the source of authority later on.

No record of the negotiations were taken as agreed with Griffith and Lloyd George. Lloyd George treated the delegates as two groups - Griffith and Collins acted as one group and the rest as another and they even stayed in different hotels.

After the initial meeting they never met again as a group until the final session. It was blatant divide and rule. Lloyd George divided matters further by dealing with Collins and Griffith separately whenever he felt it served his purpose.

All the negotiations centred on the actual meaning of what kind of association there would be with the British Empire. External Association

provided the key but it was a struggle of wills as to which side would put real substance into it. Lloyd George used every trick and threat in the book to wear down the negotiators.

I will try to illustrate the issues that give a small flavour of the negotiations by looking at three versions of the Oaths that were disputed.

### **CABINET MEETING OF 3RD DECEMBER 1921**

The first is the 'final' one proposed by Lloyd George and brought to the Cabinet in Dublin on 3 December 1921. It read:

*solemnly swear to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State; to the Community of Nations known as the British Empire; and to the King as Head of the State and of the Empire. "* This was rejected by the cabinet.

At the meeting Griffith disagreed initially on breaking with the Crown arguing that they should sign what was on offer and then leave it to the President and the Dail to reject it. But this was rejected as divisive and inevitably causing further division among their supporters. An openly divided cabinet would inevitably cause divisions further down. Griffith agreed and withdrew his proposal and he promised not to sign anything proposing allegiance to the King and to refer back and if they had to break they would do it over Ulster. Collins said little at the meeting but went along with the decisions taken.

de Valera then proposed and it was agreed that the following oath was what would be acceptable, *'I do.... solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of the Irish free state, to the Treaty of association and to recognize the King of Great Britain as Head of the Associated States. "*

There was over seven hours discussion where all the issues were discussed at length - no oath of allegiance to the King, the possibility of a renewed war, the need to refer back any new developments to the cabinet were all discussed, any break should be made over Ulster, whether de Valera should go or not, and it was decided he would not at this stage. After a three year war the cabinet did know how to act as a cabinet. The minutes record that:

- (a) *Mr. Griffith would not take the responsibility of breaking on the Crown. When as many concessions as possible conceded, and when accepted by Craig, he would go before the Dail. The Dail was the body to decide for or against war.*
- (b) *The President took his stand upon last Irish proposals which meant external connection with the Crown. He suggested the following amendment to the Oath of Allegiance: - I....do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the constitution of the Irish Free state, to the Treaty of Association and to recognise the King of Great Britain as Head of the Associated States.'*
- (c) *Delegates to carry out their original instructions with same powers.*
- (d) *Delegation to return and say the Cabinet won't accept Oath of Allegiance if not amended and to face the consequences, assuming that England will declare war.*
- (e) *Decided unanimously that present Oath of Allegiance could not be subscribed to.*
- (f) *Mr. Griffith to inform Mr. Lloyd George that the document could not be signed, to state that it is now a matter for the Dail, and to try and put the blame on Ulster.*
- (g) *On a majority vote it was decided that the Delegation be empowered to meet Sir James Craig if they should think necessary. The following voted for and against:-*

*FOR: President, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Economics and Local Government.*

*AGAINST: Defence and Home Affairs.*

- (h) *It was decided that the President would not join the Delegation in London at this stage of the Negotiations.*

So this meant the Cabinet did not see the end of the negotiations as imminent and de Valera would go if necessary. But it did not seem necessary as all points were agreed. The strategy was to keep pushing Lloyd George and force him to make a break if there was to be one.

De Valera's plan seemed to be that he could thereby best maintain Cabinet unity and be able to get to a position where he could dare Lloyd George to declare full scale formal war (hitherto it was not formally a war, just police action) against a united Irish Government on what would seem to be a very small point of difference to the general public - a quibble - about the role of the King. To complicate the possible propaganda against it the cabinet agreed to make a contribution to the King's civil list to show they had nothing personally against the king.

But the oath they agreed preserved the essence of political independence. Whatever the outcome, maintaining cabinet unity meant a 'civil war' would be avoided. All eventualities seemed to be covered and de Valera and Mulcahy began a tour to IRA units to ensure they were ready for a resumption of war, if necessary.

Lloyd George's position had weaknesses that could be exploited and were recognized by de Valera. The US was watching and in conflict with Britain about the future of the Royal navy and US power in the world - specifically who controlled the seas. Many predicted a war between them. Public opinion in the UK was going against the war in Ireland and declaring war over the wording of an oath would hardly be a convincing case for war. There were also problems elsewhere arising from the aftermath of the war. Lloyd George fell a few months later when he was downfaced by Atatürk after an attempt to impose a similar 'Treaty' on him, the Treaty of Sevres. Lloyd George found himself with no support for war at home or abroad.

