

erin's exiled children

Irish America and the road to the Rising



The proclamation of the Irish Republic from the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin, on the afternoon of Monday, April 23, 1916, was the opening act of the Easter Rising. Delivered by Patrick Pearse on behalf of the rebels, the proclamation claimed that Ireland “through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.” The document made specific reference to the support of Ireland’s “exiled children in America” and “gallant allies in Europe,” and in so doing highlighted the global dimensions of the Irish struggle for independence. It also focused attention on the need to address the critical role played by the Irish of America in this struggle. This exhibit is a modest effort to do just that.

This exhibit is not about the Easter Rising. Its concern is the evolution of Irish American nationalism from the post-Famine period to 1916. It was in this timeframe that the emigrant community in the United States fashioned a new identity that would have profound cultural and political consequences for Ireland. Describing themselves as Irish American, they would be Irish in their culture and American in their politics, and in the process shape a new vision for Ireland that would unite and transform Irish nationalism into a movement which spanned both sides of the Atlantic. The culmination of this movement was the Easter Rising and the War of Independence that saw the foundation of the Irish Free State.

If nothing else, this exhibit stands as a reminder for all who love and cherish Ireland today, of the great sacrifices made by the patriot Irish on both sides of the Atlantic, and of the debt the people of Ireland owe the Irish of America.

dóchum glóire dé agus onóra na héireann
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1916-2016 easter rising centenary

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

IRISH IN AMERICA

EMIGRATION TO AMERICA

an IMIRCE GO MEIRICEÁ

The first great migration from Ireland to America began in the 1700s. Fleeing religious persecution and economic hardship, most came from the province of Ulster and were Protestants of Scottish heritage. They would come to be known in America as the Scots-Irish; a people proud, independent, and resentful of English rule.

The Irish believe that the 6th century monk, St. Brendan the Navigator, was the first European to reach America. They also claim that Columbus studied the account of St. Brendan's voyage before setting sail for America.



the GREAT FAMINE

an drochshaol

The Great Famine prompted the greatest migration of Irish to the United States. Many fled the country aboard unseaworthy vessels, lacking sufficient provisions, and in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, causing thousands to die in the crossing. These ships came to be known as "Coffin Ships."



This mass immigration initiated by the Great Famine transformed Ireland from an island nation into a global community. This community would place the cause of Ireland on the international stage and alter the course of Irish history.

Instead of providing aid, the government transferred the responsibility for famine relief to the landlords. The landlords' response was to clear their tenants off their properties, beginning a process of eviction and emigration.

the BIRTH of IRISH AMERICAN NATIONALISM

an náisiúnachas gael-mheiriceánach

a theacht ar an saol



Emigration to America did not end the relationship with Ireland. The Scots-Irish in America transmitted the spirit and ideas of the American Revolution to Ireland that inspired the United Irishmen in 1791. Led by Wolfe Tone, the United Irishmen aimed to unite Catholic and Protestant to form a nation built on a love of liberty, a shared cultural heritage, and democratic republican principles. The failure of their rebellion in 1798 saw thousands of them flee to America where they sought to create a "new" Ireland in America that preserved their Irish identity.

"to lose your native tongue, and learn that of an alien, is the worst badge of conquest - it is the cham on the soul." -thomas davis

The United Irishmen inspired the Young Ireland movement under Thomas Davis. Davis believed Irish language and culture would form the foundation for an independent Irish nation. Outraged by the Famine, the movement rebelled in 1848. All the leaders of the rebellion were either arrested or, like John O'Mahony and Thomas Francis Meagher, ended up in America where they would become the makers of Irish American nationalism.

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

a nation within a nation

The newly arrived "Famine Irish" crowded into the port cities of the East Coast, provoking a hostile reaction from the native population. Treated as outcasts in the new world, they began to draw on their own resources to build the institutions of a new and distinctly Irish life in America. This life would be shaped by two very powerful forces: Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism.



Fr. Michael Hamman, of Butte, was an Irish nationalist and advocate for workers' rights.

the ANCIENT ORDER of HIBERNIANS ORD ÁRSA NA NGÆL



Division 1 in Anaconda, Montana is the longest continually active division of the AOH in the west.

