

Lasting Legacy: Louth Archives from the post-Truce period 1921 – 1923

An exhibition by Louth County Archives Service
and
County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaelacht, Sports and Media



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

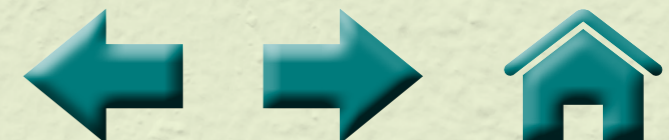


The exhibition features a selection of extant items drawn chiefly from the archive collections of Louth County Archives Service. Special thanks are due to Donal Hall, PhD, who researched and wrote the explanatory narrative accompanying each item. The Service is interested in acquiring donations of any archival items relating to the period (for example, letters, photographs, diaries, election memorabilia) from private individuals.

Please contact the County Archivist by email archive@louthcoco.ie or telephone 042-9324358.

Louth County Archives gratefully acknowledges the kind assistance of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in providing funding for this exhibition under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023 initiative.

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Cooley Cumann na mBan

Desire the pleasure of your company
at Greenore Assembly Rooms, on
Tuesday, 20th December, 1921,

to

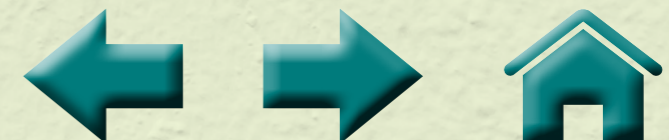
Welcome Home Our Prisoners.

9.P.M.

Cooley Cumann na mBan invitation, 20 December 1921 (Louth County Archives, PP00439/)

With the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921, the British government began to release prisoners. An amnesty was announced for about 5,000 men who were interned without charge. Among the first to be released were those who were interned at Ballykinlar, Co Down. On 9 December the prisoners arrived at Dundalk train station amid reports that the trains were ambushed as they made their way through loyalist areas in Ulster. According to the press reports about 30 prisoners from Co Louth were among the first batches to be released.

They were greeted in Dundalk by the Emmet Band playing 'national tunes' as they emerged from the train station. It was reported that the prisoners looked well and were in good spirits. They were driven to their homes in motor cars, cheered on by crowds who lined the streets. Prisoners from south Louth and Meath were greeted by enthusiastic crowds at Drogheda train station, and that night Tullyesker Hill and other heights were lit up by bonfires, while tar barrels blazed in many parts of the town.



PP00231/004/001

SECOND-HAND REVOLVERS IN STOCK ALL IN PERFECT ORDER.

LOT 9
Webley, (mark 5 and mark 6) British Service Revolver, '455 Calibre 6 inch barrel. Automatic Ejector.
100 in stock, Price.....each



LOT 10
Webley (mark 1, 2, 3, & 4.) British Service Revolvers '455 Calibre 4 inch barrel. Automatic Ejector.
800 in stock Price.....each



LOT 23
Very fine well finished Spanish made Revolver Automatic Ejector, made for the British Government during the Great War in 1914. '455 Calibre All Blued. 5 inch Barrel. As Illustrated.
All are practically new.
2,200 in stock, Price..... each

LOT 11
Webley, Bulldog Solid Frame British Service Revolver. '455 Calibre R.I.C. Pattern, 3 inch barrel.
250 in stock, Price..... each



LOT 14
Special pattern Hammerless Automatic Ejector Revolver, takes '38 S. & W. Cartridge. 3 1/2 inch barrel. All blued as Illustrated. All as New,
420 in stock. Price..... each

LOT 17 500,000 '455 Calibre British Service Revolver Cartridges, loaded with smokeless powder in good condition. Packed in tin lined cases of 1,000 & 2,000 Price..... per 1,000.

LOT 12 & 13 We have in stock about 100 each Colt and Smith and Wesson Service Revolvers. '455 Calibre, blued. 5 1/2 and 6 inch barrel. Price..... each

ALL ABOVE GOODS PACKED AND DELIVERED F. O. B. BELFAST.

The weaponry in the hands of the Volunteers was poor in both quantity and quality. After the split of 1914, the Redmondite National Volunteers retained the weapons already gathered, amounting to some 186 rifles. Approaching Easter 1916, the bulk of the Irish Volunteer arms consisted of shotguns and some revolvers.

When the Dundalk Volunteers mobilised in 1916, they marched to Ardee and seized forty-eight modern rifles and ammunition. Meanwhile forty rifles that were in the possession of the National Volunteers in Dundalk, were voluntarily surrendered to the RIC. Unbelievably they were returned by the RIC in January 1917.

Most of the Louth IRA arms during the War of Independence were obtained by small-scale raids and the dangerous practice of snatching arms from RIC men.

The most successful seizure of arms by the Louth IRA in the period was that of 20 modern Lee-Enfield rifles at Greenore port in 1920, a consignment described as a 'godsend' by the equally arms-starved Armagh IRA when the 4th Northern Division was set up in mid-1921. At the time of the Truce in July 1921, according to Frank Aiken, the 4th Northern Division had 1,200 men but only thirty-three rifles.



(21) Dundalk
Oct 7 20.

Dear Sir

Please attend a meeting of Justices to be held at 4 Seatown Place Dundalk on Sunday 10th at 2.30^{pm} to select five members of District Court for County Louth.

Yours fully
S. MacDonagh

S. MacDonagh

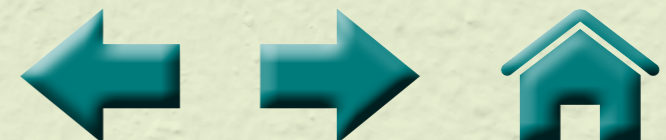
One of the earliest reports of republican courts in Louth related to a case of larceny that was heard in Dundalk on 6 July 1920. At about the same time, it was reported that 'Volunteer Courts' had been in operation during the races at Bellewstown County Meath, near Drogheda, and two separate cases, one for assault and the other of theft were heard in Clogherhead and Grangebellew in County Louth.

Shortly afterwards, 'the first official Dáil Éireann court in Drogheda' was held in the Drogheda Corporation assembly rooms on 11 August 1920, the case referred to the sale of milk illegally deprived of its fats. After that brief flurry of public activity, newspaper reports dried up until after the truce in July 1921.

In October 1921 the RIC noted that Dáil courts were in operation and on 10 November 1921 they raided a court sitting in Dundalk town hall and threatened to disperse forcibly the assembly which was adjourned 'indefinitely'.

Republican courts sat openly and regularly in Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk Co Louth from February 1922.

Dáil Courts Letter dated 7 October 1920 requesting attendance at meeting of Justices to be held at 4 Seatown Place, Dundalk on 10 October 'to select five members of district court for county'
(Louth County Archives, PP00439/)



Saorstát na hÉireann
District of North Louth
Williamsons Place
Dundalk
22.12.21

To each District Justice
A sitting of the above Court will be held in the
Boardroom Town Hall Dundalk on
Thursday next the 24^{inst} at 11 O'clock in
the forenoon.

P. J. Berrill
Registrar

Saorstát na hÉireann District of North Louth circular 'To Each District Justice' dated 22 December 1921 from PJ Berrill, Registrar, Williamson's Place, Dundalk, announcing a sitting of 'the above court' in the Board Room, Town Hall, Dundalk 'on Thursday next'
(Louth County Archives, PP00439/)

Patrick Joseph Berrill was active with the Irish Volunteers in Dundalk from 1914 and took part in the 1916 Rising. He subsequently took part in all major IRA operation in Co Louth and spent considerable periods imprisoned between 1916 and 1921 when his health suffered greatly as a result of going on hunger strike.

