



# THE FAMINE IN MAYO 1845-1850

**A Mayo County Library Exhibition**



THE GREAT FAMINE WAS ONE OF THE DEFINING MOMENTS OF IRISH HISTORY. IT MARKED A WATERSHED IN THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY CAUSING A CHANGE SO COMPLETE IN THE IRISH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FABRIC, THAT THE PEOPLE'S SENSIBILITIES WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. NO LONGER COULD THE IRISH PEOPLE TRUST TO THE LAND TO PROVIDE CONSTANT SUSTENANCE. NO LONGER COULD THEY RELY ON WHATEVER SECURITY OF TENURE WAS ALLOWED BY THE LANDLORDS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THEY LEARNED THAT THEIR ENGLISH POLITICAL MASTERS CARED LITTLE FOR THEIR PLIGHT. **THE FAMINE IN MAYO** IS A PORTRAIT OF THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF THE PEOPLE AS RECORDED BY WITNESSES IN BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS AND OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THAT PERIOD.



# THE POTATO DISEASE

*The first reports of blight appeared in September of 1845. For one third of the country's population of eight million, the nutritious lumper potato was practically the sole article of the diet. In County Mayo, it was estimated that nine tenths of the population depended on it. An acre and a half of land could provide enough potatoes to support a family for most of the year. Any other crops or animals the smallholder raised went to pay rent. A potato famine was a great calamity.*

## THE POTATO CROP MAYO CONSTITUTION (11-11-1845)

In some cases the damage is found, on digging out the potatoes, to be only partial, in other cases the injury and loss are, very great. However, if the disease could be arrested after digging the damage would not be so extensive as to give cause for the apprehensions entertained. But if unhappily the disease spread, after the potatoes are pitted, to anything like the extent we have heard of in some cases, the consequences would be frightful. Last week large quantities of damaged potatoes were sent into the market, the owners wishing to get rid of them as soon as possible.

## CROPS LOST MAYO CONSTITUTION (25-11-1845)

Large quantities of potatoes that have been pitted sound have, on examination afterwards, been found unfit for use. So general is this that we have heard some gentlemen of experience, and who are well acquainted with the state of the crops in their districts, say that they greatly fear there will hardly be a sound potato in the country in a month of two. We have heard of some cases where the disease had made such progress that the crop was abandoned altogether, as not worth being dug, or the trouble of attempting to save any of it.

## THE POTATO CROP TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONSTITUTION RATHBANE, 29TH DECEMBER, 1845

I, as a subscriber to your paper, request you will insert therein, and that with confidence as to the fact, that the disease is progressing to an alarming extent, and that two-thirds of the potato crop is lost in the neighbouring villages about me. I had fifty barrels of potatoes this year; I took the strictest care and attention in picking and separating those infected from those I considered sound, and all other possible means of preserving them; but after all my exertions I have not ten barrels out of the entire crop safe.

I am, Sir, yours truly,  
THOMAS DAVIS.

## THE POTATO DISEASE MAYO CONSTITUTION (4-8-1846)

The disease presents the same appearance as that of last year, except that decomposition is taking place much more rapidly, so much so that we fear is a great part of the crop is already lost. Several farmers in the neighbourhood of this town sent early potatoes to the market which, when sold, appeared sound, but on being boiled were unfit for food.

## PERSECUTION AND STARVATION THE TELEGRAPH (19-8-1846)

On Monday last upwards of 500 poor, wretched, emaciated human beings assembled, with loys, shovels, etc., at Greenhills, the residence of Dominick J. Burke, Esq., J. P., demanding work to keep them from dying of starvation. Their appearance and their declarations before the God of Heaven - to two respectable gentlemen, our informants - that unless speedily relieved, they and their families would be all dead from starvation, elicited much commiseration from all who beheld them. One of those gentlemen declared to us he cried from pity for their sufferings. The poor wretches crowded round the car on which the gentlemen were seated, as if craving their aid, but offering no violence.

The Landlords are now actually calling for their rents! The drivers are gone forth! - the potatoes are gone before them - The Treasury minute has followed the potatoes - the grain is unripe in the fields - death is now loose! - the green church yards open their graves to receive the victims of persecution and starvation! We tell the Landlords in the present contingency it is foolishness to talk of law, or to threaten their pauper and starving tenantry with military force. Come what may the people must be fed.



The discovery of the blight



Searching for a breakfast



# THE HUNGRY YEARS

*The damage done by the blight in 1845 was only partial and most people had enough to get through the winter. Government relief and local charity also helped. However the year 1846 brought disaster as the blight destroyed most of the crop. Overnight, fields of promising green stalks blackened and the tubers below turned to mush. In 1847, after two successive years of blight, many chose to eat whatever seed they had, rather than risk planting. There was no blight in that year, but there were no crops either. Black '47 saw the advent of fevers such as typhus, which rapidly spread through the weakened population.*

## FOXFORD

THE TELEGRAPH (23-9-1846)

One misfortunate brings another. - We regret to state that fever, to an alarming extent has, at length, made its appearance in this county. Our Foxford Correspondent states, that never, in his memory, was fever so prevalent in that locality as at present. In the villages between that town and the Pontoon, entire families are lying, and many dying. He mentions one family in particular, eight of whom are confined to the bed of sickness, their only attendant being a boy six years old! Several other families have no person to wet their parched lips, the neighbours being in dread to approach the cabins of contagion.

## CONG

THE TELEGRAPH (6-10-1846)

The Rev. Mr. Waldron, P.P. of Cong, states that three of his unhappy parishioners have paid the debt of nature from the pressure of distress, and this in a county where abundance of provisions is said to exist. - From the same place the respected Protestant Rector, the Rev. Mr. Moore, has again forwarded a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant, giving a most appalling description of the state to which his parishioners are reduced and calling upon the Government to act with promptitude.

## BALLYCASTLE

TYRAWLY HERALD (29-10-1846)

We regret to state that on Tuesday last, a worker, named Bridget Thomash, died of actual starvation within a short distance of Ballycastle. It was sworn to at the Inquest that she had not partaken of more than one scanty meal per day, for the last fortnight, and on some occasions she had nothing whatever to support nature. There are hundreds of poor creatures in the same locality who are similarly circumstanced, and if immediate relief is not afforded they, too, shall meet with the same dreadful death.

## LACKEN

MAYO CONSTITUTION (22-12-1846)

On Friday the coroner held an inquest on the body of John Ruane of Lacken. Deceased was found on Thursday, by a little girl, near the chapel of Lacken, lying dead on the footpath. He belongs to a colony of fishermen, who were comfortable in their own way, before the present calamity, but are now scattered throughout the country. The jury returned a verdict of death from starvation.

## ROBEEN

MAYO CONSTITUTION (22-12-1846)

**MORE STARVATION** - On the 16th instant, Mr. Rutledge, coroner, held an inquest at Robin, on the body of Catherine Walsh, who died of absolute starvation. One of the witnesses deposed that the deceased was able to work on the roads until the inclement weather set in, when, from her age, she was unable to withstand the cold, and therefore she could not procure food. Dr. Little declared the cause of her death to be from the absolute want of the necessaries of life.

## CROSSMOLINA

MAYO CONSTITUTION (22-12-1846)

On Tuesday last, Mr. Atkinson, Coroner, held an inquest at Crossmolina, on the body of Bernard Regan, son of a butcher, who was in the employment of Messrs. Russell of Limerick. Being out of employment, and having been refused admittance there, he made his way to Galway - together with his seven children - where they were also denied poorhouse relief. They then begged their way to Crossmolina, where the boy died. After the examination of Dr. McNair, and the father and mother of deceased the jury returned a verdict that death was caused by want of food.

## INVER

TYRAWLY HERALD (27-5-1847)

In some of the remote parts of this Union, particularly in the barony of Erris, disease is committing serious havoc. On Monday, the 17th inst., in the townland of Inver, in the barony referred to, there were no less than thirty-two human beings dead - dead of famine - dead of pestilence produced and propagated by want. The deaths in this district, arising from destitution and its consequences, are awfully numerous, and of daily occurrence. Even sudden deaths are now of almost momentary frequency, so worn and exhausted are the physical energies of the poor people. On Tuesday last a wretched man dropped dead at Crosspatrick, near Killala, from mere destitution. This is a fearful state of things and what renders it doubly so is its pervading generality.



# RESPONSE FROM LANDLORDS

*At the beginning of the Famine, in 1845, and continuing into 1846, many landlords reacted with compassion by reducing or deferring rent. Some provided funds to alleviate the starvation and continued to do so throughout the duration. The charity of others did not endure and, by 1848, many were enforcing wholesale eviction.*



George, 3rd Marquis of Sligo, 1820-1896  
(from "Westport House & the Brownes" by the Marquis of Sligo, 1981)

## THE MARQUIS OF SLIGO

THE TELEGRAPH (22-7-1846)

THE MARQUIS OF SLIGO – It is with feelings of the most intense satisfaction that we lay before our readers, and the public in general, the welcome announcement made to us by the Rev. James Browne, P.P., of Ballintubber, who, on behalf of the Carranacun Relief Committee, addressed a letter to the Noble Marquis, stating the distress a portion of his tenantry was labouring under in that locality. This communication his lordship treated with the greatest courtesy and respect, manifesting, in a very high degree, those amiable traits of character which shed such a lustre over his departed sire. He instantly wrote back stating that he had given directions to Mr. Hildebrand to have the wants of his tenantry immediately attended to, which orders that excellent man is now carrying into effect in Mr. Browne's locality.