Motivated by the Catholic principle of subsidiarity, the Irish began to build churches, schools, hospitals, and other facilities to serve their community. They also established fraternal societies to advance their culture and values, the most powerful and influential being the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). Established in 1836 to resist anti-Irish and anti-Catholic movements, the AOH quickly grew into a nationwide charitable organization. Many of its members were prominent in Irish nationalist movements.

the FENIAN BROTHERHOOD BRÁITHREACHAS NA BHFINÍNÍ

The Fenians, known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland, were founded in 1858 by veterans of the Young Ireland Rebellion. Their objective was to raise an army among Irish immigrants who would return and fight for freedom in Ireland. The Fenian invasions of Canada and their uprising in Ireland in 1867 alerted the world to the international dimension of Irish nationalism and strained British/American relations. The Fenians represented Irish American militant nationalism and would inspire future generations of Irish nationalists such as Patrick Pearse.

*the fenians. they were real men ... see them
in early youth laying out the great work for
themselves ... to free ireland from the yoke of
the english. and to do that they used to gather
during the night learning the craft of the soldier
from the americans who were at that time as
widespread as the frost throughout ireland.*

-translated from IRISH

clan na gael children of the IRISH

Founded in 1867, Clan na Gael was established to unite militant and non-militant nationalists in one organization. Although a secret oath-bound movement, it was willing to work openly with other nationalist movements in Ireland and with any country or group hostile to Britain. The governing principle was, "An enemy of England was a friend of Ireland." The Clan became the single largest financier of the Easter Rising and the War of Independence in Ireland.



the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

IRELAND LOOKS TO AMERICA

our hope, our strength is in ourselves alone
— thomas francis meagher

By the late 1870s, Irish America had become a geographical and cultural space that rested on five great cities: Boston, New York, Chicago, Butte/Anaconda, and San Francisco. Irish nationalist leaders soon realized that the solution to Ireland's problems was not to be found in the British Parliament, but among their own in America. They began to turn from London to the United States for support for the cause of Ireland. They came to an understanding called the New Departure.

the new departure

AN BEARTAS NUA



Charles Stewart Parnell

The New Departure guaranteed Clan na Gael support for the Irish National Land League seeking land reform in Ireland and the Irish Parliamentary Party which agitated for Home Rule. This agreement committed Clan na Gael to the political process and greatly reduced the influence of the militant Fenian element in the organization. Charles Stewart Parnell, president of the Irish National Land League and the Irish Parliamentary Party, immediately took advantage of this new arrangement.



parnell in america

parnell i meiriceá

Charles Stewart Parnell arrived in America in January of 1880, and delivered 100 lectures in 62 cities over a two month period. His speeches indicting English rule in Ireland and his address to Congress were printed in American newspapers. He returned to Ireland with over \$300,000 for both the famine relief and the Land League, but more importantly, he brought the legality of English rule in Ireland to the forefront of American political life.

*his visit to america was the beginning of the
impeachment of the BRITISH government in IRELAND,
and the court ... was no longer the BRITISH house of
commons, but the united states of america.*

Parnell's visit to the United States was indicative of a growing awareness of the influence and benefits of the relationship with America. Cultural nationalists appealed to their kinsfolk in the United States to help "as it is on the Irish in America that every movement for the advancement of the old country is largely dependent for support."

Oscar Wilde made a special visit to America in 1882, curious about the "reaction of American thought on Irish politics," which he also called a "new departure." This "new departure" in the history of Ireland filled the Irish with hope; it filled the British Government with foreboding for reasons reported in the London Times in 1885:

*the IRISH question is mainly
an IRISH-AMERICAN question*

The voice of Irish Gaelic nationalism was also rising, and the Irish revival movement it called into being would have profound implications for Anglo-Irish relations.

SPERANZA'S SON.

hear Wilde Lecture on What He
Calls "The English Renaissance."

THE UTTERANCE OF INTUITION.

Speaking about Henry Wilde a Million
Times overheard by the Nation.

TALENT NOT DISPLAYED.

