

CHAPTER THREE THE FENIANS

When Trinity College, Dublin took back direct control of their Iveragh estate in 1865, a well established group of rebels were established there already. The original national rising was planned for 1865, but due to numerous arrests of the leaders as well as a large amount of informants it had to be postponed. It was rescheduled for 11 February 1867, which turned out to be a total disaster. This was due to the uncoordinated risings which took place in February and March throughout Ireland, which resulted in fear being instilled in the people, especially the gentry and also resulted in some being transported to Australia. It is unclear why the Fenians rebelled because the majority of them came from relatively successful families. None of these men were in dire poverty as most were employed as farmers, carpenters etc. It may have been a sense of trying to move forward at a political and social level because even though financially independent they were still regarded as peasants. Daniel O'Connell had gained the first step in the road to independence for the Irish by gaining Catholic Emancipation, but he was not so successful with repeal of the Act of Union. It was this failure that may have contributed to these men to rebel in 1867 as their status had not altered with his success.

The Fenians of Iveragh rose in arms on Shrove Tuesday, 12 February 1867 but it was not a major military operation. However prior to this much Fenian activity was widespread in the barony. The leader of these men was the mysterious figure of John Joseph O'Connor, better known as J.J. He was born on Valentia Island and whilst

still young had emigrated to America. There he became a colonel with the Federal army during the American Civil War which left him with an obvious limp as a result of a war wound. On his return to Iveragh at the end of 1865 he took up residence in Cahersiveen, where the local police treated him with suspicion, but found no evidence against him even when they raided his lodgings.¹

Another figure from the American Civil War to return to the area was Mortimer Moriarty alias Morty O'Shea. He like J.J. had the characteristics common to veterans of the American war. 'They often had full beards and they usually wore large slouch hats and square toed boots'.² Moriarty lived in Direen just outside the town and had regular contact with J.J., and aided him in the recruitment of the Iveragh man.

J.J. began his recruitment of local man during 1866 training and drilling these Fenians by night on Valentia and in other remote areas, to ensure maximum secrecy. However this new activity in the region did not go unnoticed. The Hon Sir Peter Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, became suspicious and called a public meeting. The aim of this was to exclude any unlawful or secret society which was seen as a threat to the newly erected Trans-Atlantic cable station on the island. The captain of the Valentia Fenians, O'Driscoll, was spied upon and the police were sent to his father's house to arrest him. He was warned of their approach by a servant-girl in the house, and he luckily escaped capture. He went to America where he was later joined by

¹ *Cork Exam.*, Wednesday, 13 February 1867.

² Tadhg O'Se, 'The Revolt Courteous', *C.B. Souv. Rec.* (Cahersiveen, 1960), p.60.

this girl never to return home again.³ Many sympathisers of the Fenian movement saved the Fenians from capture by warning them of possible police raids on their homes or training grounds. Dr Barry prevented the arms of the Dromod Fenians being discovered by sending word to their leader, Paddy Daly, that a raid was planned by the Cahersiveen police. The connection between these two men was not a common loyalty to the Fenian movement but due to a friendship which had developed owing to a mutual love for hunting.⁴

Local feeling to the Fenians was mostly loyalty, although some people informed on them whilst some young men who preferred not to be part of this illegal organisation often fled their homes in fear of being forced to join the Fenians. Many locals were loyal to the Fenians not out of sympathy to what they were doing but out of fear of getting their money taken from them in order to support the rebels, and those who were not loyal to the cause were punished. Folklore has kept many of these stories alive such as 'somebody whose ears were cut off in punishment for giving information to the police'.⁵

Finally the day came for the rising, after many months of waiting and deferrals and was set for 11 February 1867. O'Connor and Moriarty met in Cahersiveen on that evening with J.J. giving Captain Moriarty a letter to take to the head of the Killarney Fenians. Moriarty set out the following morning by Bianconi mail car. However

³ *Sean O'Conaill's Book. Stories and Traditions from Iveragh.* recorded and edited by Seamus O'Duilearga. Trans. by Maire MacNeill (Dublin, 1981)

⁴ Sean O'Suilleabhain, 'The Iveragh Fenians in oral tradition', in *University Review* vol iv no 3 (Winter 1967), p.217.

unknown to those in Cahersiveen he was captured along with Sheehan and the letter which read...