## SIR ROBERT BLOSSE LYNCH

THE TELEGRAPH (22-7-1846)

Sir Robert Blossie Lynch, Bart. – This high-minded young baronet has most promptly and most liberally come to the aid of the tenantry on his estates in Mayo. Those in the parish of Ballinrobe have been liberally attended to under the superintendence of Sir Robert's humane agent, Philip O'Reilly, Esq., who, with his family, has come to Mayo to carry out the humane instructions of his excellent employer.

## THE EARL OF ARRAN

MAYO CONSTITUTION (23-7-1846)

Apprehensive of a scarcity of provisions among his tenantry, the Earl of Arran, through his active and kind agent, John Symes, Esq., has, with the most benevolent intention, purchased a large quantity of oatmeal which he is now distributing among those living on this part of his estate, upon the most liberal and easy terms. Mr. Walsh of Castlehill, and Mr. Jackson of Carramore, are likewise relieving distress on their properties, and taking benevolent steps in anticipation of apprehended want.

## BALLINA AND KILLALA

TYRAWLY HERALD (26-11-1846)

Some short time since, Colonel Kirkwood, Walter J. Bourke, Esq., the Castle, Killala; John Knox, Esq., Castlerea; Major Gardiner, Farmhill; Oliver C. Jackson, Esq., Ballina, and Ernest Knox, Esq., Castlerea, privately subscribed the purchase money of a cargo of Indian meal. The meal was purchased for them at Liverpool by John Kirkwood, Esq., Killala, who acted in the transaction without any commission, and the meal was landed at Killala. It was brought from the quay, at Mr. Bourke's expense and lodged in his store, free of storage. He is now giving it out to the poor of Killala at first cost price, which must be a serious relief to the unfortunate people. Mr. Jackson, as one of the subscribers, obtained a portion of it, and had it brought to this town where he is having it sold, likewise, at first cost.

## LORD LUCAN

MAYO CONSTITUTION (15-12-1846)

The inhabitants of Castlebar have come nobly forward to take advantage of the Earl of Lucan's proposition of subscribing £50 for each hundred collected by the inhabitants of this town.

## THE LANDED GENTRY OF CO. MAYO 1848

MAYO CONSTITUTION (28-7-1848)

Sir R. Lynch Blossie, Bart, Athavallie, Hon. Geoffrey Browne, Castlemacgarret, Sir R. A. O'Donnell, Bart, Newport House, Sir William O'Malley, Kilboyne, Thomas S. Lindsey, Esq., Hollymount House, Colonel A. Knox Gore, Beleek Manor, Colonel G.V. Jackson, Carramore, Thomas Carter. Esq., Shean Lodge, E.H. Taaffe, Esq., Woodfield, R. D. Browne, Esq., M.P., Glencorrib, George H. Moore, Esq., M.P., Moorehall, Lord John Browne, Westport House, Hon Richard Bingham, Castlebar, Hon T Dillon, Loughglynn House, Sir Roger Palmer, Bart, Palmerstown, Sir Compton, Domville, Bart, Prison, Gen Sir Robert Arbuthnot, K C B, Farmhill, Colonel C N Knox, Castle Lacken, Major P C Lynch, Hollybrook, John Knox, esq, Castlerea, Col Thomas G. Fitzgerald, Turlow Park,

Annesley Knox, esq, Rappa Castle, James Browne, esq, Claremount, James Knox, Gildea, esq, Clooncormac, Mervyn Pratt, esq, Enniscoe, James A Browne, esq, Brownehall, Thomas Rutledge, esq, Bloomfield, Charles G Mahon, esq, Mountpleasant, Valentine O'C Blake, esq, Towerhill, Anthony Ormsby, esq, Ballinamore, Mark Blake, esq, Ballinafad, Colonel James M'Alpine, Windsor, Denis Bingham, esq, Binghamcastle, St George Cuff, esq, Deel Castle, John Lindsay Bucknall, esq, Turin Castle, Edmund G Bell, esq, Streamstown, Major John Gardiner, Farmhill, H W Knox, esq, Netley Park, Bernard M'Manus, esq, Barleyhill, John D Browne, esq, Mountbrowne, Francis b Knox, esq, Springhill, James Cuff, esq, Creagh, Charles Blake, esq, Merlin Park, H J H Browne, esq, Rahins, Dominick Browne, esq, Breaffy, Alexander Clendining, esq, Westport, Robert Fair, esq, Bushfield, John F Knox, esq, Mountfalcon, William Orme, esq, Abbeystown, John Knox, esq, Greenwood Park, John C Garvey, esq, Murrisk Abbey, Fitzgerald Higgins, esq, Westport, George Ormsby, esq, Rocklands, Thomas Ormsby, esq, Knockmore, Charles Strickland, esq, Loughglynn House, Charles H Cromie, esq, Annefield, Parsons Pesse, esq, Newbrook, John Symes, esq, Ballina, David W. Rutledge, esq, Roundfort William Atkinson, esq, Rahins, John Lynch, esq, Partry, Thomas Phillips, esq, Clonmore, Joseph M. McDonnell, esq, Doo Castle, Charles O'Donnell, esq, Ross, George O'Malley, esq, Newcaste, Thomas Elwood, esq, Strandhill, W. M. Fitzmaurice, esq, Lagatura, E. J. Nolan esq Logbooy, Isidore Burke, esq, Ballina William Kearney, esq, Ballinvilla, Charles Lynch, esq, Ballycurren Castle, John Walsh, esq, Castlehill, Thomas Paget, esq, Knockglass, Edward Howley, esq, Beleek, George Rutledge, esq, Togher, Frances R. O'Grady, esq, Tavrane, Thomas Palmer, esq, Palmerstown, Robert Kirkwood, esq, Greenpark Lodge, Charles Coyne, esq Massbrook, Courtney Kenny, esq, Ballinrobe, John Bolinbroke, esq, Oldcastle, Henry Martin Blake, esq, The Heath, John Cheevers, esq, Carnacun, William Malley, esq, Ballina, James Garvey, esq, Tully House.



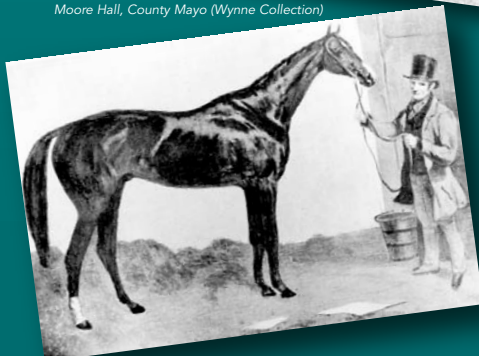
# GEORGE HENRY MOORE



George Henry Moore (1810 - 1870)



Moore Hall, County Mayo (Wynne Collection)



CORANNA  
George Moore netted £10,000 when his horse, Coranna, won the Chester Cup in 1846. He wrote to his mother at Moorehall: "No tenant of mine shall want for plenty of everything this year."

## THE TELEGRAPH, 13-1-1847

ANOTHER ATTACK – A carrier was a few days since stopped at the triangles, between Ballintubber and Westport, and robbed of his load of flour. The carman told the poor people that one of the flour barrels belonged to Mr. G. H. Moore's steward. The country people – to mark their gratitude to Mr. Moore, who has been unceasing in his acts of charity to those around him – put up the barrel on the cart, telling the carman they would die sooner than meddle with it.

## TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREEMAN, JUNE 21ST, 1849.

I have lived for many years in the midst of Mr. Moore's tenantry, and I never heard of a single tenant being evicted either by himself or his agent; of all his fine qualities there is none in which he so pre-eminently excels, nor for which he is so much admired, as his great tenderness for the poor, and, as an instance of how much he felt for the sufferings of the people, it is due to the grateful feelings of his tenantry to mention, that he sent over from London at an early stage of the famine a sum of £1,000 for the poor on his estates, as a free gift, besides orders to the steward to give a milch cow to every widow on his property. I beg to apologise for trespassing on your valuable space, and I have the honour to be, my dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

**JAMES BROWN, P.P.,  
of Ballintubber and Burriscarra.**

# RELIEF MEASURES

*In an effort to restrict the numbers seeking admission to workhouses, a scheme known as Outdoor Relief was introduced, whereby food rations were distributed to the most destitute. Public works on roads, bridges, drainage, etc were also undertaken, offering employment so that people could earn money to buy food. Both measures provided much relief, but were often poorly managed, and sometimes corruptly administrated.*

## NO WAGES

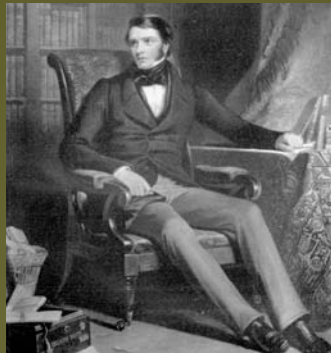
THE TELEGRAPH (12-8-1846)

Numerous, and we regret to state, well founded complaints, have been made to us from Turlough, Islandeady, Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Newport, Westport, Aughagower and Ballyhean, as to the manner in which Public Works are being carried out – but particularly the way in which the poor wretches employed on them are paid their wages. Many of those creatures, pale and haggard, have declared to us that for two, three, four and five weeks! they have not been paid their wages: that when they apply for it in the morning they are told “to call in the evening”: in the evening they are desired “to call in the morning”: that they are harassed travelling some six or seven miles, looking for this money.