Obviously regarded by the authorities as a major threat, he was one of only three people arrested in Louth as a result of the 'German Plot' of 1918.

He served as registrar for the Dáil courts between the Truce in July 1921 and the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922.

He took the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War and served in Intelligence in the National Army, though not formally appointed as an officer. His service as an officer in the IRA during the War of Independence and Civil War was not recognized by the pension board. Patrick Berrills was awarded a pension at the rank of private, amounting to £18 18s. 6d. per annum.

In peace-time he was employed as a ships' inspector in Dundalk and died at the early age of fifty-five in 1946.

Many of the pension application records relating to Louth show that former Volunteers lived out their lives in difficult circumstances, and few Cumann na mBan pension applications were successful. The IRA pension, though meagre, was a welcome bonus during the economically depressed decades that followed independence.



MARCH, 1922.

At a Meeting held in Ardee, the 21st day of March, 1922, the following Committee was formed to raise funds for the maintenance of a Police Force in the Brigade Area for the coming 3 months (*i.e.*, until such time as the Civic Guard comes into force).

Sir EDWARD BELLINGHAM.	JOSEPH T. DOLAN.
Col. C. M. O'REILLY.	CHAS. McKEEVER.
T. L. McGEE.	JOHN W. McKEEVER.
BERNARD McARDLE.	J. T. McGEE
J. G. McKEEVER.	J. C. KIERAN.

Treasurers :

JOSEPH T. DOLAN, T. L. McGEE, JOSEPH G. McKEEVER.

A sum of £2,400 is required for the payment, maintenance and transport of a Force of 60 Police in the 9th Brigade Area, half of which has been apportioned to the Ardee District.

The Committee are of opinion that the amount you should subscribe for the above purpose is £

The Committee have already subscribed £200.

TEMPEST, DUNDALK.

In January 1922 a new police force established headquarters in the town hall in Dundalk, under the control of T.J. Clancy. Its bailiwick purportedly stretched from Markethill, County Armagh to Ardee. On 20 March a police force, paid for by voluntary contributions from businessmen was set up in Drogheda having the ambitious aim of covering all of south Louth from Drogheda to Dunleer with only twelve men.

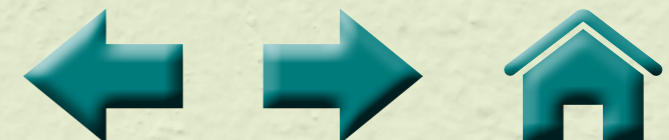
On the following day, an appeal for funds was issued by Ardee businessmen, seeking funding for 60 policemen for three months, pending arrival of the Civic Guard.

Following the split in the IRA in March 1922, the police force in Dundalk was disbanded, and a group of civilians, mostly businessmen, met on 4 May, and agreed to fund a new force known as the Civic Police. The government reacted negatively to this development and moved to place control of policing in the hands of the O/C of the 4th Northern Division, Frank Aiken.

Following the establishment of the anti-Treaty IRA executive, the garrison at Millmount broke with GHQ, and the Belfast boycott recommenced. Over the next five months until the outbreak of the Civil War, in Drogheda alone, sixty raids on the railway were carried out by the anti-Treaty IRA in pursuance of the Belfast boycott. The arrest of IRA volunteers engaged in enforcing the Belfast boycott in Drogheda and Dublin was subsequently one of the triggers for the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922.

Ardee Police subscription request note, March 1922

(Louth County Archives, PP00082/)



LOUTH-MEATH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION,

FRIDAY, JUNE 16th, 1922.

8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (New Time).

Your Number is.....

You Vote at.....

To Vote Properly mark your Ballot Paper by putting the **Figure 1** opposite the Name **O'SHANNON.**

	Duggan, Edmund,	Solicitor.
	Hughes, Peter,	Publican and Farmer.
	M'Kenna, Justin Charles	Solicitor.
	Murphy, James Edward	Draper.
	O'Kelly, John Joseph	Journalist.
1	O'Shannon, Cathal	Assistant Secretary Irish Transport and General Workers' Union; Editor "The Voice of Labour."

Give your First Vote to O'SHANNON.

You'll find his name at the bottom of the list.

Vote by placing the figure 1 opposite **O'SHANNON'S NAME.**

Don't put an X or cross or any writing on the Ballot Paper.

If you like you **can** vote for other Candidates **after** voting for O'Shannon.

But make sure you Vote **for him First.**

You Vote for others by putting the figures 2, 3, 4, or 5 opposite the other names according to your own choice.

Don't put **two** figures before one name.

But—put your 1 opposite O'Shannon's Name.

Printed at "Democrat" Offices, Dundalk, and Published by the Candidate.

The June 1922 election was the first general election to take place in a partitioned Ireland, and was widely seen as a barometer to gauge public acceptance or rejection of the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

In a final attempt to offset a split, Sinn Féin (SF) offered a united panel of candidates, expressly showing whether they supported the Treaty or not.

Six candidates vied for five seats in the Louth/Meath constituency:

Cathal O'Shannon for Labour

Éamonn Duggan, Peter Hughes (outgoing), Justin McKenna, and James Murphy (outgoing) for pro-Treaty SF

J.J. O'Kelly (outgoing) for anti-Treaty SF

O'Shannon topped the poll with 13,994 first preference votes, twice that of the other successful candidates – Duggan (Pro-Treaty SF, 6,990), O'Kelly (Anti-Treaty SF, 5,773), Hughes (Pro-Treaty SF 4,282) and Murphy (Pro-Treaty SF, 3,367).

The outcome was one seat for Labour, three for pro-Treaty SF and one for anti-Treaty SF.

In the constituency as a whole, out of 36,501 valid votes cast, 30,768 or 84.2 per cent of first preferences went to pro-Treaty candidates.





Photograph of anti-treaty garrison at Millmount, June 1922,

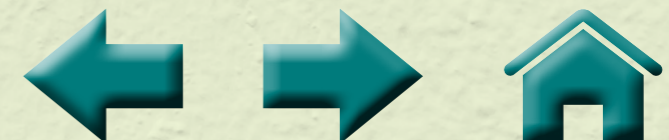
(reproduced by kind permission of the Old Drogheda Society)

Millmount barracks in Drogheda was evacuated in January 1922 and garrisoned by local units of the IRA. On 26 March 1922, anti-treaty elements of the IRA held a convention in the Mansion House in Dublin, and set up their own army executive. The Millmount garrison declared for the anti-Treaty executive.

On 29 May Captain James Flanagan from the Millmount garrison was killed at Gormanston train station when shots were exchanged during an attempt to hold up two Black and Tans. The Millmount garrison refused to co-operate with the National Army with regard to an inquest or to release Flanagan's body to the authorities. An internal investigation by the republicans was held in camera, and the findings were sent to the anti-Treaty IRA executive in the Four Courts. James Flanagan was buried

in Drogheda on 30 May, with full military honours proffered by the anti-Treaty IRA. As the cortège went through Drogheda, it was saluted by National Army troops.

