

THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Ireland from the Act of Union to Irish Free State

The Easter Rising of 1916 and War of Independence which followed in 1919-21 have had a profound influence on the shaping of modern Ireland. The political and social background to 1916 emerge from the preceding decades and failure of Britain to grant a measure of Home Rule to Ireland. Cultural developments of the late nineteenth century were significant including the creation of organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association, Gaelic League and Sinn Féin.

The establishment of the Ulster Volunteers threatening to oppose Home Rule by force led directly to the creation of the Irish Volunteers to defend the measure. The Irish Volunteers were infiltrated by The Irish Republican Brotherhood whose aim was an Irish Republic. The outbreak of war in 1914 and subsequent shelving of Home Rule provided a catalyst for some to believe an armed uprising could now succeed where earlier attempts had failed. The republicans of 1916 regarded themselves as heirs to the republicanism of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen of 1790s, 'Young Ireland' of the 1840s and the Fenians of the 1860s.

The story is illustrated under the following loosely chronological groupings which include some of the personalities involved.

Section 1. Ireland under the Union -

Crisis and Union, Daniel O'Connell and Catholic Emancipation, The Great Famine, Emigration, the Fenians.

Section 2. The demand for Home Rule and its origins -

Land League, Parnell and Gladstone, the Gaelic revival, Sinn Féin, Constitutional Nationalism and John Redmond.

Section 3. Arms and Armies -

Ulster Volunteer Force, Irish Volunteers, Irish Citizen Army, First World War.

Section 4. The Easter Rising of 1916 -

Consequences and the War of Independence.

Section 5. A Nation Once Again -

Provisional Government, Irish Free State.

Philatelic descriptions in italics.

* indicating particular interest or rarity.

Bibliography.

The Oxford Companion to Irish History - ed. Connolly.

The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland - ed. Foster.

The Road to Freedom, (Photographs and memorabilia from the 1916 Rising and afterwards)

- Michael Kenny - Museum of Ireland publication.

Irish Banknotes, Irish Government Paper Money from 1928 - Mártan MacDevitt.

*Cinderella Stamps of Ireland - Peter Wood in Irish Philately, Journal of the Irish Philatelic

Circle - Sections 12 to 15 (September 2013 - March 2015) discuss 'political' labels.

Crisis and Union - The Volunteers.

The Volunteers were a locally based amateur military force raised during 1778-79 for police and anti-invasion duties following the transfer of regular troops to combat the American Revolution. They developed a political aspect through links with 'patriot' politicians who sought greater independence from England. With more than 80,000 members they were an effective pressure group and helped gain legislative independence in 1782 but declined thereafter.

*"Dublin Volunteers on College Green, 4 November 1779" →
Francis Wheatley (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin)
Gallery postcard.*

Newspaper tax stamp. This one penny type, 1785-88.

Each pair of plates of 25 stamps bore the same plate number.

Here plate G, the line through the stamp number, 322, indicates first recut.





Crisis and Union – Henry Grattan and Wolfe Tone.

The American War of Independence influenced Irish politics. A resemblance was seen between the North American colonists and Ireland in the Imperial framework and during the late eighteenth century pressure grew for greater political independence.