The declaration of a full formal war against Ireland in December 1922, not done hitherto, over the wording of an oath to the King was very risky and would be a momentous decision. Also, Lloyd George was not a Churchill when it came to war, i.e. he was not reckless and he was not an English aristocrat. In his heart he could appreciate the Irish case. He was a total opportunist, as any successful politician has to be, and whatever would succeed from day to day was his guiding star.

## FINAL NEGOTIATIONS

The Under Secretary at Dublin castle, Andy Cope, travelled back and forth at the same time as the delegation and no doubt was able to report on cabinet debates and divisions. The delegates travelled in separate groups. And no doubt Lloyd George used this to 'work' on the delegates. The British Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> December discussed the details of the Irish cabinet of 3<sup>rd</sup> December!

The delegation, without Collins, presented the Cabinet position and oath to Lloyd George on 5th December and it was all rejected outright by them.

It is a very odd fact that Collins did not attend this meeting and this has never been satisfactorily explained. It was an irresponsible thing to do as his absence made clear the divisions to the British and that there was a real split in the Irish Delegation and with Dublin. Lloyd George then took full advantage and dealt separately with Collins and convinced him that the Boundary Commission would never work and partition would fail. This had a big impact on him.

Griffith led the next discussion but was outmaneuvered and embarrassed by Lloyd George over Ulster and he suddenly agreed to sign on his own. Lloyd George now went on the offensive, insisted everyone should sign and gave those three hours to agree and no consultation with Dublin or there would be "immediate and terrible war."

Collins then unexpectedly agreed to sign on the way back to the hotel during the break. This caused consternation; the head of the IRB agreeing to Dominion Status and an Oath of Allegiance to the King! Ryle Dwyer simply says "this only proved "testified to the skilful way in which Collins had concealed his real views in recent weeks." (*Michael Collins and the Treaty*, 1990) This behaviour is treated as a tribute to him!

Then both Collins and Griffith browbeat the others to do so by threatening them with being responsible for a return to war if they did not. There was no consultation with Dublin as Lloyd George had insisted on now reminding

them they were plenipotentiaries. They did not even make a phone call. This was extraordinary in view of the last cabinet meeting. All cabinets have differences but an open division is breaking the first rule of cabinet government and is a recipe for disaster whenever it happens.

Lloyd George had used the classic tactics of divide and rule, carrot and stick, intimidation and flattery and it worked.

The signing of a changed oath and accepting Dominion status explains the shock in Dublin when it became known that this new oath was agreed without any final consultation. This lack of consultation was unbelievable to Dublin as they had plenty time to do it. This *fait accompli* combined with massive and immediate propaganda that a 'Treaty of peace' had been signed ensured a maximisation of all differences in the Cabinet.

De Valera resisted calls to have the delegates arrested on their return. The possibility of a united, final, cabinet position being put to Lloyd George led by de Valera was thereby made impossible and we will never know what the result of that would have been. That's the crucial fact. By signing as they did the delegates and the Dublin government was put on the back foot and Britain took full advantage - the initiative was with them from then on.

Collins, we must always remember, was first and foremost an IRB man rather than a Dail Eireann man and his allegiance was primarily to the IRB. And he and they firmly believed that they could use Dominion Status to move forward. With good reason - they were firm believers in intrigue, conspiracy and assassination in determining events, organisations and people by manoeuvre and what is now called 'entryism' and they had been extremely successful at it.

## DAIL DEBATE

In the Dail debate on the Treaty all accepted that a renewal of the war was possible and this was now very potent when the leadership was obviously divided. The prospect of a renewal of war with a divided cabinet frightened many. Liam Mellows put it

well when he said that what the pro 'Treatyites' were relying on was the fear of the people not the will of the people.

The real problem with taking any steps began immediately after the Dail debate. Because the first thing that became clear was that the Dail could not ratify the 'Treaty' as it was not a party to it. Its members could vote to "approve it" as Griffith proposed but they could not *ratify* it. Anybody in civil society could have discussed it and approved or disapproved of it. The GAA could have done so, the Trade Unions could approve it, the churches could have done so and it would not have had any more significance than Dail members discussing it.

In many ways the debate was beside the point because those who won the debate did not and could not go on to implement the 'Treaty.' This is actually of more significance than the actual debate. People today do not seem to appreciate that. They think naturally enough that those who win a vote in a Parliament act on that vote and the government concerned implements the result of the vote. But this did not happen.

Accepting the 'Treaty' meant automatically abolishing the Dail as a government.

The Treatyites then had to meet at British insistence as the Government of Southern Ireland and set themselves up a Provisional Government under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act and thereby accept English law on the matter. Remember this Act? This was humiliating. It met without the anti-Treatyites, could not legally have the elected TDs from Northern Ireland present but it did have the 4 unelected members from TCD in attendance. It only met this once on 14 January 1922 and the only business it ever did was to ratify the 'Treaty.' So the 'Treaty' was ratified under a British Act of parliament and not by the Dail. Collins then went to Dublin Castle and was duly 'installed' by the Lord Lieutenant! And Articles 17 and 18 of the 'Articles of Agreement' had made all this crystal clear.