## FAVOURITISM

THE TELEGRAPH (12-8-1846)

Others complained that they had tickets for work but would not be allowed into any work, the overseers having their own favourites: We can name “overseers” who have discharged the widow’s son, her only support, and taken in at the same time, members of families who have tons of meal sold on time at 25s per cwt.



Charles Edward Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury directed government relief measures during the famine, meticulously scrutinising all expenditure

## GOD’S PROVIDENCE

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (1-6-1847)

It is hard upon the poor people that they should be deprived of the consolation of knowing that they are suffering from an infliction of God's Providence, to mitigate which much has been done by the Government and by the upper classes, while nothing, as far as I am aware, has been done to aggravate it, with the exception of the outrages which have been committed, on the works and on the stores of food in progress on the high roads. It is most injurious and dangerous, both to the people themselves and to every class of society, that the multitude should be taught to regard those as their enemies who are in truth the most active agents for their benefit.

C.E. Trevelyan

## TUBBERCURRY

W. J. BENNETT (6-3-1847)

It was melancholy and degrading in the extreme to see the women and girls withdrawn from all that was decent and proper, and labouring in mixed gangs on public roads. Not only in digging with the spade, and with the pick, but in carrying loads of earth and turves on their backs, and wheeling barrows like men, and breaking stones, are they employed. My heart often sunk within me at the obviously deteriorating effects of such occupation, while the poor neglected children were crouched in groups around the bits of lighted turves in the various sheltered corners along the line. The pay was 6d. and 7d. per day to the girls and women, and 8d. to the men; which being the lowest we met with anywhere, though never exceeding 10d.

## EMPLOYMENT AT BALLYHEANE

MAYO CONSTITUTION (3-8-1847)

We had much gratification, the other day, in observing the improvement and comforts which result from employment in lieu of the present outdoor relief. We allude to the tenantry on a small estate, the property of John Finn, Esq., in the neighbourhood of Ballyhean. A grant for drainage was obtained by J. C. Larminie, Esq., Mr. Finn’s agent, by which there are several members of families employed at wages varying from 10d. to 1s. per day. By this means upwards of ninety families are removed from the relief lists of that parish, and the people are remuneratively employed, with benefits to themselves and immediate and lasting advantage to the landlord.

## DIED WAITING FOR PAY CLERK

TYRAWLEY HERALD (25-2-1847)

On the same day he held an inquest at Coolcran on the body of Patrick Redington. The deceased was employed at the public works, and on Saturday morning he went to the hill of Gurteens to meet the pay clerk where, in company of other labourers he remained until night, but no clerk making his appearance, the others went off and he remained behind. Having got quite weak, he requested a girl who was passing to tell his wife to come and meet him, and upon the wife’s arriving at the place she found him dead. After the examination of Dr. Whittaker, a verdict of “death from starvation” was returned.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS, CUSTOM-HOUSE, DUBLIN.

**ADVERTISEMENT.**

To Carpenters, Workers in Hard Wood, Smiths, &c., IN THE COUNTY OF MAYO.

THE COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS will be prepared to receive Tenders addressed to this Office, on or before the 30th instant, from Workers in Hard Wood, for delivering to their Agents manufacturing Smiths, &c., the Implements in Wood at the undermentioned Stations, the Implements in Wood and Iron from the several Stations, the patterns, plans, and specifications for the making of which, may be seen at this Office, and at the Offices of the Engineers in the several districts throughout the county where Public Works are being carried on.

The Commissioners do not pledge themselves to accept the lowest, or any offer, unless the terms proposed are fair and reasonable. They hold a large stock of every class of Working Implements in their Stores in Dublin, with which they will be prepared to supply the remote Works, should the unreasonable demands from local artificers, or delay in the supply, compel them to do so; and thus the advantage of the employment which the manufacture of the implements would afford, will be lost to the neighbourhood.

Parties tendering are to state the number of each respective class of Implements they will be able to deliver, and the time they will require to make their deliveries.

Tenders to be addressed to JOS. C. WALKER, Esq., Secretary, and enclosed in Tenders for Implements.”

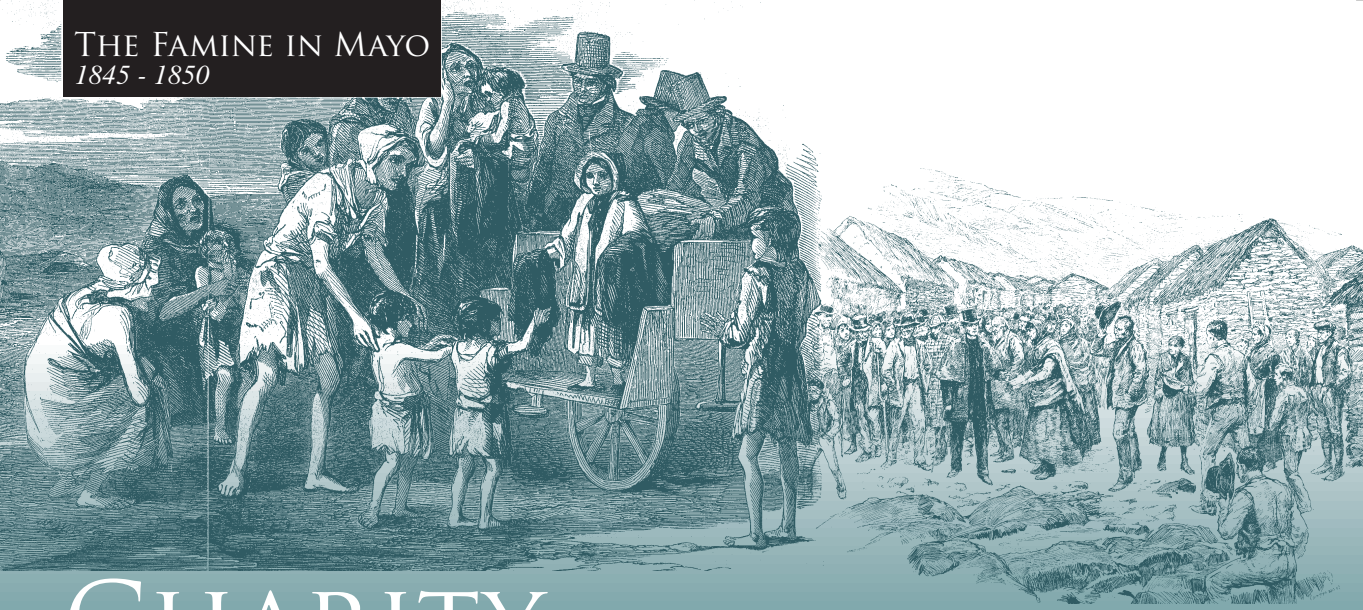
(By Order,) JOS. C. WALKER, Secretary.

Dated this 16th day of October, 1846.

PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT—COUNTY OF MAYO.

DEPOTS.	IMPLEMENTS REQUIRED.					
	Wheel Barrows.	Hand Barrows.	Clubs.	Picks.	Shovels.	Rolling Stones.
Ballaghaderreen	500	10	250	25	50	50
Bellina	500	10	250	25	50	50
Ballinrobe	500	10	250	25	50	50
Belmullet	500	10	500	50	100	100
Castlebar	1000	10	250	25	50	50
Toxford	500	10	250	25	50	50
Hollymount	500	10	250	25	50	50
Newport	500	10	375	37	75	75
Westport	750	15				





# CHARITY

*Many groups at home and abroad were involved in charitable works. Clergy of all denominations were prominent in relief measures. The Society of Friends (Quakers) saved many lives by providing soup kitchens in several areas. There were also individual efforts and some who worked among the sick fell victim of fever themselves.*

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## AID FOR CASTLEBAR

THE TELEGRAPH (31-3-1846)

On Friday last the number of individuals supplied with cheap meal, and also gratuitously, by the Evangelical Committee, was over six hundred. Yet, the demand could not be kept pace with. The haggard appearance of the poor applicants was soul-harrowing to look on, while their lamentations at being struck off the works is far beyond our power of description. On Saturday last the Treasurer, Rev. Mr. Jordan, was honoured with another draft for £25 from the Rev. Mr. James, Secretary to the Irish Evangelical or Independent Relief Committee of London. This makes £100 received from that benevolent body for the relief of the poor in and about this town. This cry for gratuitous relief is now become irresistible, unless the people are allowed to lie down and die! Horrible alternative, while the granaries of the kingdom are creaking beneath the weight of food!

