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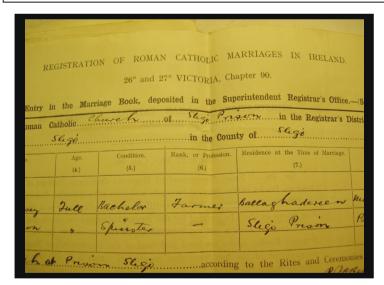
(Left) Gardaí on a ladder at the gable end of the defendants' house in a 1934 Co. Roscommon case. Sisters Elizabeth and Rose E. were charged with the murder of Elizabeth's infant daughter in October 1934. The gardaí conducted an extensive search of the local area but the infant's body was never discovered. Elizabeth and Rose were both sentenced to death but their sentences were later commuted to penal servitude for life.

Unmarried Mothers and Infanticide in Ireland, 1900 - 1950

The subject of my PhD thesis is **'Unmarried Mothers and Infanticide in** Ireland, 1900 – 1950.' Infanticide was committed regularly in Ireland during the first half of the twentieth century. It was a crime that was closely associated with unmarried mothers. At least 199 women were charged with the murder or concealment of birth of their infants between 1922 and 1950. A small number of men were also implicated in these cases. Most single women charged with infanticide or concealment of birth during the first half of the twentieth century were from working-class backgrounds and had been employed as domestic servants. My thesis will also examine infanticide cases that were tried in Northern Ireland and bring to light infanticide cases involving Irish women that came before the courts in Britain during the period under review.



(Above right) Razor blades found in the defendant's bedroom in a 1939 Co. Roscommon infanticide case. Most infants were suffocated shortly after their births but this was a particularly brutal case. One of the investigating sergeants noted that 'there were two cuts or gashes on the [infant's] throat that appeared to be fairly deep.' Photographs reproduced courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland.



(Left) A copy of a marriage certificate in a 1932 Co. Mayo infanticide case. Kate H. was charged with murder and concealment of birth in June 1932 but was released following her marriage to the father of her infant in Sligo prison. A small number of women, like Kate H., were released upon marriage to the infant's father. The father of Teresa C.'s infant wrote to her while she was in Mountjoy prison awaiting trial and expressed his willingness to 'make atonement' and to marry her. Teresa C. was convicted of concealment of birth but was released following her marriage. Many women convicted of infanticide or concealment of birth in Ireland between 1922 and 1950 served their sentences in Magdalen asylums run by nuns rather than



