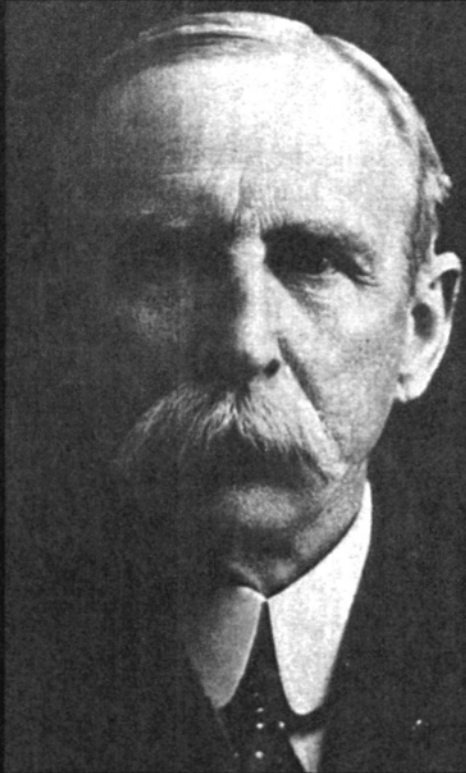


# John Kenny and the Easter Rising

by Fran Christ



*In 1914 John Kenny was asked to undertake an arduous, dangerous mission for the Clan-na-Gael. A veteran of the doomed Fenian Rising of 1867, for nearly 50 years Kenny had done what he could from America to help Ireland win its independence. By all accounts a clever and capable businessman, Kenny had repeatedly sacrificed financial prosperity to devote himself to the Clan-na-Gael and half a dozen mostly short-lived Irish freedom organizations. Kenny's missions to Europe at the outbreak of World War I helped set in motion the Easter Rising and caused him to become friend and confidante to half a dozen fabled members of the Rising later executed by the British Army.*

(above)

**John Kenny in 1910**

Author's Collection.

(right)

**Authorization for Kenny's 1914 mission to Dublin, signed by Denis Spellissy, treasurer of the Irish National Volunteers' American funding committee.**

American Irish Historical Society

November 9th

Gen. Denis F. Collins,  
Peter Breist City Brewery Co.,  
Elisabeth, N. J.

My dear General:

It has been decided to send Fifteen thousand (\$15,000) dollars more across this week and I would be glad to have the authorization of the National Officers to draw the money and deliver it to Mr John Kenny, one of our very trusty and confidential men.

I have mailed Mr McGarrity such an authorization and I enclose you a duplicate of the same so as to facilitate the matter, and have the drafts in readiness for Mr Kenny by Friday.

Will you kindly sign and return the enclosed as speedily as possible?

## 1914: England's Difficulty Is Ireland's Opportunity

For over 40 years, the exiled leaders of the failed 1867 Fenian Rising living in New York City, awaited the chance to strike a blow against England that would win Ireland its freedom. Their organization, the Clan-na-Gael, included thousands of Irish Americans willing to give moral and financial support to the fight for Irish freedom—and to use force, if necessary. In the summer of 1914, the time for action was fast approaching for Clan-na-Gael leaders. By September England and Germany would be at war.

In Ireland, the Clan-na-Gael's fraternal organization, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (or "I.R.B."), operated clandestinely. Headed by Tom Clarke, the I.R.B. bolstered its influence by infiltrating the various Irish organizations and societies. The I.R.B. paid special attention to the recently formed Irish Volunteers. Created ostensibly to defend Ireland while British troops were busy fighting on the Continent, the Irish Volunteers enjoyed legal status, causing a sensation among the Irish public as they drilled and marched in the open (albeit sometimes with wooden guns for lack of arms and ammunition).

