

# TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY



*Newsletter No. 10*

*September 2023*

**Tulsk History Society**      [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com)



*Members: John Higgins (Chair), Marese Feeney (Secretary) Mike Lennon (Assistant Secretary/Fundraising Officer), Catherine McGuire, Eileen Beirne (Archivist), Noel Sheerin (Treasurer), Jim Dockery, Jody Moylan (PRO), Therese Hanley, Joe Donoghue, Manus Tiernan, Edward Flanagan, Milo Lowry, Marty Brady, Mary Conry, Michael Jones.*

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Looking at the cover it seems quite some time ago since our last edition – the photo was taken only a few days after publication of newsletter number nine. We're pictured at Boyle Abbey and the trip to north Roscommon is covered in our report on these pages. While we've navigated all the bad weather that 'summer' has had to throw at us we've still managed to keep busy, with Phase One of our Ogulla Shrine project being wrapped up in late July (covered below also). Some of our trusted members have also been out working on recording the graves at Kilcooley cemetery. That project has thrown up all sorts of interesting old gravestones (one of which is pictured, left) and has been a real eye-opener. The latest edition of The Tulsk Morning Howl is not long out and is available at our loyal 'agents' who are deserving of a shout out – Tulsk Laundry Services, Lavin's Lisalway, O'Connor's of Tulsk, Conway's Butchers and the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre. We're just after our annual break of six weeks and we hope to have a good autumn, starting here with Newsletter No. 10!



*In this month's edition Mike Lennon continues his research into the history of the schools of the parish with a comprehensive look at Tulsk school. Our picture feature is from the society's first day trip in north Roscommon, while Manus Tiernan remembers a late great man of the parish – community activist, GAA gael and local historian Sean Raftery. A special feature this month is a reprint of a wonderful 2018 article by historian Damian Shiels, with his permission, on Tulsk natives who emigrated to the USA in the mid-1800s. While quite lengthy it really is a fascinating insight into the incredible lives of our Tulsk ancestors. A report of July's Ogulla Mass is also covered, while at the end we reprint the latest 'Morning Howl' for all our digital readers. We hope you enjoy the read!*

THS

## **TULSK SCHOOL 1863-PRESENT by Mike Lennon**

The 1824 Commissioners of Irish Education survey of hedge schools lists one in Tulske Village which was located “in a waste house lent by one of the inhabitants.” The oldest map of Tulske shows a schoolhouse on the east corner of the road leading to Castleplunkett. There were 36 male pupils and 9 females attending who were taught by Edward Neary. He was paid an annual wage of £12 by the parents. Almost forty years would elapse before a national school would be established in the village in 1863. Four national schools had opened in surrounding districts before Tulske – Flaska in 1853, Clooneyquinn in 1858, Clashaganny and Kilmurray in 1858. Local clerical opposition to the government sponsored system of national education was the reason local landlords such as Christopher French, Mary Irwin and Captain George Drought took the initiative in establishing national schools.

Following an application by the patron and manager, Captain George Drought of Cargins House, Tulske National School was established by the National Board of Education on May



1st 1863 in Carrownageelaun townland in one of his uninhabited dwelling houses which had two rooms. It was located about 150 yards west of the church towards the village in what is

now Devanney's field. It was demolished in the late 1990s, but this photo shows some stones remain visible inside the wall. There was no plaster on the walls and it had a clay floor. It was a non-vested school which meant it only received an annual grant for paying teachers and for supplies like books and teaching aids, whereas vested schools were built by and financially supported and controlled in perpetuity by the Board of Education. The principal teacher was 22 year-old Patrick Fallon and he was assisted by Bridget Cullen from February 1864. In April 1869, Captain Drought offered “to give a lease of one rood of land for 60 years” for a new school building and a grant of £240 was approved provided £120 was raised locally. However the grant was cancelled five months later when Drought declined to proceed. The reason was not given. After that, pleas about the poor condition of the school fell on deaf ears. In 1874, a separate school was set up for the enrolled 49 female pupils in one of the rooms and Bridget Cullen was appointed its principal. Patrick Fallon was dismissed due to intoxication in October 1874 and was replaced by Patrick Synan from Cloonygowen, Co. Offaly. In June 1875, Captain Drought, who remained as patron, nominated Tulske parish priest, Fr. Thomas Ryan as manager until he was succeeded by Rev James Kelly in 1878. Soon after his appointment, Fr. Kelly wrote to complain that “the floor was in bad order, rough and uneven, the out-offices were in bad repair and the roof, a thatched one, doesn't exclude the rain.” George Drought died in November 1880 and his widow Anna Sophia became the patroness.

Over the following decade, little improvement was made despite repeated pleas by the manager. Patrick Synan was stated to be permanently incapacitated in October 1886 and he died a month later. The next principal was Thomas Finan. Tusk parish priest, Rev. John O'Brien, was nominated as manager by Mrs Drought in March 1888. Fr. O'Brien wrote to Dublin in 1889 that Mrs Drought was willing to provide a site for a new school provided it was vested in the Commissioners, a condition which was unacceptable to Fr. O'Brien on the orders of Bishop Gillooly. This standoff between the parish priest, Mrs Drought and the Commissioners continued for another twenty years. In the meantime, minor repairs continued to be carried out to the school building, teachers came and went, and letters of concern from the manager to the Commissioners were marked "wait."

The waiting finally ended in June 1909 when contractor Patrick Padian of Camogue commenced building a new school on a site beside the church, which was acquired from the Devaney family by Fr. Michael Monaghan. When the school opened in February 1911, Michael Shannon, Manor and Marcella Greene (née Egan), Steil were the teachers. Michael transferred from Corraslira school to replace James Balfe of Clooneigh who had died in March 1910 at age 28. The opening of the new school ushered in a long period of stability with both teachers remaining in situ until Marcella Greene retired in 1939 and Michael Shannon in 1944. Marcella died in May 1948 and Michael in October 1959. The school managers during this period were Fr. Monaghan (1908-1920), Fr. Thomas Lavin (1920-1939) and Fr. Patrick McGowan (1939-1959).

