

C8

# KILMAINHAM GAOL

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## Kilmainham Gaol Document Pack

1796 - 1849

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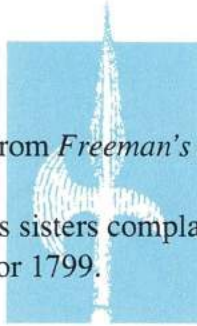


# KILMAINHAM GAOL DOCUMENT PACK 1796-1849

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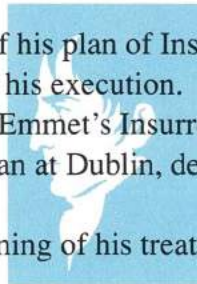
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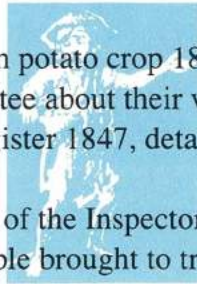
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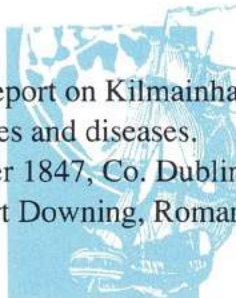
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## **INTRODUCTION TO KILMAINHAM DOCUMENT PACK FOR PERIOD 1796-1849**

Kilmainham Gaol was opened in 1796 as the gaol for the County of Dublin. Although it underwent frequent structural changes, a spectacular improvement was achieved in 1862 with the addition of the East Wing. Apart from common convicts, state (or political) prisoners were held there from time to time. During the era of transportation, it acted as a depot for transportees bound for the convict colonies of Australia.

This pack contains a selection of documents relating to Kilmainham Gaol and some of the people imprisoned there between the years 1796 and 1849. The documents include a newspaper report, diary extracts, letters, petitions, official reports and extracts from gaol and transportation registers. They give an insight into conditions in the prison, crimes and punishments, major events and the people associated with them, both famous and little known. A gaol mirrors the problems of society at any one particular time. Therefore, the documents in this pack not only describe life in the gaol, but also reflect life and events outside its walls.

The Junior Certificate History Syllabus recommends the 'use of appropriate documentary sources' by teachers in the classroom. The documents in this pack can be used in the study of revolutionary movements and social conditions in Ireland in the early 19th century for the Junior Certificate. They might also be useful for classes in Social Studies, studying the penal system and as a Transition Year history module.

The teacher, when planning a programme of work for the year, should bear in mind the age and ability of students in deciding how to use the pack. A visit by the class to the Gaol to see where many of the documents originated is strongly recommended. There, the educational trail prepared in association with this pack can be used to focus the learning experience. The other documents can be used either in preparation or as a follow-up to the visit.

Along with some background information to place the documents in historical context, the pack also contains some questions on the individual documents which the teacher may find useful. In addition, a reading list is included to help those wishing to do further reading and research.

It is intended that a second document pack will cover the period 1850-1924.

**Pat Cooke,  
Curator,  
Kilmainham Jail.**



*Extract from*

*Freeman's Journal*

*Thursday, March*

*15th, 1798.*

## ARREST OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN

The ideals of the French Revolution – Liberty, Fraternity, Equality – inspired the formation of the United Irishmen. Although many of its leaders were Protestant, it advocated full Catholic emancipation. Wolfe Tone sought and got French help to free the country. Worried at this trend, the Government was prepared to free prisoners if they would fight for the enemies of France, Prussia for instance. The *Freeman's Journal* makes mention of both the French threat and of the ideals of the United Irishmen.

The *Union Star* newspaper was run by a Dublin gunsmith called Walter Cox. It supported the United Irishmen and called for the assassination of government spies and collaborators. However, many of the leading members of the United Irishmen were opposed to this view. Cox was tracked down by the authorities and turned informer.

On Monday, 12th March 1798, most of the members of the Leinster Directory were arrested while meeting in Oliver Bond's house in Bridge Street. The same day, four other leading members of the Society (Thomas Addis Emmet, Henry Jackson, Edward McNevin and John Sweetman) were arrested at their homes and workplaces. The authorities were informed of the meeting by Thomas Reynolds, a Kildare delegate on the Leinster Directory, but, contrary to the report in the *Freeman's Journal*, he was not arrested.

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Since the apprehension of the persons charged with treasonable offences, the Privy Council have sat to a late hour at night, examining each individual, the most of whom have gone through the requisite investigation, and been committed for High Treason.

The following is a list of the names of the persons apprehended on Monday last, viz.

Henry Jackson of Church Street.

Hugh Jackson, his son.

Oliver Bond of Bridge Street, son-in-law to Jackson.

Edward Hudson.

Laurence Kelly, Delegate from the Queen's Co.

Peter Brennan, do from Wexford.

John Sweetman, of this city, Brewers.

George Cummins, Agent and Secretary to Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

James Lynch, Delegate from Cork.

Thomas Reynolds, do from Kildare.

Charles Martin, do from Carlow.

Patrick Devine )

Laurence Griffin ) Other Delegates

Eight of the former persons were committed to Kilmainham and examinations received against them.

In one place where the principal part of these offenders were siezed, handbills were found ready for distribution, cautioning the public not to take any bank notes, with a view to injure public credit, stating that the present form of Government would shortly be overthrown and that 'rap halfpence' as they are called, would then be of more value than the bank notes of the present day.

To such a pitch and horrid length had treason proceeded in its plans of anarchy and subversion against the peace and Government of this country, that among the papers found in searching after fugitive rebels on Monday last, there were found, it is said, a plan of regular attack upon the Metropolis, naming the day on which it was to take place, and also a letter from the French Directory, containing an appointment of the person to whom it was written, to the Command of

Adjutant General in the division of the Army of England, appointed to her in Ireland. Among the papers of one of the arrested parties, we understand, was likewise found several manuscript copies of the Union Star, that infernal Bulletin of proscription and assassinations.

51	Hugh Ware	6 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1798	Lord L <sup>th</sup> Warrant	Treasonable Practices
52	George Pubi	6 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1798	Lord L <sup>th</sup> Warrant	Treasonable Practices
53	Richard Wopene	6 <sup>th</sup> March 1799	Mich <sup>ts</sup> Day Capt	Treasonable Practices
54	Edward Lawson	30 <sup>th</sup> April 1799	Lord L <sup>th</sup> Warrant	Treasonable Practices
55	Laurance Griffin	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1799	Lord Castleburgh	Treasonable Practices
56	Richard C. Pully	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1799	Lord Castleburgh	Treasonable Practices
57	John Cummings	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1799	Lord Castleburgh	Treasonable Practices
58	Thomas Lynch	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1799	Lord Castleburgh	Treasonable Practices
59	James Grogan	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 1799	Lord Castleburgh	Treasonable Practices
60	Henry Beard	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 1799	Lord L <sup>th</sup> Warrant	Treasonable Practices
61	Samuel Dixon	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 1799	W. C. Linn Capt	Treasonable Practices
62	James Napier & Tandy	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1799	W. C. Linn Capt	Treasonable Practices
63	Harvey & Morris	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1799	W. C. Linn Capt	Treasonable Practices
64	James Blackwell	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1799	Privy Council	Treasonable Practices
65	George Pitts alias William Corbett	17 <sup>th</sup> Nov <sup>r</sup> 1799	Privy Council	Treasonable Practices
66	Edmond Garvey	25 <sup>th</sup> July 1800	Lord Lieutenant	Treasonable Practices
67	Thomas Mackay	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1801	Lord Lieutenant	Treasonable Practices
68	Barter Connelly	20 <sup>th</sup> July 1803	W. B. Swann Esq	High Treason
69	Gerard Stone	20 <sup>th</sup> July 1803	Privy Council	High Treason
70	John Palmer	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 1803	Privy Council	High Treason
71	John Stockdale	24 <sup>th</sup> July 1803	Privy Council	High Treason
72	John W. Keenan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug <sup>r</sup> 1803	W. B. Swann Esq	High Treason
73	John Hillman	2 <sup>nd</sup> Aug <sup>r</sup> 1803	W. B. Swann Esq	High Treason

From these circumstances it is apparent that the foulest treasons against the State, and the most horrid crimes against humanity were committed. The professed advocates of Catholic Emancipation and parliamentary reform were actually in the pay and commission of a foreign enemy, who has avowedly threatened our extermination, physical and political. From the professors of 'Brotherly love and affection among all descriptions of Irishmen' emanated that diabolical system of assassination, at which humanity shudders and which trampled under the enlanguished foot of the desperate ruffian, all the securities of civil society.

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### Questions

1. Find out what the following words mean:  
Privy Council; High Treason; Metropolis; Catholic Emancipation.
2. Handbills were found where some of the offenders were siezed. What message was on these handbills?
3. What other plan, according to the newspaper report, was discovered among the papers found in searching after fugitive rebels?
4. What evidence was reported to suggest the offenders were conspiring with the French?
5. What banned newspaper was found on one of the accused?
6. Who were the 'professed advocates of Catholic Emancipation and parliamentary reform'?
7. What is meant by the reference to 'the professors of brotherly love and affection among all descriptions of Irishmen'?
8. Find out what you can about Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Oliver Bond. *The Year of Liberty* by Thomas Pakenham and *The United Irishmen* (Education Facsimiles 61-80), published by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, would be very helpful.

DOCUMENT  
— 1B —

*McCracken's letter  
from Kilmainham  
to his sisters  
complaining of  
gaol conditions.*

## HENRY JOY McCracken (1767 – 1798)

Henry Joy McCracken was born in Belfast in 1767. Associated with Wolfe Tone in the founding of the United Irishmen, he became one of the Society's leaders in Ulster. When the Society was outlawed, he was arrested and imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol on the 8th October 1796. He was maintained on the State Allowance until 3rd May 1797; thereafter, as he relates in his letter to his sisters, he had to support himself. On his release in January 1798, he returned to Belfast and immediately set about organising the North for the Rising of 1798 and was later in command of the Rising in Antrim. On the run from the authorities, he laid plans to escape to America but was then captured. He refused an offer of freedom in return for information on the other participants. He was tried and hanged in Belfast on 17th July 1798.