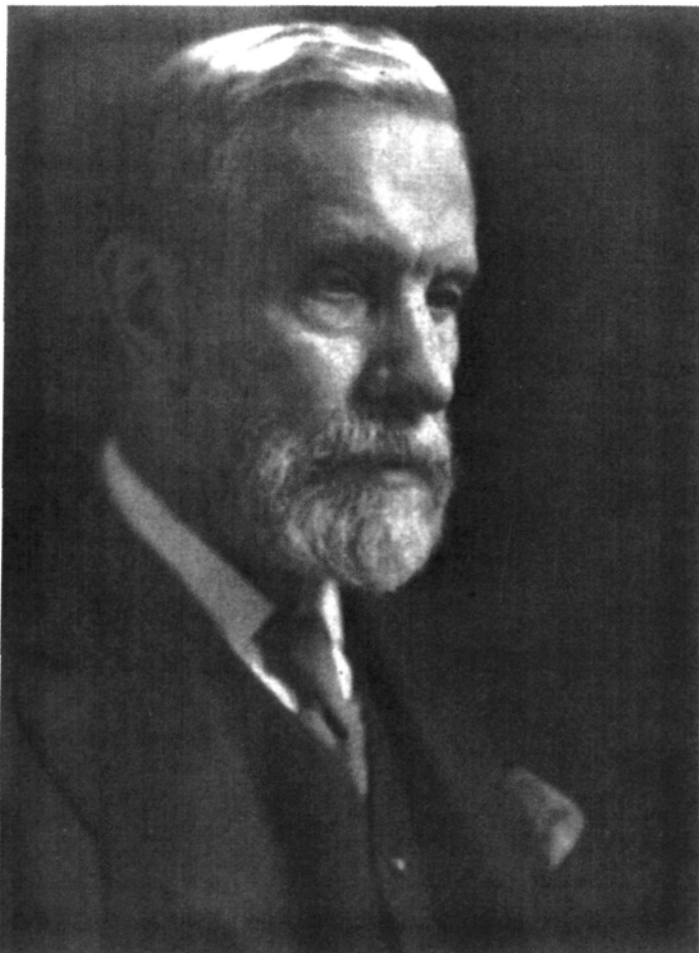
In New York, the driving force behind the Clan-na-Gael was 71-year-old John Devoy, a veteran of the Fenian Rising. Devoy remained as obsessed with Ireland's free-

dom as he had been 49 years earlier when (though only 22 years old) he had headed up Fenian efforts to turn Irish soldiers in the British Army against the Crown. Betrayed by an informer in 1866 and at first condemned to die, Devoy spent five years in prison before his sentence was remanded and he was exiled to America. He arrived in New York in 1871 to a hero's reception from Irish nationalists in America.

Convinced that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," John Devoy saw the approach of World War I as Ireland's hour of deliverance. He and Sir Roger Casement joined forces in the cause of Irish freedom. Casement, a distinguished former British consul, was knighted in 1911 for exposing the rapaciousness of Belgian rubber planters in the Congo and Anglo-Peruvian rubber planters in the Putumayo rain forest of Brazil. Through back channels Devoy and Casement arranged a meeting between the Western Hemisphere's top-ranking German diplomat, Count von Bernstorff, and a delegation of Clan-na-Gael men.

The meeting took place at the German Club in New York City. The Clan-na-Gael presented a bold plan to the Germans. "Their friends in Ireland," they told von Bernstorff, were planning to use the opportunity provided by the war to mount an insurrection against England. Although the insurrectionists in Ireland did not yet have an adequate supply of guns or of military leaders, the Clan-na-Gael stood ready to pay to provide them. The Clan representatives assured the Germans it would be mutually beneficial to supply Ireland with guns and military leaders. Once the Irish had staged an uprising, English troops would be diverted away from the war with Germany.

Von Bernstorff listened with close attention and with what Devoy took to be sympathy. After asking many questions, von Bernstorff promised to relay the Clan's proposal on to Berlin. However, von Bernstorff's wire, sent soon afterwards to Berlin, was not enthusiastic. He believed that Devoy did not really represent the will of the Irish people—John Redmond did, the leader of the Parliamentary caucus of Irish nationalists. And Redmond had pledged Ireland's loyalty to England for the duration of the war.



*Fran Christ is the great-granddaughter of John Kenny. Kenny's important role in the Easter Rising was unknown to her until she undertook this research four years ago. For "the story behind the story" of John Kenny, why her family never mentioned his name, and an electrifying piece of family history—read Ms. Christ's account on page 25 of how her research unfolded.*

**(left) John Devoy directed Clan-na-Gael activities in the United States, virtually from the time he was exiled from Ireland in 1871 until his death in 1928.** *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (NY: Chas. P. Young, 1929)

Devoys guessed that more direct communication with Berlin was needed. He decided to send the Clan's own written statement, hand-delivered by someone who could present it persuasively and answer any questions. England's control of the seas made it virtually impossible to communicate with the "Central Powers" by postal or cable communications. The challenge was to find someone high enough up in the Clan-na-Gael organization to be able to carry out such a sensitive and crucial mission -- who could pass undetected through British security, carrying messages to its enemies.

