

New Rochelle: Her Part In The Irish War Of Independence

BY JAMES MCGLASHIN

The Easter Rising of 1916 was a military failure from the outset—with just 2,000 rebels taking over the city of Dublin on Easter Monday, April 24, they held strategic buildings until Saturday, April 29. The rebels were ridiculed and spat at by Dubliners as they were marched to their jail cells, but soon word spread of who exactly had led the rebellion.

Respectable people like Patrick Pearse, who was a Gaelic scholar, poet, and headmaster of St. Enda's School in Rathfarnham, County Dublin; Sir Roger Casement, who had been knighted by the British government for his humanitarian efforts; James Connolly, a union organizer and leader of the Irish Citizen Army who dedicated his life to the rights of workers; and many more men and women that formed a cadre of poetic revolutionaries. The subsequent execution of sixteen men in total shocked the Irish nation and successfully invoked sympathies for the decimated republican cause, and out of the ashes arose a renewed campaign against British rule in Ireland—as William Butler Yeats recorded in *Easter, 1916*, “All is changed, changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born.”

The Easter Proclamation—*An Phoblacht na hEireann*—was written by and read aloud by Patrick Pearse, who is regarded by many historians as the embodiment of the rebellion. Pearse believed strongly in engaging history with the present, and the man he sought to emulate was the executed rebel of 1803, Robert Emmet. Pearse chose to open his

school in Rathfarnham on grounds where Emmet used to meet his lover, Sarah Curran, and in Pearse's writings he referenced the “blood-sacrifice” he and his comrades believed was necessary to save the Irish race from accepting indefinite British rule, just as Robert Emmet's self-sacrifice had kept the

republican movement alive through years of repression.¹

The ideological connection between Pearse and Emmet has been well-documented, and often-referenced are two speeches Pearse gave while on a tour of America in 1914. The speeches were commemorations of Emmet's birthday (March 4, 1778), and were highly charged. Pearse referenced the connections between his work at St. Enda's

and Emmet's time spent there, and said Emmet left a “memory of sacrifice Christ-like in its perfection.” All through this speech, he referenced the past with a connection to the present—Ireland was still unfree, and Emmet's epitaph remained unwritten.²

The following year, 1915, O'Donovan Rossa died in Staten Island. For being a leading member of the Fenian Brotherhood, Rossa had spent years in British prisons where he experienced unbelievable levels of torture, and upon his exile to the United States he was relentless in raising money for militant republicans, as well as coordinating the “dynamite campaign” of attacks on British cities. He spent his life opposing British rule in Ireland but is best remembered in death because of his



Photo:
Patrick Pearse (Padraic Mac Piaras) was a Dublin school headmaster who instilled nationalism in his students. A leader of the Easter Rising, his poems and prose are seen as fundamental to twentieth-century Irish Republicanism. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



Illustration: (left)
An idealized portrait of Robert Emmet, the younger brother of Thomas Addis Emmet, a leader in the 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion. Robert himself was leader of the 1803 Rebellion. He could have escaped following the Rebellion's failure had he not been captured while attempting to see his girlfriend. Subsequently, his passionate "Speech from the Dock" and execution at the young age of twenty-five made him a romantic figure. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

funeral in Glasnevin Cemetery on August 1, 1915. With the Irish Volunteers at his side, Pearse gave the graveside oration, commemorating the life of Ireland's most unrepentant Fenian, and closed with the remarks:

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, think 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.³

Behind the mask of a funeral, this was a subliminal message to the world that there would be a fight for the Irish Republic in the immediate future.

The historical narrative above is widely known and is the accepted narrative of Irish history from 1914–1916. However, a close look at some of the Irish and Irish-Americans living in the suburban town of New Rochelle in New York's Westchester County reveals an entirely new element to just how involved the spirit of Robert Emmet was in the lead up to

the Easter Rising and the subsequent War of Independence.

ONE OF MANY EMMETS IN NEW ROCHELLE

In Christ Church on the Pelham Road in Pelham, bordering New Rochelle, Margaret Emmet's funeral service was held on March 4, 1883, the 105th birthday of Robert Emmet.



Illustration: (bottom)
Margaret Emmet was aged seven when she went to prison in Fort George, Scotland, with her parents and siblings. While there, her father, Thomas Addis Emmet, and a couple of co-conspirators started a fire in the prison in the hope that they would be moved to a prison in a warmer climate, as the frost had become unbearable. About forty years later, Margaret and her sister Mary-Anne were the first Emmets to return to Ireland after the 1803 Rebellion.
Source: Emmet.org.

James McGlashin is from Brooklyn, and currently studies law at the National University of Ireland in Galway. He is an alumnus of Iona College. In 2018 McGlashin led a committee that erected a monument in New Rochelle's Beechwoods Cemetery recognizing the contributions toward Irish independence of the Emmet family. Currently he is in the process of writing a book on the Emmet family lineage. He serves as the chief of operations for The Gaelic American, an online news publication, and is an advisor for the Fenian Memorial Committee of America. ©2021. Printed with permission of James McGlashin.