*Dr Sisters,*

*When I was removed to this part of the Jail I thought that I would have a better opportunity of writing, that is, I would have more leisure, the reverse is the case, if you wish for a true picture of the inside of a Jail read the 2nd Chap. 2nd Par. of Caleb Williams<sup>1</sup>, from being confined with such a variety of characters and all sorts of crimes charged on them, it makes a sort of amusement observing the different turns of mind, in the apartments allotted to six northerns, we have got two very respectable men from the Rock on treasonable charges – since our removal my linen has had a great decline, however I have still 4 shirts – It is expensive to live here plundered by Turnkeys etc. and still more so when confined with others who cannot support themselves nor yet be left to themselves. You may easily see that I wish for some money: but not much. I received the two guinea notes and two that John paid for me which is all that I have got to support myself and some others since the 10th May.*

*I hate money it makes me melancholy to think about it, e<sup>3</sup> has entirely prevented my writting this line – we are all well yet the use of a yard all day and play ball morn to night – Will.<sup>2</sup> is writting by the same oppty.*

*God bless you all  
Hn. J.McCracken*

<sup>1</sup> *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* by William Godwin. First published 1794. Reprinted by Oxford University Press 1970, edited by David McCracken. Henry Joy McCracken is probably referring to Vol. 2, Chap.11.

<sup>2</sup> William McCracken, brother of Henry Joy McCracken.



Henry Joy McCracken

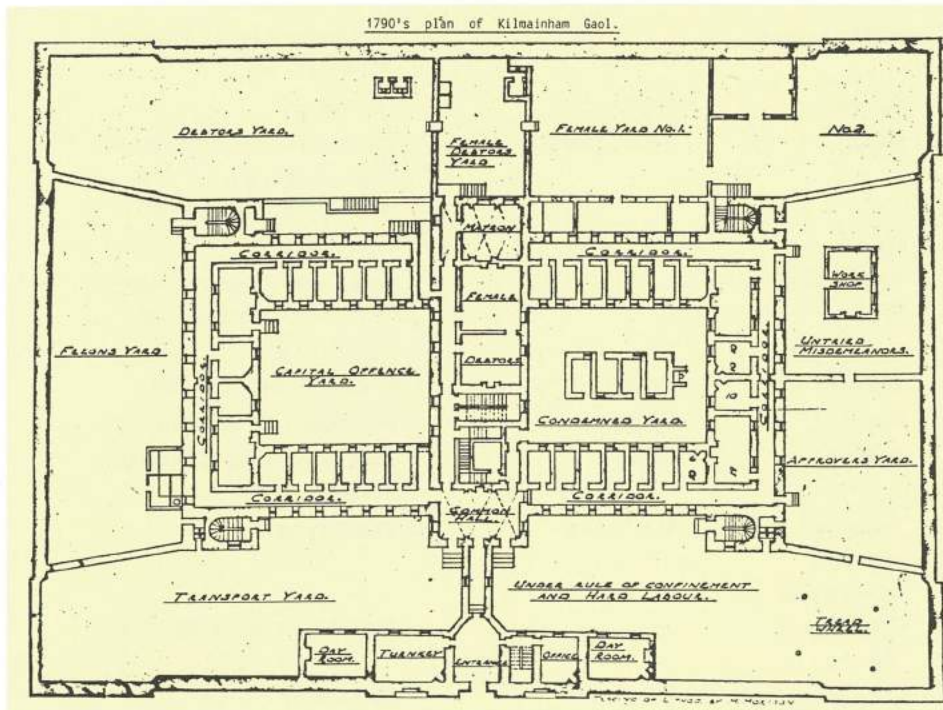
### Questions

1. What does McCracken mean when he says they were 'plundered by Turnkeys'?
2. How did McCracken and his fellow prisoners spend their day?
3. How many others were in the apartments with McCracken?
4. Was the gaolkeeper strict? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Find out about McCracken's part in the 1798 Rebellion. *The Year of Liberty* by Thomas Pakenham is a very readable account of the Rebellion.



DOCUMENT  
— 1C —

An extract based on  
the Gaol Register  
for January -  
March 1799



### Questions

- Look at the plan of the Gaol. What yards would the following prisoners have used?
  - William Corrigan, No. 70;
  - Thomas Cavan, No. 57;
  - Edward Thompson, No. 72.
- Suggest a reason why some criminals were 'sent to the King of Prussia'?
- In what part of modern Europe is Prussia?
- For what crimes were prisoners transported?
- For what crimes were prisoners executed?

No.	Names	Crimes	Sentence	Discharged
41	<b>Patrick Cooke</b>	Treasonable Pract.	.....	Sent to the Provost by order of General Ceaig, June 12th 1799
47	<b>Nicholas Trainor</b>	Assault on the High Road	.....	Bailed before Sir Henry Echlin 7th March 1799
48	<b>James Cavanagh</b>	Having forged name in his possession	Not Guilty	Discharged
49	<b>William Cullen</b>	Stealing sheep	.....	Sent to the King of Prussia 7th April 1799
50	<b>Loughlin McManus</b>	Felony	Not Guilty	Discharged
51	<b>John Harrington</b>	Felony	Seven Years	Pleaded His Majesty's Most Gracious Pardon and was discharged 10th October 1801
52	<b>Margaret Lynn</b>	Felony	Not Guilty	Discharged
53	<b>John Hardiman</b>	Treasonable Pract.	.....	Sent to the Provost by order of Alex. Marsden, Esq. 13th March 1799
55	<b>James Devoy</b>	Murder	Death	Executed 6th July 1799
57	<b>Thomas Cavan</b>	Robbery	Death	Executed 17th March 1799
59	<b>John Quinn</b>	Robbery	Death	Sent to the King of Prussia 7th April 1799
62	<b>Michael Verdon</b>	Robbery, receiving stolen goods	Not Guilty	Discharged
67	<b>Bridget Barrett</b>	Suspicion of Murder	.....	Bailed by order of the Court
68	<b>James Cavenagh</b>	For putting Jane Gilligan in dread and fear of her life	Not Guilty	Discharged
69	<b>Thomas Webb</b>	Burglary and Robbery	Death but respited until further orders	Put on board The John and Esther Tender 29th Nov. 1799
70	<b>William Corrigan</b>	Debtor Decree for £2 : 4	.....	Discharged by order of the Sheriff pleaded his pardon at Sessions and was discharged 12th October 1799.
72	<b>Edward Thompson</b>	Felony	Seven years Transportation	Discharged by order of the Sheriff pleaded his pardon at Sessions and was discharged 12th October 1799.
73	<b>John Tormy</b>	Assault	Fined 6 pence	Discharged
76	<b>James Hughes</b>	Burglary and Robbery	Not Guilty	Discharged
80	<b>Luke Stanton</b>	Wilfull Murder	.....	Sent to King of Prussia 7th Apr. 1799
81	<b>Patrick Stanton</b>	Wilfull Murder	.....	Sent to King of Prussia 7th Apr. 1799

DOCUMENT  
—2A—

*An extract from  
Emmet's account of  
his plan of  
Insurrection in  
Dublin and the  
causes of its failure,  
delivered on the  
morning of his  
execution.*

**ROBERT EMMET (1778 – 1803)**

At nine o'clock on the evening of 23rd July 1803, Robert Emmet, accompanied by a small band of followers, left his arms depot in Marshalsea Lane and marched to Thomas Street, calling on passersby to join in his revolution. The rebellion soon turned into a disorganised riot as the drunken rabble from the nearby taverns joined in. Emmet, realising his cause was lost, ordered his followers to retreat to Wicklow. However, the rabble carried on. They stopped a carriage in Thomas Street, carrying Lord Kilwarden, the Lord Chief Justice, with his nephew and daughter. Lord Kilwarden and his nephew were dragged from the carriage and piked to death. The mob was later met by a detachment of troops from the James Street barracks who dispersed them with a volley of musket fire.

Emmet was arrested two days later by Major Sirr in Mrs. Palmer's house at Harold's Cross. He was questioned in Dublin Castle and imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol. His trial lasted one day. He was convicted of high treason and was hanged, drawn and quartered outside St. Catherine's Church in Thomas Street on 20th September 1803. Fifteen others, including Emmet's close friend Thomas Russell, were also executed for their part in the rebellion. Many more, including James Tandy, John St. John Mason and Anne Devlin, who were suspected of being involved in Emmet's Rebellion were also arrested and lodged in Kilmainham Gaol.

Robert Emmet was born in Dublin in 1778. His father, Robert Emmet Snr., was the State Physician. His brother, Thomas Addis, a leading United Irishman, was arrested in 1798 but allowed to go into exile. Robert Emmet himself was expelled from Trinity College in 1798 for his political activities. He spent some time in France and returned to Ireland in 1802. In April 1803, he leased a house in Butterfield Lane, Rathfarnham, under the name of Ellis. Anne Devlin acted as his housekeeper. Michael Dwyer spent three days in this house discussing the plans for the rebellion with Emmet and Russell.

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***The original of this paper was delivered by Mr Emmet the morning just before he was brought out to execution, in order to be forwarded to his brother Thomas Addis Emmet at Paris.***

The whole of this plan was given up by me, for want of means, except the Castle and lines of defence, for which I expected 300 Wexford men, 400 Kildaremen and 200 Wicklow all of whom had fought before, to begin the surprises at this side of the water and by the preparations for defence, so as to give time to the town to assemble. The County of Dublin was also to act the instant it began; the number of Dublin people acquainted with it I understood to be 3 or 4000. I expected 2000 to assemble at Castigan's Mill, the grand place of assembly. The evening before, the Wicklowmen failed, through their officer. The Kildaremen who were to act (particularly with

me), came in, and at 5 o'clock went off again, from the canal harbour, on a report from two of their officers that Dublin would not act. In Dublin itself it was given out, by some treacherous or cowardly persons, that it was postponed till Wednesday. The time of assembly was from six till nine: and at nine, instead of 2000, there were 80 men assembled; when we came to the Market House they were diminished to 18 or 20. The Wexfordmen did assemble, I believe, to the amount promised on the Coal Quay; but 300 men, though they might be sufficient to begin on a sudden, were not so, when government had five hours notice by expresses from Kildare.

Add to this, the preparations were, from an unfortunate series of disappointments in money, unfinished, scarcely any blunderbusses bought up.

The man who was to turn the fuzes and rammers for the beams forgot them, and went off to Kildare to bring men, and did not return till the very day. The consequence was that all the beams were not loaded, nor mounted with wheels, nor the train bags of course fastened on to explode them. From the explosion in Patrick Street, I lost the jointed pikes which were deposited there; and the day of action was fixed before this, and could not be changed.

I had no means for making up for their loss, but by the hollow beams full of pikes, which struck me three or four days before the 23rd.

From the delays in getting the materials, they were not able to set about them till the day before; the whole of that day and the next, which ought to have been spent in arrangements, was obliged to be employed in work. Even this from the confusion occasioned by men crowding into the depot from the country, was almost impossible.

The person who had the management of the depot, mixed by accident the slow matches that were prepared with what were not, and all our labour went for nothing.

The fuzes for the grenades he had also laid by, where he forgot them, and could not find them in the crowd.