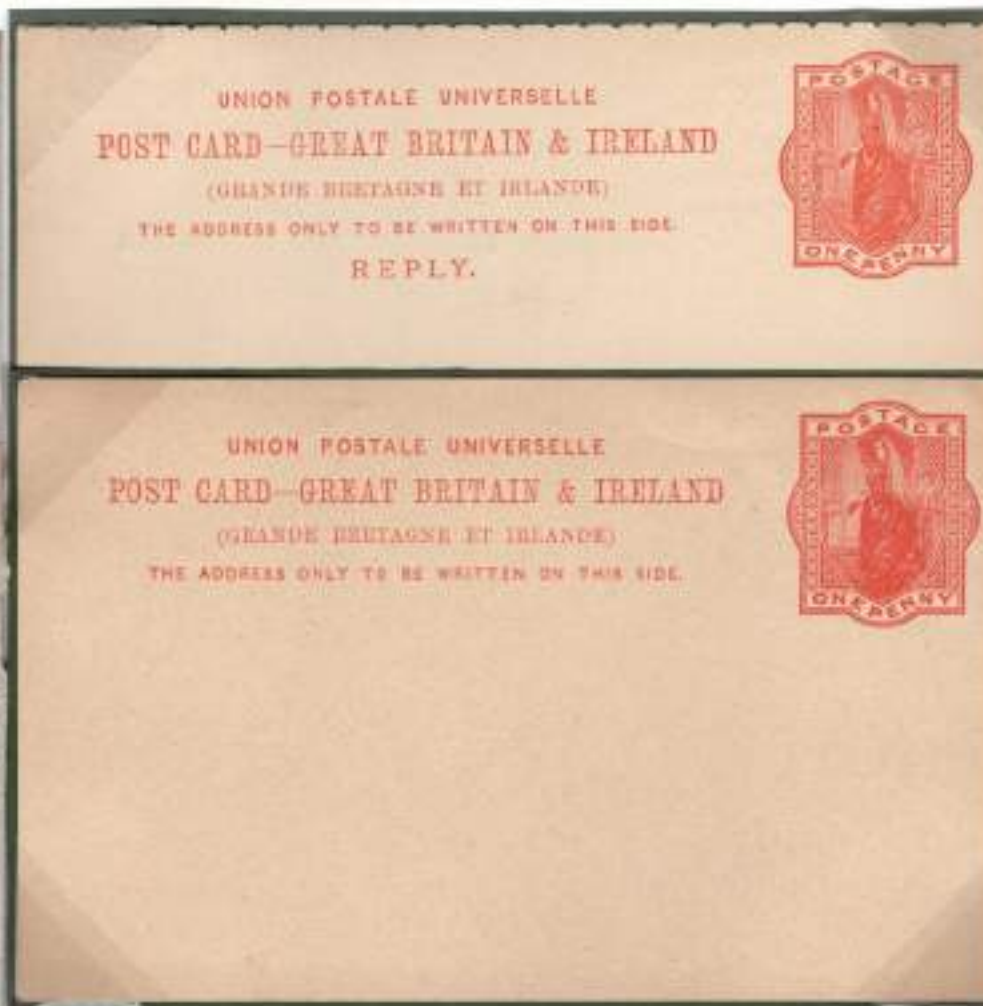
Henry Grattan (1746-1820) wanted greater political independence for Ireland.



A penny pink postal stationery envelope (1869) with a portrait of Grattan embossed on the flap.



Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant barrister, argued that the Irish Catholics and Protestant radicals should co-operate to achieve reform. Adopting his ideas the “United Irishmen” were formed.



William Pitt, the British Prime Minister, determined on a union of the two parliaments and from January, 1801 Ireland became part of the “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland”.

Crisis and Union – Wolfe Tone and the rebellion of 1798.

Wolfe Tone managed to obtain the support of revolutionary France for a rebellion in Ireland, however, the expedition of Hoche failed in 1796 as did the rebellion of 1798.



NOV. 18

BELL'S WEEKLY MESSENGER.

COURT-MARTIAL. TRIAL OF THOMAS WOLFE TONE.

Dublin, Nov. 18.

About half past eleven o'clock, the Court Martial met, and was composed of the following persons, viz.

General Loftus, President.
Colonel Vandekerck, Colonel Wolfe,
Colonel Daly, Colonel Tilly,
Major Anneton, Captain Coote.

Mr. Tone having been brought in, and the charge of High Treason read by the Judge Advocate, the usual interrogations were then put to the prisoner, who replied that it was not his intention to give the Court any trouble of adducing proof to the charge preferred against him; he admitted the facts, as he disclaimed having recourse to any species of subterfuge. He hoped, if that was the proper state, to be indulged in reading to the Court a paper, which contained the motives of his action; and he trusted that this indulgence would be the reader granted, as he had endeavoured to preserve the utmost moderation of language which his situation admitted of; nor would the paper advert to any thing that was not already to be found in the Reports of the Legislature of the country.

President—“Permit the paper may contain matter improper for the Court to hear?”

Mr. Tone—“The Court will, no doubt, reserve to itself the power of stopping me, if that should be the case; but I repeat, that I have taken care to be as moderate as possible in my expressions; and if any should be found too strong, notwithstanding my caution, I will not hesitate to adopt such as shall be more conformable to the feelings of my auditors.”

Judge Advocate—“Do you mean, Mr. Tone, that the paper should go before his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, along with the decision of the Court?”

Mr. Tone—“It has no objection; let the Court in that respect be directed by its own discretion.”