Illustration: (right)

Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, a grandson of Thomas Addis Emmet and a son of John Patten Emmet. He was born in 1828 at the University of Virginia, where his father had been selected by Thomas Jefferson as one of the original faculty. Dr. Emmet worked for many years in New York at the Refugee Hospital on Ward's Island and the Woman's Hospital, distinguishing himself in the field of gynecology. Despite the demands of his work, he still found time to be involved in a multitude of civic organizations. Source: Project Gutenberg.

**Illustration: (below)**

Justice Martin J. Keogh was born in Wexford in 1852. When he was nine-months old he was brought to live with his uncle in Waterford after the death of his father. He was educated by the Christian Brothers at Mount Sion and came to the United States when he was twenty. In New York he distinguished himself as an honest judge who was supported by both Democrats and Republicans. Source: Brooklyn Daily Eagle.

She was the niece of Robert Emmet, and the daughter of Thomas Addis Emmet, who was imprisoned and exiled for his part in the 1798 Rebellion, later becoming New York's Attorney General, an abolitionist, and both a friend and estate executor for the man responsible for the 1798 Rebellion, New Rochelle's own Thomas Paine. Margaret was a child when she shared three years imprisonment with her parents, and at her funeral alongside her family was the Fenian, O'Donovan Rossa.⁴

Margaret was one of many Emmets who lived in New Rochelle, and just beside the New Rochelle Jefferson Elementary School today is a street called Emmett [sic] Terrace. Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, a grandson of Thomas Addis Emmet, lived in Manhattan but had a summer home in New Rochelle. He was involved in many Irish societies and travelled to Ireland about thirty times to search for the grave of Robert Emmet, to no avail. While always supporting constitutional Irish reform politicians, in his many published papers he challenged his colleagues to understand why there were dynamite campaigns in the first place, and he asked them to understand that England was brutalizing all of Ireland to the point that they had no other recourse. This approach prevented him from

being marginalized as a radical and allowed for his true contributions to the republican cause to go undetected. Upon Rossa's death a collection was taken by John Devoy, another leading Fenian, to pay for funeral costs and transportation of the body to Dublin. The names of contributors were published in Devoy's paper, the *Gaelic American*, and Rossa's wife wrote to him on July 4 giving him more names to add, with the following as a post-script, "I had a kind letter and a cheque for \$25 from Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet but I doubt he would be pleased to have it published. That was the second instalment of a pension of \$100 a year he said last Christmas he would give Rossa while he lived...." She also quoted the latest letter from him, which said "I have searched a time of life where I feel that a man who has lived out his life according to his convictions as your husband has done, and did the work faithfully, he is rather qualified for congratulations as he approaches the end. May God be good to him...."⁵

In New Rochelle today, in the library of Iona College, many books written by



O'Donovan Rossa can be found, and in one of them is a special note from the author to Judge John W. Goff, in recognition of his efforts in helping to free the Fenian prisoners from a penal colony in Western Australia in 1876—a daring mission that took place on the whaling ship *Catalpa*. Goff was a New York State Supreme Court justice and a member of *Clan na Gael*, a group that provided financial and material assistance to Irish republicans. Goff's book collection, dealing with the history and culture of Ireland, was donated to Iona College by Brother Charles S. MacManus of All Hallows High School in New York City, and according to Brother Harry Dunkak, this book collection became the nucleus of the college's renowned Irish Collection in its Ryan Library.⁶ Following the death of Judge Goff, his daughter Sister Inez Hildergarde took up teaching at the Ursuline College of New Rochelle. On the bench at the same time as Judge Goff was Judge Martin J. Keogh, an Irish immigrant, alumni of a Christian Brother's school, New Rochelle resident, and husband of Katherine Emmet Keogh, a cousin of Dr. Emmet.

MEETINGS IN NEW ROCHELLE

Among the many cruelties Ireland has borne under British rule, probably the cruellest is the near eradication of the Irish language, thanks to prejudiced statutes forbidding it being spoken. In 1893 the Gaelic League was established by Douglas Hyde to promote the Irish language and culture in a modern way, and that group is responsible for bringing back native games like Gaelic football and hurling which were illegal at the time. The League reached out to American counterparts for help in fundraising, and in November 1905 Hyde arrived in New York and was greeted by Judge Keogh. The League received a lot of funding from the New York lawyer, John Quinn, and on at least one occasion Quinn and John Devoy attended dinner at the Keogh's home in New Rochelle to discuss the latest literary releases of the Gaelic League.⁷ A seven-month trip concluded with \$50,000 being collected

for the League—approximately \$1.5 million in today's money.⁸ The Gaelic League grew throughout Ireland and the language made a huge comeback, and with it came back the ancient Gaelic tales of Irish warriors like *Cú Chulainn*—perhaps unintentionally raising a militant nationalism.⁹