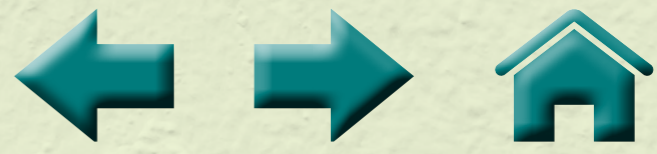
Between March and the outbreak of the Civil War at the end of June 1922, in Drogheda alone, sixty raids on the railway were carried out by the anti-Treaty IRA in pursuance of the Belfast boycott. The arrest of IRA volunteers engaged in enforcing the Belfast boycott in Drogheda and Dublin was subsequently one of the triggers for the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922.



<p>Malicious Injury Claims. to be defended.</p>	<p>A large number of Malicious Injury claims in connection with the recent destruction of property in the Borough by Crown Forces and with the Belfast Boycott have been served upon the Town Clerk, the total of which amount to £17,882:6:6.</p> <p>We recommend that the Law Agent be instructed to take the necessary steps to defend these claims.</p>
<p>Claim for damage to Police Clock & Police Station</p>	<p>We have also given directions for Malicious Injury claims to be lodged for damage to the Tholsel block and Rosehall Reservoir.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dated</p>
<p>1922 June, 6th.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">794</p> <p>Dated 29th May, 1922. P. O'Muireagain, Chairman"</p> <p>Upon the Motion of Councillor Davis, seconded by Councillor Webster the Report was unanimously adopted.</p>

Copy of entry in Drogheda Corporation minute book on 6 June 1922 concerning malicious injury claims lodged with the town clerk amounting to £17,882:6:6 (Louth County Archives, DC/MB/)

RIC Constable Benjamin Bently was killed in Drogheda on 30 April 1922, probably by men from the Millmount garrison. On the night of 2 May, twelve lorry-loads of RIC men awaiting demobilisation in Gormanston invaded Drogheda and inflicted considerable structural damage to the town centre. Claims for damages amounting to over £17,000 were later lodged with Drogheda Corporation. Following a meeting where the garrison admitted that they could not guarantee the safety of Drogheda from further raids, the Drogheda Corporation pleaded for help from the Provisional government who on the following day despatched troops from the newly formed National Army, under Paddy O'Daly and local man Frank Thornton. The Millmount garrison refused to surrender their post, and rather than trigger fighting, a stand-off between National Army troops and Republican troops in Drogheda continued for almost two months.





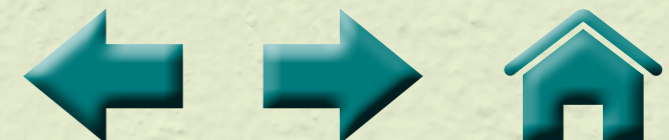
National Army troops at Millmount 4 July 1922

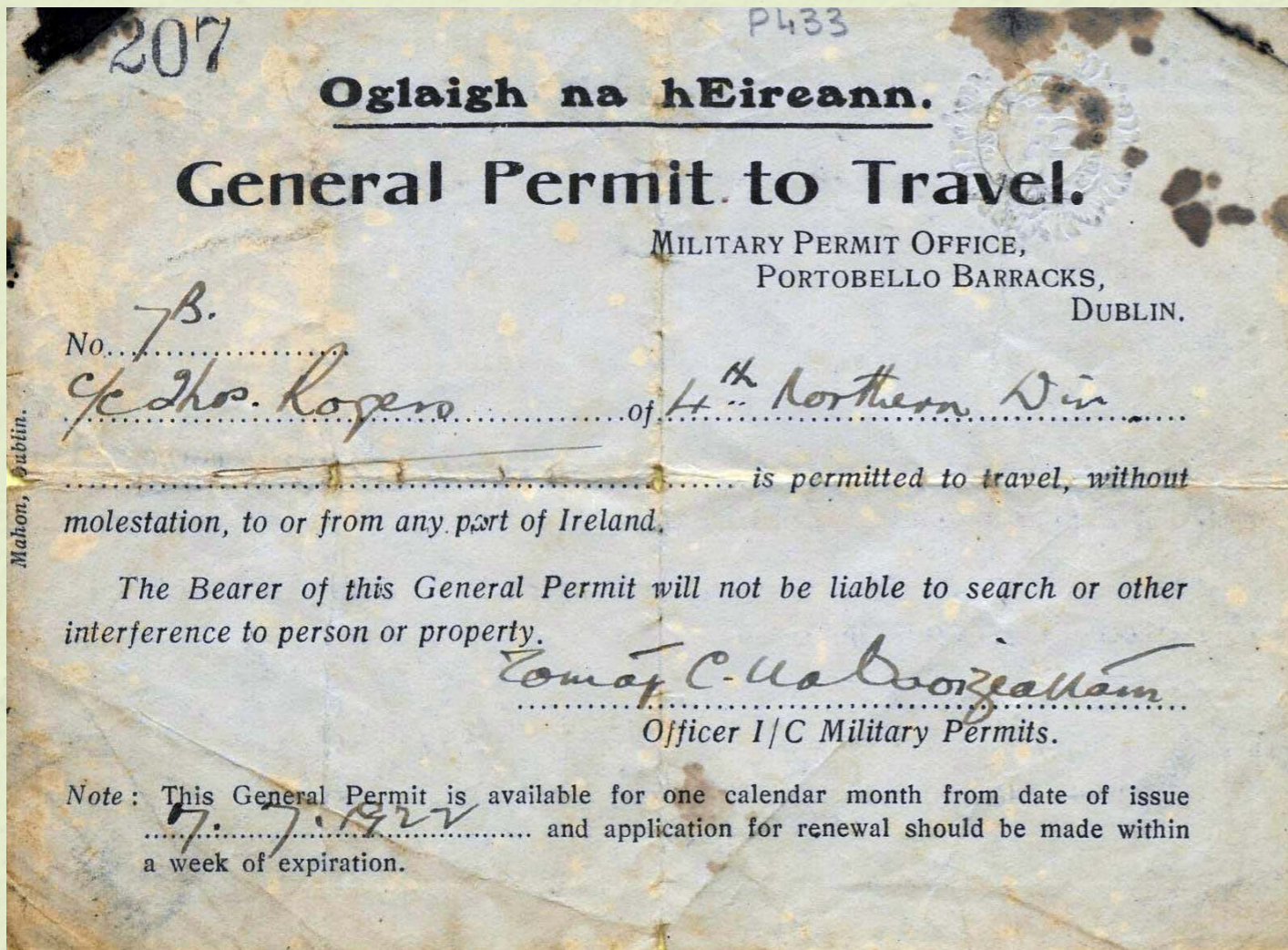
(from the Brendan Hall archive collection, Louth County Archives, PP00438/)

Fighting erupted in Drogheda on 29 June with a heavy attack on National Army posts at Westgate Barracks, South Quay Barracks and the army cordon around Millmount. Liam Leech, from the Millmount garrison was shot dead on Pitcher Hill, and Volunteer John Lynch who was serving in the army and from Co Meath, was wounded and died in the Cottage Hospital.

On 4 July, after the fall of the Four Courts, the National Army sent an ultimatum demanding unconditional surrender of Millmount. At 9.15 a.m. the bombardment commenced. The tower and buildings were shelled and a breach blown in the outer wall. By the time army units captured Millmount, it had been abandoned by the republican garrison.

Miss Alice Slowey, of Fair Street, Drogheda was accidentally killed on 4 July by a National Army patrol and five other civilians were reported to have been wounded, including the Mayor Philip Monahan.