In the English press and elsewhere
in London, Oscar Wilde appeared last evening
before the audience of the Young Ireland
Movement, when he delivered his lecture
on the English Renaissance. He was
received with the most cordial and
enthusiastic applause. The lecture
was a most interesting and valuable
contribution to the knowledge of the
English Renaissance. It was a most
valuable and interesting lecture, and
it was a most valuable and interesting
contribution to the knowledge of the
English Renaissance. It was a most
valuable and interesting lecture, and
it was a most valuable and interesting
contribution to the knowledge of the
English Renaissance.

Jane Elgee, Oscar
Wilde's mother, had
been a member
of the Young
Ireland Movement
and wrote under
the pseudonym
"Speranza."

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

REVIVING the LANGUAGE - REVIVING the COUNTRY

The Gaelic Revival was a revolutionary force that emerged in America and swept through Ireland in the 1890s. Its origins are found among the poets and scribes, the singers and dancers, the musicians and the storytellers who had relocated to the United States at the time of the Great Famine. They were politically active and heavily represented in the Fenians and Clan na Gael, with the Irish language commonly spoken, or so the evidence accumulated by the ever-watchful British Government gives one to believe:



BRITISH officials privately boast, however, that through their spies and informers the BRITISH government knows pretty well what is going on in the secret organizations of IRISHMEN in AMERICA. they continually send out as ARTISANS and LABORERS men who have been in the IRISH police, especially those who can speak IRISH.

the philo-celtic societies

● cumainn charad na gaeilge ●

The cultural nationalists did not confine their energies to politics. They created Philo-Celtic Societies to promote the language and culture. In 1881, the Brooklyn Philo-Celtic Society of New York began publishing *The Gael*, the first periodical devoted to the Irish language. It inspired language enthusiasts nationwide to establish classes and publish Irish language materials. In an effort to unify the language movement and to promote a standardized teaching methodology, the editor of *The Gael*, Micheál Ó Lócháin, called for the creation of The Gaelic League – it was a call that began a revolution.

the gaelic league

● CONRADH NA GAEILGE ●

In 1893, Eoin Mac Neill and Dr. Douglas Hyde created a new organization in Ireland to preserve and promote the Irish language. They called this new organization The Gaelic League. Ó Lócháin described the occasion as “the most important move ever made towards the preservation of Irish Nationality,” and committed the full support of *The Gael*.

The Gaelic League in Ireland grew very slowly in the early years, but it was the voice and the resources of Irish America that transformed the organization into a mass movement. The voice was that of Fr. Peter Yorke of San Francisco, whose lecture in Dublin in 1899, entitled, ‘The Turning of the Tide,’ had the effect that “every person in the audience must have felt like one who had lived in darkness for years and stepped forth suddenly into the light and glory of a brilliant summer day.” Published in nearly every newspaper in Ireland, it rallied huge support for the Gaelic League.

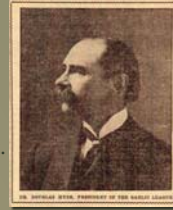


Inspired by the example of the Fenians, the Gaelic League had employed its first professional organizer, Tomás Ó Concheanainn, a returned emigrant from the United States. The enthusiasm created by Fr. Yorke, combined with the organizational skills of Ó Concheanainn, saw the Gaelic League grow from 47 branches in 1897 to 227 in 1901, and also impressed upon the League the need for more organizers.

douglas hyde in america

dubhghlás de híde i meiriceá

In 1906, Douglas Hyde, president of the Gaelic League, and Tomás Ó Concheanainn embarked on a tour of the United States to raise funds for the Gaelic League. The popularity of the language movement in America meant that Hyde was already a familiar figure there. Both men were impressed by the enthusiastic welcome and strength of support for the language wherever they went.



gaelic montana

montana na n-gael



In Montana, Butte and Anaconda achieved a prominence in the language revival movement unsurpassed anywhere else in the United States. Many of the residents of these two cities were Irish-speakers working in the copper industry for the nationalist Marcus Daly and under the shadow of Thomas Meagher. It was this mix of history and heritage that turned Montana into a bastion of Irish culture and nationalism.

no one can deny that to keep ireland irish is the very best thing for which we can strive. now the gaelic league has for its one aim and object to keep ireland irish. therefore we can best help the people at home by helping the gaelic league.

memories of butte, mt

cúimhní ar butte



The neighborhood of Centerville, in Butte, MT in 1919

Butte could surely be called the Gaelic city of the Rockies in my time. The Gaelic language was taught and spoken there more than any other city in America. The Robert Emmet Literary Association, which held its meetings in Centerville, and of which I had the honour of being secretary, was a powerful influence on the life of Montana. The spirit of the gallant Thomas Francis Meagher, their first territorial governor was everywhere ... Butte was more generous to Irish affairs, comparatively speaking, than any other city in the Union. They gave to Dr. Douglas Hyde, second to San Francisco. They kept a Gaelic organizer in Ireland on the field, with Butte putting up the money, known as the Butte organizer. No other city in America could boast of such work.