In 1914 another fundraising delegation from the League would arrive in New York, and once again they were welcomed by Judge Keogh, with whom they spent St. Patrick's Day in New Rochelle. The men that arrived were Gaelic scholars and militant nationalists, Diarmuid Lynch and Thomas Ashe. At the St. Patrick's celebrations in the New Rochelle Freemason Hall, Ashe gave his first public speech¹⁰, and less than a week later Patrick Pearse gave a speech to aid the poor of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in New Rochelle¹¹. Though it is not mentioned, it is likely Pearse met with the Emmets and Keoghs in New Rochelle as he followed the same fundraising path as Lynch and Ashe. Pearse did, however, meet with Dr. Emmet at his New York City residence during the last night of his trip. Also, Patrick Pearse had previously received contact from Judge Keogh. With Supreme Court of the State of New York letterhead, the letter is dated March 1, 1910; it read:

Mrs. Keogh and myself have heard of St. Enda's school from many of our friends. The last to speak to me about it was Mr. Bulfin¹² on his recent visit to New York. We have also had a copy of the school paper which we read with the greatest pleasure.

We have five boys, the eldest 13, and Mrs. Keogh and myself are thinking of educating a couple of them in Ireland. I have read of no school that seems as attractive as St. Enda's or one where the spirit and atmosphere are more wholesome.

Mr. Bulfin promised me when he reached Ireland to write me fully about the school but his sudden death has ended that.

I wish to become a subscriber to your school paper (I am ashamed to say I

Photo:

Douglas Hyde showed an interest in the Irish language from an early age, despite the fact that none of his family members spoke the language.

He discovered many people had an interest in reviving the language, and in an effort to unite their common goal he helped found the Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge). The League soon became an organization in which language enthusiasts, nationalists, advanced nationalists, and republicans came into contact with each other, forging connections that later became prominent in the revolutionary 1916–1921 period. Under the 1937 Irish Constitution, he became the first President of Ireland. Courtesy of Irishcentral.com.



cannot pronounce its name) and will be extremely grateful to you if, at your convenience, you will write me a long letter, telling me all about the school that you think I should know before sending our boys there. I am sure we have a great many mutual friends.¹³

By 1914 a more formal Gaelic League of America was established, with Judge Keogh as Treasurer, and fellow New York State Supreme Court justice, Daniel Cohalan, as chairman. Additionally, another New Rochelle resident and Emmet cousin, Colonel Robert Temple Emmet, is mentioned as being on the Finance Committee at this time.¹⁴ Two years later both Lynch and Ashe would play prominent roles in the Easter Rising, and in 1917 Ashe joined the pantheon of Irish martyrs when he died on hunger-strike in Mountjoy Prison. While Ashe and Lynch were fundraising for the Gaelic League, and Pearse for St. Enda's, they were all involved in secretly raising funds for the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and as one of the main organizers of their fundraising tour, it is unlikely that Judge Keogh was unaware of this, and more likely that he knew exactly who to send them to for funds.^{15,16}

In July 1914 Sir Roger Casement met with *Clan na Gael* leaders, who found him too moderate, but they warmed up to him later that month when he planned and partially financed a gun-running operation in Howth, Dublin. The Howth gun-running was largely a propaganda coup for the Irish Volunteers, as it was done in broad daylight very near the capital. The Irish Volunteers

had been formed in 1914 as a nationalist response to the formation and arming of the Ulster Volunteer Force in 1912. The UVF swore to physically defend Ulster from an all-Ireland parliament under British rule, in defiance of Home Rule bills that passed the House of Commons. After the guns were offloaded at Howth, with British troops en route to make arrests, the guns were brought to the Christian Brothers headquarters on Griffith Avenue in Marino on Dublin's north side.¹⁷ According to Brother W.P. Allen, later that evening Brother A. Hoban answered the door to Eamon Ceannt, who Hoban had as a student twenty years previously. Ceannt asked if they could keep the rifles there for another couple days, and Hoban accepted, then helped him find a cupboard suitable to hide them and allowed a volunteer to guard the weapons overnight.¹⁸ Ceannt was later executed for his role in the 1916 Easter Rising.

FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF WWI

The outbreak of war between England and Germany on August 4, 1914 revived the age-old Irish saying "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." Later that month Devoy and Casement made contact with the German government to arrange a deal, promising an Irish insurrection and thus a second front for England to fight on if Germany provided the munitions. On September 21, 1914, Dr. Emmet agreed to meet with Casement and thanked him for a pamphlet, possibly "Ireland, Germany and the Freedom of the Seas: A Possible Outcome of the War of 1914," which Casement wrote around the outbreak of war.¹⁹ As revolutionary meetings go, there is no record of what Emmet and Casement discussed, but it would be a stretch to say that they did not discuss the business at hand, namely the procurement of arms and a possible German-Irish alliance. Emmet likely discussed the details of this strategy with fellow New Rochelle resident, *Clan na Gael* man James K. McGuire, who lived at 45 Elm Street, New Rochelle. McGuire was a former mayor of Syracuse, New York (a city with a large German population). He was also the author



Photo:
Irish Volunteers in New York on St. Patrick's Day in 1902, near Judge Martin Keogh's house, 570 Pelham Road. These Irish Volunteers of that era were an Irish-American militia group. They were largely a ceremonial unit but did participate in regular drilling. Courtesy of Westchester County Historical Society.

of *The King, the Kaiser, and Irish Freedom* published in 1915, and *What Could Germany Do for Ireland?* published in 1916, which had an introduction by Dr. Emmet.