Óglaigh na hÉireann general permit to travel issued to Thomas Rogers of the 4th Northern Division by the Military Permit Office, Portobello Barracks, Dublin, 7 July 1922
(Louth County Archives, PP00433/)

When fighting broke out in Dublin and Drogheda, Aiken's response was to unite the pro- and anti-Treaty IRA in north Louth under the umbrella of neutrality.

Aiken wrote to Mulcahy seeking an immediate truce. He warned that if the war continued, it would develop into a wider conflict 'against the anti-Treaty republicans.'

Following up the letter with a face-to-face meeting with Richard Mulcahy, Aiken maintained that he would neither attack anti-Treaty forces if ordered, nor fight against the government as this would ruin the country without gaining any ground for the Republic. With the approval of Mulcahy he then travelled to Limerick where fighting had broken out, in an attempt to help broker a truce between the anti-Treaty forces of Liam Lynch and the National army under Michael Brennan.

He was accompanied to Limerick by Thomas Rogers of Dundalk, described by one witness as Aiken's right-hand man at this stage. This is the travel pass issued by National Army authorities allowing Rogers safe passage on the mission to Limerick.

By the time Aiken and Rogers got to Limerick, a precarious and ultimately ineffective peace deal had been brokered. Aiken was ordered back to Dundalk by National Army chief of staff Eoin O'Duffy with instructions to deal with the anti-Treaty forces in north Louth. By the time Aiken and Rogers got back to Dundalk on 14 July 1922, the 4th Northern was riven by disaffection.



The Prison,
Dundalk.
17/7/22.

I beg to report that armed forces, who afterwards turned out to be Free State Troops, forcibly entered this Prison at about 6 a.m. this morning. I attach report of the Acting Steward who was in charge of the Prison at the time. I wish to point out that I received no notification whatsoever of the intention of the Free State Troops, and as I had obtained a guard from the Military Barracks, which I understood was occupied by Free State Troops, I gave instructions that should any armed forces attempt to obtain admittance to the Prison, they should be frustrated in every way. The Acting Steward and Chief Warden therefore only carried out my orders.

The two back gates were smashed in, but have since been temporarily repaired, and the side door leading into the Hall broken to pieces.

I respectfully submit that if the Authorities knew that the troops in this town were irregulars posing as Free State Troops, I as Governor of the Prison should have received some confidential information to that effect. This would have entirely obviated this unfortunate occurrence.

W. Barrows
Governor.

Early on the morning of 16th July 1922, General Dan Hogan invaded Dundalk and imprisoned Aiken, his officers and most of the 4th Northern Division.

Aiken had on occasions in the past provided men to help guard the gaol, and when the invasion occurred, gaol staff phoned the army barrack looking for assistance from Aiken. The barrack phone was answered by an unfamiliar voice which alerted gaol staff that Dundalk was under attack, but they were not sure by whom, so the gaol was put into lockdown. National Army troops then forced their way into the gaol, wishing to deposit prisoners. Governor Barrows complained that government troops had damaged the gaol fabric, and that he should have been informed that the loyalty of Aiken and his men was suspect.

Letter from Governor Barrows of Dundalk Gaol, 17 July 1922

(reproduced by kind permission of the Director of the National Archives of Ireland, NAI/JUS/H/78/18)



Oglaigh Na h-Eireann.

4th NORTHERN DIVISION.

TO THE CITIZENS OF LOUTH, DOWN AND ARMAGH,

A new position has been created in this area by the Invasion of Troops acting under G.H.Q., Portobello Barracks, the Arrest of our Divisional Commandant and the Imprisonment of Six Divisional Officers, and we ask the moral and material support of all Citizens in meeting the new situation.

The I.R.A. in this Division has been kept intact, and refused to allow itself to be made use of by any Political Party. Our Object has been to secure the Unity of the Nation, to avoid Civil War and the Horrible Sight of Comrades who Fought Side by Side during the English Reign of Terror shooting each other down. Our efforts have always been on the side of Army Unity, and even at the time of his arrest our Divisional Commandant was engaged in the noble task of trying to bring an end to the present Fratricidal Strife, endeavouring to Secure a Truce and an Honourable Agreement so as to wring from England—the Common Enemy—our Just Demands in the present circumstances.

Though our Organization has been almost entirely maintained in the area by the personal sacrifices, pecuniary and otherwise, of our Officers and Men, we claim to have fulfilled our guarantees—to Headquarters of both sections of the Army—to keep the peace of the District and afford to every Citizen the protection to which he is entitled.

On the shoulders of the men responsible for the recent unnecessary display of force must rest the entire blame of its calamitous results.

The Morale and Unity of the Army in the Division is still secure, notwithstanding the sinister Form of Conscription of our men attempted, and we confidently claim the support of every true Irish Citizen in maintaining our Forces Independent of any Political Clique.

Signed,

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS,

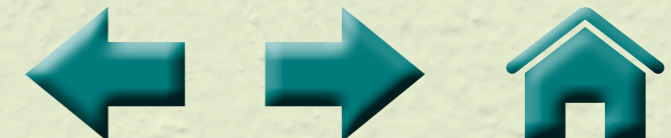
FOURTH NORTHERN DIVISION I.R.A.

After the invasion and capture of Dundalk on 16th July, the 4th Northern Division was decimated. Most of its officers were captured, over 100 men were lodged in Dundalk gaol, and a similar number volunteered to join the National Army. Those that managed to avoid capture issued this pamphlet protesting their treatment at the hands of the government.

The claims made in this pamphlet were factually correct.

As time ran out, Aiken and the 4th Northern had agreed among themselves to dump their arms, and if necessary to evacuate Dundalk peacefully. Most of the arms had already been dumped but they never got that opportunity to evacuate, and inexorably the 4th Northern was drawn into the Civil War on the anti-Treaty side.

It is probable that with a different approach, Aiken and the 4th Northern would have peacefully evacuated Dundalk and Co Louth would have been spared the trauma and destruction of the following twelve months.



Dundalk General Register of Prisoners (NAI/PRIS/1/16/1) – Transcript of Escaped Prisoners 27th July 1922

The following is a transcript extract from the Dundalk General Register of Prisoners (NAI/PRIS/1/16/1) detailing escapees on 27 July 1922 showing data under selected column headings. The data in the 'offence' column (omitted from this transcript) recorded 'detained in military custody' for all entries shown below.

Those names marked with an asterisk under the number column, have the suffix 'C' on the National Archives file JUS/H/78/64 'Attack on and capture of Dundalk Prison by Irregulars', which is taken to indicate that they did not escape.

Spellings of addresses have been corrected, suggested completions are in brackets, and a few that have not been interpreted are in square brackets. 'S/A' refers to same address.

No	Names	Age	Where Born	Last Residence	Next-of-kin with Name and Address	Trade or Occupation	Date of Committal on Remand	Court from which Committed	Further Remarks
229	Harty, Michael	18	Dundalk	Dundalk	Mother: Maggie, S/A	Boilermaker	16/07/22 02/08/22	Comdt. General Hogan, 5th Northern Division	Rescued from custody 27/7/22. Re-captured 2/8/22
230	Sweeney, Eugene	29	Vincent Avenue, Dundalk	4 Stapleton Pl, Dundalk	Father: John, S/A	Postal Official	17/07/22	Do	Rescued 27/7/22 Re-captured 28/07/22
231	O'Hare, Andrew	26	Newry	Military Barracks Dundalk	Wife: Lilly, 8 Eglinton Tce, Donnybrook	Soldier	17/07/22 28/07/22	Do	Rescued 27/7/22 Re-captured 28/07/22
232	Quinn, Patrick	22½	Liverpool	Military Barracks Dundalk	Father: John, Address not given	Student	17/07/22	Do	Do
233	Boyle, Peter	25	Camlough	Military Barracks Dundalk	Nil	Soldier	17/07/22	Do	Do

Extract from Dundalk Register of Prisoners showing names of escapees 27 July 1922

(reproduced by kind permission of the Director of the National Archives of Ireland, NAI-PRIS-1-16-1)

The facts of the 'Hole in the Wall' escape of 105 republican prisoners after an explosion at the boundary wall in an operation planned by John McCoy are well known.