The cramp-irons could not be got on time from the smith's, to whom we could not communicate the necessity of despatch, and the scaling ladders were not finished (but one). Money came in at five o'clock, and the thirty men of the depot, who alone knew the town, were obliged to be sent out to buy up blunderbusses, for the people refused to act without same.

To change the day was impossible, for I expected the counties to act, and I feared to lose the advantage of surprise.

The Kildaremen were coming in for three days; and, after that, it was impossible to draw back. Had I another week, had I one thousand pounds, had I one thousand men, I would have feared nothing. There was redundancy enough in any one part to have made up, if complete, for deficiency in the rest; but there was failure in all - plan, preparation and men.

I would have given it the respectability of insurrection, but I did not wish uselessly to spill blood: I gave no signal for the rest, and they all escaped.

I arrived time enough in the country to prevent that part of it, which had already gone out with one of my men to disarm the neighbourhood, from proceeding. I found that by a mistake of the messenger, Wicklow would not rise that night: I sent off to prevent it from doing so the next night as it intended. It offered to rise even after the defeat, if I wished it, but I refused. Had it risen, Wexford would have done the same. It began to assemble; but its leader kept it back, till he knew the fate of Dublin. In the state Kildare was in it would have done the same. I was repeatedly solicited by some of those who were with me to do so, but I constantly refused. The more remote counties did not rise, for want of money to send them the signal agreed on.

I know how men without candour will pronounce on this failure, without knowing one of



### The Murder of Lord Kilwarden

This illustration by George Cruikshank is from W.H. Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798* (National Library of Ireland)

the circumstances that occasioned it. They will consider only that they predicted it; whether its failure was caused by chance, or by any of the grounds on which they made their predictions, they will not care; they will make no distinction between a prediction fulfilled and justified, they will make no compromise of errors – they will not recollect that they predicted also that no system could be formed – that no secrecy nor confidence could be restored – that no preparations could be made – that no plan could be arranged – that no day could be fixed, without being instantly known at the Castle; that government only waited to let the conspiracy ripen, and crush it at their pleasure; and that on these grounds only they did predict its miscarriage. The very same men, that, after success, would have flattered, will now calumniate. The very same men, that would have made an offering of unlimited sagacity at the shrine of victory, will not now be content to take back that portion that belongs of right to themselves, but would violate the sanctuary of misfortune and strip her of that covering that candour would have left her.

## Questions

1. What reason does Emmet give for the failure of the
  - (i) Wicklowmen?
  - (ii) Kildaremen ?
  - (iii) Dublinmen?
2. How many men actually assembled for the Rising?
3. What problems did Emmet have with arms and ammunition?
4. What does Emmet say to the people who will criticise his Insurrection?
5. Why, according to Emmet, did he not postpone the Rising?
6. Why, according to Emmet, did he not give the signal for the others to rise?
7. Make a drawing of a pike and a blunderbuss.
8. You can find out more about Robert Emmet in *The Unfortunate Mr. Emmet* by Leon O'Broin, *Upon the Mercy of the Government* by Kieran Sheedy and *Robert Emmet: The Insurrection of July 1803* published by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

## JAMES TANDY

James Tandy was the son of Napper Tandy and is the same James Tandy referred to in Document 2D.

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The whole of the conspiracy, conducted by the unfortunate Mr Emmet, was so truly, genuine, ridiculous and puerile that it was necessary to be divested of all reason, as well as loyalty, to be engaged therein. Among other plans of that highly gifted, but infatuated boy, he proposed to send a man on horse back to arrest the several members of administration, and that each of the persons appointed for this duty, was to place his prisoner behind him and gallop off to the mountains, where all the persons so taken were to be concealed, and thus he proposed to throw the govt. into confusion. As it is not understood, that the officers of the newly constituted authority were to have provided additional saddles, Mr Marsden and some other gentlemen, would have had but an uncomfortable ride. But, I must have been but a poor scholar of my Lord Cornwallis to have acted on such sage, political or military plans!!!

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### Questions

1. What is James Tandy's attitude to Robert Emmet himself?
2. In what terms does Tandy describe the planning of the Rising?
3. What humorous observation does Tandy make on the plans for the Insurrection?
4. Having read the last two documents, do you think the Rebellion was well planned?

UNIT 2

~

1803  
EMMET



DOCUMENT  
—2B—

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*James Tandy's  
Comment on  
Emmet's Rebellion*



Emmet preparing for the Insurrection

This illustration by George Cruikshank is from W.H. Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798*

(National Library of Ireland)



DOCUMENT  
—2C—

*Copy of a letter  
from R. Rainey, a  
yeoman, describing  
the trial and  
execution of Robert  
Emmet 18-20th  
September 1803.*

**Dublin, September 18 1803**  
**Sunday evening Monday night**

*It is all over for the unfortunate Emmet; he is to be executed tomorrow in Thomas Street, the most notorious scene of his treasons – I was in Court at 7 this morning and at the same hour this evening, the Jury brought in their verdict the prisoners counsel declining to make any defence, having reduced the trial within more moderate bounds as to length than usual on occasions of such moment.*

*So complete, so minute and so connected a body of evidence was never I believe produced on any trial; it has beyond the shadow of a doubt, confirmed him as the first contriver and the very life and soul of the Conspiracy, the most atrocious which has yet been formed as having for its object that state of eternal anarchy and horror, nicknamed a free and independent Republic, an object which the frantic ambition of this young man avowed no reformation of the existing constitution were it purified by wisdom itself should ever induce him to relinquish – 8 months since, in February 1802 (sic.) he returned to this country from a continental tour in which Paris was not omitted: he was then employed in forming the plans of his new Constitution and sounding the public mind as to its reception; in March the King's messenger creating a general expectation of a rupture with France, he judged it necessary to exert himself in forwarding the Conspiracy and under the name of Hewitt took lodgings at a Mrs. Palmers at Harrolds Cross; where meetings were frequently held and measures concerted for enflaming the lower classes and furthering the preparations for revolt.*

*Here however he judged it unsafe to remain as the business advanced and he removed to a house near Rathfarnham, of which he took a lease under the name of Ellis and where aided by his principal associates, a Bricklayer and an Attorney's Clerk, infamous for his rogueries, (and who it appeared were his Lieut. Generals, and next to him Chiefs of the Provisional Government) he laboured with unremitting diligence, with his pen, his purse and his personal exertions in promoting the hoped for revolution – whilst in this retreat, however, they did not escape observation, many suspicious circumstances were taken notice of, but unfortunately so little reason was there (from the apparently happy state of the country and the mildness of a benevolent administration) to apprehend any repetition of civil war; that these suspicious were not of a political nature; they were suspected of being coiners and were left unmolested, till at length they judged it proper again to shift their quarters.*

*Their next habitation was the famous Depot behind Thomas Street; it was now the middle of July, the people as he hoped boiling with the indignation he had kindled against the Government and the Constitution and waiting but for his whistle to rise and crush their oppressors. In the Depot he anxiously superintended the manufacture of the several instruments of destruction, prepared his edicts and read them to his troops (if the rabble who surrounded him can deserve such an appellation) appeared amongst them in all the splendour of a General's appointments and by every exertion of which the human mind and body are capable laboured to enflame and rouse them to act with vigour in the approaching contest.*

*Thus it appeared it became necessary for the Conspirators to hurry as the explosion from a minor Depot in Patrick Street has awakened some suspicions of treason and accordingly the 23rd was fixed for seizing on the Castle and for the Provisional Government (the Emmet – the Bricklayer and the Clerk) to ascend their Tribunal and assume the reins.*

*The night came and Emmet and his Lieut. Generals dressed in their magnificent uniforms and with colours flying led their magnanimous troops to the charge; he commanded wherever any regularity was on that night preserved, but it did not appear that to him farther than as having let loose such Tygers, was to be imputed any of the savage atrocities which followed. Finding that those numerous hosts which he expected to swell his ranks from all quarters did [not] arrive, that his Colonels wanted Regiments and his Captains companies, that not more than 100 soldiers had disconcerted the proceedings of his army and that nothing could rationally be then hoped from them, the evidence traces the General and his Staff flying to the Wicklow mountains retaining their military paraphernalia and chattering to the people in broken French in hopes to stimulate them by the idea of there being French Generals arrived with assistance, this artifice however did not succeed and after some days experience that things were not so ripe as the expected, the Bricklayer and the Clerk effected their escape and Emmet throwing off his Green and Gold, substituted a plain frock, reassumed the name of Hewitt and returned to Mrs. Palmers where at length he was arrested by the activity of Major Sirr and there it appears, he had the weakness to communicate to young Palmer, (who on the table communicated it to the Jury) a relation of his proceedings on the night of the 23rd and of his plan of escape in case he should be searched for; many curious particulars which it would be impossible to enumerate to you came out in the course of this long investigation; the manuscripts of all those proclamations and addresses were found on his person and amongst others the draft of an address to the existing Government like all his productions ably put together, and in the diplomatic style declaring the undersigned chief of that Conspiracy, of the Power, the extension and the resources of which they could form no estimate, and denouncing the thunder of his wrath upon them, if they should presume to exert their laws against his adherents.*