Dr. Emmet was not the only one in his family involved with *Clan na Gael*. Celebrating the 130th birthday of Robert Emmet, in 1908 the Brooklyn and Queens divisions of *Clan na Gael* assembled under chairman William Temple Emmet, who introduced the main speaker of the evening, Lieutenant Governor Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler. Chanler gave patriotic remarks comparing George Washington and Robert Emmet while noting that Emmet's epitaph still had not yet been written. William Temple Emmet had previously served as a trustee of the Village of New Rochelle when he was just age twenty-one, and he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1904 and 1912. At the *Clan na Gael* celebration, William Temple Emmet stated that the ideals and principles for which the Irish people fought were not forgotten, and was quoted as saying, "If a united front be presented... the object dear to all hearts of Irish patriots will be accomplished. The time is coming when there will be absolute separation for Ireland from

England. How or when that will be accomplished, I cannot say, but I feel sure that it is one of the actualities to which we are coming."²⁰ Alongside William Temple Emmet on the stage of the event were two previously mentioned leaders, John Devoy and Judge Cohalan.

CONTINUITIES IN THE STRUGGLE

All of Irish republican history is full of continuity. While on a hunger strike for political status in the H-Block prison in 1981, Irish Republican Army Volunteer Bobby Sands wrote about seeing "the rising of the moon," a reference to the 19th century song celebrating the United Irishmen Rebellion, which said, "have your pike upon your shoulder at the rising of the moon." A song about the 1981 hunger strike, "H-Block Song" has a chorus, "I'll wear no convict's uniform, nor meekly serve my time, so that Britain might brand Ireland's fight, eight-hundred years of crime." The generations-long struggle against foreign oppression is not full of individual events, but rather it is a common thread through the ages with the revolutionaries of modern times emulating revolutionaries from days gone by, who they see as their predecessors in the same fight.

Photo:

From left to right: Judge John W. Goff, Judge Daniel Cohalan, Eamon De Valera, and John Devoy. This picture was taken on the roof of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan during De Valera's 1919 trip to the United States. The unhappy faces of Cohalan and Devoy may foreshadow the split in the republican movement that De Valera was bringing. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



The Emmet family's generational contributions are a remarkable manifestation of the continuity of republican ideology. The Emmets' post-1803 contributions were not limited to just the 1916–21 period—Robert Emmet's story inspired the Young Ireland rebels in 1848, but Judge Robert Emmet's (Thomas Addis Emmet's son) fundraising as part of an Irish Directory to arm those rebels has largely gone unnoticed. The 1848 Rebellion went ahead before the American counterparts were able to send weapons, so the funds remained untouched until Judge Emmet quietly used them to finance the rescue of Thomas Francis Meagher, a rebel exiled to the penal colony of Australia.²¹

Thomas Francis Meagher later went on to lead the "Fighting 69th" Regiment in the Civil War—the 69th was a regiment with many patriotic Fenians in its ranks. Just before the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the regiment's commander and co-founder of the Fenian Brotherhood, Michael Corcoran, refused to parade the regiment for the visiting Prince of Wales. While Judge Emmet made his case against slavery at the 1856 Republican National Convention, two of his grandsons,

Temple and Richard Riker Emmet, were to perish from illnesses sustained while fighting for the holy causes of abolition and union during the Civil War. Both of these Emmet brothers served as aide-de-camps to Meagher, and provide another physical connection between the Emmets and the Fenian movement. Upon the death of Temple Emmet, Meagher wrote, "I am grieved to the heart to hear this, for I esteemed, trusted and loved him as a favorite brother."²² Judge Emmet died in 1872 and is buried in Beechwoods Cemetery in New Rochelle. In the 1890s and the early 1900s, Grenville Temple Emmet and Dr. John Duncan Emmet, both of New Rochelle, served in the Fighting 69th.^{23,24}

The executions of the Easter Rising leaders in 1916 shocked the world, and many would argue that the most harrowing of these was the execution of James Connolly, who could not stand since he was shot in the leg and lay in his death bed. The British authorities dragged him out of the hospital, tied him to a chair, and had him face a firing squad on May 12, 1916. Without yet having heard the news of Connolly's execution, Judge Keogh wrote to Judge Cohalan on May 12, attaching



a newspaper article condemning the English government's actions against the rebels. Keogh said, "These shocking killings in Ireland efface all party lines and make one shudder at English brutality."²⁵ The Easter Rising proved a catalyst for many moderate Irish nationalists including Judge Keogh—previously committed to constitutional agitation for Home Rule and cultural revival, the Rising's intentions were realized as moderates saw that the only way for Ireland to thrive was to have a complete political, social, and economic separation. Home Rule was dead, and republicanism was reborn.

Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet helped set up the Irish Relief Fund to provide aid to the dependents of the Easter Rising rebels and had a packed house at a fund-raising event in Madison Square Garden on June 10, 1916. Dr. Emmet was reported as giving a \$250 donation, James K. McGuire donated \$1,000, and "Women of New Rochelle" donated \$2,000.²⁶ Also on June 10, 1916, Mr. and Mrs. Keogh hosted a similar event for the Irish Relief Fund with the United Irish societies of New Rochelle on their front lawn.²⁷ Dr. Emmet was National President of this relief fund, and James K. McGuire served as the Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements.²⁸

EDUCATION AND NATIONALITY

In 1868, Judge Martin Keogh was sixteen years old and under the tutelage of the Irish Christian Brothers in Waterford while the Powis Commission was reviewing the Irish educational system. The Commission officials

observed that the Christian Brothers reading and history textbooks were "pervaded by a certain fervid nationality". These textbooks and lectures had the effect of making students of the Christian Brothers "ardent lovers of their country...[and] well acquainted with its sufferings."²⁹ It is possible that this is how Keogh developed his nationalist beliefs. On March 14, 1914, the Keoghs attended a benefit at Carnegie Hall, hosted by Monsignor James W. Power, a *Clan na Gael* member, which was raising funds to defray the cost of the Christian Brothers New York Monastery. The event's advertisement in *The Gaelic American* said, "The Irish Christian Brothers not only impart the most up-to-date American education, but also teach their pupils the history of their ancestors and make them feel that they are not secondary to any other race in this country. The boys who go forth from the Brothers' schools will never be ashamed of their own people, and they will neither be renegades to their race, nor to the faith of their fathers."³⁰

In 1901 the Keoghs had established the Thornton-Donovan School,³¹ and in 1911 Mrs. Keogh was a charter member of the Froebel League of the City of New York, which helped develop kindergarten programs.³² Just a year after attending Monsignor Power's fundraiser for the Christian Brothers,

**BROTHER CHARLES
A. LYNAM**
B.A., M.S.
Assistant Professor of
Mathematics



Photo: (left)

James K. McGuire was born in New York in 1868, and at age 27 became the "Boy Mayor" of Syracuse. He spent many years advocating for an Irish Republic through his involvement in *Clan na Gael* and was the author of two books on intersecting interests of Ireland and Germany. Source: Library of Congress.

Photo: (below)

Rev. Brother Charles A. Lynam, C.F.C. joined the Christian Brothers in 1899 and served in the congregation for over seventy-five years. As a young man, Lynam was a part of the Irish revolutionary movement. In *The Passion of R.H. Brown* (1977), a novelist commented, "Iona [College] was heavily Irish in those days. The Brothers ran the College. I was told that half of them had been wanted men on the other side during the Troubles. I suspected that 'half' was an exaggeration in any case. There was a Gaelic club and a hurling club." Courtesy of Christian Brothers at Iona College.

Photo: Colonel Robert T. Emmet was born in New Rochelle in 1854. He attended West Point, graduating in 1877. Leading an all-black "Buffalo Soldier" regiment with allied Navajo scouts against Victorio, an Apache chief who led a campaign against U.S. forces, Mexican forces, and the civilian settler population, Emmet received a Medal of Honor for providing cover for his men while facing an enemy force of two-hundred men. His sisters Rosina, Jane, and Lydia were all artists. His brother William LeRoy was an inventor in the Navy, his brother Devereux was a renowned golf course architect, and his brother C. Temple was an attorney and amateur sportsman. Emmet died in Massachusetts in 1936. Source: Cmoahs.org.

Judge Keogh and other prominent figures of New Rochelle petitioned the Cardinal and the Superior General of the Christian Brothers to open a school in New Rochelle. The petition was accepted, and the Iona School opened in the Fall of 1916. Years later, it was revealed that about 10% of the 1916 Rising partici-



pants were Christian Brothers students at the time; interestingly, no Franciscan or Jesuit students took part. Several of the executed leaders were Christian Brothers alumni, including Patrick Pearse, who was also a lay Gaelic teacher at one of their schools. Pearse's former teacher, Brother James Madden, also took part in the Rising.³³ Brother Charles Lynam was an active militant nationalist who helped distribute the Howth guns from a safe kept in the Brothers' house in Armagh. Past pupils attested that "Lynam was an ardent Sinn Feiner... during his history classes he emphasised the wrong done us and our country by England."³⁴ His lectures reportedly became more extreme after the executions, and so parents of a different political persuasion threatened to inform the police—Lynam was swiftly transferred to New York in August 1916 by the Christian Brothers Superior General. He made his way from Armagh to New Rochelle and is listed as

one of the founders of Iona College in 1940.