Christine Gallagher (later Mrs Flanagan) became the next assistant teacher and Thomas Shine served four years as principal before moving back to his native Athlone in 1948. His replacement, Bill McHale transferred from Castleplunkett school and remained as principal until his death in December 1964. Bill was prominent in promoting Irish music and culture and was the local correspondent for the *Roscommon Herald* for several years. Christine Flanagan moved to Castleplunkett school in 1959 and Mary Gormley (née Geraghty) transferred from there to replace her. Mary took over as principal in 1964 following the death of Bill McHale. She retired in July 1987 and died in February 2012. Mary is also remembered for compiling and publishing the invaluable parish history, *Tusk Parish in Historic Maigh Ai*, in 1989.

Adeline Coen was appointed assistant teacher in 1965 when Rathnagly school closed and the remaining pupils were bused to Tusk. Mary Eagleton (later Mrs Neary) replaced Miss Coen in 1968. That was also the year the school moved to the Macra Hall while major renovations were undertaken including the provision of new outdoor toilets. After Mary Eagleton was appointed to Glinsk school in 1974, Maura Hannon became the assistant until 1979 and Margaret Finn served in that position until 1992. Following Mary Gormley's retirement in 1987, Emily Leonard (née Foxe) was appointed principal.

Fr. Joe Kilmartin (1959-1978), followed by Fr. Enda Farrell, were the school managers until 1990 when Fr. Austin McKeon became parish priest and spearheaded a quarter century of progressive development for Tusk and its school.



*Tusk National School*

He immediately sought approval for an additional classroom but the Department of Education wanted to erect a prefab which Fr. McKeon would not agree to. After a long drawn-out impasse, reminiscent of the one a hundred years earlier, he finally won the argument and a major extension was

opened in March 1996. It included not only the additional classroom but indoor toilets and central heating as well. During the building phase, the school moved operations to the GAA clubrooms and the Macra Hall. Fr. McKeon also convinced the Department to appoint Mary O'Connell as a learning support teacher, an innovation for rural schools in 1994. Two years earlier, Joan Higgins had joined the teaching staff in place of Margaret Finn.

Increase enrolment necessitated the appointment of a third teacher, Denise Nolan, in 2000. It was also a signal that another extension was needed. Coming so soon after the previous one, the Department was in no hurry to issue its approval, so a prefab had to suffice until June 2009 when the new classroom, a PE room and a resource room were ready for use. This also coincided with the retirement of Emily Leonard as principal after successfully overseeing soaring enrolment and major disruption during two periods of building works. Emily's assistant for much of this period of growth and development, Joan Higgins took over as principal for the next seven years.

The school Joan took command of in 2009 was nothing like the one Emily Leonard inherited in 1987. The footprint of the school had grown substantially, the numbers attending had doubled and her staff included learning support, special needs and resource teachers as well as a secretary. Joan's retirement in July 2016 followed the death of Monsignor Austin McKeon in the previous April. Along with Emily Leonard, they left an enduring imprint on primary school education in Tusk. Following in Joan's footsteps as principal was Sinéad Hickey until she transferred to Kiltristan N.S. in 2019. Sinéad Parker, who moved from Fairymount school, is the present principal and is assisted by her deputy, Denise Nolan, who has been teaching at the school since 2000, while five other teachers and two Special Needs Assistants plus a secretary constitute the remaining staff.

On April 28<sup>th</sup> 2023, just four days short of the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original opening of Tusk National School, yet another extension was officially opened and blessed by Bishop Kevin Doran. The application process was begun by Fr. John Gannon and the Board of Management in November 2018 and the work was completed in August 2022. The stand-

alone classroom has ensuite toilet facilities and solar panels. Three extensions within the space of thirty years are proof of the commitment from a succession of teachers, parents, managers and the wider community to providing the best available educational facilities and resources for Tusk pupils well into the future.

*Footnote – I wish to acknowledge the 2011 Tusk National School publication and Mary Gormley’s Tusk Parish in Historic Maigh Ai for information in this article. Rathcroghan National School will feature in the next edition of the E-Newsletter.*

### **GOOD ATTENDANCE AT OGULLA MASS**



The first Mass at Ogulla Shrine since 2015 took place on Friday, 21 July last in inclement conditions though a good crowd were in attendance. THS were delighted to have played our part in proceedings, with the completion of phase one of our County Council and Boyle Municipal District funded renovation works helping to make it all possible. Generous donations for the upkeep of the grounds were received at the Mass to the amount of €515 and it was/is greatly appreciated. It will be put to good use!

Pictured (top) the shrine and chapel after completion of the renovation work (and before the bad summer weather!). Also pictured is Chief Celebrant at Ogulla Mass Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran with ( from left) Elaine Nolan and her husband Alan Nolan – who was baptised at the site – and Kay Nolan (née Owens). The Shrine grounds were originally donated to the parish by the Owens family. Hopefully the Mass at Ogulla will become a regular fixture in the local Christian calendar going forward.

**HISTORY SOCIETY DAY TRIP TO NORTH ROSCOMMON – REPORT AND PICTURES**

Not long after our last newsletter was circulated the society had a very enjoyable day out. On Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, we set off early by minibus for north Roscommon from our base at Tusk Macra Hall and packed a lot into eight hours. It started at the Arigna Mining Experience where we sat down for tea and coffee straight away (!) before getting a great tour by ex-miner Gerald, who was terrific. We then went on to Boyle Abbey where we got another great tour of a fascinating place and it was a real eye-opener! We continued to King House for some nice food and ate out ‘alfresco’ though it was a mixed day weatherwise (that’s really the bad weather started this summer). We got a wonderful tour of the house, which has many strands to it – it’s not just the old residence of the King



*On tour at Arigna Mining Experience*

family. For example, there’s a nice area dedicated to Maureen O’Sullivan, Boyle’s own former Hollywood star, as well as a Connaught Rangers room (King House was the regional barracks for the ‘Rangers right up until 1922) while the rooms hosting the ‘Mary McAleese Collection’ are a great chance for locals to view pieces of art and artefacts from all over the world which were obtained by the former president as gifts from foreign dignitaries during her time in office (1997-2011). Boyle really has an amazing history, and our day was rounded off by a lovely walking tour of the town by Tony Conboy. The weather held up (mostly anyway!) and it was a Saturday well spent. Many thanks to all our terrific guides - Gerald at Arigna Mining Experience, Thomas at Boyle Abbey, Mary at King House, and Tony on the town walk

Warm thanks also to our driver Gillian, who did a great job escorting us around and taking lots of photos for us. Hopefully the THS day-trip will become an annual event!