~Text by Seamus Moriarty from *The Leader*; Sept. 19, 1925

Those, like the Butte organizers, were expected to be “soldiers of Ireland and talk to young and grown of Ireland’s heroes and Ireland’s glories thus infusing the right spirit of nationality into all with whom they come in contact.” Their success was shown when the Gaelic League overcame the opposition of the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland to have Irish included in the new universities. Events, national and international, would soon converge to create the circumstances for the spirit of the Gaelic League to express itself in political revolution.

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

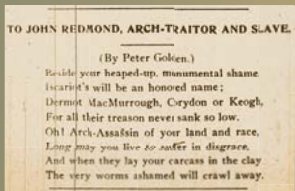
the ROAD to the RISING

*as the blood of martyrs was the seed of saints,
so the blood of the patriot is the seed from
which alone can spring fresh life, into a nation
that is drifting into the putrescence of decay.*

In the aftermath of the Fenian Rising in 1867, the English Government began to implement a new policy towards Ireland that was designed to undermine support for militant and separatist nationalism. Home Rule was the most contentious issue of this policy. Under the leadership of John Redmond, the Irish Parliamentary Party succeeded in having the third Home Rule Bill passed in 1912, but it split the country along sectarian and political lines—Catholic nationalists favored Home Rule, while Protestant unionists rejected it. Both groups established volunteer militias. The nationalist Irish Volunteers also recruited local companies throughout America and created a fund to buy arms. The outbreak of World War I averted a civil war in Ireland, but the question of Ireland's role in the war split the Irish Volunteers.

Redmond's call to arms

GAIRM chatha Redmond

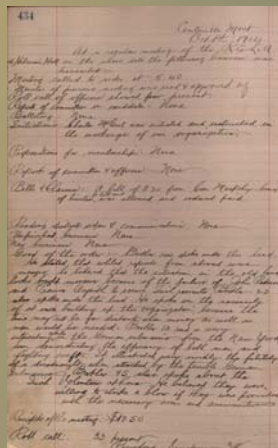


The *Butte Independent* claimed that Redmond was offering a blood sacrifice in return for the restoration of rights.

John Redmond supported the British war effort and called on the Irish Volunteers to serve. The majority answered Redmond's call and remained faithful to the Irish Parliamentary Party. The remaining refused to fight for the empire and supported a small anti-war party known as Sinn Féin. Redmond knew that his stance would be divisive, but that the majority in Ireland would support him. What he failed to calculate was

the response of Irish America and what *Butte Independent* called 'Mr. Redmond's New Departure.'

The reaction to John Redmond's call to arms was met with shock and outrage throughout Irish America. Clan na Gael, at its annual convention in New Jersey in October, 1914, at which Maurice Drohan of Butte served as vice chairman, issued a manifesto protesting 'the worst betrayal of Ireland since Castlereagh sold the Irish parliament.' The relationship John Devoy had formed between Clan na Gael and the Irish Parliamentary Party had restrained militant nationalists in Ireland and America for over 30 years. This relationship was now broken, and advocates of armed rebellion began to reemerge. With physical force nationalists in America and in Ireland once more aligned, it was no longer a question of whether or not there would be a rebellion – it was simply a question of when.



The Irish Volunteers urge "the necessity of at once building up the organization, because the time may not be far distant when money as well as men would be needed in Ireland."