A Member (Colonel Daly)—“You don't intend, I suppose, by the paper which you want to read, to deny the charge made against you? You plead guilty of acting traitorously against your King and Country?”

Witness—“I have admitted the facts, which certainly is an admission of the charge which you have technically described.”

After some short and whispered conversation between the Members, permission being given, Mr. Tone read the paper, the contents of which the following report by me means readers acquainted with.

“Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Court, It is not my intention to give you any trouble respecting proof of what has been here advanced against me; my admission of the charge prevents a production of those forms, which could not possibly prove more irksome to you than they would to

I have little more to say. Success is all in this life, and, as favoured by her, Virtue becomes vicious in the ephemeral existence of those who attach every merit to prosperity. In the glorious race of patriotism, I have pursued the path which Washington has trod in America, and Kosciusko in Poland. Like the latter, I have failed to effect the freedom of my country; and, unlike both, have forfeited my life. I have done my duty, and I have no doubt the Court will do theirs; and I have only to add, that a man who has thought and acted as I have done, should be armed against the fear of death.”

Mr. Tone having here quoted from the written paper, the Judge Advocate asked him if there was any thing else which he wished to say? To which the prisoner replied, that if he was not to be brought up again, previous to the determination of the Court, he would take the present opportunity of offering a few words more.

The President desired him to proceed.

Mr. Tone—“I believe that I stand under the same circumstances of our Emigrants in France, and I rely with so experienced that indulgence which the sympathy of honourable feeling, and the magnanimity of the French Republic, granted to Chabotte and Scobroth, in allowing them the death of a Soldier, in requesting to be shot, I yield to no personal feeling, and am only directed by a respect for the uniform which I wear, and the brave army in which I have had the honour to serve. From the papers which I yesterday delivered to the Brigade Major, it will be seen, that I am as regularly brevetted an Officer in the French service as any who now bear arms have been in the British service; and it will also be seen, that I have not sought or obtained my commission as a protection against the consequences of coming to this country in a hostile character.”

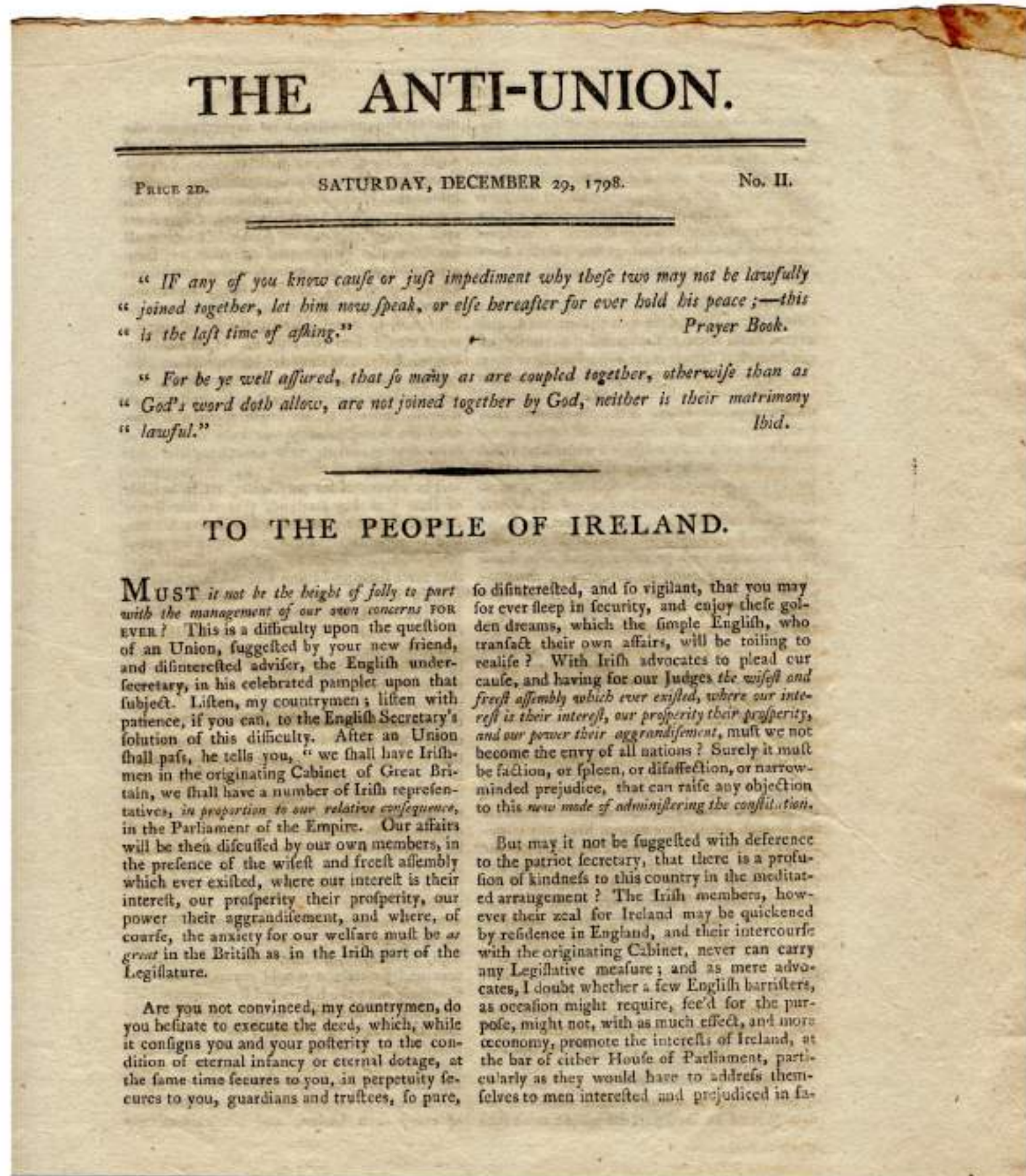
Judge Advocate—“The acceptance of a commission in the French service amounts to a positive proof of the charge against you; but I suppose its production is merely intended to show that you are an officer of France.”

