The Irish Revenue Police, 1832~1857

by Jim Herlihy

The idea of compiling a genealogical guide to the Irish Revenue Police developed from a variety of experiences. In compiling my three books on the Royal Irish Constabulary 1816-1922 (85,028 members) and two books on the Dublin Metropolitan Police 1836-1925 (12,566 members), I encountered the names of additional policemen who served between the 1830s and the 1850s, in the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers (CSORP), National Archives. Their names could not be matched with RIC registered numbers of service or with DMP warrant numbers. Also, when looking at death certificates of Irish policemen between 1864 and 1900 in the General Registrar's Office, I noticed that the occupation listed on some of the death certificates was 'revenue policeman', and in the RIC registers of service in particular I found that several Irish Constabulary members who joined on and after 1 October 1857 had an additional date of enlistment prior to that date.

This was in fact the date of disbandment of the Irish Revenue Police. On examining the RIC rank-and-file registers of service, I found that a total of 519 revenue policemen had transferred to the Irish Constabulary on and after that date. On checking the Royal Irish Constabulary officers' registers, I found that 28 former lieutenants of the revenue police transferred to the constabulary as 3rd class sub-inspectors. On checking the Dublin Metropolitan Police register of service, I found that 48 DMP men had served in the Irish Revenue Police.

Another very valuable source was *The Irish Constabulary list and directory*, published biannually from 1840 to 1921 which also contains information on other government departments, including the Irish Revenue Police from 1840 to 1857. In 1999, I was in the Public Record Office (now the National Archives) in Kew, Richmond, Surrey, and on searching the catalogue, I found a complete list of Irish Revenue Policemen who enlisted between 1830 and 1857. The records were catalogued under Customs and Excise (CUST 111) and contained the names of approximately 4,000 men. The manner in which these records had been compiled was much different to the service registers of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, in that Irish Revenue Policemen were not allocated unique sequential service numbers. I copied the index of the revenue policemen, made a database in strict alphabetical order, and added the names of those I had found in *The Royal Irish Constabulary list and directory*; those who

had transferred to the Irish Constabulary or to the Dublin Metropolitan Police. I then made contact with Brian Donovan of Eneclann, who was instrumental in securing the digitisation of these records at The National Archives (UK), thus making them easily accessible through www.findmypast.ie.

In order to compile a complete alphabetical index of names of all IRP men who joined between 1830 and 1857 without having a unique number for each, I chose to add the enlistment date of each member as a starting point for the researcher. In cases where several persons of the same fore-and surnames enlisted, I have chosen to include the earliest date of enlistment for each individual. One of the files in Kew (CUST 111) contains the names of 496 members who were awarded gratuities on disbandment in 1857. More importantly, the revenue party they were attached to at that time is also given, which is of enormous benefit to the researcher in identifying the exact place where

individual IRP men resided in 1857, seven years before the commencement of civil registration in Ireland.

Privates in the Irish Revenue Police were not permitted to get married and Lieutenants of the Revenue Police were permitted to get married, however, they were not permitted to have more than two children. How these features were policed is not known, however, on 11 July 1837 a total of 77 IRP Privates were discharged for having got married without permission, either by having got married prior to enlistment and not disclosing the fact, or by concealing the fact that they married after joining the service.

To put the Irish Revenue Police into context, the key dates to remember in its history of suppressing of illicit

distillation are 1787, when the first organized attempts were made on a voluntary basis.

1818, when the first purpose-built revenue police stations were secured.

1824, when excise commissions were awarded to revenue police lieutenants enabling them to operate separately to excise officers, in charge of revenue police parties.

1830, when the Board of Excise revenue police personnel records commenced.

1836, when there were major structural changes to the force.

1857, when the Irish Revenue Police was disbanded, its role then taken over by the Irish Constabulary.

The successful administration of the IRP was primarily due to the appointment of Chief Inspector William Brereton in 1836. He completely revamped the force, establishing a training depot in Clonliffe, Dublin and devising a code of instructions, thereby fixing accountability for every action of each member of the force.

For further contextualisation, the book has 24 appendices: for instance, I included in this book the observations and recommendations of Captain Thomas Drummond (1797–1840), later Under Secretary for Ireland, who had encountered illicit distillation when he was posted to various places in Ulster

as an army officer and civil engineer engaged in the Trigonometrical Survey of Ireland during the 1820s. As a case study, I also included the reminiscences of Matthew Power who served in the Irish Revenue Police as a lieutenant (1847-1854).

Tracing an ancestor in Ireland involves identifying the "paper trail" made during the person's lifetime. In the case of the Irish Revenue Policemen, this can be difficult as their careers predate civil registration in Ireland (beginning on 1

January 1864), and as the relevant census forms 1821-1851 were destroyed in 1922. The purpose of this book, then, is to at least name and remember those who served Government in what was then a thankless occupation.

The Irish Revenue Police: 1830-1857. A complete alphabetical list, short history & genealogical guide. ISBN: 978-1-84682-702-0, 192pp; illustrations; Paperback €22.50 published by Four Courts Press, Dublin.

www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2018/the-irish-revenue-police

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Top left image opposite page:- A Revenue Police Private in 1836 - sketch by F. Glenn Thompson.

Top right image opposite page:- A Lieutenant of the Revenue Police - sketch by F. Glenn Thompson.