In 1917, New Rochelle resident and Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Robert Temple Emmet met with Lord Balfour and several other representatives of Irish-America to encourage Irish independence, at a time when the British government desperately wanted an American alliance against Germany. Robert wrote to his brother William LeRoy Emmet, an inventor in the Navy, his thoughts on the meeting: "I feel he was impressed with what we told him and by the temperate friendly way in which we told it. So I think we may have helped the cause a little, and I am glad we came."³⁵ The ranks of the IRA swelled and with a democratic mandate in December 1918, Sinn Féin declared a revolutionary Irish government, Dail Eireann, on January 21, 1919, and the War of Independence began.

DIFFICULTY IN ASSESSING ACTIVITIES

It is difficult to assess how involved certain people were in revolutionary activities because, if they were good at covering their tracks, then there is no record of their actions. For example, Edmund Downey, the IRA Treasurer during the War of Independence, was in contact with Judge Keogh preceding the war and following the war, but no records exist of correspondence during the war.³⁶ Perhaps they were not in touch but given Keogh's history of fundraising for nationalist causes that seems unlikely. However, sometimes mistakes are made—in correspondence between Judge Cohalan and James K. McGuire, there is a note which has instructions on who to meet, featuring some names that are definitely real and others that could be aliases.³⁷ It says (with directions to addresses omitted):

This sheet [should] be destroyed and photo should not be taken away.

*James McHugh, Gresham Hotel
Denis J. Lynch, Jones Road Distillery
("D.W.D.")...His wife's name is Alice Lynch³⁸*

Mrs. Kathleen Clarke, 10 Richmond Road³⁹

Failing the foregoing my sister in law Carmel Quinn⁴⁰ may be able to do the

needful. She can be found at Newell Bros The Blouse House on Grafton St near Stephens Green. (Newell has, I think, two houses on Grafton St) Enter her name in your notebook as Carmel Newell



[preceding sentence is underlined.]

Make written memo of the following

£ 3 . 2 . 8

7 . 15 . 0

£ 16 . 19 . 1

If sent to Collins⁴¹ from Mr. Lee he will know that the bearer is in touch with me.

Destroy this sheet. Any names and addresses should only be written in camouflaged form—if at all.

This being a small, brief, handwritten document that should have been destroyed, it does not have a name on it, nor is it dated. With sums of money, code, and the names of IRA volunteers and sympathizers, it is clear that these men were involved in some sort of underground operation. However, it is impossible to determine for sure the extent of their actions. Thanks to analysis by Diarmuid Lynch's grand-nephew, Ruairi Lynch, it has been determined that Diarmuid Lynch wrote this note, but the carrier of the note has not yet been identified. Ruairi also pointed out that since James McHugh was in Ireland as a representative of *Clan na Gael* from June to July 1921, this mission must have occurred during that time period in the lead up to the truce declared July 11, 1921.⁴²

In 1919, while the war against foreign oppression was once again waged in Ireland, Eamon De Valera, President of the *Dail Eireann*, escaped from prison and stayed in New Rochelle for a time with McGuire, and met with an Irish republican fundraiser, John F. Moore, at 53 Montgomery Place, New Rochelle, a home now inhabited by the Christian Brothers of Iona College.⁴³ That same year Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet died at the age of 90. He wished for his body to be buried in Dublin, but it was not permitted by the British government, so he was buried in White Plains. Upon the establishment of the Irish Free State, the body of Emmet was at last brought to lie among Ireland's patriot dead in Glasnevin Cemetery in September 1922. A lengthy article was written about this monumental funeral and burial. A portion of it states:

...Although the President of the Free State was present at the requiem mass with some members of his administra-



tion, the little cortege at the grave was chiefly composed of Republicans. These included the widows of the Easter Rising in Ireland and the Republican members not in jail or serving the IRA. Count Plunket who lost a son in Easter Week and has at present two sons in

Photo: (left)
Eamon DeValera's visit to Moore home at 53 Montgomery Place in New Rochelle in 1919: Front row: Colin Moore; Middle row (left to right): Marjorie, Ellen, and Rosamond Moore; Back row (left to right): De Valera, John F. Moore, and Sean Nunan (De Valera's secretary and a registrar of the Dail Eireann Loan). Courtesy of Christian Brothers at Iona College.

Photo: (below)
The unveiling of the Emmet Family Monument in Beechwoods Cemetery in New Rochelle, 2018. From left to right: Rick Palladino (Director of Libraries, Iona College), James McGlashin, and Brother Joseph Morgan (Iona College) C.F.C. Courtesy of James McGlashin.

Photo: (right)
Brother Charles B. Quinn, C.F.C. While at Iona College he was Professor of English, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and Executive Vice President. He served as Grand Marshal of the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1982. He was born in Massachusetts in 1913, and his parents took the family to live in County Clare during the Spanish Flu pandemic. He joined the Christian Brothers in 1929 and returned to the United States in 1949, teaching at All Hallows in the Bronx. He transferred to Iona College in 1957 and passed away in 2007. Courtesy of Christian Brothers at Iona College.