My Dear Sheehan,

I have the honour of introducing to you Captain Moriarty. He will be of great assistance to you. I have told him all there is to be done, until I get to your place. The private spies are very active this morning, but unless they smell a rat, all will be done without any trouble. Hoping to meet you soon.

I remain sincerely,

J.J. O'Connor.⁶

Little did J.J. know that spies had led to both Moriarty and Sheehan's capture already and that the police in Killarney now knew of the planned rising in Iveragh. Not only did the Fenians not know of the events that had taken place in Killarney, but even more damaging was their ignorance of the fact that the whole rising had yet again been postponed.

The men of Cahersiveen began to get ready on the evening of the 12 February. This was also Shrove Tuesday in which the last dance until Saint Patrick's Day was being held in the Reading Room in the town. The dancing master, Thomas Griffin, ended the dance at 7.30 p.m. much to the disappointment of the dancers. He had a more pressing task of joining his comrades who were at this time lining up outside the dance hall. There was a custom in Cahersiveen that on the night of the final dance before Lent all the bachelors were given an imaginary punishment of banishment to

⁵ Ibid., p.217.

the nearby Skellig rock.⁷ That night the young men of Cahersiveen were heading on a different and more dangerous journey. The scene outside on the street was a very emotional and strained one as these men, many of them still quite young prepared to face the unknown, with women crying fearing for the lives of their husbands and sons. They were armed with pikes or guns, many of these guns having been smuggled out of the police barracks in the town by the sergeant's daughter who had given them to her sweetheart, Dinnie Donovan, a blacksmith apprentice.

Initially the Fenians planned to raid and dismantle the cable station, but this had been altered due to the arrival in early February of the navy who had moored the *H.M.S. Gladiator* in Valentia Harbour. Both the Commander of the *Gladiator* and Chief Inspector White of the coastguard were alerted to the possibility of a Fenian attack by Head Constable O'Connell. Even though he was a Protestant he was also a nationalist at heart and this guaranteed that the Fenians would receive no opposition from the Cahersiveen Constabulary, as all his four sons were Fenians and his daughter also a strong sympathiser with them. However Devoy credits her with the smuggling of the rifles out of the barracks and not a Connolly girl as reported by Sean O'Suilleabhain in the folklore based *University Review*.

The Iveragh Fenians did not receive the message in time that the rising had been rescheduled for 5 March. Contrary to this was the account by Chief Inspector Talbot who said that the Cahersiveen rising had not been cancelled by the Fenian leadership

⁶ Br Peadar, 'Na finini I gCiarrai', *Fir* 1967. (1967)

so as to draw on all police and army personnel from all over Ireland and to ensure maximum success in the 5 March rising.⁸ However, J.J. found a coded captured address to him, when they shot down the Constable on route to Killarney, which stated that the rising had indeed been postponed.⁹

At 10 p.m. O'Connor and his men, numbering about thirty, set out marching two deep with Killarney as their destination. They crossed the wooden bridge which led to an area across the river from the town called 'Over The water', where they took guns from 'Barry's big House'. They were without the Valentia Fenians, but had amongst them from Cahersiveen town and parish, Thomas Griffin, Jim Fitzgerald who was a relative of the hotel owner in the town, William O'Connell, the son of the police constable, Jim O'Reilly, an assistant in Donoghue's draper shop in the town, as well as many others. They proceeded on to meet 'The Boys Of Foilmore' at the appointed venue, but prior to meeting them they cut the telegraph lines, then known as the magnetic wires, about a quarter of a mile east of Cahersiveen. This would leave the town totally cut off from contact with the outside world whilst they progressed.

Once the Cahersiveen and Foilmore groups were joined they numbered about seventy men and set about raiding Kells Coastguard station at about 1am on Ash Wednesday. Two of the coastguards had gone to Ballinskelligs for the day to

⁷ Local folklore.

⁸ O'SE, p.64.

⁹ John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel: A personal narrative* (New York, 1929),p.290.

investigate a wreckage there, so both of their wives stayed in the Boyd residence keeping each other company. A third coastguard, Thomas Pierce, was on duty on the road above the station and upon hearing the approaching march of the Fenians called out “who goes there?”, to which he received the reply “Surrender or your life is taken.”¹⁰ Pierce dropped his gun and fled as the Fenians pursued him firing shots. He continued running as far as the beach, but the pursuing band of men just followed him as far as the Chief Boatman Dingwall’s house. They did not gain access to Dingwall’s house and did not attempt a forced entry. Instead they raided the watchhouse where they seized a number of rifles, pistols, gun powder and belts. This event led to the well known line ‘And Kells station was taken by the boys of Foilmore’.