Here the papers alluded to were produced, which were a brevet and letter of service, signed by the President of the Directory, and the Minister of War, by which it appeared that the prisoner was Chef de Brigade.

The President having asked why these papers applied to the prisoner the surname of Smith, as well as that of Tone? he replied, that he went to France from America, and it having been necessary that he should have a passport, he took the first he could get, which ran in the name of Smith; and, on arriving in France, he was necessarily registered by that name; indeed, he says it was very common with French soldiers to have what they term a *nom de guerre*. “I know (said Mr. Tone) that I reap no protection from producing my commission, and as I can have no doubt of the decision of the Court, I thought the Lord Lieutenant's approbation of the sentence can be shewn the better. I could wish, if possible, that my fate were determined in an hour.”

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Crisis and Union – Act of Union, 1801.



THE ANTI-UNION.

PRICE 2D.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1798.

No. II.

“IF any of you know cause or just impediment why these two may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace;—this is the last time of asking.”
Prayer Book.

“For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together, otherwise than as God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God; neither is their matrimony lawful.”
Ibid.

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

MUST it not be the height of folly to part with the management of our own concerns FOR EVER? This is a difficulty upon the question of an Union, suggested by your new friend, and disinterested adviser, the English under-secretary, in his celebrated pamphlet upon that subject. Listen, my countrymen; listen with patience, if you can, to the English Secretary's solution of this difficulty. After an Union shall pass, he tells you, “we shall have Irishmen in the originating Cabinet of Great Britain, we shall have a number of Irish representatives, in proportion to our relative consequence, in the Parliament of the Empire. Our affairs will be then discussed by our own members, in the presence of the wisest and freest assembly which ever existed, where our interest is their interest, our prosperity their prosperity, our power their aggrandisement, and where, of course, the anxiety for our welfare must be as great in the British as in the Irish part of the Legislature.”

so disinterested, and so vigilant, that you may for ever sleep in security, and enjoy these golden dreams, which the simple English, who transact their own affairs, will be toiling to realize? With Irish advocates to plead our cause, and having for our Judges the wisest and freest assembly which ever existed, where our interest is their interest, our prosperity their prosperity, and our power their aggrandisement, must we not become the envy of all nations? Surely it must be faction, or spleen, or disaffection, or narrow-minded prejudice, that can raise any objection to this new mode of administering the constitution.