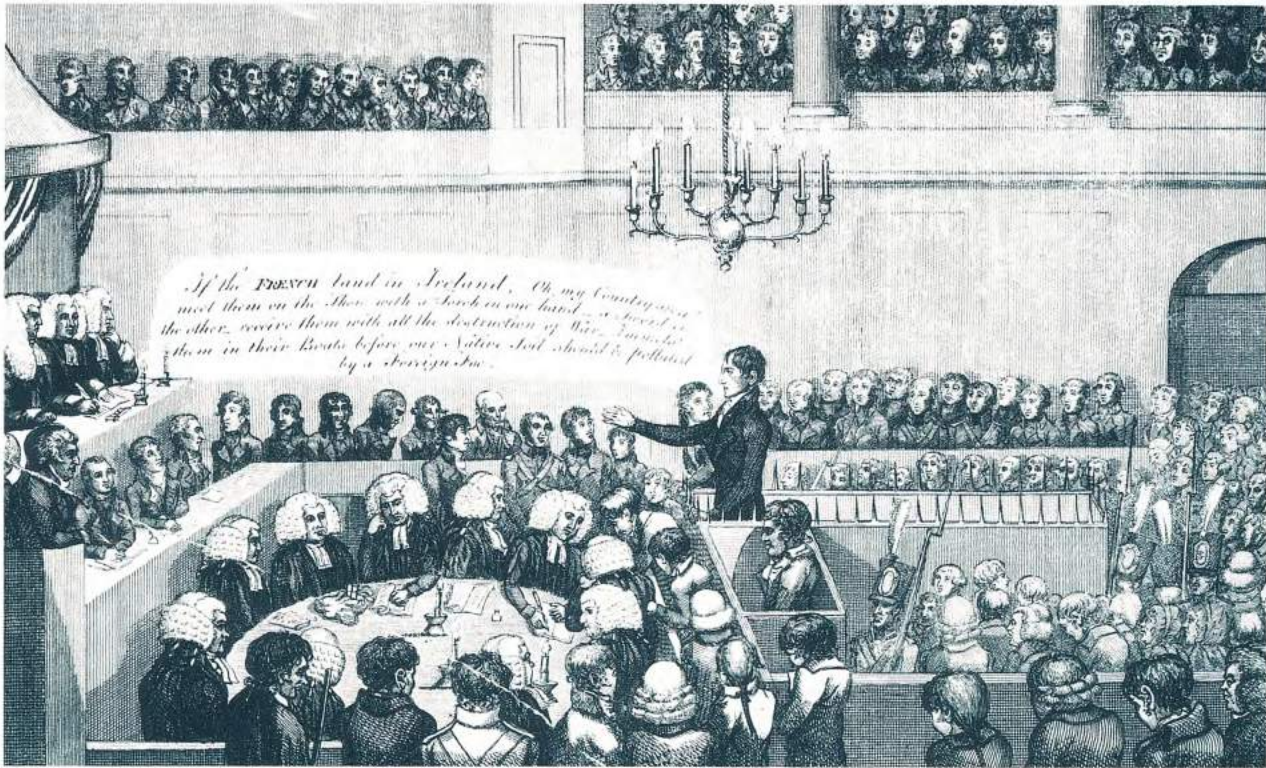
*What a pity that such brilliant talents should yield to an enthusiasm so wild and extravagant, to what a pitch such enthusiasm can lead even the greatest minds, appeared from the manuscript of a private mediation found amongst his paper... he behaved throughout with manly firmness... When the verdict was pronounced, he seemed to consider himself as rising into a Martyr; he addressed the Court and the audience declaring with the greatest satisfaction the high station he had held and the active measures he had used in the cause of Liberty he gloried in having rekindled the flame and was he again at large, he would again strain every nerve to promote its success.*

### ***Tuesday evening***

*I am going on guard and have only time to tell you that the execution took place today, he behaved with dignified firmness to the last, it was expected he would have made some very inflammatory harangue, but he only said, "My cause was a noble one, and I die at peace with all the world" – everything remains in every respect perfectly quiet...*

*Yours very truly  
R. Rainey*

---



Robert Emmet standing in the Dock  
This etched courtroom scene was made by Brocas  
(National Library of Ireland)

## Questions

1. Why did Rainey say that Thomas Street was the most notorious scene of Emmet's treasons?
2. What reason does Rainey give for Emmet's trial lasting only one day?
3. Where did Emmet stay while planning his Revolution?
4. Why, according to Rainey, did Emmet and his staff speak French to people?
5. What was Rainey's opinion of:
  - (a) Emmet's political beliefs?
  - (b) Emmet's proclamations and addresses?
  - (c) Emmet's conduct during his trial and at his execution?



*Extracts from a  
petition by James  
Tandy complaining  
of his treatment in  
prison: a pamphlet  
1804. (National  
Library ref: P142).*

## JAMES TANDY

James Tandy was the son of Napper Tandy and is the same James Tandy referred to in Document 2B.

## DR. EDWARD TREVOR

Coming from the ranks of the army, Trevor was appointed as the Medical Superintendent of Kilmainham Gaol. He was a domineering character who exerted a strong influence over the Head Gaoler and effectively ran the prison; his word was law within Kilmainham Gaol.

To Philip, Earl of Harwicke,  
Lord Lieut. General, etc., etc.  
My Lords,

*When I was first committed to this prison, it was immediately after my father's death, I was confined in the cell that he formerly occupied – it was then habitable – it was close to the necessary, and at the time I was put in, and during the time I remained about 6 weeks, the overflowing of the necessary was up to the threshold of my door; and, when I was led out, once a day, to my food, I had to wade up to my ankles through human excrement; that the food, often putrid flesh meat, was laid on a filthy table without any cloth, in the corridore, even to the feet of which table, this offensive inundation of ordure had spread itself. This disgusting repast of putrid food was for the use of 16 or 18 people, who were taken out, one by one, from their respective cells, and after cutting of a slice, were again locked up, so that by the time the last were served (for it was taken in turns) near three quarters of an hour elapsed; this meat was served without any vegetables (except bad potatoes and bad cabbage) though repeated applications were made for such. The felons, who were the attendants, and who often had the keys of the state prisoner rooms, I have seen tearing the meat, with their filthy fingers, off the joint, that I was led out to help myself from. Through this fetid quagmire, was my wife and daughter, obliged to be carried in the arms of one of the felons'.*

*In the room where I was confined, there were two small windows, that opened into the corridore, but I was obliged to have them constantly shut, in order to keep out, as much as possible, the suffocating vapour that issued from the apartment before mentioned. The room was quite dark, and I could not see to read in the middle of the day, without a candle. At the commencement of my confinement, I was allowed one small one, and a few days after Christmas, I suppose, owing to the days beginning to lengthen, they reduced it to half a one...*

*I was at length removed to the opposite side of the prison, to a room occupied by three other prisoners; here I have to complain of the want of air and exercise; in consequence of which, my constitution is nearly destroyed, not being suffered even to a necessary. A common stable bucket is placed in the room, where we are obliged to perform the offices of nature, in the presence of each other. It was, for some time, removed and placed in*

*the corridore, close to the table where our meat was served; and, when we wanted to get admittance to it, we were often obliged to knock for two or three hours before our door was opened. Of such rigour is our confinement, that not one of us will be allowed to keep in his room, not even an empty bottle for the preservation of any surplus of beverage or small beer allowed to us at dinner; or even for water at night; our meat continued to be of the very worst quality, and which, I should suppose, to be supplied from Carrion Row, and often in a putrid state. We have almost a total want of attendance, and are obliged to perform the lowest personal functions ourselves...*

*Whom to blame, I am at a loss. I do not wish to accuse any individual; but, this much I do declare upon my oath, that from my own knowledge of the different prisons in Europe, as also in other parts of the world which I have visited, no prisoners therein (not even in the old Bastille of France) have experienced more wanton cruelty, or more savage, treatment, that I have suffered for upwards of eight months, without having the most distant idea of what I am accused of...*

*The source of all of our afflicting treatment is glaringly to be traced to a person, who acts as Superintendant of this prison, a Doctor Trevor of whose inhuman, hardened, and malignant disposition, we want words to convey the deep impression, which has been forced on us. This man executes his office, in a manner, at once mean and malicious; he pleads for all our sufferings, "orders from Government"; of which, indeed, he represents himself a member, always speaking of it in the plural, WE.*

*He receives our complaints with contemeliuous laughter, and has insultingly answered a complaint against an attendant, by an invitation to a pugilistic decision with him; he insults with words, looks, taunts, and threats, us and our friends; with the zeal and ignorance of an Inquisitor, he examines and details our books; he orders, whom he choses, into irons and to the felon-side of the prison, taking care to observe, that each instance of such treatment should beone of cautionary terror to all; his treatment of all, but particularly, of one unfortunate starved prisoner (a female \*) is shocking to humanity, and exceeds credibility; he drives, through exasperation, the mind to madness, of which instances have actually occurred... To such a situation are we reduced, that life is left without value, and literally become a burthen to us, nor is there one of us, who from many concurring circumstances, cannot, on oath, declare a firm belief of an intention to deprive us of it, by underhand means.....*

*May it please your Excellency  
Your Excellency's  
Most obedient, and most humble, servants*

Wm. Hamilton	John Patten
John Palmer	John C. Hickson
Wm McDermott	Nicholas Gray
Daniel Dolan	James Tandy
Daniel Brophy	Philip Long
Denis Cassin	St. John Mason
*Anne Develin	Henry Hughes

No	Names	When Committed	By Whom	Crimes
90	James Nixon	24 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Secretary Wickham	Treasonable Practices
91	Robert Murrell	26 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Secretary Wickham	High Treason
92	John Murrell	29 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Secretary Wickham	Treasonable Practices
93	Thos. Murrell	29 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Secretary Wickham	High Treason
94	Spittle Murrell	30 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
95	Henry Murrell	30 <sup>th</sup> August 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
96	Thomas Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
97	John Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion to procure
98	John Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion to procure
99	Baron Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Treasonable Practices
100	Henry Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Treasonable Practices
101	Timothy Daly	7 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Treasonable Practices
102	John Doyle	7 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Edward Tovey Esq.	Rebellion to procure
103	John Tovey	7 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Edward Tovey Esq.	Rebellion to procure
104	Thomas Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	William Alexander Esq.	High Treason
105	Patrick Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
106	John Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
107	Robert Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
108	Peter Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
109	Thomas Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Edward Tovey Esq.	Rebellion
110	Nicholas Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Edward Tovey Esq.	Rebellion
111	Thomas Murrell	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	High Treason
112	Henry Murrell	13 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	John Bell Esq.	Rebellion
113	Hugh Murrell	10 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
114	Patrick Murrell	10 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
115	William Murrell	10 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
116	James Murrell	10 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion
117	Thomas Murrell	10 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	Treasonable Practices
118	Patrick Murrell	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 1793	William Alexander Esq.	High Treason
119	William Murrell	24 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Richard Evans Esq.	Rebellion
120	Mary Murrell	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion to procure
121	Henry Murrell	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	Rebellion to procure
122	Henry Murrell	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	Rebellion to procure
123	James Murrell	30 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	Rebellion to procure
124	John Murrell	30 <sup>th</sup> September 1793	Henry C. Esq.	Rebellion to procure
125	Nicholas Murrell	31 <sup>st</sup> September 1793	Secretary Wickham	High Treason

## Questions

1. What is meant by the reference to Tandy's cell being 'close to the necessary'?
2. Who were the 'attendants' and who were the 'State prisoners'?
3. What example does Tandy give to highlight the 'rigour' of his confinement?
4. What reference does he make to the 'Old Bastille of France'?
5. To whom does he attribute his 'afflicting treatment'?
6. Who is the person referred to as 'one unfortunate starved prisoner, a female'?
7. James Tandy's father was Napper Tandy. Find out what you can about him.

## THE FAMINE

### **The Famine and Constabulary Reports**

These reports, assembled from all parishes of the country on the order of the Government, paint a picture of the extent of the potato blight problem and of the general reaction in the areas.

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Abstract of Constabulary Reports received December 1845

#### **County: District: Date: Report.**

Dublin, Rathfarnham. Dec 12th.

The disease is apparently stopped ; the potatoes are keeping, both in houses and pit, except in a few instances. No alarm or fear of want.

#### **Fermanagh, Arncy. Dec 12th.**

The complaints have nearly subsided and I think there is an ample supply, if the disease extends no further.