They then searched coastguard Boyd’s residence which was the act that led eventually to the arrest of many of the Fenians. However these Fenian men were not violent and did not mean any harm to innocent people such as Mrs Boyd and Mrs O’Brien, whom they reassured of this and accompanied Mrs O’Brien back to her neighbour’s house after they searched her own and had found no arms there. Pierce, thinking that the Fenians had by now moved on, left the beach and began to head to Cahersiveen to inform the police there of what had happened. However he ran into the rear party of Fenians who were travelling at a much slower pace due to being slowed down by Colonel J.J’s limp. For a second time in that night Pierce’s life was spared by the Fenians.

¹⁰ Br Peadar

Having gained some coastguard's rifles as well as a horse for their leader from the nearby stables of Dr Barry, they continued their march. The journey was an eventful one with the first set back coming as they march along by Drung Hill, where they scanned the Dingle Peninsula opposite for fires to signal that the rising in Dingle had begun, but alas no fires were to be seen. Shortly after this disappointment they encountered Constable Duggan of the Killorglin constabulary at Eisc an Chatha, mounted and riding in the direction of Cahersiveen. The Fenians called on him to halt but he attempted to ride pass them, only to be shot at by Conway. The Fenians brought Constable Duggan to a nearby house and sent for Fr Maginn of Glenbeigh and Dr Spotswood. Due to this act of consideration for the injured man by the rebels they were later commended for summondings the doctor and priest, the latter giving his blessing to the Fenians. The dispatches which they found under the saddle of Duggan's horse informed them of the situation throughout the rest of the country, of the panic and extra troops been draughted into Killarney and the actuality that they had risen alone. Their discovery of these documents also contained a list of names of Fenians, 'and the names of a lot that weren't in the Fenians at all...together with news of the arrests in Killarney'.¹¹

This news was bad for O'Connor and his men with his admittance to his confidant Noonan, "We're done".¹² Nevertheless J.J. O'Connor resumed the march, he riding Duggan's horse with Dr Barry's horse having been returned to him. As they continued their journey they stopped for a short while at the roadside inn of Pat

¹¹ O'Suilleabhain, p.219.

O'Grady where as payment they tendered a promissory note 'to be honoured by the Irish Republic'.¹³ By 7.30 am the Fenians had arrived in Glenbeigh where they had breakfast at the O'Shea's hotel before heading off again.

It is often asked why O'Connor did not decide to call off the expedition and return home to Cahersiveen. They had suffered two setbacks already, that of the absence of the Valentia men, as well as the failure of the Dingle fires which were to signal an all out rebellion. It may be following the raid on the Kells coastguard station and the shooting of the constable that he decided to see it through to the bitter end. He also may have expected some support from some of the East Kerry Fenians, which he though would also be assembling in Killarney at that stage.

They continued their march by-passing the town of Killorglin, so as to avoid the police there, through Beaufort and into Tomies wood, on the western side of Killarney's lower lake, where they spent the night. By this time panic was prevalent in Kerry with most of the local gentry of the county congregating in Killarney for protection from the police, as they feared for their lives as well as the theft of their money and valuables. Rumours and counter-rumours were rife which instilled fear and terror into the people. One account was that up to three hundred Fenians had risen in arms and were going to rob the bank in the town. The police were unsure what to do as they waited anxiously for the arrival of the army. 'It has been proclaimed to the world that in Kerry, after all that has been said of it, gentlemen and

¹² O'Se, p.270.

gentlewomen must abandon their houses, and all they hold dear, if they hope to save their lives'.¹⁴

O'Connor realising the futility in proceeding any further dispersed his men and told them to return to their homes. After disbanding they survived on the charity of the local community near Tomies wood, where they hid for a day or two before trying to make their way home to Iveragh, safely through the mountains. Martin Griffin who took part in the rising reflected, at the age of ninety-four, on the generosity of the people who helped them. 'The people were good to us, very good, and gave us freely of their own poor store'.¹⁵ They were heavy hearted with a sense of failure and closely pursued by both soldiers and police with a price on their leader's head. The Fenians blamed O'Connor for their failure and predicament, but he replied to them by saying 'I'm deeper in it than ye are, and ye can shoot me, if ye wish-I'd rather ye would do so than anyone else'.¹⁶

There were many out searching all the area from Tomies wood to Cahersiveen, under General Sir Albert Horsford. They did not have much success and it was pointed out that this should not have come as a surprise to them because,

any man who had ever walked a mountain, be he peer or peasant must know the physical impossibility of flushing Fenians out of the tangled forest of Tomies. The fleet footed peasant would have no difficulty in out stripping the British infantry

¹³ *Even. Echo*, Friday, March 17 1967.