So you had the situation that a government based on an election that had not got a single vote in Ireland to support it originally had now to be accepted as the new Government

to implement the Treaty! So the situation was that one government, the Dail, where every single seat was won in opposition to the Government of Ireland Act 1920 was now faced with accepting that voteless Government as the law of the land.

A government that everyone voted for was now replaced by a government that everyone had voted against! This was the fatal moral/legal flaw in the Treatyite case. It was demeaning to have to act in this way and it showed clearly the determination of the British to reverse what had been achieved.

The Treatyites also kept the Dail going for appearances sake even though it was not the source of their authority, it was a charade, and therefore you had the perfect split - two Irish Governments. It was beyond the wildest hopes of the British. This was a step all right, but a step backwards!

This could not go on. Then a new mercenary army was created to serve the new Government and the volunteer army of the IRA was left politically leaderless as it had given allegiance to the existing Dail as elected in 1918 and 1921 and was now politically leaderless. Naturally, confusion reigned among them.

There could not have been a 'war' without the creation of a new army. The IRA did not and could not have had the normal relationship with its government as it existed before the government and had made that government effective.

The 1918 election result would have been a meaningless gesture without it.

## END OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL WAY

De Valera tried to solve the issue constitutionally and that looked possible with a new Irish Constitution as promised in the 'Treaty' and which was one of the main arguments that won the Dail debate on it.

De Valera and his supporters fully accepted the concept and worked with the Treatyites so closely on drawing up a new Constitution that they were also able to form an Electoral Pact for the next election to form the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dail on the basis of this Constitution. The

Constitution was agreed and accepted by all and it dispensed with the Oath and the role of the Privy Council, all authority would come from the Dail and in any conflict with the Treaty, the Constitution would prevail. A leading supporter of the 'Treaty', Alfie O'Rahilly, later President of UCC, said quite rightly that "...it has taken away every excuse the anti-Treaty Party may have for non-participation and non-co-operation in building up Ireland."

All looked fine until the British read it and they rejected all the above aspects that conflicted with the Treaty and insisted that it be changed accordingly. Churchill said that not only was it Republican but it was "of a Bolshevik character."

Griffith and Collins were summoned to London and ordered to change it and it was pointed out that the Free State was an integral part of the British Empire. Both agreed to the changes but Collins was so humiliated that he could not bear to sign it and there is no record of him actually doing so. But Griffith did and it was thereby formally accepted by the Free State. By the way, that Constitution also allowed for a full franchise - something that did not yet exist in the UK. This was the end of another stepping stone.

At this point Collins was treated with contempt and was described as a 'wild animal' by Lloyd George and 'erratic' and 'shallow.' They had him on the run.

There remained the Election Pact between the two sides whereby both agreed to vote for a new Dail and a Coalition government in the same ratio as before on the 'Treaty' and anti-Treaty issue and thereby seek to make the 'Treaty' as much a non-issue as possible.

The idea was to have a Sinn Fein Coalition government with a new Constitution agreed by all but the British saw this immediately as a threat to the 'Treaty' and a concession to the Republicans and would not have it. After all it was an election held under their authority. Again Collins was summoned and ordered to reject the Pact and eat his words which he did on the day after his return, just before the election, at a meeting in Cork.

## WAR BEGINS

Breaking the Pact and rejection of the agreed Constitution ruined the credibility and moral authority of the new Dail. Before it ever met the existing Provisional Government set up under British authority and supervised by Britain launched and won the 'civil war.' If the new Dail had even met it is hard to imagine that war actually happening. But war came first at Britain's insistence and when that was won militarily the Dail could then meet and behave in strict accordance with the 'Treaty.' No Dail, of any sort, ever decided to have a 'civil war.'

The British were clearly directing all crucial matters and the most crucial thing was that all attempt at Republican participation in government was blocked, never mind a Republic, and stopped at all costs and that meant war while the IRA existed in any shape or form.

Brian P. Murphy has drawn attention to the important, independent, legal judgment that was given in an American court in 1927 which decided that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dail was not entitled to the funds raised in America for the First Dail as it was not the legal successor to the First and Second Dail.

Churchill always insisted that the Free State, like any government, could not be taken seriously unless it was prepared to fight and kill its opponents, until it was blooded, and that could only be against Republicans - they had to be broken. This was what he wanted and this is what he achieved when he made Collins attack the Four Courts or else he would.

The Four Courts was a very easily managed problem in itself. Collins had been dealing with the people in the Four Courts for weeks and was exchanging weapons with them for a war in the North. He was glad to have them in one place. It was Britain that suddenly declared they were a threat to the Treaty Government. And forced Collins to attack them and start the 'civil war.'

As the issue could no longer be solved constitutionally the issue was eventually resolved by terror. Cosgrave spelt it out clearly:

*"...the people who have challenged the very existence of society have put themselves outside the Constitution. . . . there is only one way to meet*



*it, and that is to crush it and show them that terror will be struck into them.*" (Dail, 8 Dec. 1922).