#### **Louth (from County Inspector). Dec 13th.**

“The apprehensions regarding the failure of the crop are not now general.” But there is no doubt that one half is lost, particularly of the potatoes planted late. The potatoes recently gathered are not so much injured as those dug up earlier.

#### **Monaghan, Glasslough. Dec 20th.**

Nearly one half of the crop remains in the ground: it is generally thought that the potatoes so left have suffered less than those which have been taken up, and many people propose not to dig those intended to seed till next spring. The disease has not perceptibly extended since the middle of Oct. Except in one or two instances. I have not heard that the Commissioners instructions as to storing have been attended to. I find it very difficult to form an opinion as to the proportion of the crop that may be lost, but thinks it beyond doubt that there will be a serious deficiency and that the poor will suffer severely in Spring Summer, and as the price of seed will probably be too high next spring for many of the cottiers to plant con-acre potatoes, it is to be feared that the deficiency will extend to another year.

#### **Wicklow, Rathdrum. Dec 6th.**

One third of the crop has been lost or badly diseased, and one third slightly tainted; I.C. calculates that the crop exceeds produce of other years by one fourth. The mode of treatment generally pursued is, to separate the good potatoes from the bad, and to make small narrow heaps of each kind in the driest part of the field. Such of the bad ones as are eatable are used for food. Of the very bad, much is thrown away and wasted; in some cases, by the upper classes, they are converted into flour and starch. The slightly tainted have during the last month decayed more slowly than before. The good potatoes, heaped as already stated, are hitherto keeping fairly. - In

UNIT 3

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THE  
FAMINE



DOCUMENT  
—3A—

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*Abstract of  
Constabulary  
Reports on Potato  
Crop 1845-46.*

some instances the potatoes have been left in the ground. On the whole I.C. thinks the poorer classes will require much assistance to enable them to provide food for the spring and early part of the summer.

**Kerry, Kenmare. Dec 4th.**

The disease has started to extend. If the sound potatoes continue so, there will be a sufficient supply.

**Tipperary, Cashel. Dec 4th.**

The alarm is considerably on the decrease, notwithstanding that the disease has in some instances appeared during the last week in pits hitherto safe. - About one quarter of the crop is lost.

**Kildare, Celbridge. Dec 2nd.**

The disease is much on the decrease and the panic has in a great degree subsided.

**Kings County.**

About one third of the lumpers have been injured; of these, one half may be used for cattle. Of the crops nearly one fifth are injured. The seeds have escaped well. The growers admit that an unusual quantity was planted last spring; consequently with care, there will be no want. The markers are well supplied at 2 1/2 p per stone. Oats are abundant and reduced 1/- per bunch in Tullamore market this day.

**Mayo, Westport. Dec 2nd.**

With few exceptions, the crop in this district is free from disease. The accounts from the islands state that the crop was never safer or better.

**Carlow. Dec 1st.**

318 pits and 10 houses in which potatoes have been stored during the last 6 weeks have been examined, the result is as follows:

In 1 case.	5	10	14	15	40	16	31	23	8
In every 100 examined	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto	ditto
all were diseased	40	80	70	60	50	30	20	10	0

**Tyrone, Cookstown. Dec 1st.**

The disease has generally declined in this district. The people have gradually attended to the recommendations of the Commissioners and have been careful in gathering and storing the crop.

**Cork, Charleville. Dec 29th.**

Many persons have used the precautions recommended and for the present with success; as the quantity planted far exceeded that of former years, and the crop was most abundant, the panic is in



a great measure subsiding, though there [are] still many alarmists.

**Tipperary, Borrisoleigh. Dec 30th.**

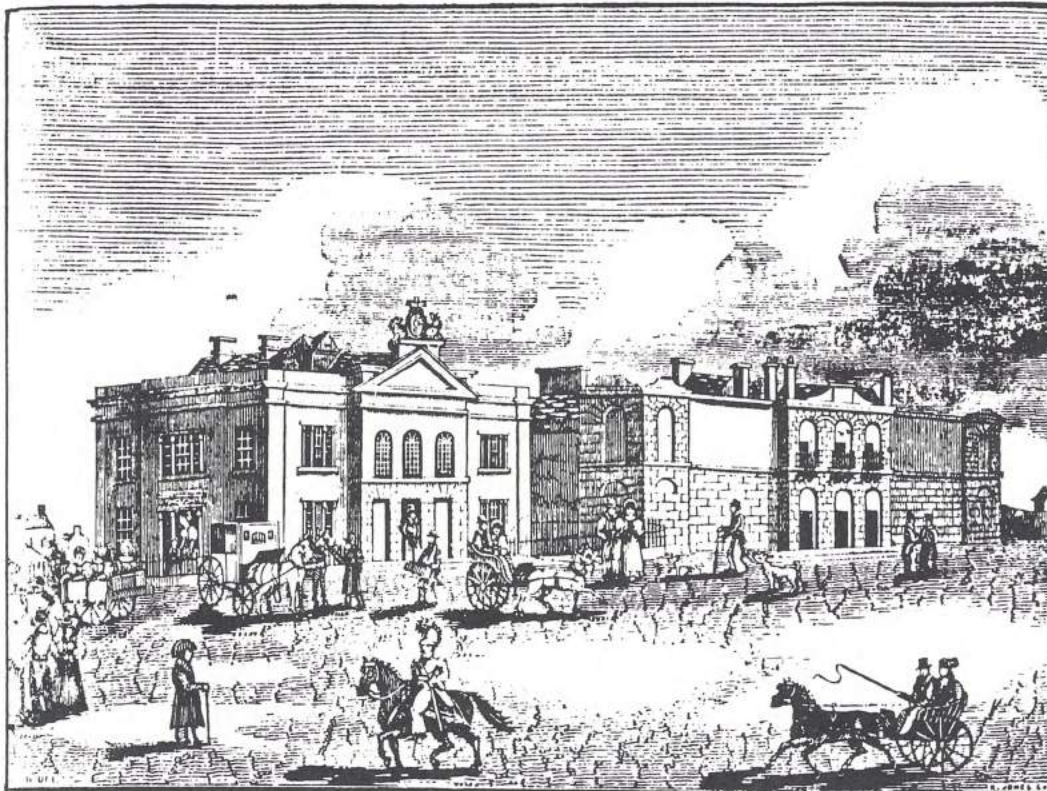
The potatoes are still getting black in the pits and such as first caught the disease are now useless. Many farmers were obliged to leave them out in fields as they could not dispose of them, and many have left their potatoes undug.

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**Questions**

1. What portion of the potato crop was lost in:
  - (i) Louth?
  - (ii) Wicklow?
  - (iii) King's County?
  - (iv) Cork?
2. How do the reports differ from Dublin, Mayo and Tipperary?
3. Had the Authorities an accurate picture of the potato crop in 1845/46?

**Note:** You can find more information about life in Ireland before and during the Famine in *Social Life in Ireland 1800-45*, R.B. McDowell (ed.), *The Great Hunger* by Cecil Woodham-Smith and *The Potato Famine and Irish Emigrants* by P.F. Speed (Longman, Then and There Series).



SESSIONS HOUSE AND JAIL, KILMAINHAM.

UNIT 3  
~  
THE  
FAMINE



DOCUMENT  
—3B—

*Letter from the  
Tallaght Relief  
Committee  
regarding their  
work (extract).*

## TALLAGHT RELIEF COMMITTEE

Local relief committees were set up in 1845 by the Relief Commission on the instructions of Sir Robert Peel, the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Local landowners, or their agents, together with magistrates, clergy and other people of importance in the locality, served on these committees. The work carried out by the Tallaght Relief Committee is described in Document 3b.

*Co. Dublin*

*Tallaght County Dublin*

*2nd February 1847*

*Tallaght Relief Fund*

*Workhouse full. Calculated to contain 2000*

*Sir,*

*I have been requested by the Relief Com.tee of this district, to transmit to you the following list of subscriptions towards their funds, and to beg, that you will have the kindness to recommend to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, that he would graciously be pleased to allocate as large a donation as you deem advisable, towards the relief of the great destitution which prevails in the District.*

*The Union Workhouses (the South Dublin) having been for sometime full; the Com.tee divided the locality into subdistricts which they personally inspected, and entered in a register the names of families where distress existed; for whose benefit they opened a meal shop in the village of Tallaght, and also a large soup kitchen where soup is distributed at one penny per quart during five days in each week. These exertions have been attended with great success, and have hitherto preserved the peace of the neighbourhood.*

*Permit me again to impress on your kind consideration the necessity of favourably receiving this application, and of making as large a grant as possible.*

*I have the honor to be*

*Sir*

*your obedient Servant*

*John Lentaigne*

*Chairman of Relief Com.tee*

*To*

*Commissary General Sir B. J. Bouth*

*Commissariat Relief Office*

*Dublin Castle*

**Editor's Note:** Subscriptions were sought from the local community. A total of 49 individuals contributed £199.2s.0d. to the relief fund.

## Questions

1. What request was made to the Lord Lieutenant?
2. What reference was made to the South Dublin Workhouses?
3. What action did the committee take to relieve stress?
4. Was the region of Tallaght in a 'disturbed condition' at this time - 1847?

10054  
Tallaght (County Dublin)  
2nd February 1847  
South Dublin Union  
Tallaght Relief Fund. Workhouse gate. Calculated to  
contain 2000  
SIR  
I have been requested by the <sup>Meeting</sup> Committee  
of this district, to transmit to you the following  
list of Subscriptions towards their funds, and  
to beg that you will have the kindness to  
recommend to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant,  
that he would graciously be pleased to  
allocate as large a donation as you deem  
advisable, towards the relief of the great  
distress which prevails in the District.  
The Union Workhouse, (The South Dublin) having  
been for some time full; the <sup>Meeting</sup> Committee divided the  
locality into subdistricts which they personally  
inspected, and entered in a register the names  
of families where distress existed; for whose  
benefit they opened a meal shop in the  
village of Tallaght, and also a large Soup  
Kitchen where soup is distributed at one

UNIT 3  
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THE  
FAMINE



DOCUMENT  
—3C—

*Based on an extract  
from Kilmainham  
Gaol Register  
October - December  
1847, detailing  
people committed  
and their crimes.*

## GAOL REGISTER

The Gaol Registers are lists of those imprisoned in Kilmainham. They include some fascinating details concerning both the crimes and punishments of those imprisoned. During the height of the Famine in 1847, the crime of stealing potatoes was common, and the sentence harsh.