¹⁴ *Tralee Chron.*, 22 February 1867.

¹⁵ *Even. Echo*, 17 March 1967.

¹⁶ O'Suilleabhain, p.220-1.

*soldier, struggling like a staggering haystack over the slippery slate formation of the Kerry mountains.*¹⁷

However John Devoy the Fenian explained the success of the Iveragh Fenians as not just they having a geographical advantage but the fact that Horsford's seventy-third regiment was not comprise of all Scottish soldiers as presumed, as it had up to three hundred Fenian members among its ranks. Even though the Scottish general and his men surrounded the mountain on which O'Connor and all his men were hiding they had all escaped by morning. 'Most of them when creeping out through the extended line, not knowing that they had many friends among the soldiers, thought they were unseen. But the Fenians in plaid trousers and Glengarry caps saw them well enough, and the Scotchmen shut their eyes'.¹⁸

A £500 reward was offered to any person who could give any information that would lead to the arrest of J.J. O'Connor and of the individual Fenian that shot constable Duggan. A promise of a free pardon was also offered to any Fenian who would inform on the location of any of the leaders or of Conway, the man who shot Duggan.¹⁹ Conway escaped to America and later returned to Cahersiveen where he was respected by young and old as they marvelled his courage in shooting a peeler.²⁰

¹⁷ *Times*, 20 February 1867.

¹⁸ Devoy, p.191.

¹⁹ *H&C.*, Tuesday, 19 February 1867.

²⁰ Local Folklore.

A description of J.J. O'Connor was published along with that of eighteen others. He was described as being twenty-five years and five foot eleven inches tall, of a stout build with a moustache, whiskers and respectably dressed.²¹ O'Connor a master at disguises once again took on a new role, this time as a priest, and escaped to America where he died a few years later. However not all his men were as lucky with Houlihan from Quay Street being one of the first to be arrested.

On 19 July, just five months after the rising the police captured Cornelius O'Brien, Thomas Griffin, the dancing master from Ballcarbery a townland just outside Cahersiveen, and John Golden from Kells, at Cork Harbour. All three were hoping to escape to America on board the *Propontis*, which they had joined in Liverpool. The 'assizes' began in Tralee on 30 July 1867, but Tom Griffin was not found guilty with Fitzgerald also becoming a free man due to an alibi. However, it was Moriarty, James O'Reilly and John Golden that were sentenced for their part in the Fenian rising, their sentences ranging from five to ten years penal servitude, with John O'Shea from Dromod only getting a year's hard labour.²² Joseph Noonan was tried in Dublin on 24 July and received a seven years sentence.²³

Noonan was jailed in Kilmainham and offered to give information against 'Captain' Moriarty. The proof of his betrayal prior to the rising can be found in the 'Munster circuit, County of Kerry. The Queen v Joseph Noonan' This document states that

²¹ *H&C.*, Friday, 22 February 1867.

²² O'Se, p.73.

²³ *P.R.O.* ref H.O. 11/19, p.133. (photocopy)

‘during the previous evening Noonan went to Head Constable Connell and warned him of what was about to take place’.²⁴ The *Times* correspondent reporting from Cahersiveen a few days after the rising said that ‘the information, I believe, was conveyed verbally by someone who was to share in the enterprise, but who had strong personal reasons for desiring its failure’.²⁵ This was an accurate account by the reporter because Noonan’s reason for informing was that he was a close personal friend of Constable O’Connell, whose son William worked as a carpenter for Noonan and was also a member of the Fenians. Thus the Cahersiveen Constabulary were not particularly vigilant on the night of the rising.