**SEAN RAFTERY – AN APPRECIATION by Manus Tiernan**

As the first anniversary of the passing of the late Sean Raftery of Valeview Kilmurry has come and gone, it is fitting that I put pen to paper and acknowledge a man who was a local historian, community activist, and GAA gael, but more importantly a dear friend. Sean was born in Valeview to Patrick and Sarah Raftery on 22 January 1935. Sean was the second eldest in a family of five children that comprised of Catherine, Sean (RIP) Margaret (RIP), James (RIP) and Mary.



*Sean and Mary Raftery on their wedding day*

Sean grew up immersed in football and won a county junior championship medal with St. Mary's (Kilmurry end of the Parish) in 1959. At the age of 24 he led the team as captain against Taughmaconnell on an atrocious wet December day in Knockcroghery. In those days there was only the Junior and Senior Championships. Sean was the first man from the Kilmurry area to represent the county at senior level in the Connaught Senior Football Championship when he was picked to play against Leitrim in 1958. Sean played for the county senior team until 1961 when injury shortened his inter-county career. Sean continued to play with St. Mary's up to the mid 1960's and then transitioned into the running of the club. He was also the last chairman of the St. Mary's club and in 1970 was one of the men instrumental in the amalgamation of St. Mary's and St. Brendan's into the re-established Tusk Lord Edwards GAA Club. All through his life Sean took great interest in encouraging young football talent within the parish – as I can vouch for – and gave me much advice growing up playing for Lord Edwards. I remember the first time Sean gave me advice; it was after playing Kilmurry in the schools' competition in 1975 when he was mentoring the Kilmurry team, he came over after the game and said 'Young Tiernan when you are in a scoring position take your score don't be dallying around'.

Sean's passion for all things local was infectious. He had a wealth of information on the locality and its people. Down through the years since I have known Sean one gift he had and shared with everyone he met was his time. In this fast-moving world of ours it is a lesson we could all learn from Sean. I have been visiting Sean and his lovely wife Mary for nigh on 20 years and the welcome I always got in Valeview was heartwarming. The dinners, teas and endless hours talking history invigorated me for months after. Sean would take me on a drive around the locality pointing out areas of interest. We shared information and Sean was always eager to learn anything new about the locality and its history. On one occasion I remember driving across Sampey's Bog near Ballyglass townland and Sean telling me to stop the car. We both got out and he pointed to a drain. 'See that, that's where Baslick Parish meets Ballinagare Parish, few people know that'.

That was Sean, full of informative nuggets in relation to the people and places of the locality. Sean's involvement in history was not only local, he was also involved in the Roscommon Historical & Archaeological Society, where his knowledge was sought for article and books research down through the years.

Sean met and married Mary (nee McGovern) on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1964 in Ballinamore County Leitrim. Sean and Mary were blessed with six children – Patricia, Dermot, Enda, Sean Og, Pdraig and Miriam. On my visits to their home Sean and Mary would always talk about their children, and the many and much-loved grandchildren.

Sean was a community man at heart and was involved in all things local during his life. The restoration of Rathmoyle Cemetery and chapel, which Sean had a big part in, was dear to his heart when it was rededicated in 1996. He continued his passion for the cemetery right up to his passing. Other projects Sean was instrumental in completing was the restoration and dedication of the Father Plunkett monument in Drishaghaun during heritage week in 2015. Sean was also on the committee that produced the book celebrating 50 years of Kilmurry church in 2012. He also served on the Castlerea Mart committee for several years. He was a lifelong supporter of Fianna Fail and served as Chair of the local cumann in the Kilmurry area.

Sean departed this life on the 20 July 2022 only seven months after his beloved wife Mary. In the words of Oscar Wilde 'Anybody can make history, only a great man can write it'. That was Sean Raftery historian, community activist and gael.

Ar dheis dé go raibh a anam ◇

## TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY ARCHIVES



Winners of the 2022 Digital  
Repository of Ireland Community  
Archive Scheme

Qualified in document  
preservation

THS are seeking to preserve our  
parish history with your help

All historic documents and  
photographs are sought to add to  
our collection

CONTACT: [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com)

**ARTICLE REPRINT**

*Thanks to the historian DAMIAN SHIELS - of the archive, website and book series on the Irish in the American Civil War – we here republish word-for-word his brilliant 2018 article on John Tiernan and his neighbours and friends from Cargins and surrounding Tulsk townlands who emigrated to America in the second half of the 1800s. This is a little-known tale, and brings to life the real people and faces behind some of the many emigrants who sought a life away from Tulsk, Roscommon and Ireland in the post-Famine years (All images used here are from the original website article)*