Redmond called on the Irish Volunteers: "Go on drilling and make yourselves efficient for the work, and then account for yourselves as men, not only in Ireland itself, but wherever the firing line extends in defence of right, of freedom and religion in this war."

summoning IRELAND from the GRAVE

múscailt na héireann ón uaigh

Any doubts about the return of the Fenian to Irish politics were dispelled on the death of Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa in 1915. Almost immediately, John Devoy received a cable from Ireland, 'send his body home at once.' His death presented those planning rebellion in Ireland with the opportunity to host the most sacred of nationalist events – a patriot's funeral. The oration delivered by Patrick Pearse at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa remains the most quoted speech of the Irish



The funeral of O'Donovan Rossa gave those planning the rebellion a renewed urgency to fight for the independence of Ireland.

Independence movement. Pearse addressed the mourners as a member of the Irish Volunteers speaking 'on behalf of a new generation that has been re-baptised in the Fenian faith, and that has accepted the responsibility of carrying out the Fenian program, to bring about an Ireland 'not free merely, but Gaelic as well: not Gaelic merely, but free as well.' Pearse's final remarks alluding to martyrdom spoke of the resurrection of the nation through the sacrifice of the patriot:



*Life springs from death, and
from the graves of patriot
men and women spring living
nations. they think that they
have pacified Ireland. they think that they
have purchased half of us and intimidated
the other half. they think that they have
foreseen everything... that they have
provided against everything, but the
fools, the fools, the fools! - they have left
us our Fenian dead - and while Ireland
holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall
never be at peace.*

The parallel between the patriot's sacrifice and that of the crucified and risen Christ pointed to Easter as the time the rebellion would occur.



The Celtic Cross in Monasterboice, County Louth, Ireland

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

the EASTER RISING

england's difficulty is ireland's opportunity
-daniel o'connell

planning the RISING pleanáil an éirí amach



The Easter Rising was planned and carried out by the seven-member Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, under the leadership of Thomas Clarke. Planning was conducted in absolute secrecy. This was done, not only to avoid detection by the British Government, but also by the leadership of the Irish Volunteers. They felt that, while so many Irish were fighting in Europe, a rebellion would be harmful to the nationalist cause. The Military Council pressed ahead with its plans and decided on Easter of 1916 as the date of the rising. The plan was to hold maneuvers on

Easter Sunday and inform the men on the day that an insurrection was taking place. Eoin Mac Neill, Chief-of-Staff of the Irish Volunteers, got wind of the project, and issued a counter-order suspending manoeuvres. Compounding the rebels' problems was the loss of a shipment of arms from Germany on Easter Saturday. The intervention of Mac Neill and the sinking of an arms shipment meant that the rebels had very few volunteers, were poorly armed, and with little hope of success. Nonetheless, the Military Council decided to go ahead on Easter Monday, in what W. B. Yeats called 'a bloody protest for a glorious thing.'



News of the Easter Rising was met much differently in America than in Ireland. The Leader in San Francisco, as well as the Butte Miner, greeted the news of the rising with this headline.

the RISING an téirí amach

At 12:04 on Monday, April 24 1916, Patrick Pearse read the Proclamation of the Irish Republic from the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin, and so began the Easter Rising. The rebels comprised members of the Irish Volunteers under Pearse, the Irish Citizen's Army led by James Connolly, and Cumann na mBan, an Irish republican women's organization. There were about 1,280 rebels facing 16,000 well-trained and heavily armed British soldiers, supported by a gunboat and artillery. The rebels seized key locations throughout Dublin, as well holding the main routes into the city centre. Despite the odds, the insurgents fought gallantly, holding out for nearly one week. On Saturday, April 29, realizing that their situation was hopeless, and to avoid further loss of life, Patrick Pearse issued the order for all companies to surrender to Brigadier-General Lowe. Dublin city centre was reduced to rubble and nearly 500 people lost their lives, the majority civilians.



The seven signatories of the Proclamation were executed.

the arrests & executions

GABHÁIL AGUS BÁSÚ

The British response to the rising was swift and harsh. Martial law was declared and over 3,500 known and suspected rebels and sympathizers were arrested, 79 of them women. Those involved in the rising were tried, 90 of whom were sentenced to death, with 15 sentences carried out. The seven signatories of the proclamation were executed, one of whom, James Connolly, who was too injured to stand was shot while strapped to a chair. Most of the others executed had commanded rebel garrisons, although Willie Pearse seems to have been shot for no other reason than being the brother of Patrick. John McBride, who knew nothing of the rising until it broke out, was shot principally for fighting with the Boers against the British 15 years earlier. Not wishing to execute an American citizen and alienate the United States Government, the British commuted Eamon de Valera's death sentence to life imprisonment. Countess Markievicz's life was also spared 'solely and only on account of her sex.' Of the remaining suspects, nearly 1,800, including Michael Collins, were detained in Frongoch internment camp in Wales, which turned into Ollscoil na Réabhlóide - The University of Revolution.



