

THE STRUGGLE FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE MAY 1916 TO DECEMBER 1921

This Exhibit shows the Social, Economic and Political Struggle for Irish Independence from May 1916, just after the failed 1916 Easter Rebellion, to December 1921, when Ireland was granted semi-autonomous Independence from Great Britain. The Exhibit illustrates several key events including the Social and Economic turmoil caused the destruction of Central Dublin during the Rebellion; the Political Evolution of Sinn Fein as the dominant Political Party in what would become the 26 counties of Southern Ireland; the Social, Economic and Judicial interconnections between Ireland and Great Britain; and the Military Conflict between the British Government and the Irish Republican Army which ultimately resulted in Independence for Southern Ireland

Historical Background

Irish History has been interwoven with that of England from the first Norman Landings in Wexford in May 1169 just over 100 years after the Norman Conquest of England. The Normans were Militarily Superior to the Irish and by 1366 they controlled over two thirds of the Island. The Norman Social, Political and Religious systems were different from the Irish. The Normans favored Central Government, intensive cultivation on farms in walled fields, large Abbeys rather than the Irish Monasteries and the Norman language was predominately French. These military, cultural and political differences would set the stage for **almost 700 years of continuous conflict** between Ireland and England (later Great Britain) which culminated in the final push for **Irish Independence in the early 1900s**. The resurgence of Irish Nationalism led to the Introduction of the **Irish Home Rule Bill in the British Parliament in August 1912 for all 32 counties in Ireland**. The Unionist Party in the 6 Counties of Northern Ireland (Ulster) strongly opposed a Union with the 26 Counties of Southern Ireland for Religious and Political reasons and this delayed the second Reading of the Bill until May 1914. The World War caused a delay in the Bills implementation and the 1916 rebellion further complicated relations between Southern Ireland and Great Britain (and Northern Ireland). **A bitter armed conflict** began in June 1917 between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British Police and Military which lasted until July 1921.

Negotiations for Irish Independence began in the Summer of 1921 and resulted in the in the Signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on December 6 1921.

The Treaty partitioned Ireland into the 26 County Irish Free State and the 6 counties of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland had the option to remain with Great Britain and it still does today.

The Exhibit is Organized as Follows on Eight Double Pages

- o The Move Toward Irish Independence and Ulster Says No to Home Rule.
- o The Aftermath of the 1916 Rebellion “*A Terrible Beauty is Born*”
- o The Political Evolution of Sinn Fein to become the dominant Irish Political Party in Southern Ireland
- o The Challenges of Irish Independence and the Socioeconomic Connections between Ireland and Great Britain
- o The American Influence and The Struggle for Irish Independence
- o The Military Conflict between the British Government and the Irish Republican Army
- o The Censorship of Mail by the Irish Republican Army and the British Military Authorities.
- o Epilogue: The Struggle Ends with Independence for Southern Ireland on December 6, 1921

Each Page has its own Time Line

Several Rare and Interesting Items are shown with a Green Back Ground

The Move Toward Irish Independence



Cover from Folkestone (Kent, on the English Coast) To Gospel Oak (London). Postmarked JA 4 13 and addressed to Murphy O' Conaill a known Sinn Fein Fund Raiser in London

The cover has three Celtic Cross Political labels printed in 1907 to raise funds to help publish Sinn Fein as a daily Newspaper.

In July 1908, the British Post Office banned the use of Political Labels on the address side of covers and Postcards. This Cover is interesting in that it went through the English mail system

Ulster Says No to Home Role in Ireland



Unionist Postcard from Belfast showing The Red Hand of Ulster backed by rifles The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was formed in 1913 to defend the right of Ulster to remain in the Union The group landed armaments in April 1914. However, many members joined the British Army During WW I Postcard printed by J. Johnson, Belfast in 1914 as a fund raising for the UVF