And that was how the Free State was actually established.

## THE LEGACY

This became the Free State template for future behavior for running government. They could not step beyond relying on the oppressive aspects of state power and became dependent on that aspect of state power. This became the mindset of the Free State party and its successors. They did not win the war on their own political ability and therefore did not acquire the political skills to cope with their success and without that they lost the moral argument. They were seen as wanting to prolong the conflict and to live off it and de Valera came to be seen as the one who wanted to end the conflict.

He arranged the 'dump arms' order on the anniversary date of the 1916 surrender to make the point that military defeat need not be the end of the matter.

The Treatyites came to regard the 'Treaty' not as a stepping stone but as the final destination. The stepping stone became a 'millstone' for political advancement.

This soon gave rise to a mutiny in their Army in 1924 which was put down by Mulcahy and the Army HQ Staff but they were then all dismissed for doing so! Sam Maguire was the most famous victim.

The Treatyites became more and more involved in Imperial Government appearing in Court dress at Buckingham Place. There was complete capitulation on the Boundary Commission and the land Annuities (which Northern Ireland no longer paid to Britain). These with other items meant 20% of their revenue was sent to London.

The Free State got more and more attached to the Treaty restrictions, Dominion status, the Oath of allegiance, the occupation of the ports. At one stage they tried extending the oath of allegiance to all who stood for election not just those who were elected. They developed a Stockholm syndrome towards Britain.

They implemented drastic economic policies and relied on exports which proved disastrous when the Depression hit export markets. There was more and more capitulation to Britain and political opposition tended to be treated as subversion at home.

De Valera devised a Republican political movement to counter this and implemented the stepping stone case. He developed a comprehensive alternative to the whole Free State set up and mindset and replaced it by an alternative polity. At one point the Free State resorted to fascist methods to oppose him betraying their authoritarian mindset.

De Valera saved the country from this type of government and politics and put open democratic politics centre stage

Jack Lane

# KEYNOTES TO *KEYNOTES*

Our publication of George Egerton's short story "The Marriage of Mary Ascension" has received some critical acclaim. I think it's worth noting that this particular story was no fluke nor was it just another story on Egerton's part. She explained that it was while living in Millstreet she was inspired to begin writing down stories in the first place. She was obviously a natural story teller before she 'put pen to paper' and this was inherited from father who was an inveterate storyteller, a seanchai. She absorbed his Irish stories and tales and they remained a subliminal influence on her. Despite his wayward, itinerant life across continents - and hers as a result- she remained very close to him and had a spiritual bond with him all her life. This background made her a child of the world and a free spirit.

She wrote the following account of how she came to write her stories and it was written by her as a background note to a bibliography of her work published by John Gawsword in 1932. It is a very honest and illuminating account of her time in Millstreet and her approach to life and writing.

We were living in a long whitewashed, thatched cottage on a slope above the station 19 miles from Killarney. A neglected garden, unexpected flowers, a ban, and a stile of one's own to the botharin. Below in the valley a river with trout to whip, and pike to be speared with a carving fork whipped to a pea-stake. Holy Wells and a mile away Millstreet. Beyond that, stony slopes leading up to Ballyvourney with its miracle stone and scald headed crows and mountain fox.

Down in the field to the left a Fairy Fort - I used to sit on the stile in the dusk and listen to the music coming from it. Marking time in such way was pleasant but something had to be done to make a future. He decided on going back to South Africa. (Her husband, J.L.).

I never remember the time I had not a story to tell, but I never remember wanting to write them down. I would have liked to go in a caravan from hamlet to village stopping to tell a story with a can for pennies. One follows the destined way. One comes one day to three roads, a mad dog bars the first, and a savage bull the second, the third is free. One can elect to be tossed by the bull, or bitten by the dog, or walk in safety - in so far one has free will.

"T. P." had a "Friends in Council" feature in the *Weekly Sun*, for the discovery of hidden talent in New Writers - as I sat with the magic music soaring up, all at once I saw my way clear. I would write some stories and send them in. I realized that in literature, everything had been better done by man than woman could hope to emulate. There was only one small spot left for her to tell: the *terra incognita* of herself, as she knew herself to be, not as man liked to imagine her - in a word to give herself away, as man had given himself in his writings. In that I think I succeeded. A German critic said of *Keynotes* and *Discords*: "There is no donning of the breeches in Egerton's books, one can hear the zip of the staylances."

Unless one is androgynous, one is bound to look at life through the eyes of one's sex, to toe the limitations imposed on one by its physiological functions. I came too soon. If I did not know the technical jargon current today of Freud and the psycho-analysts, I did know something of complexes and inhibitions, repressions and the sub-conscious impulses that determine actions and reactions. I used them in my stories. I recognized that in the main, woman was the ever-untamed, unchanging; adapting herself as far as it suited her ends to male expectations; even if repression was altering her

subtly. I would see situations or conflicts as I saw them with a total disregard of man's opinions. I would unlock a closed door with a key of my own fashioning. I did. My imitators forged theirs to a different end.