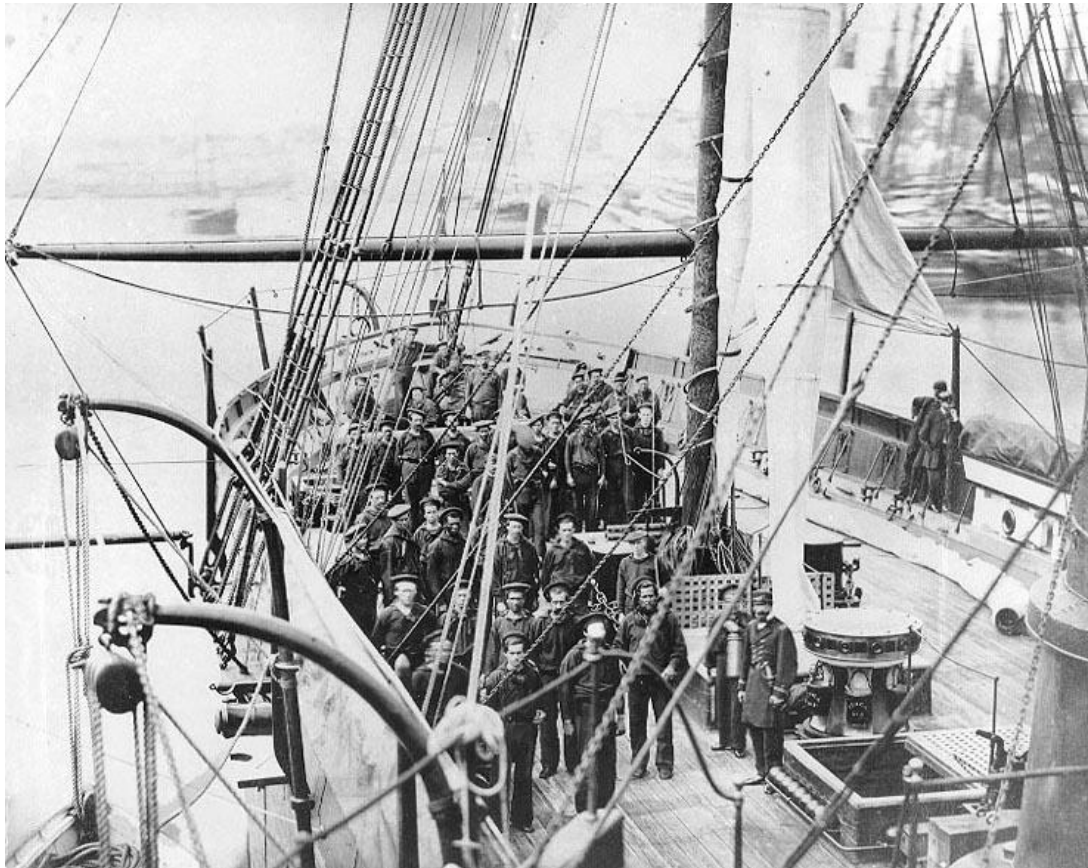
**“HE WENT HOME TO IRELAND TO DIE”: HEARING THE VOICES OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY ROSCOMMON EMIGRANTS** by Damian Shiels



I RECENTLY attended the excellent 2018 Famine Summer School held at the National Famine Museum at Strokestown Park House in Co. Roscommon. I was speaking on what pension files can reveal about the remittance of money from America to Ireland, and the maintenance of local community links across the Atlantic. Not far from Strokestown Park House is the townland of Cargins Demesne near Tulsk. On my journey home, I took a few minutes to swing by the area, to see the fields where a former Union sailor returned home to die in the 1870s. His death led to a series of remarkable interviews with nineteenth century Roscommon emigrants, recorded in the first-person, which offer us insight into

both their lives and the importance of place of origin for those in the United States. They are reproduced for the first time below.

On 9th February 1863 James Dolan enlisted in the United States Navy. During the three years that followed he spent the majority of his service aboard the sidewheel steamer gunboat USS Tioga. The Second-Class Fireman's war was mainly one of chasing blockade runners as part of forces such as the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, before yellow fever forced the vessel north in mid-1864. John left the Navy on 12th February 1866. A decade later, suffering from a lung complaint, he was advised by his Physician to return to Ireland. Many in New York were aware they would never see him again. He died just three days after arriving at his father's farm in Co. Roscommon, and was laid to rest in his local cemetery. The choices John had made on 9th February 1863 caused considerable problems for his widow Ann. In order to claim a pension based on his service, Ann had to prove her relationship to the sailor. But she had not been married to James Dolan, but rather to one John Tierney— her husband had enlisted under an alias.



*USS Tioga in the Civil War. John may well be one of the men in this image. (NavSource Naval History)*

Using affidavits, Ann successfully proved her relationship with John, but doubts about the veracity of her claim led to the appointment of a Special Examiner to her case by the Pension Bureau in 1892. Though a terrible experience for the pensioner (their pensions were stopped until the examination was complete), the detailed interviews they elicited represent an incredible historical resource. Leon Turner was the Examiner appointed to

Ann's case, and he conducted all his interviews in November 1892. In his report he explained that the "claimant is a respectable woman, but very ignorant, living in a large tenement house at No. 494, 9th Ave", further elaborating that the "claimant and all the witnesses are natives of the same locality in Ireland and were acquainted to some extent with each other over there. They are of the same class of society...poor working people." Thankfully Turner quickly recommended reinstatement of the pension, which Ann continued to receive until her death on 15th August 1895. The interviews are largely reproduced below.

**Turner interviewed Ann Tierney on 2nd November 1892:**

**My name is Ann Tierney. My age is 49 years, occupation washing and ironing and my post office address is 494 Ninth Avenue, New York City, N.Y. I am the widow of John Tierney who was a sailor on the U.S. Steamer Tioga during the war. He died in Ireland Jan 3, 1876. I have not married since his death. The Navy is the only service he was ever in. I first met John Tierney about two years before he enlisted. He was courting me when he went in the Navy. I corresponded with him during the war and I always addressed my letters to James Dolan. He enlisted under the name of James Dolan, because he said he did not want his people to know where he was. His mother's maiden name was Dolan. His father's name was James Tierney or James Tiernan. I married to John Tierney shortly after his discharge by the Rev. Mr. McAleer at St. Columba's Church in this city. He never went by the name of Dolan after he came out of the Navy. I had four children by John Tierney but they are all dead but one, a girl around twenty two years old, her name is Mary Tierney. After we were married we went to housekeeping on Christopher Street, near the ferry. I lived there about a year when I moved to West Tenth Street near Waverly Place, where I lived about a year and I then moved to West 18th Street near 7th Avenue. I don't remember the number of the houses I lived in. I lived in West 48th Street, I forget the number, in May 1876 when he (my husband) went to Ireland. His health had been poor and he went to his father's house at Cargin's Demesne, Strokestown, Roscommon County, Ireland. He had only been there a few days when he died of some trouble with his lungs. He died at his father's house. His father's name is James Tierney, but in the Old Country Tierney is called Tiernan. He has a brother also at Cargin's Demesne by the name of Michael Tiernan. My husband had been sick some time with something like consumption, and went to Ireland on the advice of his physician, and it was his intention to return to me upon his recovery or in case he got better. He contracted his disease in the Navy. Before he went in the service he was a stout hearty man. Shortly after his return his health began to fail and he got worse gradually until he went to**