John Golden’s trial was on 8 August 1867.²⁶ It was the evidence given by Lizzie Goggin or Elisia O’Brien, wife of one of the absent coastguards on the night that the Fenians had raided Kells station, which resulted in John Golden being found guilty and sentenced to five years penal servitude. She had seen Golden quite clearly in the candle light that night and recognised him as he only lived a mile away from there on his father’s farm at Mountfoley. She later had to leave Kerry after the hostility she incurred following her giving of evidence in the Tralee trial and she was also satirised in song.

Cuirfimid Goggin sa Sceilg,

Cuirfeam ar bord an ri i,

Cuirfeam anonn thar faraige i,

²⁴ Sean O’Luing ‘Aspects of the Fenian rising in Kerry 1867’, in *Jn. Kerry Arch.* no5 (Kerry, 1972), p.127.

²⁵ *Times*, 25 February 1867.

²⁶ *P.R.O* ref H.O. 11/19, p.133 (photocopy)

*Feachaint an ndeanfai dion di.*²⁷

His mother, one of the 'Hurrig' O'Neill's of Valentia, walked a distance of forty miles to and from Kells to Tralee to be at the trial of her young son. She was heavily pregnant at the time and returning home from the trial gave birth to another son, a few days later on 13 August, whom she named Patrick. He, Golden, was tried and sentenced under the name Goulding and along with 59 other Fenians²⁸ boarded the *Hougoument*, the last ship of convicts bound for Fremantle, Western Australia which set sail on 10 October 1867.²⁹ He was one of the youngest men on board and only a young carpenter of 19 or 20 when he took part in the rising and on his arrival in Fremantle prison refused to associate with the English criminals claiming to be a political prisoner. For this he was put into solitary confinement for six weeks on a diet of bread and water.³⁰ Prior to their departure to Australia a warrant was issued on 11 September 1867 for the removal of Mortimer Shea or Moriarty, Joseph Noonan, James O'Reilly and John Golden among others to be transferred from Mountjoy prison, Dublin, to Portland prison.³¹ The following page is a copy of a photo of John Golden 'Goulding' taken whilst he was in prison in Mountjoy. The photo was only accidentally found by Marcus Bourke in an album of Mountjoy prison photos of the 1865-67 period.

²⁷ O'Suilleabhain, p.219.

²⁸ Keith Amos, *The Fenians in Australia* (Australia, 1988), p.88. Of the Fenians transported in Sep. 1867, 11 had life sentences, 1 a 20 year sentence, 26 of them had 7-15 years and 22 had 5 years totalling 60 Fenians.

²⁹ *P.R.O.* ref H.O. 11/20, p.59.

³⁰ Family History.

James O'Reilly and Joseph Noonan gained their free pardon in May 1869. Noonan established himself as a builder and architect, marrying Maria Farrelly on 21 June 1871.³² He was to remain on in the colony to arrange for the rescue of the unpardoned Fenians. However, he made no attempt to do so despite ample opportunities.³³ James O'Reilly, whose real name was Seamus Raol of Binn Bhan but who's nickname was Major O'Reilly, returned home after serving his time but regretted coming back to his native area.³⁴ John Golden's 'Queen's pardon' was issued on 24 February 1869, and executed on 14 May. He moved to Gerringong, on the south coast of New South Wales, where he married Ellen Feehan, whose father had employed Golden after his release. He never returned to his native land again but is still remembered in story and song.

He sleeps today where far away,
waves wash Australia's shore,
and ne'er again he'll see the glen,
of lovely sweet Foilmore.³⁵

The Rev Fr Healy, parish priest of Cahersiveen in a letter to the newspapers following the rising expressed his shocked surprise that any of his parishioners had taken part in the revolt against the authorities, as he had preached loyalty to the crown in all his sermons in the previous twenty years. Fr Healy also found that the

³¹ *P.R.O.* ref 9140 H.O. 1517.

³² Amos, 187.

³³ Sean O'Luing, *Fremantle mission* (Tralee, 1965), p.53.

³⁴ O'Suilleabhean, p.222.