Searching for potatoes in a stubble field  
From *The Illustrated London News* 22nd December 1849  
(National Library of Ireland)

### Questions

1. What crimes were associated with the Famine? Make a list.
2. What were the penalties for 'rooting potatoes'?
3. What was the penalty for begging?
4. What do you notice about the social class of the prisoners?
5. How many of the prisoners were skilled tradesmen?
6. What do you notice about the height and age of the prisoners?
7. Make a list of the women prisoners. Were they treated more leniently than the men?
8. (a) How many prisoners could read and write?  
(b) How many prisoners could only read?  
(c) How many prisoners could neither read nor write?

No.	Name	Age	Crimes as stated in committal	Sentence	Rel.	Staats	Read/Write	Height	Trade
1599	<b>William Kinsellagh</b>	75	Begging and gathering alms	3 days confined with hard Lab.	RC	M	RW	5'8"	Meishal, Co. Carlow Lab.
1600	<b>Margaret Toole</b>	32	Same	3 days with Lab.	RC	M	n n	5'2" 1/2"	Glen of Amale, Co. Wicklow None
1601	<b>William Cooke</b>	16	Rooting Potatoes	Bailed Petty Sessions	RC	S	R	5'4"	Killeague Co. Wicklow Lab.
1602	<b>James Brennan</b>	24	Stealing Potatoes	21 days confined	RC	S	R	5'3"	Mountmellic Queens. Lab.
1506	<b>Andrew Farrell</b>	16	Malicious injury by rooting potatoes	1 cal. month confined from 2 Oct. or pay £1. fine 10 Oct.	RC	S	R	5'0"	Longford Lab.
1603	<b>Alicia Hanlon</b>	23	Stolen potatoes in her possession	14 days confined	RC	S	n n	5'0"	Crumlin None
1605	<b>John Lube</b>	17	Stolen raw meat in his possession	1 week confined	RC	S	RW	5'4"	Thomas St. None
1607	<b>Mary Stokes</b>	16	Begging and gathering alms	1 week confined	RC	S	n n	5'0"	Blackrock None
1611	<b>Margaret Doherty</b>	59	Same	3 days confined with H.Lab.	P	M	RW	5'0"	Belfast Tailor
1612	<b>George Reid</b>	15	Being disorderly	3 days confined or pay 2/-	RC	S	n n	4'11"	Ticknick Lab.
1613	<b>James McCormack</b>	15	Rooting potatoes in a field	1 month confined	RC	S	RW	4'9"	Beron Gap Donnybrook Blacksmiths Lab.
1614	<b>Bridget Horan</b>	36	Stolen copper coal scuttle in her possession	2 cal. month confined Dublin with H.Lab.	RC	M	RW	5'0"	New St. None
1615	<b>William Boothman</b>	20	Being disorderly and disturbing peace	14 days confined or find bail	RC	S	RW	5'6"	Rathfarnham Butcher
1619	<b>Edward Moran</b>	50	Malicious Trespass	1 week confined or pay 2/6	RC	M	RW	5'7"	Rathdrum Co. Wicklow Lab.
1622	<b>Patrick Freeman</b>	27	Lurking about with intent to commit a felony	2 months confined or find bail	RC	S	RW	5'8 1/2"	Kingstown Lab.

UNIT 3  
~  
THE FAMINE



DOCUMENT  
—3D—

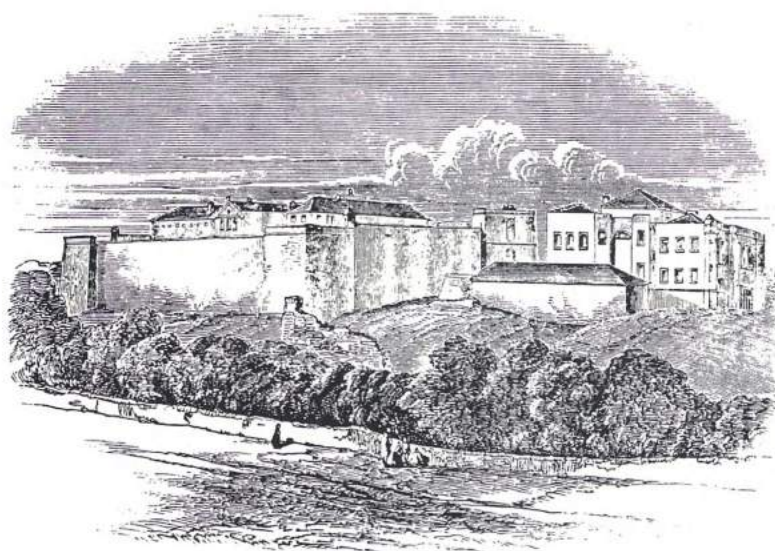
*Extracts from 27th  
and 28th Reports of  
the Inspector  
General of Prisons  
in Ireland.*

## THE INSPECTOR GENERAL'S REPORTS

These annual reports were carried out on all prisons, by order of the Government, and contain valuable information on conditions in the gaols, along with suggestions for improvements. They also yield statistics which, taken with the history of the time, help to increase our understanding of society in Ireland.

### Questions

1. What was the reason for the increase in the number of criminals between 1845 and 1848?
2. Suggest a reason why the number of transportees was so large in 1847/1848.



KILMAISHAN GAO, DUBLIN.

Consequent to the ratio of crime the number of convicts sentenced to transportation is shown in the following tabular form

Years	Number of criminal cases at Assizes and Quarter Sessions	Number sentenced to Transportation Male and Female	% sentenced to Transportation	Increase of convicts sentenced to Transportation exceeding Previous year
1845	16,696	625	3.74	—
1846	18,492	687	3.71	62
1847	31,209	2,202	7.05	1,515
1848	38,522	2,733	7.09	531
1849	41,989	3,073	7.32	340

Prison hulk 'Success' at Hobart, Australia.



PRISON HULK "SUCCESS" AT HOBART.

S2.B.

ASHTON, HOBART.

## COUNTY OF DUBLIN (KILMAINHAM) GAOL – VISITED 14TH DEC. 1849

The gaol deficient both in its plan and dimensions, appears to still greater disadvantage, owing to the enormous daily influx of beggars to which all the metropolitan prisons are liable, and which forms one of the greatest obstacles to the proper regulation of these establishments. The number of inmates showed a diminution of forty-six as compared with that mentioned in the last report; thirty six, however, had been discharged on the morning of my visit.

	males	females		males	females
Master debtors	9	1	Vagrants	39	37
Poor debtors	1	-	Soldiers	1	-
Felons convicted	32	10	Committed summarily	45	11
Misdemeanants	3	1	Lunatics	7	5
Felons untried	23	6	Crown witness	1	-
Misdemeanants untried	6	-		—	—
				167	71
Total .....	238				

None of these were convicts for transportation who, immediately after sentence, are transferred to the Government convict prison, which occupies a larger portion of this building. The remainder contains fifty three single cells on the male side, and twenty eight on the female side. Those in the old part are small, but a considerable addition to the building was made about 6 years ago, which now constitutes the principal part of the female department, together with eight cells on the ground floor for the males.

In the old cells the windows are not glazed, and this circumstance has been animadverted upon in previous reports. Sufficient ventilation is, in my opinion, one of the first requisites; and considering that there are shutters which are closed at night, that no complaints are made, and that the health of the prisoners does not seem to be the least affected by this circumstance, I cannot see that any great objection exists to allowing this deficiency to remain. At night there is necessarily much crowding, and five prisoners are frequently obliged to sleep in the same cell. As these are fitted up with a large iron bedstead, two men, consequently, are placed in bed, and three on the floor. This is contrary to the regulations of the Prison's Act, and might always be avoided by having cots or hammocks instead of bedsteads; the former being removed during the day, space is thereby afforded for carrying on work in the cells if it should be thought advisable, while the bedsteads being immovable, a harbour for dirt is formed under them which it is not easy to keep clean.

There are two small bay rooms, and another occasionally used as a carpenter's shop. The latter might be enlarged by throwing an adjoining cell into it, and both that and the other room might be made more airy by lowering the floors, which at present are some feet above the yards. Improvements might also be made in other parts, where owing to the faulty plan, much space is

UNIT 3

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THE  
FAMINE



DOCUMENT  
—3E—

*28th Report of the  
Inspector General  
on Kilmainham  
Gaol 1849.*



thrown away. There are two pumps, and water is also supplied by a machine from the river; a forcing pump inside conveys this to four cisterns, and thence to the yards. The sewers are kept clean by throwing water daily down the privies. The latter, however, are badly constructed, and not in a very clean state. There are one warm and two cold baths, besides one of the former in the female department.

The debtors' department contains some good rooms, and is spacious compared with other parts of the gaol. The chapel is small and ill-constructed, the place assigned to the females ludicrously inadequate. A door which leads into a corridor in the convict side of the prison is left open during divine service, and the convicts standing in the passage are enabled to hear and see the chaplain. A plan for enlarging the chapel has been under consideration, which might be carried out without much difficulty, by taking in some of the rooms in the debtors' department, from which they might be spared.

The kitchen is furnished with a steam apparatus which is used for dressing the stirabout, the steam being both admitted inside the vessel, and circulating in a space round it. There is only one solitary cell, which is very seldom used; bread and water diet being generally found an adequate punishment for prison offences, which usually consist of refusals to work, or fighting. The prisoners are not always examined by the surgeon on admittance but they are washed, and gaol clothing is given to all who are committed for any time beyond forty-eight hours. The meals are taken in the cells and silence is observed as much as practicable. Classification is necessarily imperfect.

### Employment and Schools

All the hard labour class are employed in breaking stones. Wool picking is also carried on, but the trade employments were, I regretted to find, but few. One of the turnkeys is a carpenter; and if, as vacancies occurred, tradesmen were appointed to these situations, much might be learned and done by the prisoners in this respect, although to carry this out, it would be absolutely necessary to have some additional working sheds or rooms; as it is, a great deal of the gaol clothing is made up and mended, as well as shoes and clogs. The occupations of the prisoners on the day of my visit were as follows:

<b>Males</b>		<b>Females</b>	
Breaking stones	68	Washing blankets	10
Picking wool	33	Mangling	10
Whitewashing	4	Ironing linen	2
Cooking and prison duties	14	Washing cells and passages	10
Mending gaol clothing	2	Making shirts	14
Mending clogs	1	Nursing and minding lunatics	10

There is no regularly appointed schoolmaster, which certainly would be an acquisition but each turnkey gives lessons to his own class. Beside these there is a class of juveniles to which more attention is given. These individuals who are committed for a fortnight or less do not attend school. A weekly lecture is given by the Presbyterian, and sometimes by the Protestant chaplain.