**Ireland. Three days after he got to his old home he died. I claim pension as the dependent widow of John Tierney who enlisted in the Navy under the name of James Dolan. In the Old Country the name is Tiernan...I do not know the name of my husband's shipmates, I have none of his old letters or papers.**

Ann's interview provides much interesting detail. Of the many reasons for enlisting under an alias, John seems to have done so so as not to be easily found by family and friends. Ann and John had courted prior to John's enlistment, and were from the same place in Ireland, i.e. that part of Roscommon near Tulsk and Strokestown. They suffered the loss of three of their four children, a mortality rate all too familiar to Irish immigrants in New York, and also moved frequently within their New York community, again something regularly seen among the Irish, who overwhelmingly lived in rented accommodation. Ann also adds the interesting detail that the family, who were Tiernans in Ireland, were known as Tierneys in America—a demonstration of how surnames could be altered from one side of the Atlantic to the other. The next interview Leon Turner conducted was with Catherine Burns, Ann's sister:

**Catherine Burns, 47, 409 West 24th Street.**

**I knew John Tierney in the Old Country over forty years ago. We were children together in County Roscommon, Ireland. His father's name was James Tierney and he had a brother by the name of Michael. His mother's name was Ann Dolan. I knew the family very well. In the Old Country (Ireland) they are called Tiernan. I came to this Country some time before he did. He came over just about the beginning of the War. He had been well to do in Ireland. His father was a farmer and in comfortable circumstances. He got knocking around here and as he had not been accustomed to hard work he enlisted in the Navy. I saw him about a week before he enlisted. He called at my house on Twenty-third Street. He did not tell me then that he was going to enlist, but a short while after, I don't remember how long, I received a letter from him and in that letter he told me to write to him and address my letter to James Dolan, U.S. Steamer Tioga. The reason he took his mother's name was he did not want his people to know where he was. When he returned from the Navy I don't remember the date, but it was the same month he married my sister...They lived together until about 1876 or up to the very day he left for Ireland...**

Although Leon Turner had remarked that these Roscommon emigrants were "poor working people", Catherine's statement demonstrates that John's father had been a well to do farmer in Ireland, and John had grown up in a privileged setting that didn't require him to do hard work. This tallies with the fact that many Irish emigrants, though poor by

American standards, were not among the poorest in Ireland (who could rarely afford to leave). Catherine’s testimony indicates the close links that people from the same locality sought to maintain in cities like New York, something common to the Irish emigrant experience across the United States. Our next interviewee is Mary Carley:

**Mary Carley, about 60, 539 West 29th Street.**

I have known John Tierney from the first day he landed in this city. He came from Tulsk, Co. Roscommon, Ireland. I don’t remember the date. I came from that place myself and when he came here he came to my house. I knew his people well in Ireland. I lived about two miles from them...I don’t remember the date he enlisted but sometime in the early part of the War I missed Tierney. He was boarding with me at the time. My husband heard that he had enlisted and went out to look for him. I don’t remember where he went but it seems to be now that he went down to Castle Garden, they were recruiting there at the time, and to all the recruiting offices but he could find no trace of him, because it seems he had enlisted under another name. He afterwards heard that he had taken the name of Dolan, which was his mother’s name...He left New York on the 20th of May and died at his father’s house June 4th, 1876 or rather he was buried June 4/76. I was one of the friends who went to the steamer to see him off, because he was in poor health and we never expected to see him again alive...His name properly is Tiernan, but in this Country people shorten it by calling it Tierney. I knew his brother in the Old Country they are all dead but Michael.

**REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN IRELAND.**

Certified Copy of Entry in the Register Book of Deaths deposited in the Superintendent Registrar's Office.—(See Endorsement.)

1876 DEATHS Registered in the District of <i>Sligo</i> in the Union of <i>Sligo</i> in the County of <i>Roscommon</i>										
No. (1.)	Date and Place of Death. (2.)	Name and Surname. (3.)	Sex. (4.)	Condition. (5.)	Age last BIRTH day. (6.)	Rank, Profession, or Occupation. (7.)	Certified Cause of Death, and Duration of Illness. (8.)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant. (9.)	When Registered. (10.)	Signature of Registrar. (11.)
478	<i>Sligo 1876 Garra-Rosnain</i>	<i>John Tierney</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>35 Years</i>	<i>Farmer Son</i>	<i>Born white one month incapacitated as medical attendance</i>	<i>Michael Tierney on notice Present at Death on Garra-Rosnain</i>	<i>1876</i>	<i>James Gillivray Deputy Registrar</i>

I hereby Certify that the foregoing is a true Copy of the Entry No. *478* in the Register Book of Deaths of the above District deposited in my Office.