³⁵ From 'The Ballad of Johnny Golden'. It is not clear when this written but possibly for the centenary celebrations of 1967.

rising not only had political implications but also social ones. 'That cursed Fenian outbreak left the farmers in no spirit for match-making in Cahir'.³⁶ The Bishop of Kerry, Dr Moriarty also denounced the Fenian rising in his sermon at the Cathedral in Killarney on Sunday, 17 February 1867, saying the following. 'But when we look down into the fathomless depth of this infamy of the heads of the Fenians conspiracy, we must acknowledge that eternity is not long enough, nor hell hot enough to punish such miscreants'.³⁷

It is often wondered at why the Fenian rising came about in 'O'Connell's town' when he, Daniel O'Connell, was the man who professed the attainment of liberty by peaceful means. It may be that the local people of Iveragh saw that the peaceful methods had gained nothing in relation to altering the daily lives of the tenants. Even though they had begun to develop and improve their area and their own lives they were still not recognised as a prospering group of people. O'Connell in their eyes had only helped the development at national level and that it was up to themselves to try and achieve something at local level. It may well have been that many thought it was time for Cahersiveen to turn out a new liberator, he being the gentle and shy, yet capable J.J. O'Connor.

Many of the Fenians were born and grew up in and around the latter years of the famine with their average age being twenty three years of age.³⁸ All were 'of a rather

³⁶ Rev Kiernan O'Shea, 'David Moriarty(1814-77):III politics', in *Jn Kerry Arch.* (Kerry, 1972)

³⁷ *Tralee Chron.*, 19 February 1867.

³⁸ Average of Fenian ages available, see Appendix I.

respectable class, principally from the district of Cahercivven and Iveragh'.³⁹ They felt that by showing their strength that they would no longer be passive to famines and an unfair administration but become part of the administrative system. However not all of the Fenians were driven by political ideals and an urge to move to a better social class, with John Golden openly admitting that he wanted personal revenge against a local landlord. He felt that by rebelling against what the local landlord, Blennerhassett, stood for that he was in affect rebelling against the landlord. When John was a young boy walking with his dog near the main entrance to the Blennerhassett estate a coach came out the gate. The dog excited by this started barking and Blennerhassett instructed the coachman to shoot the dog.⁴⁰

Although the area of Fenian influence and activity in Kerry was mainly Irish speaking, there is little or no evidence to suggest that Fenianism was promoted by linguistic influences, as Gaelic in the area was used indiscriminately by Fenian members and Government officials as it suited them. According to Garret Fitzgerald's study on the level of Gaelic speaking regions there was only 'a very slight decline' in 'Kerry from Tralee southwards' during the thirty years prior to 1841.⁴¹ In the post-famine era Gaelic was still spoken by many young people in Kerry, but the percentage of young Gaelic speakers dropped from 94% in the years 1841-1851 to 78% for the years 1861-1871. This shows a growth of English being

³⁹ O' Luing, p.144.

⁴⁰ Family History. This story was preserved in oral tradition by both the Irish and Australian sides of John Golden's family and it was not until his descendants regained contact in the early 1940's that it was discovered that both had the same story.

spoken by the inhabitants of the Barony of Iveragh, but most were bilingual with Gaelic being the dominant language in the time of the Fenian rising. The ‘percentage of monoglotism among Irish speakers in the Barony of Iveragh in 1851 was 51%,⁴² the years in which most of the Fenians were growing up.

The rising by the Cahersiveen and Foilmore Fenians in February 1867 was not a major military event, but it did leave the government and the gentry unsettled with the rising being discussed both in the Houses’ of Commons and Lords and Gladstone incorrectly claimed that the rising resulted in new legislation. ‘Gladstone was to admit that the Land Bill of 1870, and the Church Disestablishment Bill were the direct result of the Fenian Rising’⁴³ Thus the rising was not a total failure as it did result in achieving something but this was not what the insurgents sought; they had just wanted total independence for Ireland.

The influx of newspaper reporters into Cahersiveen during and after the rebellion gives one a picture of the town that prompted the Fenians to rebel. The special correspondent of the ‘Times’, Frederick Clifford, gave this account of the town as he saw it on Friday 25 February 1867.

It is well situated at the foot of the mountains and in full view of Valentia River and Harbour, and at a very great distance looks even picturesque. But the charm which the distance lends is broken when you have to pick your way through the dirty

⁴¹ Garret Fitzgerald, ‘Estimates for Baronies of minimum level of Irish-speaking amongst successive decennial cohorts: 1771-1781 to 1861-1871’, in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* vol 84 (Dublin, 1984), p.128.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.152.