Inside ten days I wrote six stories and sent them to *T. P. 's Weekly*. T. P. Gill. M. P., who wrote the foreign article for the *Speaker*, was a reader. His criticism in the column was more than flattering. In addition he wrote to me personally and suggested Heinemann or Lane - *Keynotes* came back from the former with a gratuitously offensive letter. My comment was: "The stories may be many things, but I'm damned if they are mediocre." I posted them to Elkin Mathews and John Lane and we prepared to auction and trek. We did in June - Lane's enthusiastic acceptance was returned: "Gone away, address unknown."

*Keynotes* appeared in September 1893. It went wholly or in part into seven languages in two years, roused discussion in pulpit and press. It inspired a full page in *Punch* and a skit, "She-notes by Borgia Smudington," which ran for some weeks in March 1894.

I should have kept my anonymity; it might have saved my premature burial. I was a bad incense-swinger and I disliked press publicity.

I never, alas, experienced the marvelous thrill, the walking on winged feet or shouting to the dawn, which I read so many men have felt on seeing their first book in print. I could not take myself seriously. I was intransigent, a bad seller of myself but I had my standard and I could not be bought. I was a short story, at most a long short story writer.

For years they came in droves and said themselves, leaving no scope for padded or altered endings; the long book was not my pigeon. I made the mistake, too, of letting the publisher know that to me he was a tradesman, the middleman between the author and his public. I refused to believe that he knew better than I did what I ought to write, and how to write it. and in how many words to work out my problem. I was made to realize my mistake. Agents were interested. Publishers told me bluntly: "There is no market for short stories."

It is easier now than it was then, but there is still, I fancy, a snag for women. Art is a jealous and arbitrary mistress and brooks no rival.

I was just 35 years of age when my son was born. I still believe that Marriage, Motherhood and Writing are each whole time jobs.

Until woman makes as deliberate a choice as a nun, who never bungles her job because she accepts the sacrifice her vocation demands, she will never meet man, at his best, on equal terms as a writer - and perhaps not then.

As for myself, the Trappist monk digs a spadeful of clay a day towards his own grave. One does not need to do that in London, it digs itself There are no "Fairy Forts" to whisper music from the otherwhere to Souls in Exile.

("Ten Contemporaries - notes towards their definitive bibliography" by John Gawsworth.1932)



# MORE VISITORS

William Reed, (1770-1813) was a minor romantic poet from Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, who took up traveling after a tragic love affair when his fiancée's father would not allow their marriage and she died of a broken heart. He later inherited some wealth and used it to finance his travels.

One was a visit to Ireland in September 1810. He sailed to Cork and from there went to Killarney and further on by coach. He recorded his impressions:

"The distance from Cork to Killarney is about forty-five Irish miles. I hate the Irish mile most confoundingly: it may have been the kind of mile measured out and made use of when this country was inhabited by a race of giants - by such great and brave as Gog and Magog, and the Patrick O'Briens, as it contains 2,240 yards. The road between Macroom and Millstreet becomes very interesting: it is wild and rugged in the extreme, and seems to have been broken and tossed about in heaps for sport, by the Gullivers of Romance; but on approaching Killarney, the country assumes a softer character. We now crossed a bog, which in many places quaked under the weight of our carriage-wheels; it was dreary and extensive, and bounded on the left with some beautiful mountains, called the Paps.

An Irish town invariably commences with a row of cabins; all of which smoke like so many bacon-houses, and would disgrace a village of Hottentots. I made particular enquiries, if it were possible for human beings to live in such a situation, without being smothered to death; and was answered in the affirmative. As the Irish in general live to a good old age, it may not be unfair to attribute it to the circumstance of their being effectively smoke-dried in their hovels. The Egyptians excelled all other nations in preserving the bodies of their friends after death; but the Irish, a more clever set of people, have thus hit upon a method of embalming the living.

It is not long that a mail-coach has travelled this way and as its appearance in any little village of cabins had not yet ceased to be a novelty, the sound of the horn never fails to exhibit the most picturesque groups of inhabitants.

At a distance of some miles we had a view of the fine Alpine country that lay before us; and I was so delighted with the wilderness and grandeur of its outline, as to wish that I could be carried into the very centre of the scene, blindfolded, for the purpose of enjoying, in all its acuteness and luxury, the impression which it is so well formed to excite....

Most writers have had occasion to notice the superior shrewdness of the common people of this country; but they have not as I recollect, told us from what source this intellectual acuteness is derived - whether from the extraordinary softness of the atmosphere, the juice of the 'elegant potatoe,' or from any mode of hereditary tuition. It is however a well-known fact, I have myself heard persons of the lowest call maintain a conversation with each other which, for smartness of repartee, and genuine humour, would not have disgraced the convivial parties of a Pope or a Swift....