THE IRISH REVOLUTION IN AN UNEXPECTED POSITION: PARADE THE IRISH ARMY AND BRITISH SOLDIERS IN DUBLIN AND STREETS WERE IN UNEXPECTED POSITION



"dress suitably in short skirts and strong boots, leave your jewels in the bank and buy a revolver."
- countess markievicz, minister of war under de valera's administration



DUBLIN UNDER THE CONTROL OF BRITISH REGULAR TROOPS



There is Perfect Order in Dublin Around the Center of the City, According to March 26th of Lord Dunsany.

ARRESTS ARE BEING MADE

English Officers Taking Orders from the British Government to Suppress the Revolt in Dublin, Ireland, and to Suppress the Revolt in the City of London.



the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

FOLLOWING THE RISING

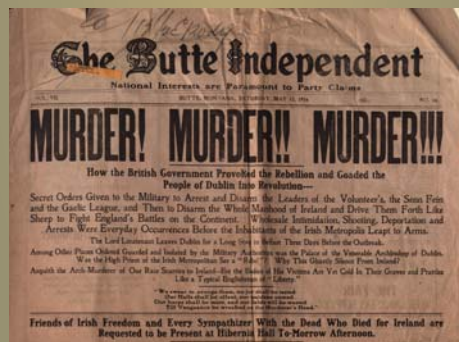


Ruins of the General Post Office after the rising.

The Easter Rising was met with mixed feelings by the people of Ireland. Those with family members fighting in Europe with the British army were outraged, but the majority were generally sympathetic. The nationalist press was steadfast to its support of Redmond and uniform in its accusation of the rebels. The *Irish Independent* described the rising as a 'criminal act' and the leaders as 'insane,' while the *Freeman's Journal* called it 'a stunning horror' and 'an armed assault against the will and decision of the Irish nation itself.'

This headline of the *Butte Independent*, May 13, 1916, was typical of the nationalist press in the United States which viewed the Irish Volunteers and all those who fought in the Easter Rising as a legitimate army engaged in a just war. They believed that such rebels should be treated as prisoners of war. The news of the arrests and executions caused widespread outrage.

The position taken by the press in America was more attuned to the mood of the Irish on both sides of the Atlantic than the Irish press. This became clearer as the arrests, executions, and the harshness of martial law in Ireland transformed public sympathy into popular support for the rebel cause. This cause of Independence and that of Home Rule would now be fought on the political stage.

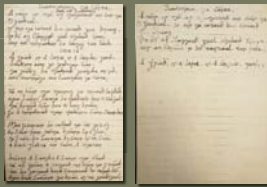


News of the Easter Rising was met much differently in the Irish-American press than in Ireland.

REVIVING HOME RULE

athbheochan an rialtais bhaile

In an effort to appease nationalist Ireland, the British Government tried to introduce Home Rule in July, 1916, but failed to overcome unionist opposition. John Redmond agreed to a national convention in 1917 to work out a compromise with the unionists, but this too failed. News of the convention was treated with scorn by the Irish of America. For them, Easter 1916 had marked a line in the sand and nothing from the King of England was acceptable.



easter week

By seán ó súilleabháin,
BUTTE IRISH-LANGUAGE POET

last night I reflected on the IRISH CAUSE,
and on the bleak BRUTAL BATTLES
fought by the sons of the fair and powerful
milesians,
against the DREGS FROM OVERSEAS.

my love, my friend and my family,
I sit lovingly beside you.
do not yield to the ugly dogs of treachery,
instead REMEMBER EASTER WEEK.

the REASON FOR my SORROW IS BEING RIGOROUSLY
discussed,
and GEORGE OF ENGLAND IS BOASTING TO THE WORLD,
that if we are loyal to the evil little king,
a free state will be given to us in return.