Office: *Sligo*  
Date: *9 December 1890*

Superintendent Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages,  
for the District of *Sligo*

*John’s death certificate from 1876 (NARA)*

Mary Carley had never met John until he landed in New York, but she came to know him there because they were from the same place in Roscommon. This is significant, as it demonstrates not only the maintained links between locals in Ireland and America, but how those networks were vital to help “bed in” new arrivals from those communities. Many married Irish emigrant women supplemented their income by taking in boarders, usually young unmarried Irish men. Again, Mary’s testimony indicates that these boarders

were often either relations or young men from their former localities in Ireland. The next interview was with Peter Burns, the husband of Catherine Burns, and brother-in-law of Ann:

**Peter Burns, 51, Labourer, 409 West 24th Street.**

**I first met John Tierney at Strokestown, County of Roscommon, Ireland. I can't give you the date but we were both boys together. I knew his mother and father well. I lived about two miles and half from them...I came to this country, April 20th, 1861. John Tierney came over before me. Soon after I got here I again met John Tierney. We were both young men, unmarried, and were very friendly having known each other in the Old Country. It was about the beginning of the war. He was out of work and had told me if he did not get something to do soon he would enlist on a Man-of-War [a war ship]. He had been pretty well to do in the Old Country and was not used to hard work. He told me at the time that if he enlisted he would take his mother's name, Dolan, and that when I heard from him again it would be from James Dolan. Shortly after that I shipped as a Coal Passer on the "Star of the South." I did not see Tierney again until he had served his time in the Navy and had come home, but I heard from him occasionally when he was in the Navy, through Ann Collins, who used to receive letters from him and whom he afterwards married...After he came out of the Navy he married Ann Collins. I was present at the marriage. He lived with her up to the time he went home to Ireland to die...I knew the whole family well at home, knew his brothers and sisters, but I can only recall one of his brothers now, his name is Michael. I think he is there yet. It has been so long since I was there I have forgotten the names of most of them. In the Old Country the family name is Tiernan.**

Peter was also from the same part of Roscommon. In America the two Roscommon men had married two Roscommon sisters from the same locality. Irish emigrants were extremely cohesive in the nineteenth century United States, and rarely married people outside of the Irish American community. Such detail as this suggests that many of them also chose to take that one step further, and marry explicitly within their local emigrant community. Evidence in the files also suggests that brides were occasionally sent for, travelling from Ireland to America with the pre-arranged purpose of marrying a man from their locality. The next interview was with Nora Carroll:

**Nora Carroll, 45, Cook, 1730 Broadway.**

**I knew John Tierney when he was a boy in the Old Country. He lived at Cargin's, Roscommon County, Ireland. They lived four or five miles from me...He left Ireland long before I did. I was in Ireland during the War. I did not come to this Country until 1872. I met him a few days after I arrived here.**

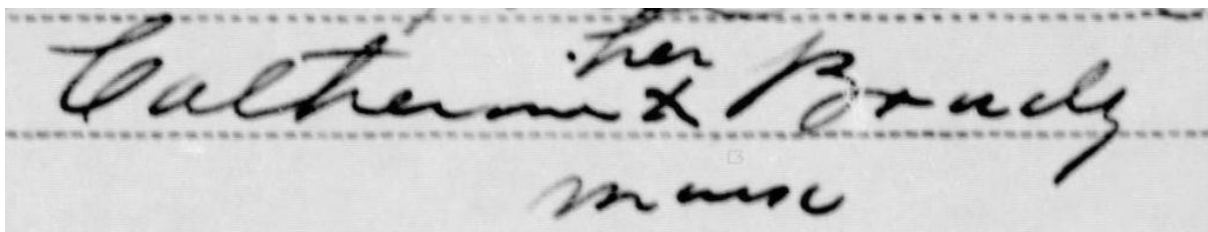


**I know his wife very well. Her name is Ann Tierney but before she married her name was Ann Collins. I knew her home in Ireland. From the time I first met him he lived with Ann as her husband...**

Irish American cohesiveness and maintained links with Ireland enabled a constant stream of new arrivals to join their fellow Roscommon emigrants in New York. The importance of that network in their new homes is again demonstrated here; Nora met with her fellow locals shortly after she arrived, and stayed in constant contact with them in the years that followed. So did Catherine Brady:

**Catherine Brady, 53, Housekeeper, 450 De Kalb Avenue, Brooklyn.**

**I knew John Tierney from the day of his birth. He was my cousin. He lived in Cargins, Roscommon County, Ireland...He has only one brother living now. The family name is Tiernan, although they call it Tierney here. I don't know why they call it so. I lived in the same Parish with the family. John Tierney came to this Country long before I did. I came here about April 1889. I did not see him during the War. I never knew him by any other name than John Tierney or Tiernan. I was home at Cargins when he came to his father's house sick. I can't remember the date but it was in the Summer of 1876. I was present when he died and I attended his funeral. He was buried in the burying ground called Killcooly County of Roscommon in Ireland. I knew Ann Tierney when she was a girl in the Old Country. She lived near me. Her name then was Ann Collins...I did hear while in the Old Country that he had gone by the name of Dolan, but I never asked him anything about that for when he came home he was too sick to talk much. He died three days after he got to his father's house. I know what I have stated to be facts because I know the family in Ireland and Tierney's family here. My maiden name was Tiernan.**

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads "Catherine Brady" and is written on a piece of paper with horizontal dashed lines. Below the main signature, the word "maise" is written in a smaller, less legible cursive hand.

*The majority of these Roscommon emigrants were illiterate. This is Catherine Brady's mark, appended to her statement (NARA)*

By 1892, there were Roscommon people in the Empire City who had been in Ireland when Ann's husband died, and remembered it. Indeed Catherine Brady had even seen him sick in his father's house, and attended his funeral at Kilcooly graveyard. Catherine also spoke of what she had heard about John's service while still in Ireland, testament to the constant

correspondence between this part of Roscommon and New York. Another who remembered the veteran's death in Ireland was Thomas Byrne:

**Thomas Byrne, 25, Laborer, 356 East 13th Street.**

I was at home at Cargins, Ireland when James [sic.] Tiernan died. I attended his funeral. I don't remember the date of his death but it was about fifteen years ago. I did not know him very long before he died. I have known his father and mother since my childhood...I don't know the cause of James [sic.] Tiernan's death but he came home from America very sick and died shortly after he arrived at his father's house. He was buried at Kilcooly. The family are called Tiernan at home but over here they call it Tierney.