Devoys chose New Yorker John Kenny for the mission, an Irish-born 67-year-old native of John Devoys's own home county, Kildare. Like Devoys a veteran of the Fenian Rising, Kenny had arrived in New York in approximately 1871, after a stay in Australia. He took an active part in all Clan-na-Gael activities of his day, from the famed Catalpa Rescue (of six Fenians from an Australian penal colony) to the founding of the Land League and the Friends of Irish Freedom.

Among Kenny's many contributions to the cause of Irish freedom in America, he served as president for several terms of the Clan-na-Gael's Napper Tandy Club. During one of those terms of office as president, in 1881, he swore a newcomer from Ireland into the Clan-na-Gael, 23-year-old Thomas B. Clarke. Tom Clarke, a quarter of a century later, would become the principal organizer of the I.R.B. (and Kenny's principal contact person in Dublin during the Clan-na-Gael missions which are the subject of this article). That, however, is getting ahead of the story.

The year he joined the Clan-na-Gael, Clarke was elected organizational secretary. That same year, 1881, when the call went out in the 1880s for volunteers for the Clan-na-Gael's bombing campaign in London, Clarke approached Kenny to offer his services. Clarke was captured in 1883 and served 15 and a half ghastly years in British prisons.

Undeterred, upon his release from prison Clarke returned to New York and redoubled his efforts for Irish freedom, working in concert with John Devoys and the Clan-na-Gael. In 1907 Clarke went back to Dublin to prepare Ireland for an armed uprising, cultivating individuals within the nationalist movement who believed "physical force" was the only way Ireland could ever win independence, and welding them into the fighting force which became the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

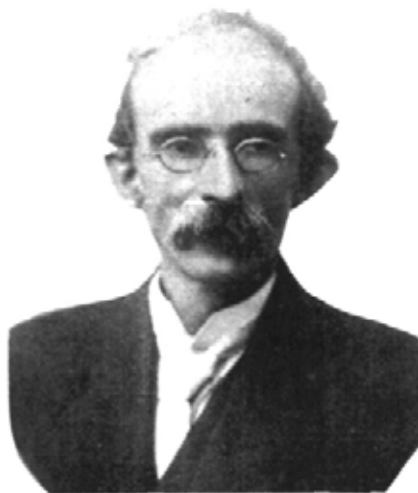
## Envoy to Germany

One of the reasons John Devoys chose John Kenny to be the Clan-na-Gael's envoy to Germany in 1914 was because Kenny could travel to the continent without drawing undue attention to himself. Between 1870 and 1914, John Kenny had made many trips between New York and Ireland for both business and pleasure. From 1885 to 1891 he moved his family back to County Kildare to work for an organizational offshoot of the Land League. He stayed in close contact with the I.R.B., carrying messages to and from the Clan-na-Gael in America. And he wrote often for *The Gaelic American*, articles on current and historical matters and poetry.

At the time Devoys asked him to undertake the mission to Germany in 1914, Kenny, once again, was serving as president of the Clan-na-Gael. Simultaneously he took active part in a half dozen other Irish American organizations. He served as vice president of the Irish Republican Brotherhood Veterans Association. He was a member of the provisional committee formed to arm the Irish National Volunteers in Ireland. He can be credited as one of the founders of the Friends of Irish Freedom. He belonged to the American Irish Historical Society, the United Irish-American Societies of New York, the Catholic Writers Guild, and the Kildare Archeological Society.

As a naturalized American citizen and frequent trans-Atlantic traveler, Kenny would be technically within his rights to carry a communication to a still-friendly country. (The United States did not enter the war until 1916). On the other hand, if detained by British authorities Kenny risked imprisonment.

Devoys and Casement insisted Kenny tell no one of his mission to Germany. Kenny arranged a passport to Switzerland, listing as the purpose for the trip: "For the benefit of [my] health."