I can also bear testimony to the cheerful promptitude of the common people in the service of a stranger. When rambling through the solitude of some of the most mountainous districts, I frequently experienced proof of that wild eccentric kind of hospitality which seems to enter in to the very essence of the Irish peasant's character. In travelling through Wales, if you meet a native of that country and ask him the way to any place, it is ten to one but you will receive some such mortifying answer as "Indeed, Sir! I don't know, indeed!" Put the same question to a Scotchman and he will tell you to "keep straight to the south, and turn round by the dyke," and so describe to you the whole of your route, with all the accuracy of a map-maker. But when you request the same favour of a poor

Irishman, with no expectation of a reward, he will go along with you, and would almost part with his skin into the bargain, without ever troubling himself with the idea that he might want it the next day.

The Irish cabin is a wretched habitation. It is built with sod, and thatched with turf, the stalk of the potato, straw, or heath gathered from the mountain. It has generally neither chimney nor window, the door being made to answer both these purposes; and in this humble shed, the man, his wife and children, the hog, cow, goat, poultry, and other bog trotters, all eat, drink, and pig together with the greatest good humour imaginable. It is a model of the most perfect republic the world ever saw. Among its motley inmates no quarrel ever arises about precedence or quality: all are perfectly equal and at ease; and one would be almost tempted to believe that some of those patriotic enthusiasts, who figured away so brilliantly during the French revolution, had studied politics and philosophy in the seminary of an Irish cabin....

A desire to education begins to manifest itself, and very generally, amongst the lower orders of the people. In my wandering through the country, I have found several very humble seminaries, called hedge-schools. Not having any other convenience, the scholars are taught reading, writing, &c. in the open air, under the shade of some embowering hedge or branching tree; and very often the green bank or smooth shelves of the rock answer the purpose of the bench and the desk. There are also itinerant teachers, who become inmates of a cabin for several weeks together, and who receive only a temporary lodging and a few potatoes for instructing the juvenile inhabitants. In traveling through one of the lonely districts of the island, I have met with one of these tutors. He was young, sprightly and intelligent, and offered himself as a guide through the mountains, although he was entirely unacquainted with the comfortable equipment of hat, stocking, or shoe. This humble attempt to communicate knowledge to the human mind is, it is to be hoped, the harbinger of better and happier days, and cannot fail of meeting encouragement from the more enlightened and wealthy part of the community."

("Remains of William Reed, Late of Thornbunty: Including Rambles in Ireland." 1815)

Isabella Lucy Bird (1831-1904) was one of the most prolific and influential female travel writers of the Victorian era. She was also an explorer, missionary and journalist. Although well-educated, much of her life was marked by numerous health complications and travel was considered a help in overcoming these. She made a tour of Ireland in 1887-8 and it being then one of the high points of the Land War she was obliged to visit Millstreet, the well known 'hot-spot' of that war, which she did in early January 1888. But, as with so many other visitors at the time all she saw here was the side effects of the conflict and it did not occur to her to probe the causes of it and establish the real reasons for the passions that dominated the life of the area at the time. Of course, that period in Millstreet's history still remains unwritten. She wrote:

"From Cork I went to Millstreet, a village of 1300 people and thirty-three liquor-shops, long famous as a centre of outrages, and as being the residence of Canon Griffin, a priest of remarkable intellect and force of character, whose persistent and unqualified antagonism to certain methods pursued by the National League, now, from a Church point of view, abundantly justified by the action of the Holy See, led to what, in his case may be termed "partial boycotting." Millstreet also possesses another noteworthy character, "Jerry Hegarty," famous as a "landgrabber," whose multiplied offences against the "unwritten law" have not only been visited with "complete boycotting," but with the repeated attempt at that, "by which alone" (according to Mr. Gladstone) "boycotting in the long run can be made thoroughly effective, *the murder which is*

*not to be denounced."* The last attempt was made only a few months ago, when he was shot at and wounded just outside the railway station.

Millstreet is not an inviting-looking place, though very prettily situated. The morning after my arrival was sunny and warm, and smiled on the pig fair which was held promiscuously all along the straggling street. A brisk business was done, and the shops and groggeries were crowded. I heard some remarks made on my visit to Canon Griffin the evening before, and I did not care to ask the way to Mr. Hegarty's, but coming upon a shop, silent and empty in the midst of the crowd and hubbub I recognised at once a boycotted business. Mr. H. was expecting me, and took me to his house. His story in brief, was this. He is a merchant and farmer, a teetotalter, and a prosperous man. He was also a popular man. His business as shopkeeper was worth £2000 a year. He has been boycotted since 1881 as a "landgrabber," and for "not going with the people and not joining the National League." He has several farms, 1400 acres of land in all. He has spent £10,000 on improvements, spends about £300 annually on lime and other manures, and has reclaimed much land. He employs sixty labourers, and pays about £30 per week in wages. When he was first boycotted, two men were sent to watch his shop and take down the names of those entering it. His business is now completely ruined, and he only keeps his shop open to "fight it out," and for loyal labourers. By great efforts he succeeded in bringing to justice the ringleaders among the intimidators, and they were sentenced to twelve months imprisonment. After this conviction his windows were smashed. His children were hooted at and misused at school. He had to send them away for education. Although shot twice, he has refused police protection. He has been left "severely alone," and may walk up the street of the village, in which he was once the popular "leading man," without recognition. He has been made a magistrate. As a large capitalist and a man of great pluck he has not succumbed to the boycotting, although he is a heavy loser, and is socially *a leper*.