Photo: (bottom)
Thomas Paine cottage in New Rochelle. The property had previously been confiscated from loyalists and was gifted to Paine by the newly established United States government in appreciation for all he did for the republican cause. Paine was denied burial in a Quaker graveyard because of the controversial views he espoused in *The Age of Reason*, so he was buried on the grounds of the cottage after a funeral attended by just six people, including Thomas Addis Emmet. Paine's remains were later dug up by radical British journalist, William Cobbett, and supposedly brought back to England with the goal of re-burying him there. His remains were lost to history after the death of Cobbett. Source: Library of Congress.



Mountjoy Jail was present as the representative of ex-President De Valera. Miss Mary MacSwiney, Mrs. Tom Clarke and Mrs. Pearse were also there. The last evening that Padraic Pearse spent in New York before the Easter Week Rising he passed with Dr. Emmet. As he left that night to sail for Ireland his last words to Dr. Emmet were "You may never see me again, but if not you will know that we are following the

steps of Robert Emmet." Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet loved to recall that evening. The young man Pearse did not follow him to the grave in Ireland but his aged mother was there. Laurence Ginnell the veteran fighter and several Republican TD's were joined with the dark robed women in praying in Gaelic over the casket when the religious ceremony was over at the graveside.⁷⁴⁴

As the war for Irish independence drew to a close, the British weaponized the peace treaty to satisfy their age-old tactic of divide and conquer to factionalize the Republican movement. The tactic split the movement in America as well. McGuire, Cohalan, Devoy, and De Valera all took sides and picked fights over who was to receive what money, and at its most crucial moment the united front was decimated. Still, it is interesting to see how a small town like New Rochelle played such a notable, yet unnoticed, role in the Irish struggle for independence. In 2018 a memorial was erected in honor of the Emmets' contributions in America and Ireland at their family plot in Beechwoods Cemetery, New Rochelle. It was erected by a committee led by the author with assistance from the Emmet family, Iona College, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. From the 1940s through the 1970s, Iona



College hosted an Irish music festival dedicated to the rebels of 1916; this tradition was revived by the local AOH T.A. Emmet Division 17 in September 2019.

WHO YOU MEET IN NEW ROCHELLE

In New Rochelle you never know when you might meet someone connected with the Irish struggle. When I first started researching the Emmets in Iona College's Ryan Library in 2016, I met Jim Lonergan, whose grandfather came to America while "on-the-run" for being an IRA volunteer during the War of Independence. For over twenty years James Francis Freyne taught accounting at Iona College. He died in 1974 at age seventy-three, but as a young man he was an IRA volunteer during the war and took part in the burning of the Customs House.⁴⁵ Also an Iona College professor for many years, Professor Edward F. Leonard was a long-time New Rochelle resident who was a staunch supporter of the republican movement through The Troubles, and who aptly compared Britain's Special Powers Acts of that period to the Coercive Acts of the 1770s.⁴⁶ At Holy Family Church on Clove Road, you might meet Monsignor Patrick Carney, whose father was hidden by Benedictine nuns in Kylemore Abbey while being pursued by the Black and Tans.⁴⁷ A former member of Michael Collins' legendary "Squad," Seán Lemass visited New Rochelle in 1953 to accept an honorary Doctor of Laws from Iona College during his term as *Tánaiste*. Monsignor Patrick J. Temple, who passed away in 1972, was a priest at Holy Family Church and St. Gabriel's Parish, and during this time he had correspondence with at least one Irish Republican leader, namely John Devoy.⁴⁸ Brother Charles Quinn of Iona College, who passed away in 2007, has been described as being a "firm disciple of Padraig Pearse." A kind man who would teach the Gaelic language during his lunch hour, Quinn donated many books to the Irish section of Ryan Library, and his advice was consistently sought by activists within the Irish Republican movement in America throughout The Troubles.

Knowing this, I encourage readers to take full advantage of the Irish section of Ryan Library, which is impressive, and has been made even better thanks to a recent donation of 150 historical books by Christopher Emmet, a descendant of United Irishman, Thomas Addis Emmet, who used to visit his friend Thomas Paine in New Rochelle many years ago.