But may it not be suggested with deference to the patriot secretary, that there is a profusion of kindness to this country in the meditated arrangement? The Irish members, however their zeal for Ireland may be quickened by residence in England, and their intercourse with the originating Cabinet, never can carry any Legislative measure; and as mere advocates, I doubt whether a few English barristers, as occasion might require, fed'd for the purpose, might not, with as much effect, and more economy, promote the interests of Ireland, at the bar of either House of Parliament, particularly as they would have to address themselves to men interested and prejudiced in fa-

Are you not convinced, my countrymen, do you hesitate to execute the deed, which, while it consigns you and your posterity to the condition of eternal infancy or eternal dotage, at the same time secures to you, in perpetuity securities to you, guardians and trustees, so pure,

Newspaper report of arrest, trial and sentence of death.
‘Bell’s Weekly messenger’ – London, 18th November, 1798.

Following the collapse of the 1798 rebellion, William Pitt, the British Prime Minister, introduced a bill to abolish the Irish parliament and create a union between Ireland and Britain. The Act of Union became law on 1st January 1801.

There was great opposition from the protestant class who controlled the parliament.

Ireland under the Union – Daniel O’Connell - Emancipation and Repeal.

The Catholic majority who were excluded from parliament were promised rights under the Union. The promise was not kept and so a campaign was led by O’Connell during the early decades of the century until emancipation was achieved in 1829.

In 1929 the first commemorative stamps of the Irish Free State were to mark the Centenary of Catholic emancipation.



Embossed portrait by Whiting.



Violet specimen handstamp of the Bechuanaland P.O. on UPU distribution (ex-Dublin)

Following the success of his Catholic Association which had won Catholic emancipation he founded the “Loyal National Repeal Association of Ireland” (membership card below) to work for repeal of the Union and establishment of a separate legislature in Dublin.

CLONTARF, 23 rd April 1844	RECEIVED UNANIMOUSLY <i>That a state of war has been declared by the 21st of June 1844 between the Kingdom of Ireland and the Kingdom of Great Britain, and a 10th of the same month, 1844, the same day.</i>	BENBURG, 5 th June 1844
IRELAND 13,242,000 inhabitants 1473 Larger than SARAGOSA & SICILY, UNITED. 1098 Larger than NAPLES & SICILY. 221 Larger than VANDERMAR, WURTEMBERG, & BADEN. 1246 Larger than HANOVER, THE PAPAL STATES & FURGARY. 1017 Larger than BERGAM, HESSE-CARMONY, & THE ELECTORATE OF HESSE. 1511 Larger than GREECE & SWITZERLAND. 25 1/2 Larger than HOLLAND & BELGIUM. A population Superior to that of every other Kingdom in Europe, AND HAS NOT A PARLIAMENT.	LOYAL NATIONAL REPEAL ASSOCIATION (OF)  Mr. Maurice Russell Secretary of the Association The 16 th day of Oct. 1843 <i>The^o Mat^o Ray</i> Secretary	IRELAND Has 8,750,000 Inhabitants. Has a yearly Revenue of £1,100,000. Exports yearly £18,000,000 of Provisions, which yearly are paying her (Great Britain) £2,500,000 to ENGLAND. Remits yearly to America £1,000,000. Supplies during the last year a general average of 100,000 tons of the "ENGLISH" Army and Navy and a further quantity 2,000,000 AND HAS NOT A PARLIAMENT.
REAL-AN-AYNA-RUDDI, 10 th Aug ^o 1844	You may make the EXPOSURE a LAW and you cannot make it binding on CONSCIENCE. 32,563	LIMLEIGH, 9 th to 31 st Aug ^o 1844

Ireland under the Union – Daniel O’Connell.

Following Catholic Emancipation O’Connell could sit at Westminster as an M.P. and so was entitled to Free Franking privilege



Dublin to London, 26 December, 1829.

When the ‘Mulready’ design of postal stationery became subject to ridicule by means of caricature several showed O’Connell.

Southgate No. 4 – “Blarney Stone”, the lion has the face of O’Connell. The Irish M.P.s at Westminster were known as his “Tail”.



London to Farnham, Surrey, 17 July, 1840.

Ireland under the Union – Daniel O’Connell.

O’Connell was a significant enough figure to have memorabilia produced at the time.



Letter seal with his portrait.

Wangford, England to Kilmarnock, Scotland, 1846.



“Fac...similie of DANIEL O’CONNELLS’S Frank”

“Free” fronts were collected at the time for the signatures upon them. O’Connell was in such demand that a contemporary facsimile was produced in Dublin.

Ireland under the Union – Daniel O’Connell.

‘Mulready’ design caricature showing O’Connell.