pearse died, alas, in his youth,
the GREAT man, BRAVE AND SUPERIOR IN BATTLE,
he would not want the land of his mother
to be a state belonging to ENGLAND.

awaken my tired one, my dear,
the sun is shining on the tree tops,
please god your enemies will be scattered,
and my beloved will have eternal freedom.

home rule OR independence

rialtas baile nó neamhspleáchas

Nationalist Ireland was split between supporters of Home Rule and those seeking an independent Irish republic. In December, 1916, under intense public pressure, the British Government released the prisoners from Frongach internment camp. They took over and reorganized Sinn Féin, a political party established in 1905 by Arthur Griffith. Sinn Féin favoured creating native institutions of government and promoted the idea of self-reliance. Sinn Féin contested the 1918 general elections to the British Parliament, winning a landslide victory and wiping out the Irish Parliamentary Party.



The newly elected members of parliament did not take their seats in London. Instead, they convened an independent Irish Parliament, called An Dáil, in Dublin, in January, 1919.

This did not represent the triumph of politics over violence, however.

The Fenian nationalists had their own parliament, but they still believed in physical force. In a few short months, the first shots of the War of Independence rang out – the Irish and Irish America had declared war on England once again.



The newly elected Members of Parliament did not take their seats in London.

Instead, they met in Dublin in January, 1919 and established a parliament of their own which they called Dáil Éireann (Assembly of Ireland). The first act of this parliament was to declare Ireland an Independent Republic. On the same day that Dáil Éireann met in Dublin, Irish Volunteers attacked members of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Soloheadbeg, Co. Tipperary. The first shots of the War of

Independence had been fired – Irish nationalists in Ireland and America were at war with England once again.

the IRISH of AMERICA and the making of MODERN IRELAND

ANCIENT ORDER of HIBERNIANS

FRIENDSHIP · UNITY · CHRISTIAN CHARITY
CAIRDEAS · AONTACTH · CRIOSTULACHT



The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) is the oldest Irish Catholic Fraternal Organization in America. Hibernia is a Latin term, originating in 98 B.C., used by many people to describe people of Ireland and Ireland herself. Founded in America in 1836, the AOH can trace its roots hundreds of years back to a series of societies that existed in Ireland beginning in the fifteen hundreds.

The English, who were occupying Ireland at the time, passed what were known as the Penal Laws – a brutally repressive set of regulations designed to destroy Irish culture. These societies were founded to protect the welfare of Irish Catholics, particularly Irish priests, who were subject to persecution and even execution for their culture and their faith.

When Irish immigrated to America, some of the same ancient persecutions followed them. The AOH worked to protect Irish emigrants in America from anti-Catholic, anti-Irish groups like the Know Nothings. This was especially true following An Gorta Mór, also referred to as the Irish Potato Famine, when over a million Irish were exiled from Ireland, many coming to the United States. These refugees from Ireland were often met with contempt, prejudice, and even violence as they tried to make their way in America. The AOH was a haven for the Irish, one that grew as more and more Irish came to the United States. To this day, the AOH has remained one of the strongest advocates and ambassadors of Irish culture in the United States, fully living by their motto: Friendship, Unity, & Christian Charity.



The growth of the AOH in Montana parallels the timeline of the development of the Montana Territory. The AOH in Montana began in a log cabin in the mountains of the Continental Divide, near the mining camp of Vestal, where J.D. Murphy became the first AOH Division President on July 10, 1879.

Several divisions were founded across the state, with the Anaconda Division being the longest continually active branch of the AOH west of the Mississippi. They have met regularly since their founding in 1885. Hibernianism has been an integral part of the Montana since it was a territory. Still boasting the most Irish city per-capita in the United States, Butte, Montana has remained a hub for all things Irish and the role the AOH has played in the continued expansion of Irish culture in Montana can hardly be overstated. The AOH has remained a stronghold of Irish Culture within Montana for well over a century. They have ensured the rich Irish heritage is passed down to the next generation, not only within Montana, but all across the United States. Today there are 6 AOH Divisions in Montana - Anaconda, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Missoula, & Kalispell. Their continuing mission is to keep and maintain the Irish Culture for future generations. They are active in their communities and proudly partake in civic and cultural activities.



1916-2016 EASTER RISING CENTENARY