*Cargin's Demesne, Roscommon, where John came home to die (Damian Shiels)*

The final interview is with James Connolly, who provided evidence that indicates how men from the same locality maintained close friendships in their new homes, and often worked together:

**James Connolly, 48, Sailor, 310 West 42nd Street.**

I first met John Tierney at home in Roscommon, Ireland about 1858 or 1859 also knew him when he lived at Cargins, Ireland, sometime before he emigrated to this country. I knew his parents...I landed in this City from Ireland in September 1863. I don't know when John Tierney came over. I did not see [him] again until after the close of the War, in the Fall of 1866. We

were friendly. I lived then [at] 409 West 24th Street. He used to visit there and I met him out often...We were working together for the same firm here in New York in 1866, weighing logs for Flandran and Hardy. We were quite intimate. He got me the job. Being from the same place at home and working in the same place, we were often together. I did not know Ann Tierney before she married although I knew her people in the Old Country. Her father's name was Martin Collins.

The series of interviews recorded as part of the Examination into Ann Tiernan's case are a perfect example of the incredible value of Civil War pension files for the study of Irish emigration. They firmly indicate the key importance of locality of origin, and how maintained links across decades led to a continual relationship between these intertwined communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Aside from describing an extremely poignant story of a veteran going home to die, they allow us a rare opportunity to "hear" the voices of these poor people, the majority of whom were illiterate. That alone makes them an invaluable resource.



*Kilcooley Graveyard, where John Tiernan was laid to rest (Image Courtesy of Historic Graves)*

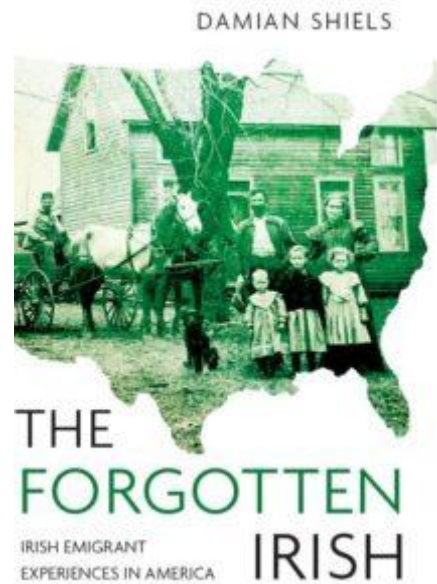
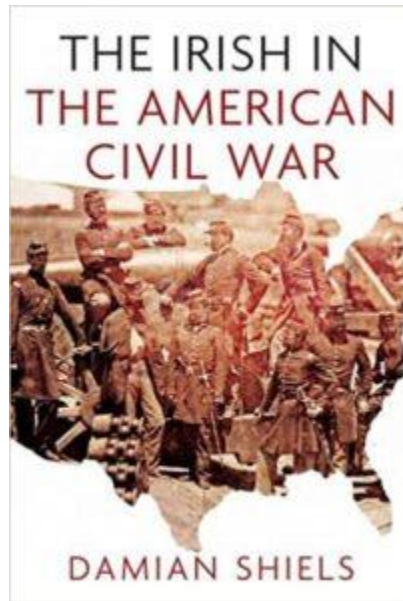
**\*None of my work on pensions would be possible without the exceptional effort in the National Archives [of America] to digitize this material and make it available online. A team of archivists from NARA supported by volunteers have enabled access to this treasure trove of historical information. To learn**

more about the Irish who emigrated and fought in the American Civil War follow the link at:

<https://irishamericancivilwar.com/>



Damian Shiels' books includes *The Irish in the American Civil War* and *The Forgotten Irish* available for purchase online



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## *TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY*

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### *Membership*

*We hope you have enjoyed the September edition of our newsletter. New members are most welcome to join the Society. If you wish to do so, please email us on [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com). Annual fees are €30 for adults and €10 for students. We hope you all have a wonderful autumn!*





# THE TULSK MORNING HOWL

August 2023

Bulletin No. 5



The following extract is from the book *Percy French and his Songs* by James N. Healy, published in 1966.

William Percy French was born on the 1st May, 1854 at the family residence, Cloonyquin House, in the midlands of Ireland, about ten miles from the town of Roscommon, and two miles from the Tusk Cross-roads on the Castlebar-Ballina road. His father was Christopher French, a scholarly man who was a Doctor of Law, and a Justice of the Peace. His mother came from Carrick-on-Shannon, a town in pretty surroundings about twenty miles to the north of Roscommon. She was the daughter of the Rev. William Percy, who was the Protestant Rector of the town.

The French family settled in Galway in Elizabethan times, and moved in the 17th century to Cloonyquin. There, they had a fine estate, and so, for many years, were part of the 'landlord' class unpopular with the Irish peasantry because of the hard application of the tenantry laws. This disaffection was the

cause of much trouble but the Frenchs had a reputation as 'good' landlords, and the good relationship of the family with their tenantry was the beginning of the love and understanding which Percy French developed for the people of the land. French had a happy boyhood around the countryside of his home in Roscommon.

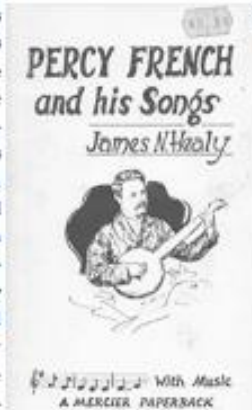
From these days, wandering around fields and misty bogs of that part of Ireland in which his youth was centred, he derived a love of the countryside and its people which expressed itself later on in the delicate water paintings and his many songs. He loved animals; disliked

people who were unkind to them; and in early years through the fashion of musical evenings spent in his own and in neighbours' houses, developed a talent for music and improvisation.


Many of the older generation will remember the little figure with flowing white hair and moustache who came to entertain them at Bundoran, Kilkee or others of the many seaside places, for it was an event of his time when Percy French came to town—whether the town was Dublin or London: Lisdoonvarna or New York. They heard him maybe once or twice a year, and then he was gone over the next horizon with his banjo, his bicycle and box of coloured chalks: leaving them happy for the humming of a new ballad, or with revived memories of one they had heard before.

Percy French was a remarkable person: a member of the gentry who became a wandering professional troubadour, and who had all the artistic talents at

his command— he was verse-maker and composer, artist and singer: storyteller par excellence. It is perhaps forgotten, or not realised, that he was one of the most popular entertainers of his time with a solo performance which lasted over two hours, and for which he wrote all his own material: an easy-going, amiable man whose inner strength, nevertheless, enabled him to deal calmly with a great amount of tribulation, and in his own surprising way, made a success of his life.