*Ackermann & Co. – “The Rent Mill”

Cambridge to Uttoxeter, 13 October, 1841.

In their book on British Illustrated Envelopes, Bodily, Hahn & Jarvis record three examples of this envelope and call it “The Print Mill”. The design actually says “Rint” and I suggest this is simply the Irish pronunciation of the word “Rent”. O’Connell’s supporters subscribed a penny each week collected by their Parish Priest and this became known as “The Catholic Rent”.

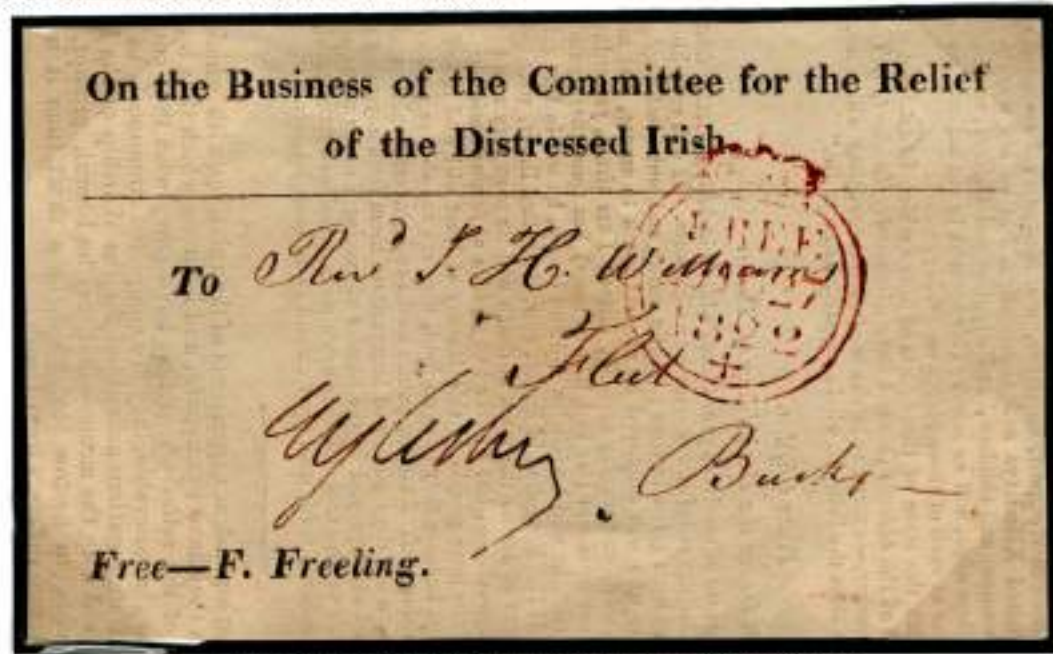


Central Bank of Ireland £20. (1995-1997)

164 million printing with these signatures over 12 dates and this is 19.08.96, series AIB – LIB.

Ireland under the Union – Relief of the distressed Irish 1822.

Localised and limited food crises affected the west in 1799-1801, 1816-17, 1822 and 1831 but nothing to prepare for the shock of the Great Famine of 1845-50. The London Committee for the Relief of the Distressed Irish raised a substantial fund in 1822 for the relief of famine and distress in Ireland.



London to Aylesbury, 27 July, 1822. (front)
The Committee received the benefit of Free Frank privilege for a short time.



The Corner cut on entry..

Ireland under the Union – The Great Famine.

An increase in population had been made possible by sub-division of holdings and reliance on the great yield from small area of the potato. Potato Blight struck in 1845 and again in 1846 causing catastrophic famine.



Searching for potatoes.



Cork Society of Friends soup kitchen.



Both pictures are taken from the Illustrated London News. (Original →)



Strokestown to Dublin, 2 January, 1848.
Report addressed to "Central Relief Committee, Society of Friends....Dublin" (Quakers)

**Ireland under the Union –
The Great Famine, an appeal.**



CHARLEVILLE, COUNTY OF CORK.

September 30th 1846

At a Meeting, convened by public Notice, at the Court House in this Town, on the 14th of September, it was unanimously Resolved—That immediate measures should be taken to alleviate the Distress, caused by the destruction of the Potato crop—that for this purpose, the Parishes of Charleville, Ballyhea, Aghlishdriden, Cooline, Shantrun and Killolane, should be united into One District, to be called the CHARLEVILLE POOR RELIEF DISTRICT, and that application for subscriptions be made to the Landed Proprietors and others connected with the locality, by the General Committee.