*streets and get a rear view of the miserable dwellings...yet the town has a considerable trade.*⁴⁴

This account shows that even though the town was economically improving this benefit did not filter down to the peasants. This poverty is what the *Times* reporter credited as a reason why the young men of the area had joined the Fenians, but he still found, like many others the reason for the beginning of the insurrection at Cahersiveen a mystery. Trinity college were also affected by the rising as only £929.4s.41/2d. was collected in March 1867. The tenants were £912.7s.71/2d. in arrears which meant that the college expected £1841.12s.0d. by the following September.⁴⁵ The graph on the next page shows the actual rental received from the year before the Fenian rising as well as the post rising period. This graph is a photocopy from Robert B MacCarthy's *The Trinity College Estates 1800-1923*. However the education of the locals was still a priority in the town with there been three schools in Cahersiveen at the time of the Rising. These included two run by religious orders, the Presentation nuns and the Christian brothers as well as a National school.

The newspapers gave grotesque exaggerations of what happened in relation to the rising, but their account of the widespread panic was accurate. The sensational media reports made this event all the more dramatic by giving distorted accounts in

⁴³ *Even.Echo*, 13 March 1967.

⁴⁴ *Times*, Friday, 25 February 1867.

⁴⁵ T.C.D., MS p/23/1720/2

relation to the number of Fenians and in their reluctance to admit that the rebels did not commit any serious acts of violence other than the shooting of Duggan.⁴⁶ According to newspaper reports there were a large band of Fenians roaming the countryside with one report saying that 'as to numbers, they were variously set down at from sixty to 1,200 or 1,500'.⁴⁷ In response to the rising a large number of soldiers were draughted into Kerry to deal with the situation. These troops mainly began to arrive on the morning of Thursday, 14 February. 'On Wednesday night the commander of the Forces directed that a special train should at once be got in readiness to convey eight hundred troops from Dublin to Killarney...Five hundred left Cork...and about the same hour five hundred more left Fermoy'.⁴⁸ All this is an account of what seemed a minor incident in Irish history, but one which is still discussed and debated about to this day.

⁴⁶ *The Kerryman*, 2 September 1950. 'Fenianism in Kerry' articles which were largely based on the secret police reports in the state paper department of Dublin castle and which were published for the first time in 1950.

⁴⁷ Br Peadar.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this one must highlight that this is only a view of life during the nineteenth century in Cahersiveen and its surrounding parishes. It is not a comprehensive account of every event as I concentrated on the initial growth and development of the town, the famine years and finally the Fenian rising of 1867.

Daniel O'Connell is referred to on numerous occasions as this was his native area but from what I have shown he did not always put this region to the forefront of his priorities. This was due to his national and international affairs as he progressed from being a successful barrister to a highly acclaimed member of parliament, who aided Irish Catholics on their way to political freedom. Thus it can be said that due to his commitments on a national level he overlooked the grassroots of Iveragh who helped finance his expensive electoral campaigns with their rents.

In looking at the famine in relation to south west Kerry one must realise that this was not the first time the region was affected by bad harvests which Reid noted in 1822. The area saw slight improvement in the 1830's but that was all ruined by the Great Famine which was the most extreme period of uncertainty and death that the people had ever experienced.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The post famine years saw a new spirit in the people as they concentrated not only on developing their area by setting up new enterprises but also by participating in sports and promoting tourism. The main new era for the estate came in 1865 when direct control of the land went back into the hands of Trinity College, after numerous years of unsuccessful administration by middlemen. However this was not carried out as peacefully as the college authorities had hoped with the Fenian rising of February 1867 having begun in the capital of their Iveragh estate.

This rising was prompted by a need to be more independent as a region and a country. However, its military success was limited but it did alter the idea that the tenants were passive to authority.

The area that I have looked at under went many developments in the period researched. It moved from being a collection of mud huts at the outset of the nineteenth century and grew into the capital of a large rural area in fifty years despite frequent reproaches that it would never amount to much.

APPENDIX I

The following is a list of those involved in the Fenian organisation in South Kerry from newspapers of the day, secondary sources and oral folklore. However it is not a full list of all involved as the Fenians left very few accounts of their members and activities, and those accounted for was by oral means. These men were from both the town and parish of Cahersiveen, neighbouring parishes and a few from outside the south Kerry region. This gives as much information as can be found with regards their occupations, ages and where they were from.