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TO COMMENCE AT ONE O'CLOCK,

## Auction

OF

# CATTLE

At Castleland,

ADJOINING

## TULSK.

THE following STOCK, the property of ROBERT HEVER FRENCH, Esq., will be sold on WEDNESDAY the 17th MAY, 1897, viz:—

Two BLOOD MARES with One FOAL, one Sired to Pilgrim, the other to Paldon.

One FILLY, two years old, by Pilgrim.

One COLT and One FILLY, one year old, by Pilgrim.

A Draft MARE, Cart and Harness.

Two DONKEYS, with Cart and Harness.

**Black Cattle.**

14 three year old Heifers.	3 three year old Bullocks.
15 two year old do.	2 two year old do.
6 one year old do.	1 one year old do.

1 two year old HEREFORD BULL.

**Sheep.**

60 Ewes two and three years old, with their Lambs.	
40 Wethers, two years old.	17 Hogget Ewes.
40 Ewes, two years old.	2 Rams.
40 Hogget Wethers.	Also 6 Sheep-Hooks.

**TERMS—CASH.**

1st May, 1897.

**KILLINA INDUSTRIAL SHOW.**

*From The Strokestown Democrat, November 1919*

Killina Industrial Show will be held on Saturday next, 1<sup>st</sup> Novr. The number of exhibits surpass by far those of previous years and include knitting, needlework, cookery, laundry, darning, patching, butter, etc. A special feature of the show will be the section for school children (presently on rolls) which include sewing and knitting for which very good money prizes will be given; arts and crafts, etc. All exhibits, sent by post to the president Rev M Keane, will be in their proper place on day of show. The Secretary, Mr J J Toolin, in conjunction with the Committee, have the necessary arrangements complete for the holding of this popular and instructive annual fixture.

**United Irish League Branches.**

KILLINA.

A meeting of the Killina branch U I League was held at the Camogue cross roads at 7 o'clock on Sunday evening last. Mr T Rorke, U I, president, presided. There were a large number of members present. The president read a communication from the National Directory re the Parliamentary Fund, and after a short discussion it was decided to forward the subscription to Mr A Webb after Sunday next. A letter was read from the Kilmore branch of the U I League re a subscription for the boy Roche who received some injuries recently at the Broadstone station, which was discussed at some length. The alleged malicious killing of a donkey at Raheen was discussed at some length, after which the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "That we condemn the action of these insignificant people who killed the poor donkey at Raheen in their excitement on the night of the 7th June last." The recent elections were next discussed, and the action of the so-called Nationalists who called the local land grabbers and their connections to their assistance was severely criticised, after which the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—"That we consider the action of Mr Jas Fagan, Elphin, at the late L G Elections as inconsistent with the principles of the National cause. . . . But we are pleased to learn that this action is not going to be overlooked. We also consider the action of the impugned factionist candidate highly improper in writing a letter the morning of the election to the Corraslira tenants stating that all the small tenants on the O'Connor property would have their turf bank free in future, as said turf bank is now let to outsiders and thus disappointing the poor tenants who were coaxed into supporting the candidature of the imported factionist at the Co Council Election." After transacting routine business, it was decided to hold next meeting at Loughauk cross roads at 7 o'clock p m on Sunday, 14th July.—I I M'GRATH, hon sec.

*The above from The Roscommon Messenger, June 1908*

**Back to the Old Land.**

A right royal welcome was accorded Mr. Con Finneran, Flaska, on his return from the States, where he has been for some fourteen years. He has prospered in the land of his adoption. He is accompanied by his wife, and after a short visit to his old home he proposes to visit some of Ireland's beauty spots and then return to the States, but with the hope that when things settle down here he will return and live in the land where his youth was passed.

**Emigration.**

For the past few weeks a large number of young girls and boys have been bidding adieu to the old home. It "may be for years or it may be for ever," and emigrating to Australia, U.S.A., and Canada, in order to earn a decent livelihood which they are unable to earn at home although they have their own Government now. Why cannot our Free State Government take over the ranches in the county and parcel them out to these young men and keep them at home?

*Above from Roscommon Herald, October 1924*

**TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY can be contacted at history-tulsk@gmail.com**

**Tulsk Notes (Co. Roscommon).**

**Tulsk Parish Court.**

The business of Tulsk Parish Court was adjourned on Saturday last to 2nd September in respect to the memory of the late President Griffith.

**Continuous Rain.**

There has been almost continuous rain for some time and farmers are finding it pretty difficult to save their hay crop. A great deal of good hay has been made up during July and the early days of August, but a decided change has come in the weather for the past fortnight and a certain amount of cold accompanied to the rainfall. At one time in the early summer it looked odds on another dry summer, but from observations of the trees in the spring it was evident to an experienced eye that there would be a very wet autumn. Notwithstanding the adverse meteorological conditions, farmers are getting up the hay crop very well, but turf has suffered greatly and the greater part of it will be held in the bogs as it can't be removed owing to the wet nature of the ground, unless removed at once, and this will cause fuel to be very scarce next winter. The oat crop is coming to hand well and promise a heavy grain crop, and turnips have recovered their early failure. The blight is apparent in nearly on all potato fields, but in a slight degree where the crop was sprayed secondly while the "tubers" are very large and an exceptional fine crop is expected by agriculturists.

*Above from Roscommon Herald, August 1924*

**T A I L O R I N G**

— 0 —

**THOMAS O'CONNOR,**  
Ladies and Gents Tailor, Tulsk.

— 0 —

Announces that he has opened a Tailoring establishment at Tulsk, where he is in a position to execute all orders at shortest notice and reasonable prices.

— 0 —

Style, Fit and Finish  
Guaranteed.



*The above advert appeared in the Strokestown Democrat in January 1938. If you know where Mr O'Connor operated from we'd love to hear more! historytulsk@gmail.com*