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## A GLENISLAND NEIGHBOUR

THE TELEGRAPH (7-10-1846)

A PEASANT SAMARITAN – Laurence McHugh, of the village of Barnastang, Glenisland, with a family of six children, himself and wife, in all eight persons, were on Monday morning last in that low degree, from hunger that, as our informant states, the most of them could not survive until night. With much difficulty the poor man made his way to the house of Patt Malley, a neighbour, who is in great want himself, having no provisions but as he buys the market: still the Irish heart beat in his bosom: "he could not," he said, "see his neighbours die while God left him anything" and he forthwith went out, took one of his four sheep, and handed it over to poor McHugh, to kill for himself and family.

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## TURLOUGH

THE TELEGRAPH (7-10-1846)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT - The Rev. Paul MacGreal, P.P., of Turlough, gratefully acknowledges a remittance of £15 in aid of the relief of the poor of his parish, from the India Poor Relief Fund, through their Secretary, T. L. Synnot, Esq.

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## IRISH RELIEF ASSOCIATION

MAYO CONSTITUTION (15-12-1846)

We have seen with pleasure the rapid progress of this charitable association, in their laudable efforts to raise subscriptions to help to feed their starving fellow-country-men. Each day their efforts are crowned with success, the effects of which we trust are nigh at hand to us. We have been informed that a sum of £20 has been forwarded to W. Campbell, Esq., for the poor of Ballycroy, with a promise of further donations, to be expended by him in selling meal at reduced prices. We have also heard that £500 worth of meal has been granted to the Rev. Mr. Pouden, Rector of Westport, for the relief of the poor of that district; and also a supply promised to the Rev. Edward Nangle, for the Achill poor.

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## A NATIONAL SCHOOL IN CHESHIRE

TYRAWLEY HERALD (31-12-1846)

The following letter addressed to the Rev. Richard St. George, Rector of Crossmolina, needs no comment to impress its worth: Rev. Sir - We, the children belonging to the Moulton National School, in the Parish of Davenham (Cheshire), having heard from our beloved patroness, Mrs. Harper, of the distress that is so prevalent in our sister island, have given up our annual treat to the relief of our

suffering sisters in Ireland; trusting that God, of His abundant mercy, will soon turn the "scarcity and dearth which they now suffer into plenty and cheapness." We humbly trust that our offering (small as it may appear), will be accepted by those who have kindly undertaken to alleviate the sufferings of our brethren. As we have bountifully received of the Lord, so we also freely give. We here insert our names – M. Whitlow, L. Garner, E. Dickinson, E. Darlington, W. Buckley, L. Bateman, G. Dickinson, J. Downes, R. Ravenscroft, W. Williams, Jos Astbury, E. Whitton, M. Astbury, James Presten, W. Hicken, L. Kemmerley, T. Hutchinson, and of thirty other children.

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## BALLINA AND ARDNAREE RELIEF COMMITTEE

TYRAWLEY HERALD (21-1-1847)

At a meeting of the Ballina and Ardnaree Relief Committee, held in the Court-house on Tuesday, the 19th of January, the Managers of the Soup Kitchen handed in a statement of their proceedings for the last week with the accounts. It appeared that they distributed each day 1,387 quarts of soup to 563 families at the expense of £23-12s.-1d. The accounts and vouchers were examined and found correct. It was resolved, that the thanks of the meeting be given to them for the zeal and attention they manifested in the arduous duty.





# DOOLOUGH

*One of the most infamous occurrences in County Mayo during the Famine happened in March of 1849, in the Louisburgh area. The circumstances of the event, which needlessly compelled many starving people to walk twenty miles or more, gives testimony to the callous and uncaring attitude of some officials charged with administering the Poor Law. The tragedy has long lived in the minds of the people of the Louisburgh area and is now commemorated annually by the Famine Walk, from Louisburgh to Delphi.*



Delphi Lodge

## DOOLOUGH

MAYO CONSTITUTION (10-4-1849)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MAYO  
CONSTITUTION.

Louisburgh, April 5th, 1840.

Sir - On last Friday, 30th ult., Colonel Hogrove, one of the vice guardians of Westport union, and Captain Primrose, the poor law inspector, arrived here on that morning for the purpose of holding an inspection on the paupers who were receiving outdoor relief in this part of the union, but, from some cause or other, they did not, but started off immediately for Delphi Lodge. In a short time after, the relieving officer, ordered the poor creatures forthwith to follow him to Delphi Lodge, as he would have them inspected early on the following morning, Saturday, 31st; and in obedience of this humane order, hundreds of these unfortunate living skeletons, men, women and children, might have been seen struggling through the mountain passes and roads for the appointed place. The inspection took place in the morning, and I have been told that nothing could equal the horrible appearance of those truly unfortunate creatures, some of them without a morsel to eat, and others exhausted from fatigue, having travelled upwards of 16 miles to attend the inspection.

I have now the melancholy duty of informing you and the public, that a woman named Dalton, from Wastelands, six miles to the West of this town, her son and daughter, were all found dead on the road side, on the morning after the inspection, midway between this town and Delphi: and about one mile nearer to this town, two men were found dead - in all, five. The bodies of these ill-fated creatures lay exposed on the road side for three or four days and nights, for the dogs and ravens to feed upon, until some charitable person had them buried in a turf hole at the road side.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
A RATEPAYER.

## DOOLOUGH

MAYO CONSTITUTION (17-5-1849)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MAYO  
CONSTITUTION

Louisburgh, April 13th, 1849.

Sir - I have this day the melancholy duty of informing you that two more miserable creatures were found on the mountain passes dead - in all 7, and I am confidently informed that 9 or 10 more have never reached their homes, and several of those that did, were so fatigued with cold and hunger that they in a short time ceased to live.

I tell Colonel Hogrove, and Captain Primrose that the relieving officer ordered the poor creatures to follow them to Delphi, in order that they might be inspected at 7 o'clock on the morning of the 31st, at that lodge, and I challenge them to contradict what I state; further that the cause of their not stopping at Louisburgh was, that the relieving officer had not his books ready and it was at the court-house the following order was given - all persons not attending at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning, at Delphi, would be struck off the relief; the people did attend, but the relieving officer did not until 12 o'clock.

I now think it right to inform you that a strictly private inquest was held by Mr. Coroner Burke, aided and assisted by a member of his family. Doctor Burke, who is the poorhouse doctor, and the jury returned the following verdict, after a post mortem examination on the bodies of two of them: - "Died from starvation and cold," when instead of providing coffins for those creatures, the bodies were again thrown into a mountain slough, with a few sods thrown over them immediately after.

The Coroner and his staff proceeded to Delphi Lodge, and on the following day returned and held another inquest; like verdict was returned, when the Coroner and doctor returned to their mansions, leaving three more unfortunate creatures at the road side, with scarce a covering of sods upon them.

Thank God all are not so hardened as the above, for that excellent and humane clergyman. I mean the Rev. Thomas O'Dowd, the Catholic Curate, gave five coffins to Mr. Walshe, who, to his credit be it said, both himself and his men had all the bodies taken out of the sloughs on the 12th instant, and placed in coffins, and had them respectfully interred in a burial place.

In my last, I stated that the poor had not to travel more than 10 or 15 miles, I now tell you that the residence of some of those found dead was at least 28 miles from Delphi - the same distance back.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
A RATEPAYER.

I omitted giving you the names of the persons found dead - Catherine Dillon, Patt Dillon and Honor Dillon, mother, son and daughter, living two-and-a-half miles from this town. Catherine Grady and Mary McHale of Wastelands, 10 miles from this; James Flynn of Rinnacully, 13 miles; so that instead of receiving their rations of the 30th - the day they expected it - in this town, they had to proceed on to Delphi Lodge, without a morsel to eat, a distance of at least fourteen miles.



# THE WORKHOUSE

*Under the Poor Law Act of 1838, County Mayo was divided into five areas or unions; Ballina, Ballinrobe, Castlebar, Swinford and Westport. Each was managed by a Board of Guardians, which was required to maintain a workhouse, where paupers could be housed and fed. The Mayo unions covered a very large area, which compelled some seeking relief to walk several miles to the nearest workhouse. During the Famine, these workhouses soon came overwhelmed by those seeking admission. In 1849, the number of unions in Mayo was increased with the establishment of Belmullet, Claremorris, Killala and Newport unions.*

## BALLINROBE WORKHOUSE

MAYO CONSTITUTION (23-3-1847)

In Ballinrobe the workhouse is in the most awfully deplorable state, pestilence having attacked paupers, officers, and all.— In fact, this building is one horrible charnel house, the unfortunate paupers being nearly all the victims of a fearful fever, the dying and the dead, we might say, huddled together. The master has become the victim of this dread disease; the clerk, a young man whose energies were devoted to the well-being of the union, has been added to the victims; the matron, too, is dead; and the respected, and esteemed physician has fallen before the ravages of pestilence, in his constant attendance on the diseased inmates. This is the position of the Ballinrobe house, every officer swept away, while the number of deaths among the inmates is unknown; and we forgot to add that the Roman Catholic chaplain is also dangerously ill of the same epidemic.

## CASTLEBAR WORKHOUSE

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (1847)

MR. GIBBONS TO MR. REDINGTON  
Castlebar, January 8, 1847.