**Thomas Clarke**

*Recollections of an Irish Rebel*

## Getting There

Armed with one small bag, credentials from the German Embassy in Washington, two copies of the Clan's proposal to the German government, and several copies of *The Gaelic American*, Kenny set sail from New York August 21, 1914. He sailed aboard the *S.S. Canopic*, headed for Naples. The ship ran at night without lights, for fear of German cruisers, compelling passengers

and crew to go to bed in the dark. Passengers were daily bombarded with war reports and the waters surrounding the ship were filled with British warships.

The tense crossing only got worse for Kenny upon reaching Naples. Although Italy was not yet a combatant nation, all signs pointed to imminent war. British consular

officials would not allow Kenny and seven other Americans to disembark. (They made an exception for fellow passengers Cardinals Gibbons of Baltimore and O'Connell of Boston, who were immediately cleared for disembarkation to attend a Papal Conclave.)

Ultimately immigration officials reversed themselves. After intensive interrogation the eight Americans were escorted to trains and ordered to go directly to the Swiss frontier. Kenny, however, detained in Rome.

Fearing that his mission might be aborted before he reached Germany, Kenny was determined to get a copy of the Clan-na-Gael proposal to the German ambassador in Rome. He slipped unannounced into the German compound, presented what credentials he had, and to his pleased surprise was ushered in immediately to see Ambassador von Flutow.

Count Von Flutow read the message from John Devoy and listened to what John Kenny had to add to it. Von Flutow immediately brought up the subject of John Redmond's pledge of Ireland's support and loyalty to England during the war. Anticipating the question, Kenny gave the German ambassador several examples from Irish history where the ostensible leaders preached reconciliation while the masses were planning rebellion. Von Flutow, well-read in Irish history, could see his point.

Kenny assured von Flutow that the Clan-na-Gael and the I.R.B. together formed a powerful enough force to sway the Irish people towards armed rebellion when opportunity presented itself. (A few weeks later in Dublin, Tom Clarke informed John Kenny that in fact exactly the opposite was true: "We [revolutionaries] are only a handful," Clarke told Kenny.)

Von Flutow showed great interest when Kenny introduced Roger Casement's pet scheme, the enlistment of Irish prisoners of war, captured from British combat units—into the German service. He made notes continuously as Kenny spoke, questioning the loyalty of Irish soldiers enlisted in the British army, and why there were so many. Von Flutow anticipated problems with international law and had other reservations, but assured Kenny that all the points presented by the Irish leaders would be forwarded immediately to authorities in Germany.

Both Casement and Devoy wanted Kenny to meet personally with the Kaiser, although Devoy did not hold much hope that it could be arranged. Reports put the Kaiser somewhere near the front. Devoy assumed that the Germans would prefer to take any messages to the Kaiser themselves.