Fenian	Occupation/	Age	Location	Other Information
Patrick Connell				Arrested by 1 Mar.
Denis Neill			Killinane	son of a comfortable farmer
Roger and Denis O'Brien: brothers			Killinane	sons of comfortable farmer
John and Thade Quirke: brothers			Killiane	sons of comfortable farmer
Michael Reily	Nailor			
John Gleeson Jnr				
James Keilty				
Jeremiah Courtney				Hid at Carhan after the rising
Martin Griffin				
Paddy Daly				Head of the Dromod Fenians
O'Brien				Brother of Parish priest of Prior
O'Murchadha			Cloghanakeen	
O'Driscoll			Valentia Island	escaped to America
J.J. O'Connor		25/26	Valentia Island	In American civil war
Mortimer Moriarty Alias: Morty O'Shea			Son of John Moriarty & Nora O'Shea of C'iveen	In American civil war. Arrested 12 Feb.
John Golden	Carpenter	19/20	Kells	Arrested 23 July
James Reilly: real name Seamus Raol	a clerk at Mrs O'Donoghue's drapery	22	Bin Bhain, Waterville	Arrested 22 Feb.
Michael Conway		24	Cahersiveen	shot Constable

Jnr				Duggan
John Moran		21	Cahersiveen	Arrested by 30 Apr.
Thomas Griffin	Dancing master		Ballycarbery, Cahersiveen	Arrested 23 July
Patrick Griffin		23	Cahersiveen	
Timothy Connell		26	Cahersiveen	Arrested by 1 Mar. Belongs to Kerry militia
Daniel Griffin		25	Cahersiveen	Arrested 28 May
Jeremiah Cournane		19	Cahersiveen	
Cornelius O'Brien		24		Arrested 23 July
William Connell	Carpenter	22	Cahersiveen town	Son of head constable
Joseph Noonan	Contractor	25	Cork	Arrested 30 Apr. in London
Denis Donovan	Black smith	24	Cahersiveen town	Arrested 2 Mar.
Cremmin				
John Mannix		30	Killarney	Arrested 22 Feb.
John Fogarty	Blacksmith	24	Cahersiveen town	Arrested 30 Apr.
John Houlihan		20	Quay St. C'siveen	Arrested 28 May
Patrick Keating	Blacksmith	23	Cahersiveen town	Arrested by 3 May
Daniel Houlihan		24	Cahersiveen town	
Thade Connell				Arrested. Son af a boatman
Thade Mannix	Labourer			Arrested
James Fitzgerald	Driver of posting car		Cahersiveen	
Michael A Brennan	Cooper			Arrested
John Willis		28		
Patrick Falvey	Labourer			Arrested. Married
John Clifford	Labourer			Arrested
Foley				
Gard				
Jerimiah Sheehan	D			Head of Killarney Fenians
James thompson	Assistant at his uncle's shop			Arrested

All of the above information was compiled from the following sources; Tadhg O'Se, *C.B. Souv. Rec.*; Sean O' Suilleabhain, 'The Iveragh Fenians in Oral Tradition,' in *University Review*; Br Peadar; *H&C*, 19 February 1867; *P.R.O.* ref H.O. 11/19, p.133; *Kerryman* 2 September 1950;.

CHRONOLOGY

The reader unacquainted with the period discussed in relation to this area of Ireland may be assisted in his reading of the text by the following brief chronology of some of the more important events referred to in this work.

- 1597 Trinity College Dublin acquire Iveragh estate.
- 1775 Aug. Birth of Daniel O'Connell.
- 1814 Alexander Nimmo's survey completed.
- 1822 New approach road to Cahersiveen completed.
- 1829 Catholic Emancipation.
- 1834 Inglis reports on Cahersiveen and surrounding area.
- 1838 Poor Relief Act.
- 1841 Daniel O'Connell becomes mayor of Dublin.
- 1844 Dispute over birthplace of O'Connell.
 - Aug. Cahersiveen union workhouse opened.
- 1845 Nov. Foster arrives in area.
- 1846 Oct. Workhouse has first admissions.
- 1847 O'Connell dies.
- 1858 Bulter gains Blennerhassett lease of estate.
- 1865 Trinity take back direct control of Iveragh estate.
- 1867 Feb. Planned national Fenian rising.
 - Mar. Reschulded rising.
 - July Tralee trials begin.
 - Oct. Hougoumont sets sail for Australia.
- 1879 Feb. Queen's pardon issued.