Mr. H. has gone into the Land Court regarding some of his lands, the rent of which is nearly double the Poor Law valuation. He spoke of the opinion created by the National League as "the terror." Three neighbouring tenants, he said, wish to purchase their holdings under Lord Ashbourne's Act, but could not, they told him, "because of the people in the town." "Few men in Ireland, he continued, "act regarding all things as they would feel free to act if no coercion existed."\*Mr. H. complained of great hardships under the Crimes Act of 1887. Mr. Gladstone's Act, he said, gave compensation to families of murdered bread-winners. The new Act does not, and he believed the present Government dared not make the proposal. People take advantage, he said, of the immunity from arrest which "Moonlighters" enjoy, to mask and disguise themselves, in order to demand money with impunity.

I was told that a few days before my visit, a man having taken a road contract which another man had regarded as his right, "Moonlighters" appeared and fired up his stairs, the bullet wounded his little girl. The mother said, "You've shot my child," showing the limb from which the blood was running freely. The masked man who fired the shot denied it. Forty people were in the vicinity, but no evidence as to the act or the identity of the man who perpetrated it was to be obtained,

From this notorious district I went to Bantry, and the peaceful region, so far as outrages are concerned, which lies around Bantry Bay. Two days of a tremendous storm of wind and rain, resulting in serious floods, gave that lovely region a sublimity which it lacks under serener skies. Quite as the district is, however, there is a good deal of boycotting within a few miles of Bantry in cases where "evicted farms" have been taken, and where the tenants live under police protection, and are indebted to the Cork Defence Union for many service, including the travelling forge which shoes their horses.

\* Mr. Hegarty doubtless referred to the coercion practiced by the National League; but there are *two* *coercions* in force, and if the second be included, so far as my observation goes, I cordially agree with him. Through the south and west of Ireland nearly every person who I spoke to looked carefully round over both shoulders before he replied."

("A Lady's Winter Holiday in Ireland", Murray's Magazine, June 1888)



It is, of course, a great pity that Ms. Bird, above, did not take the trouble to meet and interview the local National Land League officials in Millstreet to get their side of the story. One thing that is clear from her account, and many others, is that the League had overwhelming local support despite the forceful opposition of the Parish Priest and, as she rightly noted, the Vatican, at that time. That was surely a story worth investigating and explaining to her readers. The Irish Catholic 'peasantry', so called, at war with the Catholic Church! There's a story! Otherwise, many readers would have been perplexed and have wondered why her curiosity did not extend as far as to seek to explain that very obvious and very curious fact. Her liberal use of inverted commas clearly indicates her prejudices.

Jack Lane

## MAP OF LANDOWNERS

The following map may be of some interest. The property owners' map is self-explanatory. It is taken from "Landlords and Tenants in Ireland" by Finlay Dun, 1881.



The numbers under the names of the Counties indicate the number of Owners of Land in the County over one statute acre.  
The numbers after the landowners' names are the number of statute acres they hold in the county.



# GEORGE EGERTON'S COTTAGE IN MILLSTREET

In the previous item Egerton describes her home in Millstreet in some detail. On the basis of that information a number of people have helped locate where the cottage was situated even though it was knocked down some decades ago. It was located in the townland of Dooneen and is featured in the early ordnance survey maps: OSI map 6 inch greyscale 1837-1842 (<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V1,526535,592655,7,8>) and OSI 25 inch map greyscale 1888-1913 (<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V1,526535,592655,7,9>). An aerial view of the area at present is at: (<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer/#V1,526545,592671,7,4>).

The cottage is somewhat shorter in the second OSI map. In the earlier map there is also a very clear representation of an impressive Fairy Fort that would have been "down in the field to the left" and is therefore most likely the one where she was inspired by its 'music' to write, as described in the item above by her. The cottage is indicated in the extract from the 1842 OS map on the next page with an indication in a current map of where it was located.

Connie Buckley who owns the land across the road from where the cottage was (and the land with the Fort) remembers the cottage. Tim O'Shea, Tullig, has explained that the house was owned by a Sean Murphy (known locally as 'Seanie Jackie') who left for America in the 1950s and came back some time later and set up a small garage in Letterkenny.