All was not well in the gaol. In the fortnight before the invasion of Dundalk on 16 July, there had been two escapes from the gaol carried out under the threat rather than the reality of violence. On the eve of the 'Hole in the Wall' escape the governor complained that he was responsible for 134 prisoners with only seventeen staff, many of them inexperienced and warned 'I fear under present conditions, safe custody is in jeopardy.'

Three days later the gaol was attacked. There was a military guard composed of an officer and twenty-six men stationed in the hospital, but the warders complained that they failed to turn out until the prisoners had escaped and not a shot was fired by a small detachment of troops who were on duty. On the other hand, when he was laying the mine at the wall, Eiver Monaghan stated that he and Malachi Quinn were fired at by two army snipers on the prison wall.

Records show that 105 prisoners escaped, the *Dundalk Democrat* reported that about 60 were back in custody within a week.



AN OPEN LETTER TO RICHARD MULCAHY, T.D.

OGLAIGH NA h-EIREANN—4TH NORTHERN DIVISION,

30TH JULY, 1922.

TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, DAIL EIREANN,

A CHARA,

The War of the Provisional Government for the rights of the people—i.e., the war waged by eight Irishmen, without a mandate from the people and without consulting the representatives of the people, to force Irishmen to take an oath of allegiance to a foreign king, is now in progress for a month. A doped press, the control of the National funds, the economic stress of the men of the country and tactical mistakes of the Anti-Treaty parties have resulted in supplying you with a large Army. That army has captured a large number of towns and prisoners. In one month the troops of the Provisional Government have their opponents on the run in several counties. In another month or two they will probably be on the run in the whole country, and THEN THE WAR WILL COMMENCE IN REAL EARNEST.

Now I often told you during the last seven months that when several different principles were stated to be fundamental the only sure test to guide an Irishman was whether or not by taking a particular course he would develop into a clean, honourable Irish-speaking Irishman. Apply that test to the course being taken by the Provisional Government and its supporters presently and one sees immediately that they are wrong. No Irishman can honourably fight for a Government that stands over the present Constitution. By doing so he would quickly become as rotten and British as the British themselves.

Both the Pro-Treaty and Anti-Treaty parties have been too quick to assume that the people of this country want peace with England at any price. The people want peace between Irishmen. They returned a large majority of the third Dail on the platform of peace between the Civil and Military organizations. They were promised peace, and although a censored press and the difficulty of organizing in war conditions may delay the expression of their opinions, you may be sure that some way will be found to express the preference of both the Army and the people for risking a war with England rather than the war that is at present ruining the Nation morally and financially.

Is mise,

FRANK AIKEN, Taoiseac Ceann Roinne.

Aiken declared some years later, that such were the promises made when the Treaty was agreed, that had he been a member of the Dáil he might have voted in its favour. He considered that a split in the IRA would inevitably lead to Civil War which would prove to be a distraction from what he regarded to be the greatest problem, that of partition.

By mid- 1922 his reservations about the Treaty were growing but he was biding his time to judge if his republican ideals would be reflected in the Free State constitution.

At the beginning of July 1922, Aiken and the officers of the 4th Northern had easy access to the leadership of the National Army from Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy down. The 4th Northern had been central to Collins' attempts to undermine the Northern Ireland government by physical force. Collins had wanted Aiken to accept the position of officer commanding all IRA units in Ulster, an offer which Aiken declined.

By the end of July 1922, those in the 4th Northern who were not captured were fugitives in hiding along the land frontier between Louth and Armagh.

Printed leaflet, dated 30 July 1922, 'An open letter to Richard Mulcahy TD' from Frank Aiken, Óglaigh na hÉireann, 4th Northern Division urging peace between the warring factions in the Civil War (Louth County Archives, PP00439/)



Today is
the first news
you get
from
the world
no newspapers
from any
quarters

Dundalk
Friday 18 Aug 1922

Dear Jennie

I got your letter & envelope
(L) safely on Monday morning and
will have Maxes offered as requested
but as you must be aware we
had no means of communication
either by wire, telephone or post
since and I suppose you must
think we are dead & buried, but
thank God we are all alive and
well both in Roden Place and
St. Helena and Nellie was here
this day & is still on foot, I need
not tell you of our experience
& all that happened since Sat
Monday, as you will have the
true acct in the Democrat
before perhaps you get this letter,
as Pat Watters says the post is going
via Holyhead. The worst time we
had was on Wednesday night &
we spent it mostly in the cellar
as the Irregulars were slipping from

Esmay Young letter, 18 August 1922 (Louth County Archives, PP00011/)

This letter was written by Mrs Esmay Young to her daughter Mrs Jennie O'Mahony in Drogheda. Mrs Young had a tobacconist shop in Roden Place, beside the Century Bar, where the 'Century Tower' was and still is, part of the structure.

From January 1922 Frank Aiken, O/C 4th Northern Division, IRA, continued to take orders from the pro-treaty government, though publicly expressing reservations about the terms of the Treaty. With the outbreak of Civil War fighting on 28 June 1922 he declared that his divisional area would remain neutral, nevertheless there was great surprise when on 16 July, Dundalk was invaded by the National Army under the command of Dan Hogan, and taken without much trouble. Aiken and most of his men were imprisoned, only to be sprung from captivity in the famous 'Hole in the Wall' escape from Dundalk gaol on 23 July.

Aiken retook Dundalk on 14 August after a significant battle particularly at the army barracks, where substantial military stores were seized. Six men (five from the National Army) died including Captain Frank Byrne mentioned in this letter, and overall about forty from both sides wounded. The National Army launched a counter-offensive on Dundalk, retaking the town without significant opposition on the 16th August after Fr James McKeone, persuaded Aiken not to defend the town in depth. A lorry-bomb was set off, placed at the junction of Francis Street and Earl Street, just around the corner from Mrs Young's shop. One man, James McEvoy, a civilian on his way to work in the distillery, was killed, and significant property damage was suffered from the explosion and the subsequent looting.

ÓΣΛΑΙΣ ΝΑ Η-ΕΙΡΕΔΗΝ.

PP166/2/40

Αριθμ. μο. έασηα.	A. 6032.
Αριθμ. μο. έασηα.	

Όειν αν αριθμ. σεο εγασμα το λυαό ες εσηί ουιτ.

ΟΙΡΗΣ: Chief of the General Staff,
ΒΕΑΡΡΑΙΟ ΠΟΡΤΟΒΕΛΛΟ,

ΒΑΙΤΕ ΑΪΤΑ ΟΛΙΑΪ, 26th. August, 1922. 19

To:
Joseph Dolan, Esq.,
Ardee.

A Chara,

I got your letter of 18th. August and only the tragic distractions since have prevented me replying to it.