The house is closed against the admission of paupers during the present trying visitation on the poor, but the condition of those confined in the house, upwards of 100, is not generally known. I am a frequent visitor of the workhouse; after inspecting each class of the inmates, and I am pained to have to state that almost every individual of the 100 or more are showing striking signs of haggard and famished looks; the provisions, oaten or Indian meal, is supplied very irregularly, often not sent to the house until an advanced hour of the day, in quantities of 200 lbs. or so, but never in a large or satisfactory supply. Turf is most irregularly supplied; on many days not all sent, the cause of having the breakfast meal deferred to one or two o'clock, p.m. On New Year's Day the paupers had only one diet, and that at a late hour. The master states that he is obliged to permit the paupers to continue in their beds for heat's sake.

The hospital is occupied by the old men, and the children pining away by hunger and cold. Coffins with difficulty procured for those who die.

## BALLINA WORKHOUSE

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (1848)

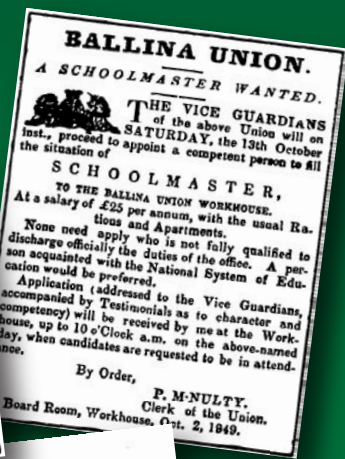
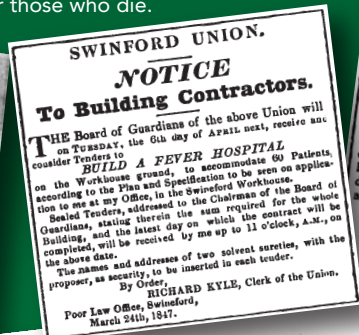
LIEUT. HAMILTON TO  
THE COMMISSIONERS:  
December 5, 1847.

WITH reference to my letter of yesterday's date, in which I stated that 300 paupers were to be removed yesterday from the workhouse to the store, which a Committee of the Guardians had taken in the morning, I beg to acquaint you that notwithstanding the greatest exertions on the part of the officers of the workhouse, it was found impracticable to move them earlier than this day; consequently 1698 person had to be provided for last night in the workhouse.

I was at the workhouse early today, and had every possible precaution taken against infection. The applicants for admission are in the most miserable and filthy state; there is neither bedding nor clothing for 600.

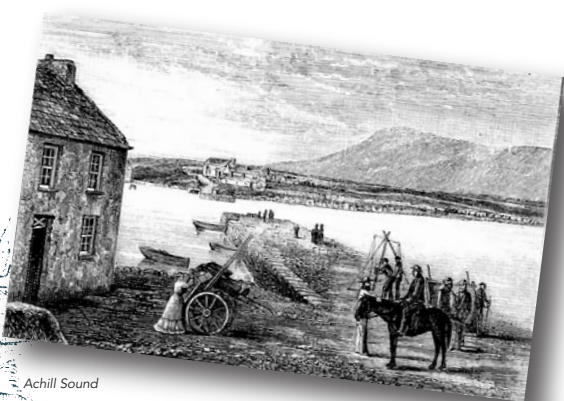


An Irish Board of Guardians





An attack on a potato store



Achill Sound



Downpatrick Head and Dunbrista

# CRIMES OF DESPERATION

*The incidence of crime rose during the Famine. Most involved the theft of food and were carried out in desperation. There were also attacks on rent and rate collectors. Fifteen thousand extra troops were drafted to police the country and new laws were enacted.*

## ACHILL PLUNDER ACHILL MISSIONARY HERALD (JANUARY-1847)

We regret extremely to state that a hooker belonging to General Thompson, of Connemara, which put into Achill Sound, at the south of the island, from stress of weather, was plundered by a party of the natives of this island. One person suspected of being concerned in this outrage has been apprehended, and there is reason to hope that others also will be brought to justice. We tell the natives of Achill, and they know that the advice is given by a real friend, that any man among them who engages in such lawless proceedings is the enemy of the whole population. The general good conduct of our poor islanders under their distressing trial is deserving of the highest commendation; the lawless conduct of some to which we have alluded is the only exception.

## SHEEP STEALING TYRAWLEY HERALD (21-1-1847).

John Gennelly was indicted with having stole, in the month of December last, a sheep, the property of Robert Carey, of Erris. The charge having been fully proved, Mr. T. W. Kelly, who defended the prisoner, proceeded to address the Jury on behalf of the prisoner. When you have a robber arraigned before you he should not be allowed to escape without due punishment. But it should be a crime that ought to be visited with punishment, and when judging on crime the intention and not the act is to

be taken into consideration. This, I will show you in his worship's presence, who knows the law. I tell you that if the man was starving and came to the owner of the sheep, and said I'm starving and took a sheep, that act does not constitute the act of robbery, because he had not taken with a felonious intention. This poor man was steeped in misery, and what rendered his case worse, he beheld his wife and family starving around him. A man may suffer a great deal himself; he may bear patiently and without repining the pangs of hunger, but when he sees his wife and children without anything to eat and starving in his presence, he cannot stand it.

The jury, after the lapse of some short time, brought in a verdict of guilty, and the Barrister, when about passing sentence, said that the court having taken into consideration the extreme destitution of the prisoner, would only inflict on him three months' imprisonment and hard labour.

## WESTPORT MOB TYRAWLEY HERALD (21-1-1847).

On the night of Monday last, or morning of Tuesday, a mob broke open the store of M. McDonnell, Esq., Westport, and took there from seven barrels of flour, which they divided amongst themselves at the door, leaving the empty barrels behind them. The watchman on the premises, whom they overpowered, could not recognise any of the plunderers.

## MURDER AT DOWNPATRICK TYRAWLEY HERALD (13-4-1847).

We are informed that a brutal murder was perpetrated a few days ago at a place called Castletown, close to Downpatrick, within about four miles of Ballycastle in this county. The victim was a poor old widow, named Mary Hegarty, 75 years of age. The poor woman had a small bag of meal in the house, and this circumstance being known to a boy, named James, who lived in the same locality, he determined to avail himself of the absence of her family and to rob her of the meal. He accordingly went to the widow's house, and either to effect his purpose, or to prevent discovery, he inflicted six or seven desperate wound on her head with a loy which he found in the house. He then seized on the bag of meal, and just as he was leaving the house with his bloody booty another boy, belonging to the village, happened to be passing by, and seeing the old woman weltering in her gore, he, at once, thought that all was not right and immediately pursued the murderer and robber. Having overtaken him he took the bag of meal from him and, of course, identified him.



# FATAL ENDEAVOURS

*To stave off the pangs of hunger, the people turned to whatever sources they could for sustenance. Turnips and imported maize were no substitute for the nutritious potato. Fishing at sea was hazardous, particularly in winter, in poorly maintained boats. For many, their endeavours had fatal consequences.*

## IMPROVED METHOD OF MAKING INDIAN STIRABOUT.

Two pounds of Indian meal put in three pints of boiling water, stir it very well, and then leave in steeped all night. In the morning, have ready three quarts of water in your stirabout pot on the fire when boiling, put in the Indian meal you have steeped, stir well, and when it has boiled for an hour, stir in a pound of oaten meal, and let it boil another half hour. This will give four able bodied men a good breakfast, and the cost is about 41/2d.

## CARRION

TYRAWLEY HERALD (31-12-1846).

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TYRAWLEY HERALD.

A pig, having died of disease near Rappa Castle, was thrown into a dung-pit, and after remaining there for a few days became so offensive from decomposition, that it had to be placed in a deeper hole in the pit and covered. On the same evening, the mother of a large family, learning it was there, came after night set in and removed it. The remainder of the night she spent in cleaning and preparing it for her children, a most difficult task – I should say; as the smell from it, to use her own expression “was strong enough to knock down a horse.”



A Famine meal



Catastrophe for an evicted family

## SEAWEED

W. J. BENNETT (18-3-47)

Portaclloy is a deep rift in these hostile cliffs, otherwise wholly inaccessible for many miles. These is scarcely any proper landing, the beach being high and rough with rocks; and so great is the swell and turbulence of the ocean that accidents not unfrequently happen. A man had recently been swept off the rocks while catching crabs; and two poor women, we afterwards heard, met with the same fate that very morning, while gathering seaweed for food.

## DONKEYS

THE TELEGRAPH (5-4-1848)

A Correspondent asks how is it to be accounted for that so many poor persons are now to be found in our streets carrying baskets of turf on their backs, for sale? Our answer is – the asses are nearly all dead, and consumed, we believe, as human food.

## SHELLFISH

TYRAWLEY HERALD (13-4-1848)

On Monday, the 3rd April, four men and three women went out in a small Curragh, for the purpose of picking up seaweed, and shellfish, on a rock near the Island of Ennisklora, on the Erris coast. they remained on the rock for two hours; when returning,

after getting the fish, etc., a heavy sea struck the Curragh and upset it. However, they got back to the rock safe where they had to remain all night, having no way of escape. On Tuesday, the 4th, two of the crew died of hunger and cold. On Wednesday two more died, and one was washed away and has not been since found. The other two, a man and woman, had to remain on the rock until Friday, without any nourishment, on which day they were taken off by the Coast Guards.