The Fort, as it is now, has been included in the Archaeological Survey, Vol. III, for Mid-Cork at reference number 8263 and is described as follows - Dooneens should of course be in the singular:-

## 8263 DOONEENS

## Map 12b

OS 39:5:3 (207, 396) Hachured (1842) OD 357  
12640, 09261

*Ringfort* In pasture, on SW-facing slope just below crest of hill. Depicted on 1842 OS map as hachured circular enclosure (diam. c. 26m). According to Broker (1937, 48), 'knocked by Dan O'Sullivan 1855'. Arc, formed by scarp (Hl.1m) with slight internal lip, survives SW—>WNW; low rise marks line of leveled bank to N and E. Modern drain dug outside scarp. Possible souterrain (**9019**) in interior.

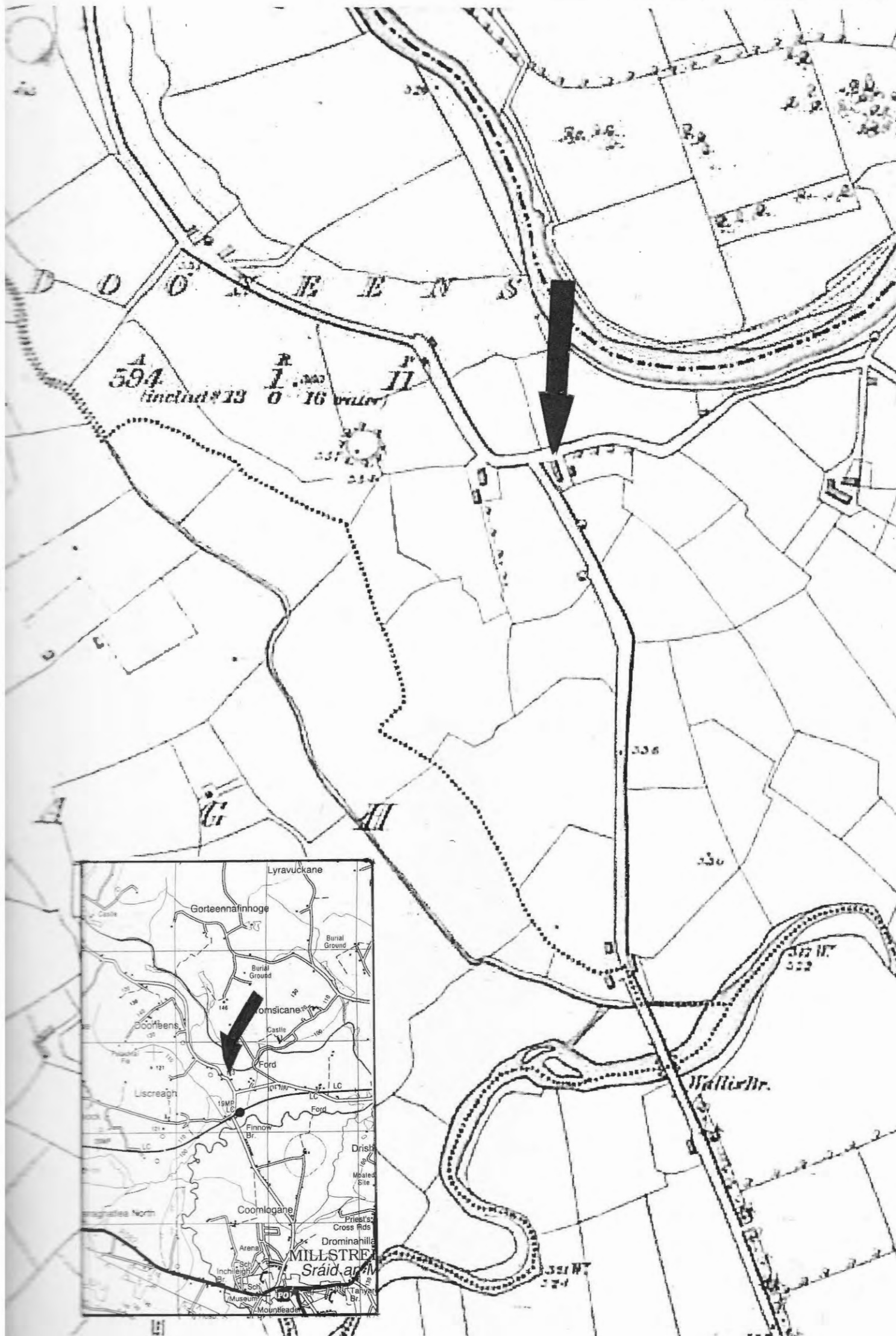
39:22/01

23-4-1986

(Archaeological Inventory of County Cork,  
Volume 3: Mid-Cork, 1997, page 206)

I am very grateful to Connie and Tim for their information and particularly to Michael Cashman, Tullig, who collated the information and provided the map references.

Jack Lane





**This is another collection of items on Millstreet and local areas which hopefully will contribute to providing sources for anybody interested in following up the history of the area.**

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**Mahon's Rock on the Brandy Road**