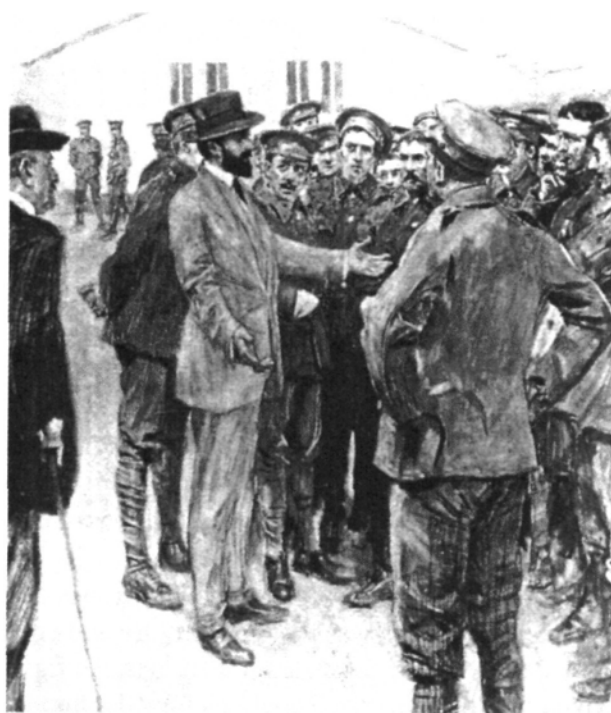
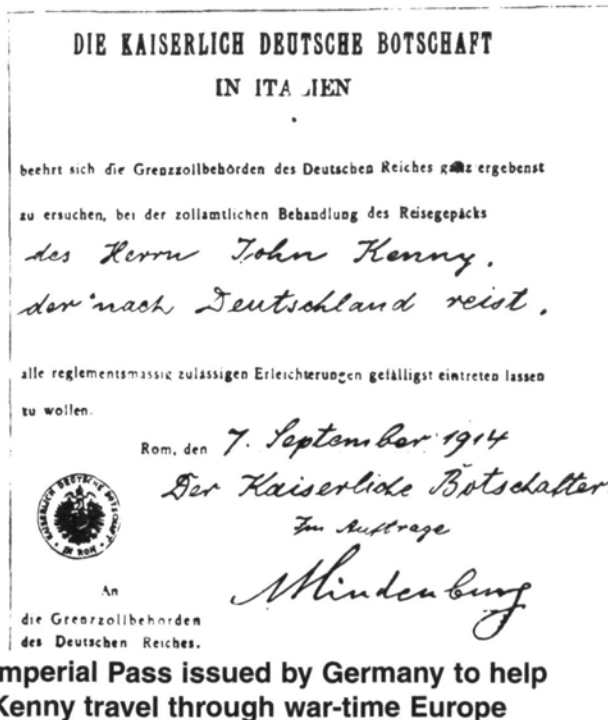
Ambassador von Flutow offered to facilitate Kenny's meeting the Kaiser by communicating directly with Berlin and by issuing him a special Imperial pass. The pass would be recognized immediately by German officials. To the uninformed it would appear to be simply a pass for ordinary state business.

One task remained for Kenny in Rome: both Devoy and Casement were very anxious that Kenny should meet with the newly elected Pope, Benedict XV, who was alleged to be in sympathy with the Irish cause. Friends of Monsignor Brann, a relative and close personal friend of

Kenny, managed to get him an invitation to an important function at the Vatican. But he had to turn it down for lack of appropriate clothes. Efforts by the same friends to get him an audience with the Pope met with no success.

For the next ten days, Kenny zigzagged through Europe. Boarding troop trains with the authority conferred by his Imperial pass, Kenny slept outside on the ground, foraged for food, and came close, but never quite met up with the Kaiser.

Along the way, Kenny



**Roger Casement recruiting Irishmen inside a World War I German P.O.W. camp.**

Artist W. Hatherell



met with Prince Von Beulow, a German diplomat who had formerly served as chancellor. Again Kenny laid out the Clan-na-Gael's bold proposal. Von Beulow advised if he could wait a little longer, his chances of meeting the Kaiser would improve. Kenny instead reasoned that he had fulfilled his primary mission, to communicate the Clan-na-Gael proposal to the government of Germany—and made plans to return to America.

Having missed by just hours a ship departing Rotterdam harbor, Kenny booked return passage via Queenstown, Ireland. In so doing he had opportunity to work side by side with a who's who of Irish revolutionaries in the midst of preparations for what would be known in history as the Easter Rising.

## Pearse, Clarke, and McDermott

Since he had not originally intended to stop over in Dublin, Kenny had no instructions from Devoy as to whether he should brief Tom Clarke of his mission. He went ahead and did so, confident that Devoy would approve. Clarke, after all, was the hub of I.R.B. operations in Ireland. During his stay, Kenny managed to meet Sean MacDermott, Padraic Pearse, and other top I.R.B. leaders.

Although Kenny thought he had arrived without the knowledge of British Intelligence, Clarke assured him he was being followed. Clarke gave Kenny an oral report to pass on to Devoy in America: "Our people have the Irish Volunteer Committee well in hand and will at once take drastic action with the Parliamentary men on it. They will also raise a strong protest at the Asquith-Redmond meeting to be held in Dublin on Friday."

Clarke believed that Redmond's followers would ultimately abandon him. Threats of conscription into the British Army would—Clarke persuaded himself—alienate the great majority of the Irish people: "all of a heap."

John Kenny concurred. If ever the Irish people were to make a stand, now was the time. Clarke urged him to pass on his sentiments when he saw Padraic Pearse the next day at St. Enda's School. Clarke asked him, at the same time, to ascertain Pearse's views about issuing a manifesto.