## GRASS

MAYO CONSTITUTION (24-4-1848)

FATAL INDUSTRY – We, last week, had to record the death of a poor creature who expired near Westport, from actual hunger, a quantity of grass being the only substance in his stomach. When we chronicled his death amongst others, we, of course, never once imagined that he could have been what was once denominated a comfortable farmer; but such is the fact, the deceased held land in one of the distant islands, had actually planted half an acre of potatoes, sowed an acre of oats, which exhausted all his resources, and then he repaired to the mainland to seek for employ. He came to Westport Quay, looked for work in vain; pledged his loy for one day's support; his shoes for a second; but alas! suffering from want had gone too far, and he fell the victim.



Searching for potatoes in a stubble field





# BURIALS

*People, weakened by hunger and fever, were unable to give proper burials to dead relatives and neighbours. Coffins could not be afforded and those who managed to carry their dead to the graveyard often did not have the strength to bury them. Workhouse dead were interred in mass graves. Some of the dead were buried where they died, in fields, on the side of the road, etc. Often, to avoid contracting fever, neighbours simply tumbled a victim's cabin around the body.*

## CARRIED COFFIN FOUR MILES THE TELEGRAPH (10-2-1847)

We are daily witnessing horrid sights in this town (Castlebar) from starvation. A few days ago a poor young man died in Stabball, from want of food. After much time had been consumed in procuring a coffin, which was effected in three days after his death, we were horrified to behold the poor mother of the deceased carrying on her back the dead body by means of straw ropes at either end of the coffin: her only living companion being an old helpless woman. In this manner did the wretched parent convey the inanimate remains of her son to the burying place at Turlough, a distance of nearly four miles. – Horrible.

## PILE OF STONES THE TELEGRAPH (5-4-1847)

**DEATH FROM WANT** – On Wednesday last the body of a poor woman was found dead in a field adjoining this town (Castlebar). A child belonging to the deceased had piled some stones round the body to protect it from the dogs and pigs.

## COFFINS VISIBLE IN BALLINA TYRAWLEY HERALD (15-4-1847)

For some time past the above burial grounds are in a most disgraceful and dangerous state, caused by the hurried and imperfect manner in which the bodies of several paupers, who died in the Workhouse, were committed to the earth. In some places the graves are so shallow that portions of the coffins are distinctly visible above ground without the slightest covering.

## CASTLEBAR WORKHOUSE DEAD MAYO CONSTITUTION (3-8-1847)

**BURIAL OF WORKHOUSE PAUPERS:** – Considerable annoyance and disgust has been felt by the inhabitants of this town, by the conveyance of the lifeless remains of paupers who may have died of fever and dysentery, through the principle streets; and, in many cases, the creatures carrying the remains have left down their burden to rest.

## PAUPER BURIAL IN WESTPORT ASENATH NICHOLSON (1847).

The chapel bell tolled one morning early, when a respectable young woman was brought into the yard for interment. No bells tolled for the starving, they must have the "burial of an ass," or none at all. A young lad improved this opportunity while the gate was open, and carried in, a large sack on his back, which contained two brothers, one seventeen, the other a little boy, who had died by starvation. In one corner he dug, with his own emaciated feeble hands, a grave, and put them in, uncoffined, and covered them, while the clods were falling upon the coffin of the respectable young woman.

## WATTLES THE TELEGRAPH (5-4-1848).

**AWFULLY HORRIBLE:** – Within the last week numbers of dead bodies have passed our Office, for interment in the Old Church yard, borne on wattles, **WITHOUT COFFINS!** One of those bodies, that of a full grown person, was carried by women!



# EVICCTIONS

*As the Famine progressed, increasing numbers of smallholders fell into arrears with rent. Some landlords were also in financial difficulty, but continued to alleviate distress among their tenantry. Others saw the Famine as an opportunity to clear their lands of several small holdings and turn them into larger and more lucrative units.*

## CROPS SEIZED

THE TELEGRAPH (6-10-1847)

Mayo is now one large field full of beggars, crawling about in quest of food – the fathers, with implements of field labour in their hands, bags in their backs, children spread-legs on top, lead the way from cottage to hamlet, wives and children, tottering from want, follow in their wake, seeking for alms! Oh, it is hard to look on those things and not shudder: to behold whole villages without smoke issuing from a single cabin: the doors being built up with stones, the owners, in many instances, numbered with the dead, thro’ starvation – while others have fled the homes of their childhood, in quest of work or food. Many have been turned off by process of law to seek asylums by the neighbouring ditches, the high canopy of heaven their shelter, the green sward their couch, the stars in firmament their watch-light, and the scarecrow and skeleton dogs keeping their vigil close by the dying.

## EVICTED AND IMPRISONED

THE TELEGRAPH (12-7-1848).

Last week a poor man named Devir died in the Mayo Prison under very peculiar circumstances. It appears he owed a certain western Landlord a trifling debt. – say nine shillings! for which a decree was obtained, by virtue of which the poor man was dragged from his family and cast into prison! His wife and children sought relief from the Poor Law officials, and were taken into the workhouse in Castlebar. Banished from house and home by would-be-thought Christians! For NINE SHILLINGS! the wretched man sickened and died. After his decease the officers of the prison tied up his old clothes and had them conveyed to the poor widow at the workhouse!

## MANULLA

THE TELEGRAPH (7-11-1848)

The following families were evicted on the 26th inst., from the townland of Ruslahan (the property of Henry S. Jones, Esq., Mountjoy Square, Dublin) in the Parish and Electoral Division of Drum, and Union of Castlebar, viz: – James Foster; James Dowd, Thomas Kerigan, James Kerigan; John Dowd, Richard Barrett, James Kennedy, Pat McDonnell, James Killilea, in fever; Michael Moran, in fever; Daniel Surdival, Hubert Bourke.

## ISLANDEADY

THE TELEGRAPH (5-7-1848)

HOUSE-LEVELLING – the crowbar invincibles, pulled down several houses, and drove forth the fortunate inmates to sleep in the adjoining fields. On Thursday we witnessed the wretched creatures endeavouring to root out the timber of the houses, with the intention of constructing some sort of sheds to screen their children from the heavy rain falling at the time. On Wednesday night there was a deluge of rain, the severity of which those poor creatures were exposed to in the open fields. Unfortunately for them, the pitiless pelting storm has continued ever since, and if they have survived its severity they must be more than human beings.

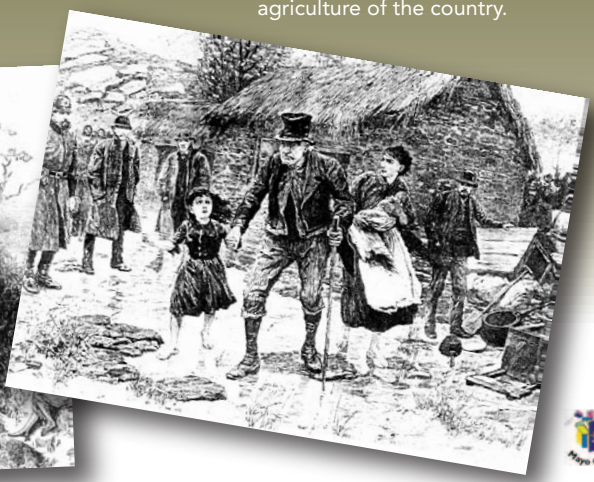


Earl of Lucan (From the Wynne Collection).

## GEORGE BINGHAM, 3RD EARL OF LUCAN

(FINLAY DUNN: "LANDLORDS AND TENANTS IN IRELAND" – 1881)

Lord Lucan has 60,570 acres in Mayo, part of it around Castlebar, where his substantial old house stands; part of it at Cloona Castle, near Ballinrobe. From several parishes extensive evictions were made from 1846 to 1850; throwing together the smaller holdings, several large grazing and a few considerable tillage farms were made. Lord Lucan, in his terse, incisive style, asserted that "he would not breed paupers to pay priests." With a sort of military despotism, he has endeavoured personally to rule his estates. Hurried visits to Mayo have not, however, always furnished him with sound information as to agricultural or social difficulties; his local lieutenants have had small authority; their opinions have often been hastily set aside; little has been done to develop either Castlebar, the villages on the estate, or the agriculture of the country.






**AT WESTPORT,  
FOR PHILADELPHIA,  
TO SAIL ABOUT 10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER,**

THE SPLENDID  **FIRST-CLASS,**  
Coppered and Copper-fastened, British Built Ship,  
**GREAT BRITAIN,**  
BURTON, 600 TONS,  
R. WILSON, COMMANDER.

THIS well known, fast-sailing Ship is now dis-  
charging her Cargo of Indian Corn at Westport.  
She will be fitted up with every attention to the comfort of  
Passengers, who will receive the usual allowance of Provisions  
and Water during the passage.  
Application to be made to Captain WILSON, on board; or  
at the Office of  
**JOHN REID, JUN., & CO.,**  
Ship Agents, Westport Quay.  
Westport, 21st September, 1848.

AMERICAN  
**EMIGRATION OFFICE,**

  
**100, WATERLOO ROAD, LIVERPOOL.**

THE SUBSCRIBERS continue to despatch first-class  
PACKETS to NEW YORK, BOSTON, QUEBEC, MON-  
TEAL, PHILADELPHIA, NEW ORLEANS, and ST.  
JOHN'S, N.B.