In conformity with the foregoing, we beg leave to state, that the Potato crop in this extensive District, has been almost totally destroyed by the Disease universally prevalent, and that portion which remains is rapidly decaying,—that there are very few Gentlemen of fortune residing within this District—Agriculture is far from being in an advanced state, and the Land principally used for grazing—that extensive tracts planted with Potatoes, have been this year abandoned by the Farmers, who consider them not worth the expense of digging out, and from the foregoing causes, the poorer classes are without employment, provisions high, and daily rising in price, and consequently Distress and Destitution already exist, and threaten to increase to a fearful extent.

The Poor people, though much alarmed at the prospect of immediate want, have hitherto shown the utmost forbearance and patience, confidently relying on the assistance of their natural protectors, the Landlords and others deriving property from land.

We trust this confidence is not misplaced, we feel that it is the duty of us who are amongst them, to do our utmost by personal exertions and pecuniary contributions, to alleviate their distress, and we hope that none of those who are absent will refuse to afford their liberal aid.

From you, on whom we feel we have a claim, we beg to solicit a Subscription, and as the emergency is urgent, we request the favor of an early reply.

We have the honor to be,

Your obedient Servants,

WILLIAM HALL, CLK.,
THOMAS COOKE, P.P.,
D. CLANCHY, J.P.,
W. H. SANDERS, J.P.,
JOHN POWER, P.P.,
RICHARD RYAN, R.C.C.,

MICHAEL P. RUSSEL, J.P.,
STANDISH HARRISON,
JONATHAN BRUCE, Jnr.,
EDMOND H. COTTER, P.P.,
WILLIAM DUNBURY, CLK.,
GEORGE GOULD,
GEORGE HARDING,

ROBERT O'HEARDON, P.P.,
WILLIAM BARRY, J.P.,
JONATHAN BRUCE, J.P.,
ROBERT WELDON,
RICHARD ISAAC,
S. C. MARTIN, CLK.

*W. Sanders
Secretary*



Charleville, Co. Cork to Dublin, 1846.

Ireland under the Union – Emigration.

Emigrants took with them memories of the Famine and the inadequate response of the establishment. This kept alive an anti-British attitude and meant there was great support in America, both politically and financially, for Irish independence.



"Emigrants waiting to board ship" - illustration from the 'Illustrated London News'.

Irish Emigrant Society.



New York to Thurles, Co. Tipperary, 1871.



A receipt for the remittance sent to Ireland from America.

Ireland under the Union – Emigration.

Settled emigrants purchase a passage for those still at home giving rise to 'chain migration' of family or district. Emigration was taking place before the Great Famine increased the numbers.

Emigration - American Civil War.

Irish emigrants took part in the Civil War which gave military experience and influenced them to support physical force to achieve Irish independence.

A. BELL & CO.

New York, 5th Month, 23rd 1835

MALCOMSON & BELL
Belfast

Give James Dunlop
or bearer

a Steerage Passage, unforced, on board the ~~Ship~~ *Ship* Sarah Cheape
from *Belfast* to this Port.

Bel B/L

John Bell
James Bell

The Agents of the Vessel will inform the above named Passenger or Passengers the time appointed for the sailing of the Ship, of which they will please take due notice, and bring this letter with them, as it is their only evidence that a passage has been engaged for them; and in case they cannot come, they will please return the passage order to their friends in America who settled for their passage.

If any of your neighbours and friends wish to embark for America, you will please inform them that they can obtain passages by applying to the Agents in Belfast or Liverpool, by letter, post paid.

MALCOMSON, BELL & CO. No. 11 Chapel-street, Liverpool, -or } Agents.
MALCOMSON & BELL, No. 9 Duggal Quay, Belfast, }

STATEMENT OF VOLUNTEER.

Date *NY. Mar 16th 1864*

Name *James Murphy*

Residence *NY*

Age *19 yrs*

Occupation *Shunter*

Where Born *Ireland*

Whether New Recruit or Veteran Soldier *New*

Examining Surgeon *Charles Gray*

Mustering Officer *James Davison*

County Bounty Paid *\$3.00*

James Murphy



New York to Omagh, Co. Tyrone, 1835.
"A steerage passage.....from Belfast to this port"

Volunteer born in Ireland.