### Female Department

This department, which seems well managed by the matron, Mrs Judge, comprises the best part of the gaol. The cells constructed (as before observed) six years ago, were intended to be adapted for

the separate system, and accordingly flues are carried round them for the transmission of warm air. As, however, the warming apparatus has never yet been put up, the intention remains unfulfilled, and the cells are not occupied by day. These are large - more so than in fact is necessary, considering the purpose for which they were destined. I observed that sheds were used in this department, a practice which I should recommend being extended to the whole. The laundry is roomy but too low, and adjoining it there is a fumigating oven for clothes, but so small and ill adapted, that it is hardly ever used. There is a large ironing room, with an apartment for drying adjoining, which has been erected against and almost on a level with the top of, the external wall. This has greatly affected the security of the prison, and by this means two convicts lately made their escape.

The women are divided into two classes - one composed of vagrants and prostitutes, the extreme youth of which appeared remarkable. One of the assistant matrons acts as school mistress for half an hour daily - a small portion of time to be devoted to this purpose.

### **Dietary**

The new dietary has been in use since it first came out, and no complaints have been made of its insufficiency except by some of the females.

Breakfast - First class, males, two ounces of rice, six ounces of indian meal, made into stirabout, and half a pint of new milk; third class, children, one ounce of rice, four ounces of indian meal made into stirabout, and half a pint of new milk. Dinner - first class, males, fourteen ounces of whole wheatmeal bread, and one pint of milk; second class, females, twelve ounces of whole wheatmeal bread, and three-fourths of a pint of milk; third class, children, ten ounces of whole wheatmeal bread, and half a pint of milk. Supper - third class, children, four ounces of bread, and one and a half naggins of milk. The provisions are inspected daily by one of the chaplains, and to my taste were exceedingly good. The milk is given warm, which perhaps may be a salutary practice. The bread is supplied by contract.

### **Books and Accounts**

The books are kept by the Deputy-Governor under the constant supervision of the Governor, and are sufficient in number for the purpose. The system of checks on issue and receipts seem quite satisfactory. The contract for oatmeal appears high, and that for milk particularly low. Bread, per lb. 1 1/2d; oatmeal, per cwt, 14s; rice, per cwt 14s; indian meal, per cwt 11s; new milk, per gallon 4 1/2d; buttermilk, per gallon 2d; salt, per stone 3d.

A code of by-laws is at present in preparation, but has not yet been submitted for approval.

### **Officers**

The present governor, Mr Robert Allison, has since the last inspection succeeded his father in the post, having for some time acted as deputy, and is therefore experienced in the management of the prison. The attention and benevolent kindness of the local Inspector, the Rev Mr Nixon, are well known. Only two of the turnkeys sleep within the walls - a number hardly equal to insure safety and vigilance, consequently there is no night watch through the corridors. It is to be hoped that this defect so common in the gaols in the country will be shortly remedied.

The visits of the non-resident officers during the past year were:-

Local Inspector	173	Presbyterian Chaplain	156
Surgeon	189	Roman Catholic Chaplain	128
Protestant Chaplain	173		

## Hospital

The hospital accommodation is confined to one large room in each department. In that for the females the ventilation appears hardly sufficient. Although owing to the general healthiness of this prison, no further room is required, yet it would be desirable to have the sick in a separate building, and airing yards for the convalescent, which do not at present exist.

The medicines are supplied by an apothecary as they are ordered by the surgeon.

## Lunatics

There are seven males and five females belonging to this unfortunate class, which I hope in time to see banished from our gaols. Most of them were in the hospital, and the rest mixed with the other prisoners.

## Board of Superintendence

The board meets on the first Thursday in each month and frequently on special occasions. The accounts are then looked over, and the payments ordered, which are made on the ensuing board day.

## General Observations

This gaol, as is the case with others belonging to metropolitan counties, is remarkable neither for size nor good arrangement. It is nevertheless clean, and appears to a certain degree well managed. The absence of rooms in which trade work could be carried on might be supplied by sheds, and a few turnkeys tradesmen would accomplish a good deal. It is in vain however to look for any thing like perfection in any course of prison discipline, as long as the cells are occupied at night by more than one individual; while flux and reflux of shoals of paupers operates as a perpetual bar to improvement. Nor is it perhaps fair to hold the county responsible for not expending more in additions, when a quarter of the whole building is taken up by the government prison.

The number of commitments were:-

	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	Total
Males	219	72	35	41	367
Females	93	31	28	27	179
					<hr/> 546

389 were vagrants

*Frederick B. Long, Inspector-General*

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## Questions

1. What was the main reason for the poor functioning of Kilmainham Gaol in 1849?
2. From the list of inmates, what can we learn of the treatment of the insane?
3. In what yard did the crown witness exercise?
4. What comment is made on the unglazed windows in the prison?
5. To what extent was there overcrowding in the prison?
6. In what condition is the Gaol's church?
7. What were the punishments for prison offences?
8. What activity was involved in 'hard labour'? (Find the Hard Labour area on the Gaol Plan.)
9. How were prison uniforms mended?
10. Was much attention given to education in the prison?
11. In the Female Department, how was a successful escape carried out?
12. What observation was made on vagrants and prostitutes in the prison?
13. What was insufficient or lacking in the diet of the prisoners?
14. Compare this description of the gaol with that of James Tandy in Document 2d.



*Extract from  
Inspector General's  
Report on  
Kilmainham  
Convict Depot 1848  
(Breakdown of  
crimes, sentences,  
ages and diseases)  
(National Archives,  
Dublin Castle).*

## TRANSPORTATION

During the Cromwellian period, thousands of Irish men and women were transported to the West Indies. Many more were transported to the American colonies in the eighteenth century. Following the American War of Independence and Britain's loss of the colonies, it was decided that a new penal colony would be established in Australia. The first fleet, which included convicts, left England in May 1787 and arrived in Sydney Cove on 26th January 1788. The first convict ship to sail directly from Ireland was 'The Queen' which arrived in Port Jackson, New South Wales, in September 1791.

During the next 62 years, over 30,000 men and 10,000 women were transported as convicts from Ireland to Australia. The last ship to sail directly from Ireland was 'The Phoebe Dunbar' which arrived in Western Australia in August 1853. The sentence of transportation was abolished in 1857, but convicts sentenced to penal servitude could still be sent 'beyond the seas'.

Convicts were transported for a minimum of seven years. Once convicted they were transferred, when possible, to a convict depot to await transportation. They were then moved to Queenstown or Kingstown when convict ships were ready. Up to 1836, the prison hulk 'Essex'<sup>1</sup> was moored in Kingstown Harbour to hold convicts awaiting transportation, while the prison hulk 'Surprise' was moored at Queenstown until 1838 for the same purpose.

A large part of Kilmainham Gaol was used as a male convict depot (*see* Inspector General's Report, 1849). In Dublin, female convicts were sent to the Grangegorman Lane depot. Spike Island prison<sup>2</sup> in Cork Harbour was opened in 1847 as a convict depot. There were other depots at Richmond, Bridewell and Smithfield (*see* Inspector General's Report on Kilmainham Convict Depot, 1848).

<sup>1</sup> See illustration from *Dublin Penny Journal*, 25th January 1834, showing Kingstown Harbour and the prison hulk 'Essex'.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration from *The Illustrated London News*, 4th August 1849, of Cork Harbour from Monkstown Road showing Spike Island Convict Depot.

### Ages

10 years and under 14	—	
14 years and under 16	2	
16 .. 20	17	
20 .. 30	48	
30 .. 40	19	
40 .. 50	3	
50 .. 60	3	
60 .. 70	1	
	93	

### Expense of Medicine, Hospital Sustenance etc. £80 7s 5

Ankle, disease of	2	Influenza	8
Abscess	6	Itch	31
Boils	4	Neurosis	1
Bowel complaint	30	Pain in the head	4
Catarrh	14	Pain in the ear	2
Dypepsia	2	Pain general	10
Eruption	4	Pulmonary affection	7
Fever	13	Phthisis	2
Gout, rheumatic	1	Retention of urine	1
Scrofulous abscess	3	Venereal	4
Swelled legs	2	Wounds	3
Tic doloreuse	1	Ulcers	2
			157

### Dietary of Male Convicts in Dublin Depots

**Breakfast:** For one prisoner every morning 3 1/2 ozs rice 3 1/2 ozs oatmeal (to make one quart of stirabout) with 3/4 pint of new milk.

**Dinner:** For one prisoner every day, except Sunday 1 lb household bread and 3/4 pint of new milk – Sunday 3/4 lb of household bread, 1 lb beef, 1/2 oz rice and 1 oz vegetables (to make one pint of soup in the liquor in which the beef was boiled).

**Supper:** For one person every evening, 1/2 lb household bread and 1/2 pint of new milk.

### Questions

1. What were the most common illnesses or complaints among the convicts? Why do you think these complaints were so common?
2. What was lacking or insufficient in the convicts' diet?
3. What were the most common crimes? Why, in your opinion, were these crimes so common?

## Kilmainham Convict Depot

### Statement of the number of Convicts in Custody; Committed and Disposed of, for one Year, ending 31st December 1848.

1st January 1848 in Custody .....	84
Committed .....	<u>80</u>
Total .....	164
Transported .....	32
Died.....	3
Removed to County Gaol.....	3
Removed to Smithfield Depot.....	12
Removed to Richmond Bridewell Depot.....	3
Removed to Spike Island Depot.....	16
Discharged.....	1
Sent to the Meath Hospital.....	<u>1</u>
	<u>71</u>
Remaining in custody 31st December 1848	93



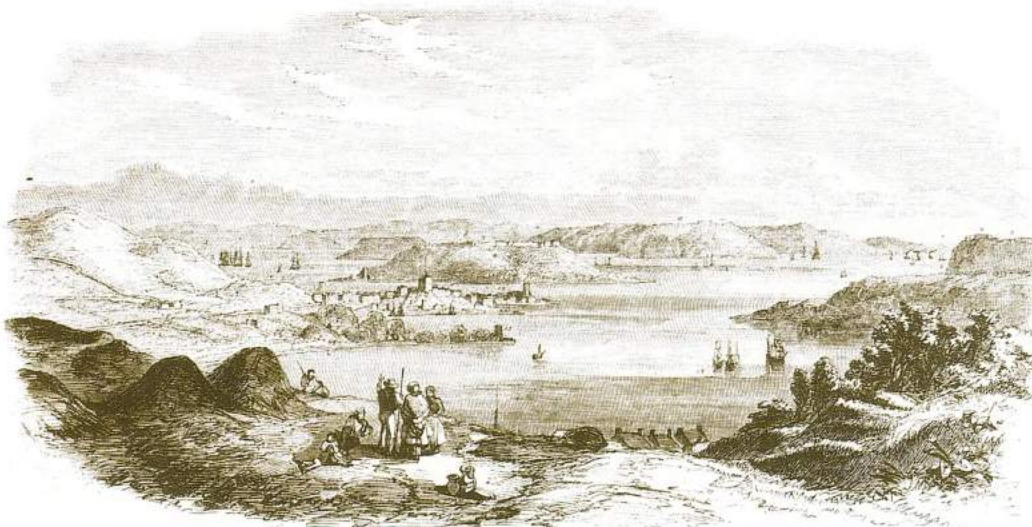
The prison hulk 'Essex' moored at Kingstown Harbour in 1834  
From *Dublin Penny Journal* 25th January 1834 (National Library of Ireland)

### Crimes in Conformity with the Gaoler's Return

Appearing in arms day or night.....	6	Felony.....	4
Arson.....	2	Highway robbery.....	4
Assaulting habitation .....	3	Housebreaking & robbery .....	4
Assault, malicious .....	1	Larceny.....	7
Assault & robbery .....	2	Murder, street.....	3
Burglary & robbery .....	8	Murder shooting at, with intent to.....	3
.....		Murder conspiracy to .....	1
Cattle stealing.....	26	Receiving stolen goods .....	3
Coining.....	1	Sheep stealing.....	9
Robbery with violence .....	1		
<b>MILITARY</b>			
Desertion.....	3	Firing at with intent to kill .....	2
		<b>Total: .....</b>	<b>93</b>

### Periods of Sentences of Prisoners Committed

7 years	44
10 years	33
14 years	2
15 years	3
20 years	1
Life	10
	<u>93</u>



CORK HARBOUR, FROM OLD MONKSTOWN-ROAD.