**FOR NEW YORK,**  
The favourite Packet-ship,  
ANTINGUER, Captain BURSLEY. 1150 tons...6th Jan.  
Parties residing at a distance may have every information  
sent them, and the best disengaged berths secured by sending  
Orders of 11 for each Passenger to  
**GEORGE RIPPARD and SON,**  
General Emigration Agents, Newport, Mayo.

Or to **JOHN FLANAGAN,**  
Monthly Packets, First Class Vessels are despatched by  
Messrs RIPPARD to the principal American ports.

LOCAL AGENTS:  
Mr ALEXANDER ROSE, Castlebar; Mr PETER O'FLANA-  
GAN, Tuam; Mr ADAM NEALE, Ballinrobe; Mr THOMAS  
HUGHES, Turin Castle, Kilmalee; Mr CLAUDIUS NIXON,  
Ballinab; Mr FRANCIS O'DONNELL, Knockmore, Balli-  
ghas; Mr ARTHUR ROSE, Belmullet; Mr LAWRENCE  
KILLALA, High-street, Galway; Mr MICHAEL JACKSON

# EMIGRATION

*For many, emigration became a means of escaping the hunger. Many departed for England, America and Australia, some from ports in Mayo. Most emigrants were forced to avail of the cheapest passages where conditions aboard vessels were atrocious, with overcrowding and poor sanitation. Emigrants often had to provide their own food and eat and sleep on their allocation of a few square feet of timber. Water was often in short supply. In such conditions fever spread and many died at sea.*

## HORRIFIC VOYAGE OF THE ELIZABETH AND SARA

TYRAWLEY HERALD (24-9-1846)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MONTREAL  
HERALD

Quebec, 22nd August, 1846.

Sir – The suffering which we have undergone, in our late voyage across the Atlantic, and our desire to save others from experiencing similar treatment, induces us to address this letter to you; and to request that you will publish it.

Before leaving Killala, Hugh Leighton, Hugh Simpson and Thomas Townley gave us to understand that each berth was occupied by six persons, and that the number of passengers was not to exceed 216; after we had sailed, however, it was found that we numbered 280 souls, and that instead of there being 47 berths, as there should have been for this number of persons, there were 36 in all, 4 of which were afterwards occupied by the crew; so that there remained but 32 for the accommodation of the passengers, which being totally insufficient for our number, many of us were obliged to sleep on the floor. Two quarts of water per day, was the most allowed to each passenger; nor was bread or oatmeal ever served out to us, as stated in our passage tickets; and which, by law, the master was bound to have given us. After having been out twenty-one days the master informed us, that we were on the Banks of Newfoundland; whereupon many of the passengers wasted their provisions, believing that they were close to port; we did not reach Newfoundland for twenty-four days after this, and instead of finding ourselves on the South side, we were

on the North; we had to make the circuit of the Island of Newfoundland to gain the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but before doing this, the Mate, Jeremiah Tindal (the Captain being sick, and unable to attend to his duties), ran us ashore on the Island of St. Peter to the South of Newfoundland, thinking at the time, it was St. Paul's Island; we were then in a most deplorable state, living upon short allowance, and many of us without any; our pittance of water was both gluey and putrid; disease and pestilence broke out among us and carried off many of our fellow passengers in its grasp. In this state of things, we succeeded in getting off the reef, luckily without much inquiry; our Captain who, for many days past, had been at death's door, now breathed his last, and several more of the passengers likewise yielded up their souls to him who created them. Their bodies were, of course, immediately committed to the deep. On the 72nd day after our departure from Killala, we dropped anchor at Grosse Isle, where we were kindly and hospitably treated by Dr. Douglas, the Medical Superintendent, as also by Mr. Cullingford, who was in charge of the sick; here sayen more of our fellow passengers died, and many still remain there in a very precarious state.

We are, Sir, Your obedient servants  
(Signed on behalf of their fellow passengers),

JOHN LAVAL,  
Late of the parish of Kilmore;

JOHN STEPHENS,  
Late of the Parish of Westport;

JAMES JOYCE,  
Late of the Parish of Laumore  
(County Mayo)

## STATEMENT OF THE NUMBER OF EMIGRANTS

MAYO CONSTITUTION (31-10-1848)

Which have arrived at the Port of New York, for the present year, from January to September, inclusive.

From:	
Ireland	... ..72,896
Germany	... ..40,731
England	... ..17,223
Scotland	... ..4,974
France	... ..2,007
Holland	... ..1,374
Switzerland	... ..1,243
Norway	... ..4,206
Wales	... ..899
West Indies	... ..335
Spain	... ..225
Italy	... ..241
Sweden	... ..113
Poland	... ..53
Denmark	... ..33
Portugal	... ..35
South America	... ..21
Russia	... ..11
Mexico	... ..7
Belgium	... ..4
China	... ..1

143,632



Emigrants crowded in the hold



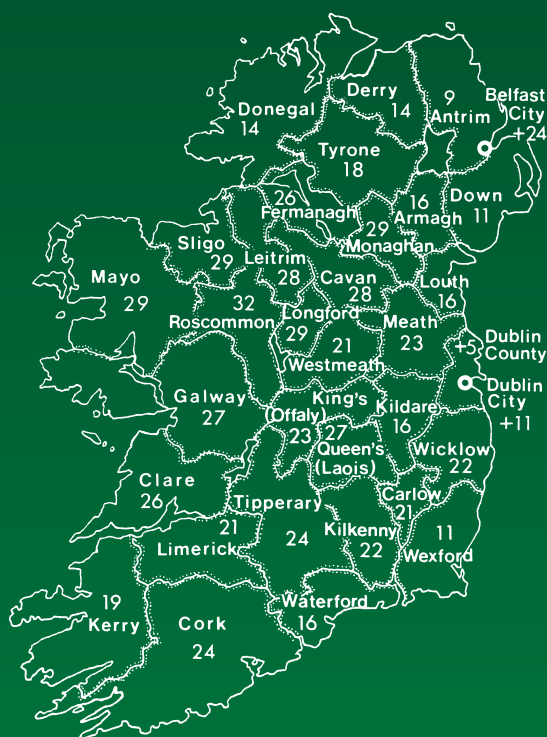
# POPULATION DECLINE

*Over the period 1841-1851, the population of Ireland fell from 8,175,124, the highest recorded, to 6,552,385. The overall decline was 20%, but, in some counties it was higher. The population of County Mayo fell by 29%, from 388,887 to 274,830, due to deaths and emigration. Emigration became a long-term legacy of the Famine, with each successive census showing a decline in population which reached a low of 109,525 in 1971.*

Parish	Population		Houses	
	1841	1851	1841	1851
Achill	6,392	4,950	1,387	956
Addergoole	7,379	5,085	1,313	949
Aghagower	12,235	6,511	2,298	1,302
Aghamore	7,675	6,097	1,427	1,241
Aglish	10,464	9,135	1,835	1,196
Annagh	7,904	6,105	1,477	1,194
Ardagh	2,621	1,497	463	263
Attymass	3,435	2,431	651	463
Balla	1,934	1,272	331	224
Ballinchalla	1,722	1,420	311	275
Ballinrobe	10,115	9,326	1,884	1,303
Ballintober	7,199	3,438	1,355	672
Ballyheane	4,032	1,987	798	405
Ballynahaglish	5,397	3,393	956	664
Ballyovey	4,505	3,073	792	590
Balysakeery	6,034	2,951	1,068	571
Bekan	5,589	4,724	1,053	886
Bohola	4,301	2,907	737	561
Breaghwy	2,452	1,136	456	218
Burrishcarra	1,681	913	296	162
Burrishoole	11,942	7,528	2,217	1,254
Castlemore	2,944	2,831	520	508
Cong	5,359	3,839	999	758
Crossboyne	6,702	4,963	1,195	953
Crossmolina	12,221	7,236	2,219	1,278
Doonfeeny	4,819	2,720	865	491
Drum	4,127	2,732	758	548
Inishbofin	1,612	1,047	288	196
Islandeedy	8,463	4,699	1,556	921
Kilbeagh	9,963	9,733	1,784	1,774
Kilbelfad	3,681	2,296	629	423
Kilbride	1,963	1,144	329	193
Kilcolman (Claremorris)	9,451	7,421	1,670	1,323
Kilcolman (Costello - Part)	4,365	4,151	754	717
Kilcommon	7,456	5,255	1,285	952
Kilcommon (Erris)	17,000	12,253	2,935	2,079
Kilconduff	7,072	6,909	1,287	1,140
Kilcummin	2,791	1,552	500	293
Kildacommoge	3,923	2,234	710	420
Kilfian	5,040	3,348	1,094	589
Kilgarvan	4,158	3,194	785	580
Kilgeever	12,573	6,892	2,309	1,263
Killala	3,253	2,919	593	400
Killasser	6,962	4,852	1,240	949
Killedan	6,410	5,158	1,168	1,047
Kilmacclasser	3,548	1,614	630	315
Kilmainebeg	1,491	895	255	174
Kilmainemore	4,877	3,293	898	645
Kilmeena	7,876	5,108	1,398	929
Kilmolara	1,296	864	243	180
Kilmore (Erris)	9,428	7,379	1,720	1,106
Kilmoremoy	7,028	6,393	1,318	1,163
Kilmovee	5,844	5,882	1,095	1,120
Kilturra (Part)	1,350	1,023	259	200
Kilvine	2,236	1,697	392	308
Knock	3,374	3,174	616	600
Lackan	2,943	1,176	511	207
Manulla	2,336	1,387	404	241
Mayo	4,179	2,379	751	434
Meelick	3,915	2,692	680	521
Moorgagagh	627	294	112	54
Oughaval	13,441	13,282	2,385	1,741
Rathreagh	1,664	790	287	146
Robeen	3,544	2,522	638	505
Rosslee	1,283	694	216	143
Shrute	5,087	3,004	876	565
Tagheen	3,084	2,051	582	389
Templemore	4,251	2,387	770	434
Templemurry	1,291	514	242	83
Toomore	3,744	2,498	707	500
Touaghty	1,297	884	232	156
Turlough	7,430	4,516	1,369	893
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>388,887</b>	<b>274,830</b>	<b>70,542</b>	<b>49,073</b>