Kenny did so and returned to Clarke's shop to let him know that Pearse was in complete accord. Clarke passed on the same query to Eoin MacNeill, head of the Irish Volunteers, and James Connolly, head of the Citizens Army, that night.

Having done his best to serve as Devoy's eyes and ears

in Dublin, Kenny sailed back to New York. Devoy's closest associate in the Clan-na-Gael, Judge Daniel Cohalan, happened to catch the same ocean liner home.

Upon returning and debriefing John Devoy, Kenny met with Clan-na-Gael leaders Joe McGarrity of Philadelphia and John A. McGarry, of Chicago, to brief them on his mission. Kenny met as well with Roger Casement, as it happened, in the same restaurant where they had lunched the day of Kenny's departure, six weeks earlier.

Commenting on all that had happened in the intervening weeks, and speculating on the outlook for the near future, Casement was boyishly enthusiastic. Years later, Kenny reflected that Casement showed no foreboding of the tragic fate awaiting him. Within a few days, Casement would sail to Europe on a mission of his own, which would ultimately cost him his life.

## The Second Mission

At this point, the Clan-na-Gael urgently needed to get funds to Ireland to finance the impending revolution.

Devoy asked Kenny in early November, 1914, to make a second trip. He was to bring money (and the promise of more) to Dublin, and to bring back a full report of conditions there.

The trip would be harder this time since the British would be on the alert for him. Kenny proposed that some means be devised to notify Devoy and Clarke in the event he was detained. Arrangements could then be made for Kenny to slip the money to a courier to insure it reached the I.R.B.

Kenny was worried about his passport. He had just renewed it the previous trip, and it was covered with the visas of the ten



Sean MacDermott

*Mr. Spellmeyer  
If held up ~~for~~  
at point of landing & it  
should appear to be indefinitely  
I may wire "arrived"  
& then if I succeed in the  
mission I shall wire as  
already agreed "arrived well"*

Kenny's handwritten note  
detailing contingency  
plans if he were arrested—  
or reached Ireland safely.

*JK*

JOSEPH MCGARRITY, CHAIRMAN

DENIS SPELLISSY, TREASURER

P. J. GRIFFIN, SECRETARY



**Fianna dúthanac na hÉireann**  
(national army of Ireland)

**American Committee Irish National Volunteers**

SUITE 1204, 256 BROADWAY

NEW YORK, N. Y.

NOVEMBER 10th 1914

Letterhead of the American arm of the Irish National Volunteers, the organization which entrusted \$15,000 to John Kenny to take to Dublin, to buy guns and ammunition for the rising secretly being planned in 1914.

countries, some of them hostile to England, he had just visited. With a simple ruse he obtained a new passport, but nearly tripped himself up by forgetting to empty his pockets of souvenir coins, one for each of the ten countries he had visited while crisscrossing Europe. Fast talking—and the official-looking papers he carried—distracted the customs official sufficiently to allow him to slip through.

In Dublin, Clarke and the other I.R.B. leaders were pleasantly surprised that Kenny had not been detained in Liverpool. Spending the next few days at the Kildare Street headquarters of the Irish Volunteers, Kenny was able to meet with almost all the key men planning the embryonic insurrection.

## Planning the Rising

Clarke and MacDermott were preoccupied at the time of Kenny's return visit with the task of piecing together a second and third line of command for the I.R.B. At any moment, they expected British authorities to round up all of the I.R.B. top leadership as the first step towards enforcing conscription. Originally, Kenny was to bring back to Devoy the list of these fallback chains of command, but MacDermott worried that Kenny might be searched when leaving the country. It was decided the lists should be smuggled into America on the person of Fr. Liam O'Donnell. Kenny memorized names and addresses of a few trusted people in England with whom future couriers could communicate if they were unable to reach Ireland.

Because of their long acquaintance, Clarke was very open with John Kenny in his assessments of the men who might take over the I.R.B. if its leaders were arrested. John Kenny brought back to Devoy "word pictures" of these individuals.