Endnotes

- 1 Pearse, Patrick. "The Murder Machine."
- 2 Robert Emmet is best remembered for his speech from the dock; after receiving his death sentence he famously said "Let no man write my epitaph, until my country stands among the nations of the earth! Then and not till then, let my epitaph be written."
- 3 O'Donnell, Ruan. "16 Lives: Patrick Pearse." O'Brien Press Ltd. 2016. Page 121.
- 4 *The New York Times*, Mar 04, 1883. Page 14.
- 5 National Library of Ireland, "Letter from Mary Jane O'Donovan-Rossa to John Devoy regarding subscriptions to the Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa Testimonial Fund, and quoting a letter from Thomas Addis Emmet." John Devoy Papers, Call Number: MS 18,009/12/1.
- 6 Dunkak, Harry M. "The Charles B. Quinn Irish Collection: A Source for the Study of Irish History and Culture." *New York Irish History*, Volume 24. 2010.
- 7 Tansill, Charles C. *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom*. Devin-Adair Publications, 1957. Pages 126–127.
- 8 Lynch, Ruairí. "The Gaelic League: Ireland, America and the Fund Raising Tours 1905–1915."
- 9 While defending the northern province of Ulster from foreign plunderers, *Cú Chulainn* was so ferocious in battle that his opponents feared to confront him. He was dying as he tied himself to a standing rock, and his opponents did not approach him until a raven landed on his shoulder, indicating he was dead. The story was written around the first century A.D.
- 10 Diary of Thomas Ashe.
- 11 O'Donnell, Ruan. "16 Lives: Patrick Pearse." O'Brien Press Ltd. 2016.

- 12 William Bulfin was an Irish reporter based out of Argentina, and was fundraising in the U.S. for the *Sinn Féin* newspaper when he became ill. He had been travelling with The O'Rahilly, a founding member of the Irish Volunteers. William's son, Eamon Bulfin, a pupil of Patrick Pearse and later a teacher at St. Enda's, fought in the Easter Rising, as did The O'Rahilly, who was killed in action.
- 13 Pearse Papers, "Typescript letter from Martin J. Keogh, New York, to Padraic Pearse." March 1, 1910. National Library of Ireland.
- 14 Lynch. *Ibid.*
- 15 Lynch. *Ibid.*
- 16 BMH. WS Ref #: 84, Witness: Bulmer Hobson, Member Supreme Council IRB, 1915; General Secretary IV, 1916; Founder *Fianna Éireann* 1902 (Belfast) and 1909 (Dublin). Page 1.
- 17 For over twenty years, Iona College had their Irish study-abroad program operate out of the Christian Brother's school in Marino.
- 18 Coldrey, Br. Barry. *Faith and Fatherland*. Pages 259–260.
- 19 "Letter from Thomas Addis Emmet to Roger Casement thanking him for the pamphlet and expresses willingness to meet up." Sept. 21, 1914, Joseph McGarrity Papers. National Library of Ireland. Call Number: MS 17,582/1/14
- 20 "Brooklyn Irishmen Honor Robert Emmet." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Feb. 24, 1908.
- 21 *The Catholic Advance*, Dec. 25, 1902. Page 4.
- 22 *New York Herald*, August 11, 1862.
- 23 *New-York Tribune*, Nov. 18, 1899. Page 12.
- 24 *The Courier-News*, Nov. 17, 1923. Page 11.
- 25 Cohalan-McGuire Papers, American Irish Historical Society.
- 26 "DENOUNCES BRITISH FOR EXECUTING IRISH: Bourke Cockran Stirs Madison Square Garden Meeting Called in Protest. BIG RELIEF FUND RAISED Rev. Dr. Beril Says There Can Be No Alliance Between the United States and England." *New York Times*, June 11, 1916. Page 12.
- 27 "Foy Sells Ham to Aid Irish: Actor in Auctioneer's Role at Fete at Justice Keogh's Home." *New York Times*, June 11, 1916. Page 12.
- 28 "The Fatherland," Volume 4, p. 299. (The Fatherland Corporation, New York) 1916.
- 29 Coldrey, Pages 113–114
- 30 *The Gaelic American*. March 14, 1914.
- 31 <http://td.edu/history/>
- 32 Report of the Education Department. University of the State of New York, 1911.
- 33 Coldrey, Pages 251–254
- 34 Coldrey, Page 260.
- 35 Smithsonian Emmet family papers: Emmet, Robert Temple, 1886–1917.
- 36 "Letters to Edmund Downey from Judge Martin J. Keogh, of New Rochelle, New York" 1918–1929, Edmund Downey Papers, National Library of Ireland.
- 37 Cohalan-McGuire Papers, American Irish Historical Society.
- 38 Brother and sister-in-law of Diarmuid Lynch.
- 39 Wife of executed Rising leader, Thomas J. Clarke.
- 40 Sister-in-law of Diarmuid Lynch.
- 41 Michael Collins.
- 42 Author's correspondence with Ruairi Lynch.
- 43 Fahey, Joseph. *James K. McGuire: Boy Mayor and Irish Nationalist*. Syracuse University Press. 2014.
- 44 "Burial of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet in Dublin" Kathleen Brennan Papers, National Library of Ireland. [Incorrectly dated as 1919] Call Number: MS 41,518/1/22.
- 45 Freyne, Peter. "Portrait of an Assassin." *Seven Days*. October 16, 1996.
- 46 Leonard, Edward F. "An American Conservative Looks at the Irish Question." *The Irish People*. February 10, 1973.
- 47 <https://thewildgeese.irish/profiles/blogs/My-fathers-story-how-the-nuns-of-kylemore-abbey-saved-his-life>
- 48 John Devoy Papers, National Library of Ireland.