Cork Harbour from Old Monkstown Road showing Spike Island Convict Depot  
From *The Illustrated London News* 4th August 1849

## FATHER DOWNING

Father Downing was appointed by Lord Clarendon, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. The 'Pestonjee Bonanjee' left Kingstown Harbour on Wednesday, 20th September 1848. There were 300 convicts on board, 270 of whom were Roman Catholics.

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### Friday Morning September 22nd 1848

On this morning at a quarter to 8 o'clock a.m. all the Roman Catholic Convicts assembled in the Prison for morning prayers which the Catholic Church prescribes to be observed by its members. 2ndly for Meditation, after which I gave them a lecture and an explanation of the Meditation above mentioned.

The weather becoming very rough and a number of the Convicts very sea sick. I was unable to go to the prison to give out evening prayers

### Sunday Morning Sept 24th 1848

Weather continuing very rough. Prison wet. Many of the convicts sick. Consequently I was unable to attend.

### Wednesday Morning Sept 27th 1848

Weather clearing up. Convicts all occupied in drying and preparing the Prison after the past rough days. No prayers in the morning or evening.

### Tuesday Morning Oct 3rd 1848

Prayers commenced this day at quarter to 8 o'clock after which I read the Meditation to the convicts and then gave them an explanation of it. At 10. oc. a.m. I formed 3 school classes which consisted of 12 in each class, superintended by a monitor. Evening prayers at dusk.

### Saturday Oct 14th 1848

Read prayers on this morning for the convicts at quarter to 8 oc then the meditation of which I gave an explanation. No school on this day, as the convicts were employed cleaning the prison. Evening prayers at the usual hour.

### Wednesday Nov 8th 1848

Went to the prison on this morning at 20ms to 8 oc. All the convicts being present. I read the prayers for them. School at 10 oc Heard the confession of one of the convicts who was sick and anointed him in the afternoon. Evening prayers at sunset.

### Thursday Morning Nov 16th 1848

The convict John McCannon (no. 209) expired about 20 ms p 12 oc on this morning. During his illness, I rendered him every consolation in my power. Went to the prison on this morning at 25

UNIT 4

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TRANS-  
-PORTATION



DOCUMENT

—4C—

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*Extract from the  
Journal of the Rev.  
Robert Downing,  
Roman Catholic  
Chaplain on  
Convict Ship  
'Pestonjee Bonanjee'  
1848-49.*



Friday Morning September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1848

On this morning, at 7<sup>1/2</sup> to 8. O'Clock, a.m., All the Roman Catholic Convicts assembled in the Prison for morning prayers, which the Catholic Church prescribes to be observed by its Members.

2<sup>ndly</sup> for Meditation, after which I gave them a Lecture and an explanation of the Meditations above mentioned. The weather becoming very rough, & a number of the Convicts very sea sick, I was unable to go to the Prison to give out evening prayers.

Saturday Morning Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1848

This morning (on preparing to go to the Prison,) I was informed that it would be impossible to recite the morning prayers in consequence of the illness of the convicts.

Sunday Morning Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 1848.

Weather continuing very rough. Prison wet. Many of the Convicts sick. Consequently I was unable to attend.

Monday Morning Sept 25<sup>th</sup> 1848

Day very boisterous. Weather as yesterday. Sickness among the Convicts. Prison not as yet dry - unable to go down to go through the Morning Prayers. The evening continued the same way as the day, by which I was prevented from attending.

ms to 8oc when I read the usual prayers for the convicts. School at 10 oc. At a quarter to 11 oc on this day, I read the funeral service (according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church) over the remains of the deceased John McConnon on the deck after which they were consigned to the deep. Evening prayers at sunset. General conduct of the convicts very meritorious.

**Wednesday Morning Dec 13th 1848**

At 12 oc on last night the convict Thomas Molloy (No 274) expired ...

**Friday Morning December 29th 1848**

Visited the prison on this morning at 25ms to 8 oc. All the convicts being present I commenced prayers after which I read a chapter of the New Testament and gave them a lecture. No school on this day in consequence of the severity of the weather. Evening prayers at a quarter to 7. oc pm.

**Tuesday January 2nd 1849**

The transport arrived in the Harbour of Hobartown on this evening at 10 M/P 8.oc pm.

**Hobart Town Harbour**

**Wednesday Morning January 10th 1849**

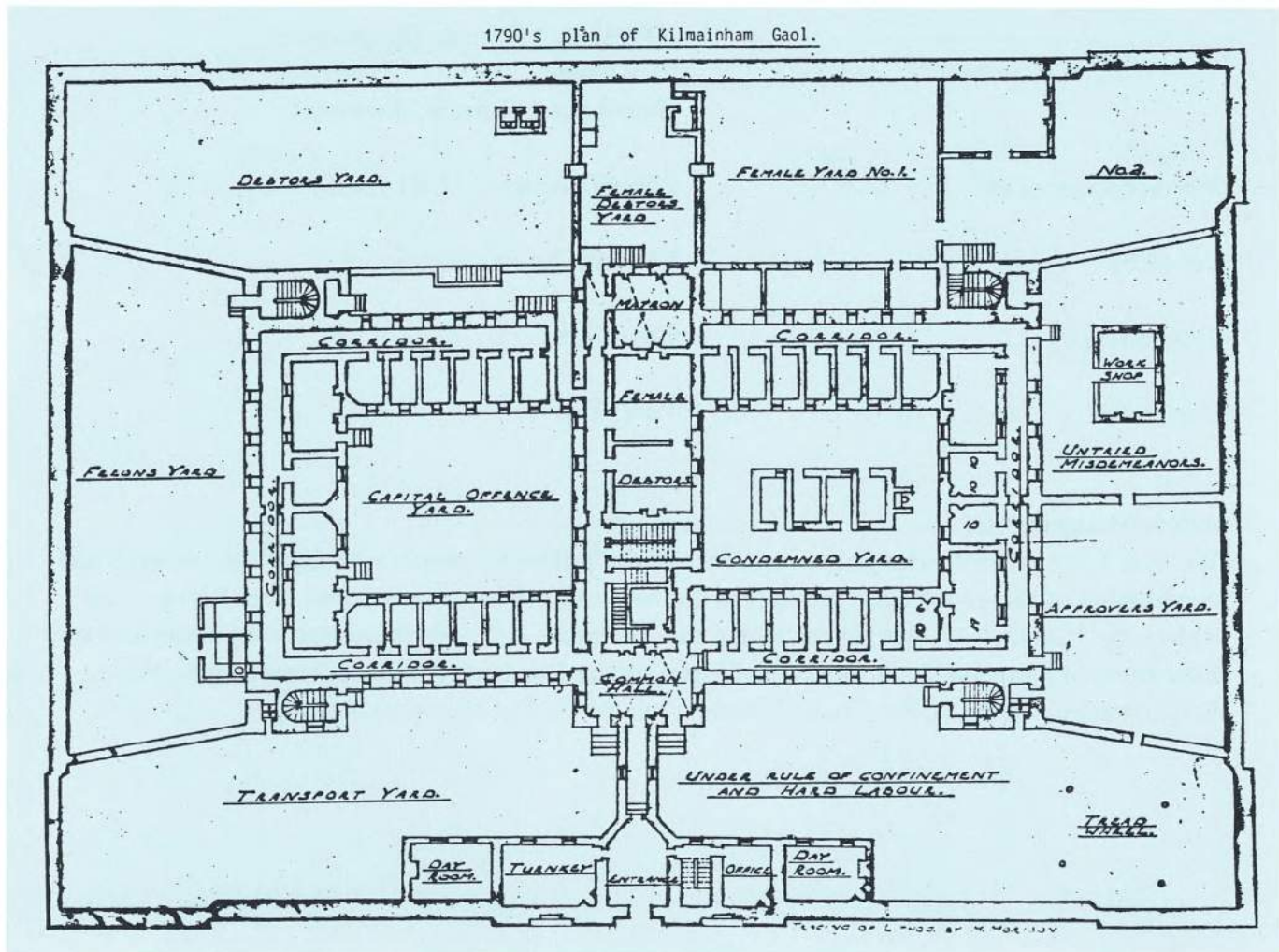
All the convicts, on board, were disembarked on this morning. In concluding this Journal it gives me much pleasure to give my testimony as to the uniform good conduct of the convicts in general during the voyage. They (the convicts) evinced the greatest anxiety to be instructed at school. The result is that 90 have learned to read, 60 of which number can write. Among the convicts who could read and write (prior to embarking) I find that they have made considerable improvement.

---

**Questions**

1. How long did the voyage of the 'Pestonjee Bonanjee' take?
2. How many convicts died during the voyage? Name them.
3. What were the travelling conditions like on the voyage?
4. Locate Hobart Town on a map of Australia.
5. How did the Chaplain look after the spiritual welfare of the convicts?  
What other work did he do?

## A PLAN OF KILMAINHAM GAOL



### Questions

1. Find the Debtors' Yard. What crime had debtors committed?
2. What are turnkeys called today?
3. What sort of prisoners used the Transport Yard?
4. Find a drawing of a tread wheel. What was it used for? Can you locate the position of the tread wheel in this plan?
5. What is the difference between a felony and a misdemeanour?
- 6.. Explain the following terms:
  - (a) Capital offence;
  - (b) Approver.

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