I think nobody appreciates Frank Aiken's mind and position more clearly or more sympathetically than I do. Frank was not only negotiating with me for "preserving peace in Dundalk" when the Dundalk Barracks was taken by National troops; he was actually doing it to a certain extent, but very dangerous forces were working underground in his ranks, and Frank could not have controlled them and their operations would have brought a much worse state of affairs there.

The present position with regard to Frank and his men is brought about by the same cause as that bringing about the dreadful conditions in other parts of the country, namely, -pure waywardness, futility, and irresponsibility.

Whether it be a ^{sign of} strength or of weakness, the actual position is that practically the only condition made with regard to the men in your area is that they surrender their arms.

Beir Beandacht,

Frank MacDermid
GENERAL.
CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.

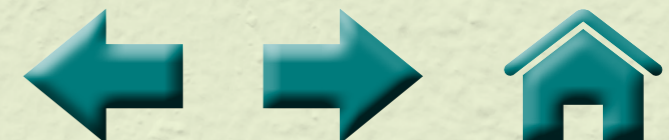
Joseph Dolan of Ardee, a businessman and long-time nationalist, wrote to Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff and Minister for Defence, on 18 August. That letter has not survived, but it was obviously an effort to generate a peace initiative. Michael Collins was killed in an ambush in Cork, on 22 August 1922, and it was another four days before Mulcahy replied to Dolan and revealed a surprising generosity of spirit towards Aiken. He stated that '... nobody appreciates Frank Aiken's mind and position more clearly or more sympathetically than I do.' Mulcahy conceded that 'Frank was not only negotiating with me for preserving peace in Dundalk ... he was actually doing it to a certain extent'.

On 27 August, Aiken sent Mulcahy an emotional letter lamenting the death of Michael Collins. Aiken asserted that Collins was about to see that he was on the wrong road. He pleaded with Mulcahy to end the war and even offered his own life in return for peace. Mulcahy's reply on 31 August attributed Aiken's outlook 'to an entirely unstrung state of mind'.

It was at this point that Aiken finally confirmed adherence with the anti-Treaty side. His new area of command included Monaghan, west Cavan, and Meath. In Louth, he had about 250 men plus 100 men from Armagh and Down, opposing 750 to 850 in the National Army.

Richard Mulcahy to Joseph Dolan letter, 26 August 1922

(Louth County Archives, PP00166/)



NOTICE.

Oglaigh na h-Eireann

IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

Field General Headquarters,

8th September, 1922.

The Army Executive wish it made known that while they have no desire to interfere with individuals because they hold opinions opposed to them regarding the present conflict between the Republican Forces and the Provisional Government's Imperial Forces, they hereby give notice to all whom it may concern that Citizens of the Irish Republic conveying information to the enemy which leads to:—

(a) The Death;

(b) The Wounding; or

(c) The Capture of Republican Troops,

will be regarded as Spies and will be liable to the same penalties as those inflicted on Spies previous to the Truce July, 1921.

In some districts also Persons who, though not Officially attached to the Provisional Government's Imperial Forces, are either voluntarily or at the request of these Forces, acting on Committees and inquiring into and giving decisions on cases of persons arrested because of their Republican sympathies. Notice is therefore further given that after the publication of this Notice, all Persons acting on such Committees will be punished as the gravity of each offence demands.

By Order

Army Executive

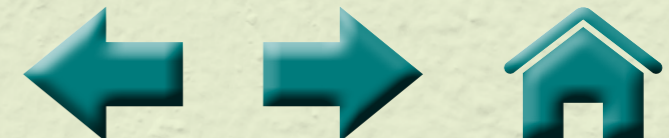
This notice was circulated with IRA General Order No 6 under the signature of Liam Lynch to 'O/C All Divisions and Independent Brigades'.

A tariff of penalties included death or deportation.

General Order No 6 was cancelled on 24 November 1922, and O/Cs instructed that 'spies' should only be executed after a Brigade Court of Inquiry and the sentence ratified by the Divisional Commander.

Warning letter from IRA to Joseph H McArdle, 8 September 1922

(Louth County Archives, PP00439/)





Castle Street Ardee, c.1910

(Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland, call number L_ROY_10082)

Ardee barracks was subjected to a 'fierce and determined attack' by the IRA on the night of Friday 3 November, 1922.

It was reported that:

rifle fire was opened on the barracks from the rear of the post office directly facing the barracks ... three of the attackers were observed on the flat roof of Mr T Taaffe's commodious drapery ... blazing away with rifles. Bombs were hurled from the same direction at the officers' quarters but only smashed glass in the windows. The troops replied vigorously to the enemy fire.

A bomb was placed on the footpath causing extensive damage to nearby houses and shops.

The attack continued for three hours, during which it was asserted the garrison refused entreaties from the leader of the attackers to surrender, in response to which the IRA commander advised them to say their prayers and he threatened that 'they would be taken out dead.' After three hours the attackers withdrew.



Muchgrange
Greenore
Friday

Sir,

I see by the Independent where the Army Pensions Act is now going on, and I apply for application form, to fill for the loss of my son, James Boyle who was a Captain in the Free State Army, and was killed in ambush on the road ~~to~~ from Greenore where he was in charge of the garrison there, on 4th Nov 1922.

Oblige

Mrs Mary Boyle (James)
Muchgrange
Greenore

James Boyle served in the Irish Volunteers from 1917, becoming O/C Cooley Company, IRA. He joined the National Army on its formation. He was killed in an ambush at Rockmarshall on 4 November 1922, along with Sergeant Peter Treanor from Co Monaghan. A report noted that Mrs Boyle lived in very poor circumstances, with seven other children, one of whom, Thomas aged 21, a member of An Garda Síochána, had died on 13 March 1924.

Mrs Boyle received a gratuity of £100 in 1924. In 1953 following changes in the war pensions regulations, she was awarded an annual pension of £180.00 per annum. Mrs Boyle died on 1955.

Sergeant Peter Treanor was a widower with three children under 14 years of age, and had served in the British army during World War 1.

Pensions enquiry letter from Mary Boyle, regarding her son, Captain James Boyle, Greenore, killed in ambush on 4 November 1922

(Image courtesy of the Military Archives/MSPC, MA W2D174)



"You're sick of the game"! Well now,
that's a shame.

You're young, and you're brave and
you're bright;

"You've had a raw deal"! I know - but
don't squelch.

Buck up, do your damndest and
fight.

It's plugging away that will win you
the day

So don't be a piker, old pard!

Just draw on your grit! It's no
easy to quit:

It's keeping your chin up that's hard.