Out of curiosity, Kenny asked Clarke why he heard James Larkin's name so roundly condemned around Dublin in the wake of the 1913 Lockout, and asked if religious or anti-Socialist feeling prompted the criticism. Clarke insisted that neither was the case, simply that James Connolly was the labor representative with whom the I.R.B. had relations.

Among the top nationalist leaders Kenny met at Volunteer headquarters on this second visit were Professor Eoin MacNeill, leader of the Irish Volunteers, his adjutant "The" O'Rahilly, Diarmuid Lynch, and Bulmer Hobson. Kenny turned over £3,000 to The O'Rahilly, receiving a receipt from MacNeill. MacNeill also gave him receipts for money

## WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, VICE-PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

DELVIDERE BROOK

RECEIVED AT 821 Sixth Avenue, near 46th St., New York ALWAYS OPEN  
A463NY AJ 9 MARCONI

DUBLIN NOV 28 1914

LCO: GROGAN

0549

104 WEST FORTYEIGHT NEWYORK

ARRIVED WELL

KENNY

1145PM

Coded telegram reporting Kenny safely cleared British Customs, 11:45 a.m., November 28, 1914.

ÓGLAÍOCH NA h-ÉIREANN,

Longpoint: 41 SRÁID CILLE DARA,  
áit chait.

THE  
IRISH VOLUNTEERS

HEADQUARTERS:  
41 KILDARE STREET, DUBLIN.

28<sup>th</sup> November 1914

Received from Denis A. Spelling treasure  
Irish Volunteer Fund U.S.A. per John Kenny  
the sum of Three thousand pounds sterling;  
the Irish Volunteer Fund  
£3000  
Eoin MacNeill.

**Receipt for the \$15,000  
John Kenny carried to  
Ireland, bearing the sig-  
nature of Eoin MacNeill  
head of the Irish  
National Volunteers.**

American Irish Historical Society  
(for documents on pp. 21-23)

brought previously by other couriers, which they could not risk sending through the mail. It was decided that all money, whether for the I.R.B. or the Irish Volunteers, be sent to MacNeill, since I.R.B. money was liable to be confiscated.

Kenny was told a sum of gold had been placed in the custody of two persons known only to Clarke, his wife Kathleen, and MacDermott. The whereabouts of the Irish Volunteer deposits were known only to MacNeill, The O'Rahilly and a few others.

Adding to the tension at Volunteer headquarters, the newspapers *Sinn Féin*, *Irish Freedom*, *Ireland*, and the *Irish Worker* had all been suppressed by the British government, along with John Devoy's *Gaelic American*. Kenny recalled a far-fetched discussion at Volunteer headquarters that a Zeppelin or airplane be used to distribute bundles of leaflets throughout Ireland to get out the nationalist point of view.

On this second mission to Ireland, Kenny spent a great deal of time with Padraic Pearse, the future commanding officer of the Rising. They shared a great many interests in common. Kenny had been one of the first contributors to Pearse's school, St. Enda's, and Kenny had helped promote Pearse's tour of the U.S. a few years before. On this second trip in 1914, Kenny conferred with Pearse at St. Enda's School, at committee meetings, and at his home. He came to know Pearse's brother Willie and mother, as well.

Pearse implored Kenny to urge Judge Cohalan and John Devoy to press Germany to recognize the Irish nation

and announce a German-Irish alliance. He felt strongly that it was the only thing that would arouse Irish citizens from their apathy. Kenny rejoined—having heard it from Devoy, Cohalan, and Prince Von Beulow on his trip to Germany—that Germany could not recognize Ireland's independence without disregarding international law. To be accorded the rights of a belligerent the I.R.B. would have to control some strategic part of the country (the capital, Dublin, for example) and additional territory surrounding it—and successfully administer its holdings for a period of time.

Pearse disagreed, insisting that England and her allies, including the U.S. systematically ignored international law when it suited them.

Back at Irish Volunteers headquarters, Kenny was included in discussions of the coming rising. An estimated 94,000 British soldiers were garrisoned in Ireland. The Volunteers' provisional committee, Kenny was told, could count on only 10,000 men. Clarke was confident that they could take possession of Dublin if they had a few thousands more rifles, but could not hold it unless troops in the Curragh and elsewhere could be kept from converging on Dublin. The

I.R.B. Council estimated there were 10,000 rifles in the country, including 1,700 landed at Howth two weeks earlier (with the help of one of the English political parties—for political reasons—Kenny was told). England had now cut off the shipment of guns, and forbidden manufacture of arms in Ireland, when the Birmingham manufacturer offered to set up a factory in Dublin. From then on, the I.R.B. would have to smuggle in



**Padraic Pearse**

arms in small lots via the Blaskets or Achill Island, whose inhabitants could be counted on.