Middle image opposite page:- Button used by the Irish Revenue Police. Image courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks.

Bottom right image opposite page:- Sword hilt used by the Irish Revenue Police. Image courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks.
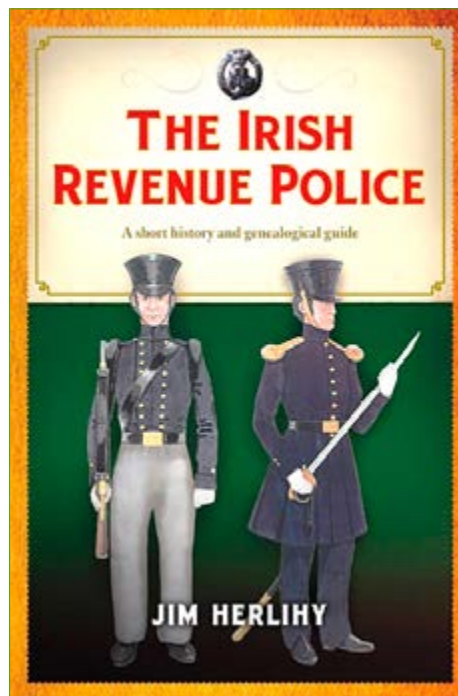
Iconic O'Connell Tower at Glasnevin Open to the Public After Over 45 Years

The O'Connell Tower is an iconic structure and well-known around Dublin. It is synonymous with Glasnevin Cemetery at this point. It was built to commemorate the life of one of Ireland's greatest political figures, Daniel O'Connell.

Work began on the tower in 1854, seven years after O'Connell died in 1847. Hundreds of skilled tradesmen and labourers worked for over 16 months to construct the magnificent tower which stands so tall to this very day.

Patrick Byrne was the architect who conceived the design, he was also responsible for both: St. Audeon's Church and St. Paul's Church in Dublin.

In 1971, a large bomb exploded at the base of the Tower. Nobody was harmed in the blast. The tower has now re-opened to the public and Tower Tours are available daily. Spaces are limited and run from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. (approx). Visit https://www.glasnevintrust.ie for further details.

Tracing Your...

Co. Leitrim Ancestors

By James G. Ryan

County Leitrim is one of the smallest Irish counties, with an area of just 614 square miles. The county has an unusual long and narrow shape and borders on 6 other counties. This can be significant for family history as Leitrim people and activities may be documented in records related to these surrounding counties. The Northern part of the county was originally part of the historic Gaelic territory of West Bréifne (ruled by the O'Rourkes), while the southern part was part of Muintir Eolais, in which the principal family was the McRannals, which has been anglicised as Reynolds. Leitrim families are mainly Gaelic in origin and include O'Rourke, McClancy, O'Meehan, McMorrow, Flynn, McLoughlin, Kelly, Gallagher, McKiernan, Rooney, Moran, McGowan and McSharry.

The county has undergone major changes in population over the centuries. In 1791 it was estimated that there were 10,026 homes in the county, mainly smallholders. In 1841 (according to the official census) it had 155,000 residents, but this dropped to 112,000 by 1851, mainly as a result of the Great Famine (1845-47). The resulting economic depression caused huge emigration so that the population decline continued. The 2016 census shows that the county has a population of 32,000.

Leitrim was originally densely wooded but during the 18th and 19th centuries it was mainly economically dependent on agriculture, although a significant proportion of the county is lakes and bogland, which is relatively useless for farming. The county was dominated by large estates on which the bulk of the population lived as tenant farmers. The major towns are Carrick-on-Shannon (population of 4,062), Manorhamilton (1,466), Kinlough (1,032), Ballinamore (914) and Drumshanbo (902).

Leitrim has a relatively diverse set of records for family research. It has all of the major national records: Civil records of birth, death and marriage start in 1864 and most of these are available on-line from www.irishgenealogy.ie. It is planned that all of these records (up to at least 1918) will be available in due course. See https://bit.ly/2wx3HGQ for full information. Griffith's Valuation (a major listing of land occupiers) was conducted in 1856 and is available on many websites including www.askaboutireland.ie. The 1901 and 1911 census returns are available on-line at www.nationalarchives.ie. If you are beginning your search and do not know where your family was located within Leitrim, these are useful starting points.

A search in the Griffith Valuation, for instance, will show whether the name is associated with a particular local area (e.g. a civil parish). If it is, then you can search the church or other records from that area to find evidence of your ancestors. Equally, the 1901 census, although compiled long after the major period of emigration, may indicate the local prevalence of a surname. When you have identified a likely area, or a definite ancestor, one or more of the following types of records can extend your search.

Church Records

Catholic baptism and marriage records are relatively poor in comparison to many Irish counties. Although there are 23 Catholic parishes serving the county, their start dates are very late in relation to most counties. The earliest start-dates are in the 1820s: Cloone (1820), Bornacoola (1824) and Fenagh (1826). Note that some of these parishes are based in neighbouring counties but also served a part of Leitrim. The late start-date of church records is usually an indication of the relative poverty within the county, which affected the ability to build churches and the attendant administration functions. A full description of the factors which affected creation and maintenance of church records is in 'Irish Church Records' (Flyleaf Press, 2001). www.ancestornetwork.ie/flyleaf/book/Irish-