Maryborough Prison
1/12/22

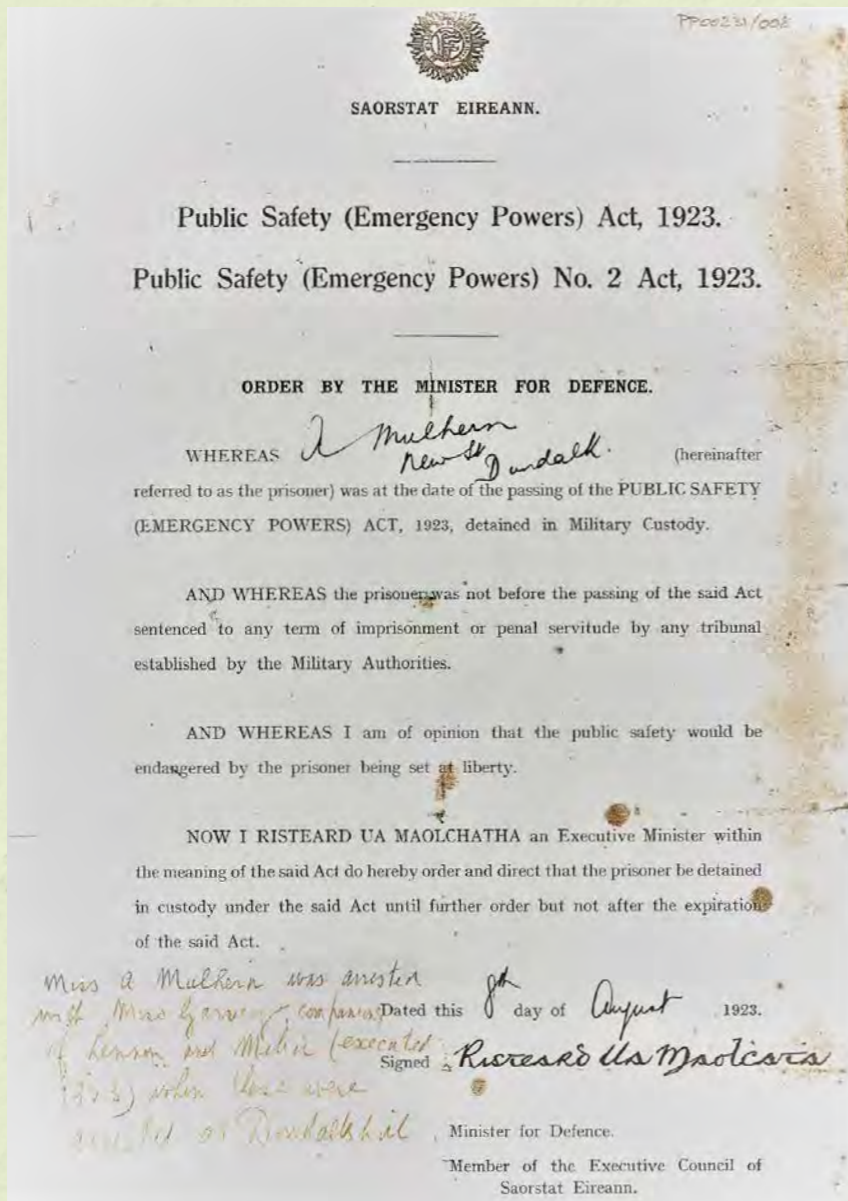
Sean McCoy
Mullaghbawn
Dundalk

John McCoy, Aiken's able adjutant, was wounded and captured during the War of Independence. On release he was appointed Truce Liaison Officer for Co Armagh, and on relinquishing, reverted to the post of Adjutant of the 4th Northern Division, then headquartered in Dundalk. He was overnight in Dublin on 15 July 1922 and avoided arrest when Dundalk was invaded. Drawing what remained of the 4th Northern together, he planned and launched the raid that released Aiken and 104 men from Dundalk gaol, but in the process was himself captured. He was released from internment in 1924 and was briefly O/C of what remained of the 4th Northern Division. He joined the Irish civil service and was appointed to the Military Service Pensions Board by Frank Aiken, then Minister for Defence, and later worked in the Bureau of Military History collecting statements from 1912-23 activists.

Page from Maryboro Prison (Portlaoise) Autograph Book showing verse by Sean McCoy of Mullaghbawn, Co Armagh who signed it on 1 December 1922

(Reproduced by kind permission of private depositor, Louth County Archives, PP00462/)





Miss A Mulhern Order of Custody under Public Safety (Emergency Powers) No 2 Act, 1923, signed Richard Mulcahy (Louth County Archives, PP00231/)



Photograph of Kathleen Dawe, Annie Mulhern, and A McGeown, Cumann na mBan members, 1922-24 (Louth County Archives, PP00412/)

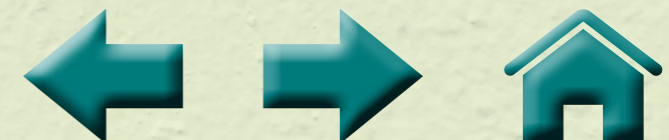
On 7 January 1923 Annie Mulhern, Evelyn Garvey, James Melia, and Thomas Lennon all of Dundalk, were arrested in a car owned by a prominent business man and government supporter, Bernard O'Rourke of Inniskeen. A military report stated that a gun and ammunition were found on one of the passengers, a female, who was also carrying despatches.

Annie Mulhern was imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail, Dublin until May 1923, then in North Dublin Union until 28 November 1923. She underwent hunger strike on three occasions, the longest for 19 days in October/November 1923. Described by Annie Maguire, her O/C Cumann na mBan, as 'the most active member of Cumann na mBan in the area and although her brother was under sentence of death she carried on as usual'.

On the day after the arrests, Sylvester Heaney of Dillonstown, Dunleer was executed in Dublin on 8 January 1923. On 13 January, Thomas McKeown of Piedmont, Bellurgan, John McNulty of Belleeks, County Armagh, and Thomas Murray of Kilcarn, Navan, County Meath were executed in Dundalk prison by firing squad.

On 22 January 1923, James Melia, Thomas Lennon from Dundalk who were arrested with Annie Mulhern and Joseph Ferguson from Lordship, Co Louth, were executed in Dundalk army barracks.

All of those executed in Dundalk had been found guilty of possession of military material, not of actually using it.





Photograph of Knockabbey House after burning in March 1923

(Reproduced by kind permission of private depositor)

In response to the executions in Dundalk, a campaign of house burning commenced. Milestown House near Castlebellingham occupied by Major Barrow was destroyed on 29 January 1923 on the grounds that ‘... Major Barrow, was a prominent member of Irish Farmers’ Union and the house would be burned as a reprisal for the failure of the Irish Farmers’ Union to protest against the executions carried out by the Government.’

Clermont House at Blackrock, Dundalk owned by Col Charles Davis Guinness, High Sheriff of County Louth in 1918, was burned to the ground on 2 February. No reason was offered.

Ballygassan House at Annagassan, owned by JJ Russell, sub-sheriff of the county, was also burned on 2 February 1923 ‘because he was an official of the Government and as a reprisal for the recent executions in the county’.

Annagskeagh House near Mountpleasant owned by AN Sheridan DL was destroyed on 10 February because ‘Mr Sheridan was a government official’. Sheridan had organised considerable relief for the Belfast refugees who streamed into Louth over the previous number of years.

Knockabbey owned by the O’Reilly family, one of the principal Catholic families in County Louth, was destroyed on 2 March.





Photograph of train de-railed on GNR line from Dundalk to Enniskillen
(Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland, call number NPACW11)

During the Civil War, railway infrastructure was frequently attacked, bridges and lines were damaged, and locomotives derailed.

The Great Northern Railway Company complained that in the Drogheda area alone, between March and August 1922, sixty raids on the railway were carried out by the anti-Treaty IRA in pursuance of the Belfast boycott.

In May 1923 a compensation scheme was introduced for damage inflicted on property between July 1921 to July 1923. 856 claims were lodged in Co Louth. About 200 claims related to damage to the railways or to goods carried on the railway in Co Louth.

The 856 claims compared unfavourably to 281 in Monaghan, 271 in Meath, and 296 in Cavan, and put Louth in eighth position nationally in terms of volume of claims lodged.