The Civil Parishes of County Mayo



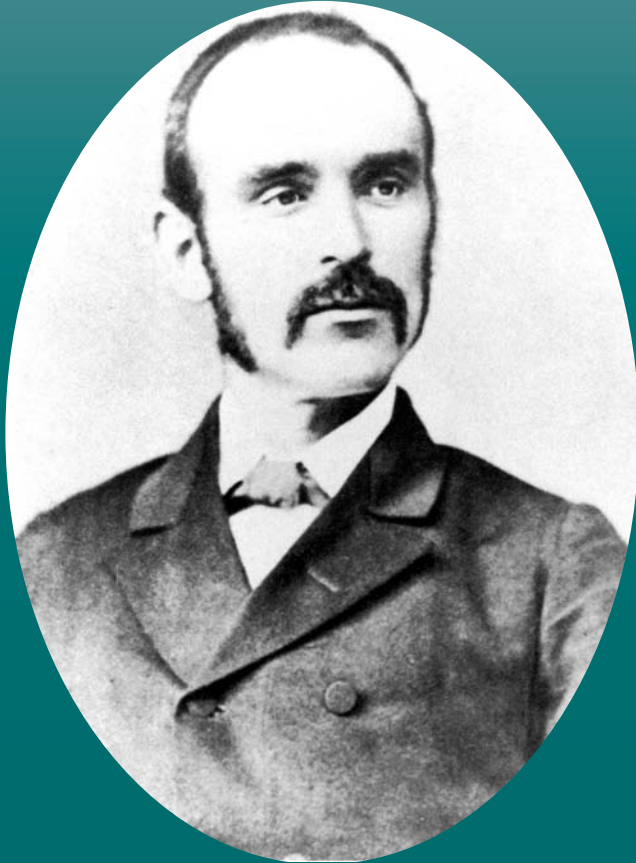
The effects of the Famine: this map shows the percentage population decline per county between 1841 and 1851.





# REFORM

*In 1879 Michael Davitt, who was born at Straide in County Mayo, founded the Land League. This mass movement campaigned for reform of land legislation which eventually transformed tenant farmers into owners of the land.*



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## “THE FALL OF FEUDALISM IN IRELAND” 1904.

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“Straide was my birthplace, and almost my first-remembered experience of my own life and of the existence of landlordism was our eviction in 1852, when I was about five years of age. That eviction and the privations of the preceding Famine years, the story of the starving peasantry of Mayo, of the deaths from hunger – and the coffinless graves on the roadside – everywhere a hole could be dug for the slaves who died because of ‘God’s providence’ – all this was the political food seasoned with a mother’s tears over unmerited sorrows and sufferings which had fed my mind in another land, a teaching which lost none of its force or directness by being imparted in the Gaelic tongue, which was almost always spoken in our Lancashire home.”

**Michael Davitt**

# THE EXTERMINATOR

*In 1847 Aghadrina near Castlebar was one of several townlands cleared by the Earl of Lucan who became known as 'the exterminator' for his ruthless policy of eviction. It would form part of a racecourse for the sporting entertainment of the Earl and his fellow gentry.*



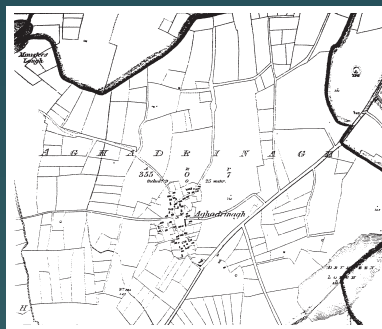
Father Michael Curley, Castlebar, one of many clergymen involved in charitable works

Was ever such monstrous cruelty - such gross injustice - known or tolerated in any civilized country? It is painful - it is heart-rending, to witness the shifts of these poor, unfortunate wanderers to provide some temporary resting place - throwing up hurdles against ditches and on the tops of lime kilns in neighbouring villages, to make room for themselves and their naked children to stretch their feint, and feeble, and worn frames on their bed of straw or rushes during the night.

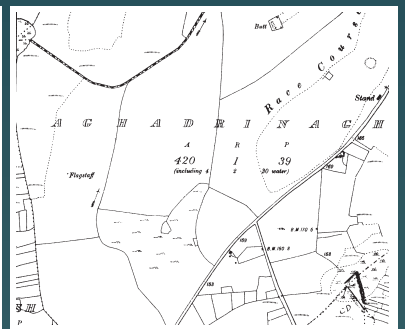
Peter Gerraghty, R.C.C.  
Michael Curley, R.C.C.  
Castlebar, June 20, 1848

## AGHADRINAGH TOWNLAND, BALLYHEANE PARISH, PROPERTY OF LORD LUCAN

(BASED ON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY, BY PERMISSION OF THE GOVERNMENT - PERMIT NO.: 6407)



Before: from Ordnance Survey (1839)



After: from Ordnance Survey (1900)

Aghadrinagh	1841	1851
Population	314	9
Number of Houses	66	2



HOUSE LEVELLING IN MAYO.			
AGHADRINA TOWNLAND.			
Names of householders.	No. in Family	Where now residing.	If getting relief.
Thomas Murphy,	8	Wallslads,	
Justia Torra,	6	America,	6
Widow Gill (Henaghan),	2	Do	4
Michael King,	4	Mount Daisy,	2
Pat Broderick, jun.,	3	Castibber,	
Widow Pat Broderick,	4	Mount Daisy,	3
Widow Thomas Geary,	4	Do	4
John Torra,	7	Spencer-street,	4
Widow Pat Torra,	7	Drinmeen,	4
Anthony Nally,	7	Do	7
Pat Henaghan,	5	Do	7
Widow Larry Blake,	6	Climens,	4
Malachi Oon,	2	Mount-Daisy,	7
Richard Walsh,	7	Do	6
Widow Michael Kenny,	5	Baynesforth,	3
Pat Cefney,	4	Mount Daisy,	7
Widow John Broderick,	3	Spencer-street,	6
Widow Michael Walsh,	2	England,	4
James Walsh,	7	Mount-Daisy,	4
John Berry,	4	England,	2
Nicholas Berry,	1	Do	
Bilen Philbin,	6	Ballynabul,	
John Connor,	12	Do	
Gill Henaghan,	6	Do	
Phelia Torra,	3	England,	2
Thomas Torra,	3	Do	
James Browne,	2	Mount Daisy,	2
Widow Mary Browne,	6	England,	2
Stephen Torra,	2	Mount Daisy,	7
Widow Michael Faden,	6	Do	6
Anthony Walsh,	6	Do	2
Widow John M'Gough,	5	Do	4
Michael Mulroony,	5	3 in England,	4
Michael Mally,	5	Clonsfert,	2
John Bartly,	7	Drinmeen,	4
James M'Gough,	5	Do	7
Mark M'Gough,	5	Deravesh,	
Widow James Mulroony,	4	Wallslads,	
Pat M'Gough, sen.,	4	Drinmeen,	
Pat M'Gough, jun.,	6	England,	3
Mark M'Gough,	6	Castibber,	3
Thomas Henaghan,	6	Baynesforth,	4
Widow James Henaghan,	6	Mount Gort,	
Widow Butler,	6	Kilmerade,	
James Fergus,	3	Mount Daisy,	5
James Pargus,	3	Do	6
Pat Mulroony,	3	Do	3
Anthony Gallaher, sen.,	7	Drinmeen,	3
Pat Henaghan, sen.,	6	Wallslads,	5
Widow John M'Kerly,	5	Drinmeen,	2
Widow James Milligan,	5	England,	6
John Keane,	3	No residence,	
Marstin Henaghan,	3	Clonsfert,	3
Widow John Geraghty,	3	Westlands,	5
Anthony Gallaher, jun.,	4	Do	5
John Gibbos,	3	Castlebar,	3
Catherine Murphy,	6	Ballyheane,	2
Eoger-Murphy,	2	Mount Daisy,	2
Pat Connor,	1	Do	0
Widow Michael Walsh,	1	Dead,	2
James Fallow,	7	America,	
	4	England,	
	4	No residence,	
Total elected May, 1848,	289		
Houses levelled,		Bardens on Union,	102