Kenny was told future arms shipments should all be able to use the English service cartridges, the .303 cartridge, or else be accompanied with an ample supply of ammunition. There were only an estimated 35,000 rounds of ammunition in Dublin and another 30,000 in Limerick.

Kenny was instructed to ask the Clan in America for men who could handle explosives. Officers were badly needed. Kenny was to report, as well, that MacDonagh would be getting in touch with the U.S. Army veterans then living in Ireland, a list of whom Kenny had provided.

John Kenny, in short, was entrusted with information vital to the success of the rising which took place a year and a half later. I.R.B. leaders hoped that via envoys like Kenny, the Clan-na-Gael in America could supply the guns, funds, and missing personnel to make the planned rising a success.

Clarke, MacDermott, MacDonagh, Plunkett, "The O'Rahilly," Pearse—the I.R.B. men John Kenny met on this second Clan-na-Gael mission resonate in the martyrology of Irish history. In addition, Kenny attempted meetings with James Connolly and Arthur Griffith (editor of *The Irish People*) but they were being so closely watched by police that Kenny had a great deal of difficulty arranging a face-to-face meeting. Eventually, Clarke succeeded in making an appointment for Kenny to meet Griffith the following afternoon. As it happened, however, the meeting never took place: Griffith's office was raided, his printing plant seized, and his newspaper suppressed.

Similar events thwarted Kenny's planned meeting with James Connolly. The day before he sailed, Kenny received a message to meet Connolly at 1 p.m. at the home of one of Connolly's relatives on Oxford Road. Kenny waited there some time when Maeve Cavanaugh burst through the door with the news that Connolly "was on the run," having been warned of a warrant for his arrest for an alleged treasonable speech in Liberty Hall the night before.

At the same time he was meeting with the chief organizers of the Easter Rising, Kenny roamed Dublin attempting to gauge the strength of separatist feeling in Ireland. He found contradictory political sentiments among people from all walks of life: "separatists among the so-called garrison, many shoneens among the workingmen, and so on."

Just before leaving for Liverpool and his return voyage to New York, Kenny met one last time with Clarke and MacDermott in the Wynnes Hotel. That evening, The O'Rahilly called to see him on a personal matter. With the exception of Eoin MacNeil, the lives of virtually everyone Kenny met in Dublin during his second

Clan-na-Gael mission would be forfeit in the April 1916 Easter Rising and its train of executions.

Ten years later, shortly before his own death, Kenny eulogized the men and women he met in Dublin on his second mission: "They were the stuff of which is made the heroes and martyrs whose statues adorn our public squares and whose names are canonized in our churches. Yet they were condemned as little less than criminals by some who now profess that their greatest desire is to emulate them. They were derided as visionaries, yet Ireland is well on the way towards which they would have led."

## The Price of Patriotism

John Kenny lived out the rest of his life in New York City. In 1915 he became the business manager of the *Gaelic American*, until around 1921 when he had a serious falling out with John Devoy. He continued to remain active in political affairs, and to publish his work in the *Gaelic American*.

Estranged from his wife and family, he was attempting unsuccessfully to get into a nursing home when he came down with pneumonia and died at age 77 on December 27, 1924, in St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan. His passing was mourned by the many Irish organizations in the city, and a special Mass was sponsored by the Cumman na mBan, which wrote of him:

"The organization feels that in the death of John Kenny they have lost one of their most valued friends, and one of the sincerest, noblest, and most intelligent friends of Ireland who was ever ready to assist wholeheartedly and unselfishly . . . a soul that never valued the material things of this world."



**Artist W. Paget's rendition of fighting at the G.P.O. during the Easter Rising. Kenny met four of the commanders pictured above: The O'Rahilly (on table by window directing fire), Pearse (revolver), Clarke (behind his left shoulder) and Plunkett (rear, in trench coat).**