JOHN B. HAMILL, M.A., LL.B.
STATE SOLICITOR
FOR COUNTY LOUTH.
TELEPHONE NO. 108

*Court House Square,
Dundalk.*

9th January, 1924.

re John H. Clinton, Rokeby Hall, Dunleer.

A Chara,

I have received a report in this case from the Board of Works, in which their investigator recommends the sum of £908: 0: 8d. in settlement of this claim. The claim was for the destruction of a Saw Mill, Machinery, and a stock of Timber. The Board of Works investigator's report is made up as follows:-

Shed	£190 : 0 : 0
Founds, Boxing & Tables	£130 : 0 : 0
Belts, Pulleys & Shafting	£112 : 10 : 2
Saw Benches	£222 : 0 : 0
Stock destroyed	£105 : 0 : 0
Circular Saws destroyed	£ 75 : 12 : 6
Sundries	£ 17 : 10 : 0
Total	£852 : 12 : 8
6½% Engineers & Surveyors fees	55 : 8 : 0
	<hr/>
	£908 : 0 : 8

*852-12-8
122-10-0
730-2-8*

I had an interview with the applicant and his Solicitor and have settled the case subject to your approval for £825. A question arose at our interview in reference to a re-instatement condition. Mr. Clinton explained that he had erected a new Shed on the site of the old one, and that it cost him over £200 to erect the Shed, but that it was not quite as large as the old Shed. He also stated that he had replaced most of the Machinery, and that he commenced work immediately after the fire. I therefore consider that it would not be fair to have a re-instatement condition attached to the Decree. Of course settlement in this case is entirely subject to proof by applicant that the claim comes within the Damage to Property Compensation Act.

An early reply will much oblige.

Mise, le meas,

John B. Hamill

Secretary,
Ministry of Finance,
DUBLIN.

399/241

Attached to 241/305

In May 1923 the IFS introduced a compensation scheme which was only applicable for damage inflicted on property and not for personal injuries from July 1921 to July 1923.

Claims were many and varied, large operations attracting more claims. The IRA attack on Ardee Castle on 3 November 1922, prompted at least twenty-four compensation claims for damage to buildings etc in Ardee town centre.

Comparatively small claims made up the majority, the destruction of hay, pony trap, turnip cutter, two sheds and straw by fire on 6 March 1922 in Termonfeckin or the seizure of and damage to a motor car at Drogheda, County Louth, by armed men representing the IRA on 2 April 1922.

Loyalists who felt themselves victimised could also claim off the British Government's Irish Grants Committee. Sixteen such claims were made from people living in Co Louth, four were rejected and one not proceeded with. Four claimants, JJ Russell, William Barrow, Charles and Lucy Guinness had already received compensation from the Irish courts.

In total 856 compensation claims from Louth were processed through the Irish courts.

Compensation claim document relating to Rokeby Hall, home of Clinton, John H (Reproduced by kind permission of the Director of the National Archives of Ireland, NAI/ FIN/COMP/2/15/217)



THE ELECTORAL ACT, 1923.
CONTESTED ELECTION.
COUNTY CONSTITUENCY OF LOUTH.
PUBLIC NOTICE.

I, the undersigned, being the Returning Officer for the County Constituency of Louth, in pursuance of Rule 8 in the Fifth Schedule to the Electoral Act, 1923, hereby give notice that the Poll in the above Constituency will be taken on the 27th day of August, 1923.

The Names of the Candidates, and other particulars of such Candidates as described in their respective Nomination Papers, and the Names of the persons who subscribed such Nomination Papers are as follows:—

Family Name	Other Names	Address	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Names of Persons who subscribed the Nomination Paper
AIKEN	FRANK	Dublin	Chief of Staff, Irish Republican Army.	Philip John Daly Patrick Carroll
HUGHES	PETER	24 Park Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth	Farmer and Vintner.	Rt. Rev. Patrick Segrave Very Rev. B. Canon Donnellan
MCGHEE	PATRICK	Charleville, Dunleer	Farmer.	Patrick Connolly Nicholas Tierney Murphy
MURPHY	JAMES EDWARD	60 West Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth	Drapery.	Rt. Rev. Patrick Segrave Very Rev. B. Canon Donnellan
O'SHANNON	CATHAL	88 Philshere Road, Dublin	Trade Union Official.	James Coburn Owen Clarke

And I further give notice that the Names of such Candidates will be printed in the Ballot Paper in the order in which they appear in this notice.

Dated this 18th day of August, 1923.

J. J. RUSSELL, Returning Officer.

The pro-Treaty position was put before the electorate in material and legislative terms and 'it offered a little something to everyone who broadly accepted the Treaty.' This time Louth was on its own as a constituency. Five candidates were nominated for the three seats.

It is noteworthy that Aiken's rank, profession or occupation was described unambiguously as 'Chief of Staff, Irish Republican Army'.

It is also noteworthy that the house of JJ Russell, the returning officer, was burned out by republicans on 2 February 1923, in retaliation for the Dundalk executions.

The election of August 1923 itself passed off quietly. Seventy-five percent of the first preference votes in Co Louth went to pro-Treaty candidates.

Frank Aiken topped the poll with 6,651 (25%) first preferences, while Cathal O'Shannon, the outgoing TD, could muster only 2,517. Aiken obtained few votes in the south of the county but received solid support in the Cooley peninsula.

The other two seats were taken by pro-Treaty candidates, Peter Hughes from Dundalk and Patrick McGee from mid-Louth.

Advert from the *Dundalk Democrat* of candidates for General election on 27 August 1923, July 1923





Troops at customs hut on Newry Road, 1923 (Source: Curran)

Before the end of the Civil War, the cash-strapped IFS government on 1 April 1923 assumed responsibility for the collection and retention of customs and excise duties. Restrictions on cross-border traffic both commercial and non-commercial were introduced. It was not permitted to import goods other than at approved stations, or outside the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or at weekends, or on public holidays.

The Customs service, previously only concerned with shipping, now had to re-configure itself to deal with the difficult task of controlling a 360-mile land frontier. In Louth, the border was controlled from five patrol stations and five crossing points approved to facilitate cross-border trade.

FREE STATE CUSTOMS BARRIER

AGAINST NORTHERN IRELAND

TO OPERATE FROM APRIL 1

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE TO
GO FREE.

The Irish Free State Government has decided to set up a Customs Frontier between its territory and that of Northern Ireland.

The new arrangement will come into force on and after the first day of April next.

For this purpose, pending a decision as to the future boundary line, a temporary frontier will be placed along the boundary line between the six Northern and the twenty-six Southern counties.

Irish Times headline on customs report, 23 February 1923

Long established trading patterns were affected. Differentials arose in the prices of commodities between the jurisdictions, quickly leading to a brisk trade in smuggled produce.

Contrary to original hopes and expectations, customs posts and controls on the border remained in place for almost seventy years and were only lifted on 1 January 1993 with the introduction of the EU Single Market.



Further information on collections can be found on our Archive Collections web-page and online catalogue: www.louthcoco.ie

Please note that if you wish to view the archives at Louth County Archives, you should make an appointment in advance.

The service is always interested in acquiring donations of any archival items (for example, letters, photographs, diaries, election memorabilia) from private individuals.

Louth County Archives Service

Old Gaol, Ardee Road

Dundalk, Co Louth

A91 PY17

Email: archive@louthcoco.ie

Tel: +353 (0)42 9324358



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

